

**Analysis, Assessment and Accreditation**  
**M.Ed and M.S. Programs**  
**Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling**  
**Utah State University**  
**December 2021**

### **Executive Summary**

Four master's degree programs in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling represent advanced levels of preparation for professionals who work with children, youth, and adults with disabilities (see Figure 1). The purpose of each program is to provide students with high levels of knowledge and skill competencies to serve as exemplary educators. These programs align with the Department's mission and the higher education role of Utah State University. Currently, eight faculty in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling teach master's-level courses. Most courses are delivered online in a synchronous format and are scheduled during evening hours to accommodate needs of practitioners working in schools, clinics, and community service provider programs. Students work with faculty through synchronous online course discussion, individual online appointments, and email correspondence.

### **Mission and Goals**

Our mission is to prepare high quality professionals; identify, implement, and disseminate evidence-based practices; and conduct research and outreach in collaboration with community partners. Our work is critical to ensuring the full inclusion of people with disabilities across educational, independent living, and employment domains to increase, to the maximum extent possible, their quality of life.

The core values that drive our mission include the conviction that all people have the right to:

- Respect: valued interactions and communication
- Wellness: positive relationships and meaningful partnerships
- Inclusion: meaningful participation in education, employment, and community
- Self-determination: opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and strengths to support self-advocacy and informed choices.

### **Description of Programs**

The master's degree programs in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling represent advanced levels of preparation for professionals who work with children, youth, and adults with disabilities. Specifically, the purpose of each program is to provide students with high levels of knowledge and skill competencies to serve as exemplary educators. There are four basic special education master's degree programs offered in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling:

- Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Special Education: see description at <https://cehs.usu.edu/sperc/sped/masters/master-of-education>
- Master of Science (M.S.) in Special Education: see description at <https://cehs.usu.edu/sperc/sped/masters/master-of-science>

- Master of Science (M.S.) in Special Education with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis: see description at <https://cehs.usu.edu/sperc/sped/masters/ms-with-bcba>
- Master of Education (M.Ed.) with Administrative Supervisory Licensure: see description at <https://cehs.usu.edu/sperc/sped/masters/med-with-asl>

### **Purpose of Master's Programs**

The overarching purpose of the master's programs in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling is to prepare personnel to be competent practitioners administering the highest quality programs and evidence-based teaching procedures to learners who have disabilities.

### **Alignment of Master's Programs and Degrees with Department Mission**

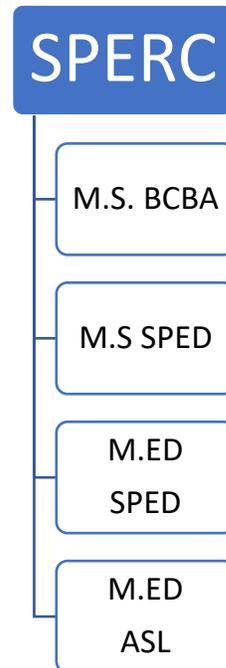
These programs align with the Department's mission because each is structured to (1) develop and improve the student's teaching skills working in inclusive classrooms and community settings as they interact with individuals who have disabilities, (2) require demonstration of competency in various skill areas as master's degree students interact with individuals who have disabilities, and (3) support the master's degree student in academic work and applied settings by demonstrating respect, wellness, inclusion, and self-determination.

### **Alignment of Master's Programs with University Mission**

Utah State University is a land-grant school whose purpose is to serve the public of the entire state through learning, discovery, and engagement (<https://www.usu.edu/about>). The master's programs in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling are readily available to students in every corner of the state because courses are broadcast using synchronous video technology directly to students who have internet connections. Students, many of whom are full-time teachers working in Utah's schools, learn by attending online broadcasts during evening hours. Moreover, master's students are able to apply concepts, strategies, and instructional procedures learned in courses in applied environments – in many cases, their own classrooms – with feedback from professors. Master's program faculty interact in real time with students working in applied settings through remote observations, video recordings, and other communications. The result is a rich educational experience in which students are truly engaged in meaningful learning.

**Figure 1**

***Four master's programs within the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling (SPERC)***



### **Recruitment**

The master's program utilizes five strategies aimed at recruitment of high-performing graduate students: (1) communication with colleagues, (2) a brochure, (3) faculty workshops, (4) conference recruitment, and (5) the [master's website](#). Admitted students are supported by the graduate program coordinator, master's faculty advisor, and the student's personalized master's faculty committee. Using checklists and periodic meetings, faculty advisors and students chart progress towards completion of the master's degree.

**Communication with colleagues.** Most master's students are teachers working in Utah schools. We encourage students to describe the master's programs to colleagues with whom they work. Master's program faculty describe the programs to colleagues when visiting schools, conducting online meetings with teachers and administrators, and presenting research at conferences.

**Brochure.** A master's program brochure was recently developed to describe why individuals may seek a master's degree, why they should choose the Utah State special education master's programs, and what advantages exist to choose a program offering local access to coursework and advisement. The brochure is distributed to SPERC faculty with the intention of dissemination to interested parties when faculty work in schools or conduct conference presentations.

**Faculty Workshops.** Twice annually, the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling sponsors on-campus or virtual events for all district special education

administrators to interview prospective teachers graduating from the undergraduate licensure program and to hear faculty presentations. The Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee describes master's programs to district special education administrators encouraging them and their colleagues to apply to a master's program. Additionally, in the same event, the Chairperson describes master's programs to graduates of the licensure program who attend the event. The result is development of close collegial relationships between faculty and districts as well as increased visibility of master's programs.

**Conference Recruitment.** Prior to COVID-19, the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee attended statewide conferences (e.g., Utah Council for Exceptional Children, Utah Systems Conference, Utah Transition Conference) to recruit prospective master's students. With virtual conferences taking precedence due to COVID-19, these recruitment efforts have evolved into online recruitment sessions.

**Website.** The [master's program website](#) contains pertinent information for prospective students, including general information about each program, requirements, new student orientation, faculty, FAQ, and contact information.

### Admission

Prospective students applying for a master's degree are initially directed to the [School of Graduate Studies](#) website. The Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee and GPC work with applicants to complete each component of the application packet. Although the deadline for complete applications is March 15 (to start Fall Semester), applications are encouraged throughout the year. Most students begin their coursework in August at the start of Fall Semester. Subsequent to the March 15 deadline or upon receipt of an application, master's program faculty review each application. Typically, two faculty independently evaluate each application by rating five criteria (1) the applicant's letter of intent, (2) three letters of support, (3) teaching and clinical experience, (4) research experience, and (5) supervisory and leadership experience. All criteria are rated on a 6-point rating scale as shown in *Figure 2: Applicant Rating Scale*. The over-arching evaluation criterion, based on evidence shown in the application, is the likelihood that the applicant will be successful in achieving a master's degree in an online environment involving high standards of scholarship.

**Figure 2**  
***Applicant Rating Scale***

Faculty Member:	Date:					
<b>Applicant's Name</b>						
Letter of Intent (Should include specific reasons for wanting to attend graduate school, describing experience and qualifications for advanced study.)	Strong Letter of Intent 6      5		Moderate Letter of Intent 4      3		Weak Letter of Intent 2      1      0	
Letter 1	Strong Support 6      5		Moderate Support 4      3		Weak Support 2      1      0	

Letter 2	Strong Support 6 5	Moderate Support 4 3	Weak Support 2 1 0
Letter 3	Strong Support 6 5	Moderate Support 4 3	Weak Support 2 1 0
Teaching or Clinical Experience (group home; adult service provider; autism services)	3 2+ years	1 1 year	0 ➤ 1 year
Research Experience	2 Published	1 (date collector; participated as part of a behavioral research group)	0 No experience
Supervisory/Leadership Experience	2 USU	1 District / Other University	0 No experience
Comments:			

The GPC receives faculty ratings and develops a spreadsheet to collate ratings and notes. Thereafter, all master's program faculty meet to discuss applications and make decisions on admissions. Decisions include *admit*, *admit provisionally*, or *deny based on justification*. Applicants are first contacted by the School of Graduate Studies regarding the decision. Second, the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee and GPC meet to assign admitted students to a Faculty Advisor based on degree sought and compatible career and research interests.

### Tracking of Student Progress

Student support is multi-dimensional and depends on the needs of the individual student. Applicants are first contacted by the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) regarding the admission decision, a course schedule, and eventually, a program of study. Second, the Faculty Advisor contacts the student to discuss career and research interests. The Advisor follows a checklist of sequenced activities related to advisement and preparation for the creative project (see *Figure 3: Checklist of Creative Project Advisor Responsibilities*). A similar checklist exists for Advisors of students pursuing a thesis. As the Advisor follows the checklist, the student completes a similar checklist describing a sequence of aligned activities (See *Figure 4 Student Checklist for MEd Plan B*.)

**Figure 3**  
**Checklist of Creative Project Advisor Responsibilities**

MEd – CREATIVE PROJECT – PLAN B

Item/Action	How it happens	Timelines
Advisor Assignment	Student will be given an interest questionnaire and will be assigned an advisor based on the student's interests, career goals, etc.	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> semester – Beginning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Advisement on Research Focus and Tentative Program of Study	Advisor meets with the student to (a) identify a focus area of research, (b) describe how to review research (or direct the student to specific research to read), and (c) consider specific courses for a program of study. Students in Special Education and Admin/Supervision may take SPED 6900 to learn how to review literature and write proposal.	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Committee Formation / <a href="#">Supervisory Committee Approval Form</a>	GPC works with Master's committee to assign committee members and an advisor (if not already assigned). GPC will then fill out the SCAF form in ServiceNow on behalf of student. Any revisions will be submitted by the GPC.	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Program of Study	GPC contacts student to get started; student meets with advisor to finalize. Student enters POS plan in DegreeWorks then emails GPC. GPC checks plan, then submits via ServiceNow. Revisions will be submitted by GPC.	Before end of 1 <sup>st</sup> year or summer after first year
Mentoring and Preparation	Students in Special Education and Admin/Supervisory may take SPED 6900 to develop written proposal, present at the proposal meeting, and assist with IRB protocol.	2 <sup>nd</sup> year
Scheduling of Proposal Meeting	Advisor prompts student to arrange proposal meeting. Student polls committee members to set date and time for proposal meeting. Student informs GPC of date and time, and asks for assistance in scheduling room if necessary. Student emails committee members with confirmation of date, time and location, and then emails reminder of proposal meeting with date, time and location to committee members and GPC.	About 4 – 6 weeks before proposal meeting  About a week before meeting
Proposal Title Page	Student creates and sends to GPC; GPC checks and returns to student. Student prints 2 copies for proposal meeting.	About 4 – 6 weeks before meeting
Proposal Manuscript	Student emails draft of manuscript for proposal to all committee members.	2 weeks before meeting
Answer Questions Prior to Proposal Meeting	Student contacts committee members to answer questions about the project/thesis prior to the proposal meeting.	About 1 week before proposal meeting
Identify Concerns Prior to Proposal Meeting	The advisor contacts committee members to identify major concerns about the project prior to the proposal meeting.	About 1 week before proposal meeting
Preparation for Proposal Meeting	Advisor and student meet to discuss meeting format, processes, and outcomes. Advisor arranges for the student to practice delivery of a presentation as needed.	About 1 week before proposal meeting
Preparation for Student Presentation at Proposal Meeting	Advisor directs the student to prepare a 20 min presentation of no more than 10-12 slides. The slide presentation should be developed with the assumption that all committee members are well-versed having read the proposal.	About 1 week before proposal meeting
Proposal Meeting Note-Taker	The advisor announces the note taker (self or other). Note taker will identify which committee recommendations in the notes are mandatory changes or merely suggestions. Also, note taker will identify which recommendations must be addressed prior to IRB application.	Beginning of meeting

Proposal Meeting	The advisor welcomes committee members. Tradition dictates that the advisor has the student leave the room while asking committee members if they find serious flaws in the proposal (this can be done prior to the meeting as well). Ask the student to return to the room, propose the research to the committee (focusing on research literature, rationale for study, justification, research questions, method, etc.). Committee members query the student on all aspects of the study. If approved, committee signs title page before end of meeting.	During proposal meeting
Title Page Signatures	Student brings checked title page and committee signs if proposal is successful. Student keeps copy for IRB application.	At meeting
IRB Application	Student and advisor (who IRB refers to “Principal Investigator”) complete IRB application. Principal Investigator submits application with approved draft of manuscript and signed title page.	After successful proposal meeting
IRB Approval	Student and advisor interact with IRB by responding to queries about research. Advisor (Principal Investigator) must resubmit protocol with changes. IRB approves protocol.	Median duration = 2 months
<a href="#">Thesis/Project Approval Form</a>	GPC prompts student to fill out TPA (Thesis/Project Approval) Form in ServiceNow.	After successful proposal meeting and IRB approval
IRB Amendments and Reporting of Protocol Deviations	Advisor should direct the student to read the IRB Investigator’s Handbook ( <a href="http://rgs.usu.edu/irb/handbook/">http://rgs.usu.edu/irb/handbook/</a> ) and respond immediately to report changes in research (Chapter 9).	During research
Scheduling of Defense Meeting	Student polls committee to set date and time for defense meeting. Student contacts office staff to reserve room. Student informs GPC of date, time and location. Student emails committee with confirmation of date, time and location. <b>Note: Graduate Studies sends out notice of defense meeting with date, time and location to student, committee and GPC.</b>	About 4 – 6 weeks before defense meeting  About a week before meeting
<a href="#">Appointment for Examination Form</a>	GPC contacts student to complete when student notifies her of date, time and location of defense meeting. Student submits form via ServiceNow.	About 4 – 6 weeks before proposal meeting – <b>a minimum of 10 business days before defense meeting</b>
Defense Meeting	Advisor conducts defense meeting in a manner similar to proposal meeting (see above). Advisor asks student to focus on research questions, any modifications requested by the committee in the proposal meeting, method section (especially any changes since the proposal meeting), results, conclusions, and implications of the research.	During defense meeting
Record of Examination Form	If student successfully defends, GPC submits ROE form via ServiceNow	End of defense meeting
Graduate Studies “next steps” email	When Graduate Studies receives ROE, student receives email with “next steps” and follows them with guidance of GPC.	After successful defense
Approval of Changes	When the edits recommended by the committee are approved, advisor contacts GPC regarding approval of changes.	When manuscript is edited and approved by committee

**Figure 4**  
**Student Checklist for MEd Plan B**

MEd - Creative Project - Plan B Student Checklist			
Date Completed	Item/Action	How it Happens	Timeline
	Advisor Assignment	Student will be given an interest questionnaire and will be assigned an advisor based on the students interests, career goals, etc.	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> semester – Beginning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
	Advisement on Research Focus and Tentative Program of Study	Student and advisor meet to a) identify a focus area of research, (b) describe how to review research (or direct the student to specific research to read), and (c) consider specific courses for a program of study	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
	Committee Formation / SCAF	The student will be assigned a committee, and then notified of the assignments. The GPC will submit the Supervisory Committee Approval Form (SCAF) on the student's behalf.	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
	Program of Study	GPC will prompt student to work with advisor to finalize program of study. The student will enter the plan into DegreeWorks and notify GPC. GPC checks the plan and submits to the Grad School.	Before end of 1st year or Summer after 1st year
	Scheduling Proposal Meeting	Advisor prompts student to arrange proposal meeting. Student polls committee members to set date and time for proposal meeting. Student informs GPC of date and time, and asks for assistance in scheduling room if necessary. Student emails committee members with confirmation of date, time and location, and then emails reminder of proposal meeting with date, time and location to committee members and GPC about a week before meeting.	2nd year - 4-6 weeks before meeting
	Proposal Title Page	Student creates and sends to GPC; GPC checks and returns to student. Student prints 2 copies for proposal meeting.	4-6 weeks before meeting
	Proposal Manuscript	Student emails draft of manuscript for proposal to all committee members.	2 weeks before meeting
	Preparation for Proposal Meeting & Presentation	Advisor and student meet to discuss meeting format, processes, and outcomes. Advisor directs the student to prepare a 20 min presentation of no more than 10-15 slides. The slide presentation should be developed with the assumption that all committee members are well-versed having read the proposal.	About 1 week before meeting
	Proposal Meeting / Title Page Signatures	Student proposes the research to the committee (focusing on research literature, rationale for study, justification, research questions, method, etc.). Committee members query the student on all aspects of the study. If approved, committee signs title page and student keeps copy for IRB application.	At meeting
	IRB Application / Approval	Student and advisor (IRB refers to "Principal Investigator") complete IRB application. Principal Investigator submits application with approved draft of manuscript and signed title page. Student and advisor interact with IRB by responding to queries about research. Advisor (Principal Investigator) must resubmit protocol with changes. IRB approves protocol.	After successful proposal - takes 2-4 months on average
	<a href="#">Thesis Proposal Form</a>	GPC prompts student to fill out Thesis Proposal Approval (TPA) form in ServiceNow	After successful proposal & IRB approval
	Scheduling Defense Meeting	Student polls committee to set date and time for defense meeting. Student contacts GPC to reserve room. Student informs GPC of date, time and location. Student emails committee with confirmation of date, time and location. <b>Note: Graduate Studies sends out notice of defense meeting with date, time and location to student, committee and GPC about a week before meeting</b>	About 4-6 weeks before Defense Meeting
	<a href="#">Appointment for Examination Form</a>	GPC contacts student to complete when student notifies her of date, time and location of defense meeting. Student submits form via ServiceNow.	4-6 weeks before defense meeting - a <b>minimum of 10 business days before meeting</b>
	Defense Meeting	Student defends, focusing on research questions, any modifications requested by the committee in the proposal meeting, method section (especially any changes since the proposal meeting), results, conclusions, and implications of the research. If student successfully defends, committee notifies GPC. GPC fills out Record of Examination form & submits to Grad School.	During/After Meeting
	Graduate Studies "Next Steps" email	When Grad School receives student's Record of Examination, student receives email with "next steps." Student follows them with guidance of GPC.	After successful defense

Faculty contact information appears on the [master's website](#) and on all syllabi. Prior to COVID-19, faculty placed high priority on meeting students in their work setting to discuss relevant concerns. Given the onset of the pandemic, visits to students in their work settings have been curtailed. Currently, students and faculty contact each other through synchronous online course discussion, individual online appointments, or email correspondence. Additionally, students are encouraged to use online information on the Master's Program website such as [Frequently Asked Questions](#), [current student resources](#), and a library of recently completed theses and creative projects (<https://sper.usu.edu/masters/sped/project-thesis-library>). Links from the Master's website include the [Utah State University Publication Guide](#), information about the proposal/defense process, a student checklist to track progress towards completion of the degree, and contact information for each faculty.

## **External Accreditation**

### **Assessable Outcomes**

Continuous data collection occurs on relevant outcomes, including (1) recruitment, (2) graduation, (3) faculty satisfaction with the programs, and (4) student satisfaction with the program. Master's program faculty participate in program evaluation and development in bi-monthly meetings.

### **Assessment Planning and Implementation**

At bi-monthly meetings, master's program faculty evaluate the status of each of four programs by sharing recruitment and admissions data, graduation rates, numbers of students remaining in programs, status of current student programs, status of courses being taught and future teaching schedules, and other matters. Minutes of meetings are communicated to master's program faculty. Beyond bi-monthly meetings, master's faculty remain in close contact with the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee and GPC regarding student queries, course schedules, recruitment opportunities, and other matters. The Department Head attends all bi-monthly meetings and oversees actions of the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee. On an annual basis, the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee submits a report detailing current data and future projections of assessable outcomes.

### **Results are Used**

Data on master's programs are generated for the purpose of making informed decisions. For example, in Spring 2021 and annually, surveys are conducted of current faculty and recently graduated students. In the 2021 student survey, results indicated that graduates were overwhelmingly positive about their experience within each program. Ratings of instruction, curriculum, advisement, and quality of assistance were rated "Excellent" by 75% of respondents on most items. However, ratings of the master's program website were relatively low. In response, during fall semester 2021, the website was refined and updated based on student feedback. In the faculty survey, five faculty respondents offered specific recommendations for master's programs going forward, including (a) consider ways to shorten the duration of coursework leading to completion of the master's degree, (b) improve the master's website as per recommendations, (c) improve advisement, (d) consider consolidating the undergraduate

and master's course on legal issues and policies into one course, (e) consider new master's program specializations given results of consumer surveys, and (f) explore personnel preparation and other grant sources to create funding streams for students to offset tuition costs.

### **Annual Feedback on Assessment**

After the Chairperson of the Master's Program Committee submits an annual report detailing current data and future projections of assessable outcomes, the master's faculty committee meets to provide data-based feedback and make recommendations for refinement of processes and outcomes.

### **Program Evaluation**

Evaluation of master's programs occurs at multiple stages, including (1) internal evaluation at the course level based on student evaluation; (2) internal evaluation based on master's faculty committee evaluation, and (3) external evaluation based on Board of Regents analysis of program processes and outcomes.

### **Data**

See program data at

<https://usu.app.box.com/file/740096781648?s=1oz1w1w3exkdy35ateishvn3av3fx3zr>

At the bottom left of the page, go to SPED Data Tables

### **Analysis of Currently Available Data**

The Data Tables show Faculty FTE, Faculty-student ratios, student credit hours (SCHs), SCHs per full-time equivalent faculty, Admissions, Completions, and Enrollment Trends. As shown, there are 18 full-time faculty in the department, including three full-time tenured, 14 full-time nontenured, and one part-time faculty. Of these faculty, eight teach master's-level courses (three tenured and five nontenured). The table presents data on the number of graduates over a 5-year period. The number of graduates has decreased from 32 in 2016-17 to 17 in 2019-20. These data are consistent with decreases in master's applications and admissions nationwide. Decreases are the result of changes in recruitment activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, in-person conferences are less prevalent and being replaced by online conferences. Second, whereas faculty had made frequent presentations to teachers in schools about applying to master's programs in the department, these events were occurring less frequently as school districts trimmed their faculty meetings, in-service training events, and professional learning community activities. The master's programs had relied on student inquiries and applications during in-person conferences. Faculty are currently exploring alternative methods of recruitment. For example, we anticipate that newly implemented policies, particularly a master's-plus-licensure option for special education students seeking licensure, will incentivize increased applications to the M.Ed and M.S. programs in the coming years. Table 1 shows the current Master's program students.

### **Table 1**

#### ***Active Master's Students in Each Program (2020-2021)***

Program Area	N
M.S. or M.Ed. in Special Education	7
Applied Behavior Analysis	23
ABA Coursework only (post-masters)	6
Administrative Supervisory Licensure	5
TOTAL	41

With 41 currently active students, Master's faculty FTE per student ( $41 \text{ students} \div 8 \text{ faculty} = 5.2$ ) indicates that faculty can provide intensive advisement and mentoring to individual students.

**Master's Program Self-Assessment.** In 2021, the Chairperson of the Master's Committee and master's program faculty conducted an assessment of all four programs using (1) an online survey of all master's program graduates over a 6-year period (2015-2020), and (2) an anonymous survey of Master's Program Faculty. Results of these evaluation activities are described below.

**Survey of Master's Program Graduates from 2015-2020 (see Appendix A).** A Qualtrics survey of graduates from master's programs between 2015-2020 consisted of 25 questions about the graduate's program, characteristics, and experiences. The survey was distributed to graduates using the last known email. Overall, 33 former students out of 51 total students responded (response rate = 65%). Survey responses, which were compiled by an independent source, appear in Appendix A. Generally, students were positive about their experience within each program. Ratings of instruction, curriculum, advisement, and quality of assistance (#13-14) were rated "Excellent" on a 4-point scale by 75% of respondents on most items. Ratings of activities carried out by the committee chairperson (#15) were highly variable and contextual. Ratings of the master's program website (#12) were relatively low. See a complete list of individual responses in Appendix A.

**Survey of Faculty, 2020: Department Self-Study (See Appendices B, C, and D).** Survey results are organized according to type of master's program (M.S. BCBA [ $n=2$ ], M.Ed or M.S. in special education [ $n=2$ ], or M.Ed in Administrative Supervisory Licensure [ $n=1$ ]). Faculty were asked to respond by identifying strengths and weaknesses/needs. Specific questions related to coursework, recruitment, and mentoring. Survey responses, compiled by an independent source, appear in Appendix B. The five faculty respondents identified strengths in each program area. One M.Ed or M.S. Special Education need was to conduct surveys of local education agencies, Utah State Board of Education, and teachers to identify recommendations, including new specializations. The respondent identified potential new specializations as "literacy & numeracy, MTSS, inclusive practices, etc." The respondent indicated that "having only a general-purpose program with no targeted concentrations of courses reduces that value of the program." Regarding recruitment, one respondent indicated "the most important things for recruitment is having a program that addresses needs perceived by teachers, funding to support teachers in the program. I would focus on these factors before putting a lot of energy into outreach activities." Another recommended "emailing past graduates of undergrad

program a year or two following their graduation years to advertise the program.” Regarding mentoring, respondents described their current efforts to work with master’s students.

**Faculty and Staff**

Eight faculty in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling teach master’s-level special education and behavior analysis courses, including

Kaitlin Bundock, Ph.D (Assistant Professor)

Summer Gunn, M.S. (Clinical Instructor)

Karen Hager, Ph.D (Assistant Professor)

Tom Higbee, Ph.D (Professor)

Ray Joslyn, Ph.D (Assistant Professor)

Robert L. Morgan, Ph.D (Professor)

Sarah Pinkelman, Ph.D (Assistant Professor)

Tim Slocum, Ph.D (Professor)

See faculty publications, teaching activity, and graduate students mentored at

<https://cehs.usu.edu/sperc/directory/index>

## Appendix A: Survey of Master's Program Graduates, 2015-2020

### Total Respondents Per Program

BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst)=11

SPED (Special Education)=5

ASL (Administrative Supervisory License)=2

Transition=15

Overall response rate=33 out of 51 (65%)

### 1. How long did the program take to complete?

BCBA - Range - 3-5 years, Average - 3.72 years

SPED - Range - 2-8 years, Average - 4 years

ASL - Range - 2-2 years, Average - 2 years

Transition - Range - 2-2 years, Average - 2 years\*

\*this program was funded by a federal grant providing student support. The program has since been discontinued.

### 2. Did you take any time off between beginning and finishing the program? If so, how many years?

BCBA - No = 10, Yes = 1 (1.5 years)

SPED - No = 4, Yes = 1 (5 years)

ASL - No = 2, Yes = 0

Transition - No =14, Yes = 1 (2 years)

### 3. How many years intervened from your bachelor's degree to entering the master's program?

BCBA - Range = 0-23 years, Average = 4.43 years

SPED - Range = 2-30 years, Average = 14 years

ASL - Range = 4-5 years, Average = 4.5 years

Transition - Range = 0-25 years, Average = 9.7 years

### 4. Current work location:

a) Preschool

BCBA = 3

b) Elementary School

SPED = 3

Transition = 1

c) Secondary School

SPED = 1

Transition = 5

d) College/postsecondary education program

BCBA = 1

SPED = 1

Transition = 4

e) Clinic

BCBA = 3

f) Not working at this time 0

g) Other

BCBA= 4 (public school district level, consulting, in home, provider agency)

ASL = 2 (K-8 school, district SpEd coordinator)

Transition = 5 (PhD student, community rehabilitation provider, district office, K-12, director of state board of education transition program)

## 5. Degree Completed:

a) M.Ed = 16

SPED = 4

ASL = 2

Transition = 10

b) MS = 17

BCBA = 11

SPED = 1

Transition = 5

## 6. Concentration

a) BCBA = 11

b) SPED = 5

c) ASL = 2

d) Transition = 15

## 7. Reasons for Seeking a Graduate Degree

a) Certification

BCBA = 9

SPED = 0

ASL = 2

Transition = 2

b) Self-Improvement

BCBA = 7

SPED = 4

ASL = 1

Transition = 14

c) Career Advancement

BCBA = 10

SPED = 3

ASL = 2

Transition = 11

d) Retraining / New Career = 0

e) Salary Increase

BCBA = 4

SPED = 2  
 ASL = 2  
 Transition = 10

f) Other

BCBA = 1 (cost)  
 SPED = 0  
 ASL = 0  
 Transition = 2 (better serve the students, area of internet - transition)

**8. Reasons for Enrolling at USU**

a) Program reputation

BCBA - 4  
 SPED - 4  
 ASL - 1  
 Transition - 14

b) Department reputation

BCBA - 3  
 SPED - 2  
 ASL - 1  
 Transition - 9

c) Faculty reputation

BCBA - 4  
 SPED - 1  
 ASL - 1  
 Transition - 8

d) Location

BCBA - 3  
 SPED - 3  
 ASL - 1  
 Transition - 5

e) Cost

BCBA - 3  
 SPED - 1  
 ASL - 0  
 Transition - 13

f) Other

BCBA - 3 (one of the few local BCBA program, availability, only program in UT at time)  
 SPED - 0  
 ASL - 1 (scholarship opportunities)  
 Transition - 3 (wanted to focus specifically on transition), 2 (grant for tuition/stipend)

**9. Did you complete your program as quickly as you planned?**

Yes

BCBA - 4 (40%)

SPED – 1 (50%)  
 ASL – 1 (50%)  
 Transition – 13 (87%)

No

BCBA – 6 (60%)  
 SPED – 1 (50%)  
 ASL – 1 (50%)  
 Transition – 2 (13%)

**10. If no, please check reasons for delay in program (click all that apply):**

- a) Lack of finances - 0
- b) Personal issues - 1
- c) Health issues - 1
- d) Balancing multiple priorities - 6
- e) Military duty - 0
- f) Program proved more difficult than expected - 0
- g) Poor advising - 3
- h) Other - 6 (thesis data collection, thesis taking longer than expected, advisor recommended retake of course, scheduled classes didn't allow for going faster - only taking one class some semesters and would have liked it to have only taken 2 years, class only offered once in awhile, didn't plan extra summer semester for project, finishing creative project)

**11. Regarding the program and the USU site where you took courses, please respond to the following items: (RATE EACH):**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>NA</u>
Ease of Registration	0	0	7	26	0
Ease of purchasing textbooks	0	1	7	23	2
Quality of onsite technical support	0	0	9	23	1
Onsite advising	0	3	5	22	3
General helpfulness	0	0	7	26	0

**12. SPED Master's Web Site (RATE EACH):**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>NA</u>
Quality of information	1	2	10	20	0
Ease of accessibility	0	2	11	20	0

Clarity of information	0	3	11	19	0
Accuracy of information	1	1	12	19	0

**13. Instruction, Curriculum, and Advisement (RATE EACH):**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>NA</u>
Teaching ability/effectiveness of faculty	0	0	5	28	0
Structure/planning of curriculum	0	2	9	22	0
Course demands on time and effort	0	2	8	23	0
Availability/accessibility of advisement	1	3	8	20	1
Department's interest/commitment to students	0	3	4	26	0

**14. Quality of Assistance (RATE EACH):**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>NA</u>
Committee Chairperson	1	2	5	25	0
Graduate Program Advisor	1	2	5	25	0
Graduate School Office	0	0	16	17	0
Library	0	0	8	22	3
Admissions Office	0	0	12	16	5
Registrar's Office	0	0	12	16	5
Financial Aid Office	0	2	8	12	11

**15. To What Extent Did Your Committee Chairperson (RATE EACH):**

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>NA</u>
Provide adequate information on requirements?	1	1	7	24	0
Check your work regularly and carefully?	0	2	6	25	0
Reinforce and encourage you in your training?	2	3	3	24	0

Inform you of required resources for your research?	1	1	6	25	0
Assist you in designing your research project?	1	2	4	26	0
Inform you of the proposal review process?	0	2	5	26	0
Inform you of requirements & deadlines?	0	1	7	25	0
Respond to written material in reasonable time?	0	3	5	25	0
Respond to emails and phone calls from you?	0	1	4	28	0
Assist with preparing for proposal and final defense?	1	2	3	27	0

**Feedback on all subsequent “open questions” are separated by semi-colons to reflect individual remarks:**

**16. Provide any suggestions for improving your chairperson's performance:**

BCBA - I was very pleased with this experience; incredible chairperson; don't have recommendations; quicker feedback on written drafts of thesis proposal - it was difficult to complete a thesis in a timely manner - especially given the additional IRB constraints I had working in a school district setting; more frequent check ins and encouragement; felt like I was the lower priority in terms of my chairperson's overall work responsibilities; had multiple chair people across the process due to staff changes and they all had different methods of supports - but the first two were hard to get a hold of and did not give a lot of support; increase engagement and hands on approach.

SPED - I didn't always like what I was advised at the time as University perspective and “real” practitioner life are not the same, but in retrospect, it was just what I needed and served me well; more timely response in beginning

ASL – Nothing; she did absolutely amazing!; He had retired, but he was excellent

Transition - Keep up the good work; He was so helpful, personable and approachable; I had a great experience with my chairperson, Dr. Bob Morgan was fantastic!; My chairperson was incredibly helpful and supportive; he was great (2); None (5)

**17. Regarding your master's program, what was your greatest satisfaction?**

BCBA - completion/finishing (3); my experiences and supervision on campus were wonderful. I loved getting to have experiences in different clinics, learning so much in a short amount of time. Also really liked that research was required. This was super helpful to cement the concepts we learned; overall I had a great research experience; I had access to several knowledgeable faculty who helped me facilitate and complete my research project; the skills I left with

SPED - I didn't always like what I was advised at the time as University perspective and "real" practitioner life are not the same but in retrospect it was just what I needed and served me well; more timely response in beginning

ASL – Nothing; she did absolutely amazing!; He had retired, but he was excellent

Transition - Keep up the good work; He was so helpful; personable and approachable; I had a great experience with my chairperson, Dr. Bob Morgan was fantastic!; My chairperson was incredibly helpful and supportive; he was great (2); None (5)

**18. Regarding your master's program, what was your greatest dissatisfaction?**

BCBA - I would prefer supervision start sooner and thesis planning begin sooner; I would have liked a course on supervision and staff performance; working with the university IRB; changing requirements while in the program; lack of support - until the end, my last year I had great support; inconsistent information regarding what program would provide; time it took (2)

SPED - mentoring opportunities to connect our research to professional publications; several in our cohort have mentioned we see less quality work published in research and field journals; how long it took; had to wait for classes to be offered; I was frustrated that I couldn't take more classes in the summer when I had the most time off teaching

ASL - classes that did not apply to my program

Transition - I had one class/instructor that I didn't like or find very valuable; when the stress load from work and school got too much and I almost gave up - one semester the workload was unbearable; courses taught by rehabilitation counselors tended to not be as engaging or well-paced; the lack of clarity when classes switched professors last minute; the systems change class focused too much on PBIS rather than exploring strategies to implementing systems changes; maybe that I missed having the in person experiences since I was at the distance site in Salt Lake; None/Not sure (4)

**19. Regarding the master's program, identify the greatest strength(s):**

BCBA - great information, very relevant to real like application; great supervision provided to master's students while in the program; curriculum and hands on learning; good content, professors/supervisors/faculty (3)

SPED - research based, current; network opportunities; rigorous preparation; quality education; quality staff that know what they are talking about and have experiences to share

ASL - they are able to meet the individual needs of the students and their current circumstances; they also provide material that can be applied immediate within the work environment, the faculty

Transition - instructors and the way they care about their students and people with disabilities; program preparation; excellent teaching; personal attention from advisor and committee chairperson; prepares students for research; ease of remote locations; everyone was so supportive and I came away with a significant increase in knowledge and skill; feedback and advising from professors; professors/advisors (2); application to my job/real life (3); quality of content (3)

**20. Regarding the master's program, identify the most glaring weakness(s):**

BCBA - the pace is almost exclusively for working professionals, I was stuck to the course timelines and could not advance as quickly as I would have liked; I think one area that could be strengthened is discussing cultural humility in more depth; BCBA changed requirements and it felt a little disorganized for a semester as to what would be expected of us; we also had to find our own supervision at the end because of the requirement changes and house were not provided soon enough from the department; difficulty finishing requirements in the stated amount of time; things we more disorganized at the beginning but got better as new faculty were introduced; low support; lack of consistent support and mentorship during theses project; none

SPED - the opportunity to complete an administrative credential was not offered as part of the program - significant weakness for the level of rigor and preparation to contribute provided by the program; would have been an option more than one of us would have considered and could have advanced with; when classes are offered and how to fill out IRB info - I felt like I had no idea how to fill everything out and I had to ask a ton of questions; none

ASL - planning of required course offerings; through no fault of my own I missed a course offering and had to wait almost two years to take it

Transition - one teacher who I had a hard time learning from; None (9)

**21. Has the master's program positively affected your career? Yes (33)**

**22. If yes, in what ways?**

BCBA - given more opportunities for advancement and growth; met the requirements for the certification I needed; professional practice; level of expertise; general quality of life; confidence; my clinical licensure is integral to my role as an executive in the disability care industry; better pay; better at handling behavior in classrooms and assisting/training teachers with difficult students; I moved into a PhD program and have been able to continue my graduate school education; I am more effective in my job; credential has afforded credibility; increased salary; giving me more experiences and better access to furthering my career

SPED – network; leadership; rigor to standards; I have learned strategies that make me a better teacher; I feel like I also understand the whole education picture better; I feel more knowledge in many ways about SPED and leadership roles

ASL - new job; pay raise; professional skills; it has allowed me to accept a position where I will have greater impact on the SpEd department for my school district

Transition - changed the focus of my career; led me to a position that I love; assisted with career advancement; greater knowledge of transition has provided me with greater perspective in all aspects of my career from working with preschool students through post-high age students; my knowledge level; the strength I have in being calm while dealing with challenging situations; the knows I have working with people and programs in transition; after I finished, I moved out of state and worked at the state level as a specialist and coordinator - I am now a district administrator and have begun

a doctoral degree; greater knowledge to inform my work in transition; greater writing and analytical abilities that I apply to my work daily; it has helped me become more confident in how I include my students in the IEP education process; I have learned many strategies to help my transition students; I have a new job working in postsecondary education that deals specifically with transition and I love it; better able to support my students; I implemented a lot of new teaching strategies and resources to better prepare my students and parents for the transition process; able to help/assist/mentor colleagues and staff (4); better transition teacher (2)

**23. Has the master's program negatively affected your career? No (33)**

**24. If yes, in what way? No responses**

**25. How could the program be improved? We will use your feedback to strengthen the program, so please be specific.**

BCBA - I know that things have already been improved since my time in the program, but maybe creating more reasonable timelines and supports for students-especially during the thesis. I'm not sure if my feedback would be current; I finished the majority of my coursework in 2015; Overall it was a good program and experience; Perhaps facilitating more 1:1 support and guidance for distance learning students by assigning an adviser within the first semester; Overall, I had a wonderful experience with my master's program; The program could benefit from more clear communication regarding research and final project expectations; Because the expectations were a little unclear, it was difficult for me to get the project done within a reasonable time frame; I would like to see a course on supervision. Although supervision was addressed in one of the course, it was very brief

SPED - This program is definitely not for those who wish to finish a degree during their prep-time (I had 2 in my department who did that at the same time I did mine - The experiences were not even close to being the same); Adding Optional Mentoring to publish our projects/theses; You can never have too many examples of how the principles learned apply to actual educational situations; Specifics on how to actually fill out IRB application; They wanted very specific information that I had not been exposed to

ASL - carefully plan offerings and make students aware of the classes they need when; Student Program Planning; Keep providing possible ways for people to receive scholarships; I probably wouldn't have been able to complete my last year if it wasn't for the scholarship I received through USU

Transition - Look at the workload of each semester and distribution classes appropriately; Transition program-Rehabilitation counseling courses offered valuable content, but instructors were not as strong as those who taught SPED courses; I thought it was well planned and effective - I hope it continues; The transition emphasis was invaluable; More explicit recruiting and marketing on the website; I felt that there were too many behavior classes; None/can't think of anything (2)

## Appendix B: Master's Program Self-Study, Department Faculty Survey Data, BCBA Faculty

The self-study is organized to elicit faculty feedback regarding one graduate degree program. Be specific in your feedback. To ensure anonymous feedback, please email the completed survey to [Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu](mailto:Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu) who will copy/paste your responses to a template and eliminate identifying information.

### Check one:

- M.S. BCBA (n=2)**  
 **M.Ed or M.S. Special Education**  
 **M.Ed Admin Supervisory Licensure**

### Strengths and Needs

What do you consider the core strengths of this graduate degree program?

- The BCBA program keeps student numbers at a sustainable level.
- We have historically had excellent certification exam pass rates, the program is flexible and allows for students who work full time to be successful

What do you consider the primary needs to achieve and advance the purpose/mission of this degree program?

- Increase numbers in other specializations; find/provide master's funding to incentivize, maybe through training grants; consider different specialization areas that best match current funding priorities and community needs;
- Promoting on-campus, full time students to enter the program with funded positions could increase the presence of the program on campus and improve application rates for the doctoral program
- Students have mentioned wanting to have more faculty teaching in the sequence – if we were able to do that it might improve the reputation of the sequence

Courses: What changes do you recommend in coursework associated with this degree program?

- Depends on if we provide different specializations
- None – it is pretty tightly restricted by the certification board so we don't have a ton of flexibility.

**Recruitment refers to faculty and student activities designed to encourage individuals to pursue master's degrees in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at USU**

What recruiting strategies are you currently using?

- Networks, any contact with undergrads
- I correspond with colleagues and interested students to encourage applications.

How many students have entered the master's program associated with your recruitment?

- Unsure
- 1

How effective are these recruitment strategies?

- Unsure
- Not very, the program has few full-time on campus students

How do you evaluate recruiting effectiveness?

- Enrollment numbers as a vague proxy measure
- Students who come to the program due to specific recruitment activities

What would be required to be more effective in recruiting students for this graduate degree program?

- Depends on specialization; BCBA program could be advertised through national/international and local ABA chapters
- I don't know of many deliberate recruitment activities that USU engages in for the BCBA master's program. In-state recruitment could consist of more aggressive postings and emails containing fliers and resources. Strong full-time student recruitment would likely require more aggressive contact with undergraduate mentors nationally.

**Mentoring includes faculty activities designed to increase student future preparation, scholarly development, professional community participation, appreciation for diversity, and collaborative opportunities**

What mentoring strategies are you currently using?

- I mentor students through their theses primarily and help them decide interests and topics through discussion meetings and reading assignments. Then we work through the protocol process by corresponding and working on the document together.

How effective are these mentoring strategies?

- So far they seem effective, but I haven't walked anyone through the entire process yet.
- See above

How do you evaluate mentoring effectiveness?

What would be required to be more effective in mentoring students for graduate degree programs?

- It might be nice to have students get on a specific timeline for theses that is provided

by the department. As it is, the advisor is largely responsible for keeping students on track and may be more prone to delay. General Dept. deadlines might help faculty and students stay on track with a timeline.

## Appendix C: Master's Program Self-Study, Department Faculty Survey Data, M.Ed Faculty

The self-study is organized to elicit faculty feedback regarding one graduate degree program. Be specific in your feedback. To ensure anonymous feedback, please email the completed survey to [Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu](mailto:Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu) who will copy/paste your responses to a template and eliminate identifying information.

The self-study is organized into questions regarding the overall nature of each graduate degree program and the critical components.

### Check one:

M.S. BCBA

M.Ed or M.S. Special Special Education (n=2)

M.Ed Admin Supervisory Credential

### Strengths and Needs

What do you consider the core strengths of this graduate degree program?

- Access to exceptional research faculty to support development of thesis and projects
- Ability to apply licensure coursework toward master's degree
- Web-delivered
- Supports teachers conducting research in their own classrooms
- High quality coursework
- High quality theses/projects

What do you consider the primary needs to achieve and advance the purpose/mission of this degree program?

- Opportunity for specialization clearly articulated and supported with coursework.
- Obtain funding for students
- Admit more students
- Offer classes more frequently (which would require admitting more students ☺)
- Develop an initial cert + master's program that requires fewer additional credits
- Need to establish tracks/concentrations/specializations that directly address needed skillsets for teachers. E.g., literacy & numeracy, MTSS, inclusive practices, etc. Having only a general-purpose program with no targeted concentrations of courses reduces that value of the program. To the degree possible, these concentrations should lead to career advancement opportunities. There are several data sources that could contribute to identifying areas of concentration:
  - Ask what is NOT covered in sufficient depth in our UG program.

- Survey (a) teachers, (b) SPED Directors, (c) USBE on what teachers need and want in advanced training. Ask what teachers are concentrations are most likely to make them enroll. Ask Directors and USBE what they would *support*.

**Courses: What changes do you recommend in coursework associated with this degree program?**

- Consider what additional course offerings may be appealing to potential master's students. Consider cross disciplinary collaborations that may support depth in knowledge and provide offerings to other department master's level programs.
- Look at the legal issues course at the master's and undergraduate level and determine what competencies should be achieved at each. Can one count for the other or should there be two separate courses?
- See note above – if the only thing that transfers from OPTT to a master's program is the 12 electives [12 credits], we are not likely to get many apps via this route. Consider additional requirements for some licensure courses to take the place of some master's program courses.
- Develop concentrations of courses that address areas of competence that are needed by teachers and LEAs.
- Consider bringing some of the OPTT approach into the SPED Master's courses. How much can the courses use and build on SPED teachers' (our students') daily experiences and practices?

**Recruitment refers to faculty and student activities designed to encourage individuals to pursue master's degrees in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at USU**

What recruiting strategies are you currently using?

- I currently do no recruitment.
- Have not actively recruited.
- Word of mouth.
- Booths at some state conferences related to special education
- Recruitment of OPTT students during their program.

How many students have entered the master's program associated with your recruitment?

- Unknown

How effective are these recruitment strategies?

- Poor (our numbers are very low)

How do you evaluate recruiting effectiveness?

- Unknown

What would be required to be more effective in recruiting students for this graduate degree program?

- Regular contact with LEA's in a systematic distribution of recruitment materials

- One idea is to offer free webinars (via Zoom) on topics of interest to inservice teachers and recruit those that attend.
- By far, the most important things for recruitment is
  - having a program that addresses needs perceived by teachers,
  - funding to support teachers in the program.
 I would focus on these factors before putting a lot of energy into outreach activities.

**Mentoring includes faculty activities designed to increase student future preparation, scholarly development, professional community participation, appreciation for diversity, and collaborative opportunities**

What mentoring strategies are you currently using?

- Identified advisory and committee
- Regular zoom meetings with students I chair

How effective are these mentoring strategies?

- The advisor advisee relationship can be successful if they are well matched. Committee members with matched interests are recruited to participate in the proposal and defense process.

How do you evaluate mentoring effectiveness?

- Student progress through thesis/project; quality of thesis/project
- Review years to completion?

What would be required to be more effective in mentoring students for graduate degree programs?

- Additional hours in the day 😊
- unknown

## Appendix D: Master's Program Self-Study, Department Faculty Survey Data, ASC Faculty

The self-study is organized to elicit faculty feedback regarding one graduate degree program. Be specific in your feedback. To ensure anonymous feedback, please email the completed survey to [Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu](mailto:Caroline.Bressler@usu.edu) who will copy/paste your responses to a template and eliminate identifying information.

### Check one:

M.S. BCBA

M.Ed or M.S. Special Special Education

M.Ed Admin Supervisory Credential (n=1)

### Strengths and Needs

What do you consider the core strengths of this graduate degree program?

- Provides students interested in both administrative roles and special education a pathway to gain expertise and skills
- Internship hours, combined with special ed creative project/thesis provides a well-rounded program
- Not much difficulty with determining specific courses to fill elective hours, because there isn't room for many additional classes beyond those required by both programs

What do you consider the primary needs to achieve and advance the purpose/mission of this degree program?

- Develop a smoother process for advising between the two programs. Students have gotten incorrect information in the past, which has led to issues.
- Determine courses between the two programs that overlap content to a large degree; there are some on the program guide that are somewhat redundant. Reducing the total credit hours for required courses could open up room for additional electives, which may be appealing to some students
- Evaluate specific semesters when different courses are offered, to ensure that it is realistic/feasible for students to complete the program in 4 semesters (with additional grace semester for finishing thesis/creative project edits)

Courses: What changes do you recommend in coursework associated with this degree program?

- Review required courses to ensure that there is not redundancy in content between the admin supervisory license and special ed courses.
- Evaluate specific semesters when different courses are offered, to ensure that it is realistic/feasible for students to complete the program in 4 semesters (with additional grace semester for finishing thesis/creative project edits)

**Recruitment refers to faculty and student activities designed to encourage individuals to pursue master's degrees in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at USU**

What recruiting strategies are you currently using?

- I talk to current on-campus undergraduate students about pursuing a master's degree, and encourage them to do so.
- I talk to current OPTT students and encourage them to pursue a master's degree, especially given that we have created a pathway for OPTT + masters

How many students have entered the master's program associated with your recruitment?

- Two students

How effective are these recruitment strategies?

- Somewhat effective; there is a time-lag reflected in the strategy of encouraging current undergraduate students to pursue a master's degree, since it is generally recommended that they teach for one or two years prior to starting a master's program.
- These strategies have limited reach

How do you evaluate recruiting effectiveness?

- Number of students who enter the program directly as a result of these recruitment strategies

What would be required to be more effective in recruiting students for this graduate degree program?

- Advertising/marketing the program at different local conferences & education events
- Emailing past graduates of undergrad program a year or two following their graduation years to advertise the program

**Mentoring includes faculty activities designed to increase student future preparation, scholarly development, professional community participation, appreciation for diversity, and collaborative opportunities**

What mentoring strategies are you currently using?

- I meet with my master's advisees (over Zoom) on a regular basis (typically every other week), to provide advice, support, and guidance.
- I meet with master's advisees (over Zoom) in their creative project/thesis stage more frequently (typically once a week) to discuss proposal development, review written feedback I have provided, oversee data collection, and provide additional guidance and support.

- I meet with master's advisees leading up to and following their final defense, to review written feedback I have provided, advise them in how to prepare and/or address edits, and guide them in navigating the final steps of their program
- I provide students with frequent written feedback on each stage of their proposal development, IRB protocol draft, and final project write-up.
- I am responsive to emails and encourage students to email when they need support or guidance.

#### How effective are these mentoring strategies?

- I think these methods (frequent meetings, written feedback, email responsiveness) are highly effective. I have had very positive relationships with my advisees, and they do not hesitate to contact me when they have questions or need additional support. Students have told me that they appreciate my written feedback, guidance provided in meetings, and general support. I have a 100% degree completion rate for the advisees I have had in this program (2/2), and one of these advisees completed her degree within 4 semesters (with a grace semester to finish post-defense edits and submit to the library).

#### How do you evaluate mentoring effectiveness?

- Student satisfaction with mentorship provided
- Students' program completion rate
- Time that it takes students to complete program

#### What would be required to be more effective in mentoring students for graduate degree programs?

- I think more guidance/support could be provided to students related to which courses they should complete and in which semesters