



Mary Lou Fulton
Teachers College
Arizona State
University

Master of Arts in Special Education
(Autism Spectrum Disorders)
Student Handbook
2023–24 Academic Year

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Introduction

Master of Arts degree in Special Education (Autism Spectrum Disorders)

The [Master of Arts in Special Education \(Autism Spectrum Disorders\)](#) equips individuals with specialized skills and knowledge to work effectively with children and adults impacted by autism.

The steady rise in the number of those affected by autism has caused a public demand for professionals who are aware of the unique perspectives and needs of these individuals, their families and service providers. Our graduates will be well prepared to provide important services and care for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, as educators, interventionists, psychologists, speech pathologists, behavior analysts or family members.

Each student completes a practicum customized to their individual interests. The program culminates with the creation of a portfolio or applied project that demonstrates analysis and synthesis of material learned in the master's program and evidence of competency in the seven Council for Exceptional Children autism standards.

This program does not lead to Arizona teacher certification. All courses are online.

Students interested in sitting for the national Board Certified Behavior Analyst exam should apply to the [Master of Arts in Special Education \(Applied Behavior Analysis concentration\)](#).

Non-Arizona residents, please refer to the [ASU Online State Authorization Information page](#) for additional information.

Purpose of the handbook

This handbook provides guidance and information related to admission, program requirements, and general policies and procedures. Please note that in some cases you will find differences between program policies and requirements and ASU's Graduate College policies and procedures. In these cases, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College has established higher standards. Policies and procedures are subject to change. Changes will be communicated to students through email. Any updates to this handbook can be found on the [program website](#).

Admission

Admission to the [MA in Special Education \(ASD\)](#) program is offered for the fall, spring and summer semesters. Completed admission files are reviewed and admission decisions are made on a rolling basis. Space may be limited; therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply and have all application materials on file with ASU on or before any posted deadlines.

Quick facts

- Campus location: Online
- Start terms: Fall Sessions A and B, Spring Sessions A and B, Summer Session A
- Time to completion: This program can be completed in five semesters (fall, spring, summer), which equates to approximately 1.5 calendar years, provided you follow the prescribed course sequence
- Application deadlines: [Graduate Program Application Deadlines](#) (See [Academic Calendar](#) for session dates)

Contacts

For admission information, contact EnrollmentOnline@asu.edu. Current students, please contact your assigned academic advising team, listed on your My ASU page. If you do not know who your advisor is, contact the [MLFTC Office of Academic and Career Success](#) at 602-543-6358 or GraduateEducation@asu.edu.

Graduate admission requirements

ASU maintains *minimum* standards for consideration for admission to graduate programs. The program may establish requirements in excess of those established by the university.

- An earned bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution in the U.S., or the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from an international institution officially recognized by that country.
- Maintain a B (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) grade point average in the last 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of undergraduate coursework. If you do not meet the minimum GPA requirements, your application may still be considered.
- An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of [English proficiency](#) regardless of their current residency.

Academic program admission requirements

In addition to the graduate admission requirements, the program requires the following as part of the application:

Personal statement — Responses to short-answer questions provide the admission committee with information regarding your personal or professional goals and how they align with the MA in Special Education (ASD). The admission committee pays particular attention to the quality of writing and ideas expressed in these responses, as well as evaluating the relevance of goals to the aims of the program. Please respond to three of the four questions below. Responses should be limited to 150–200 words per question. The statement should be prepared in an MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf), Portable Document Format (.pdf), or Text (.txt) file format.

- Describe one or more personal or professional goals that motivate you to apply for this program. How will completion of the MA in Special Education (ASD) program help you fulfill this/these goals?
- Describe a quality you believe is critical to working with an individual with special needs and at least one situation in which you have demonstrated this quality.
- Describe an individual with special needs and how you supported them.
- Briefly discuss why you are interested in pursuing a graduate degree at this time. What steps have you taken, or will you take, to ensure that you will be successful in the program?

Three professional references — Provide the names, email addresses and institutions or companies of individuals who will submit electronic letters of recommendation. They should be individuals who have worked with you in professional or academic capacities, and who can attest to your aptitude in this field and your ability to succeed at graduate-level coursework.

Resume that includes relevant personal, professional, educational and community activities (one to two pages). The resume should be prepared in an MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf), Portable Document Format (.pdf), or Text (.txt) file format.

Provisional acceptance guidelines

Applicants who do not meet the GPA criteria for admission but have otherwise strong applications may be considered for provisional admission by the committee. This status provides the academic unit with an opportunity to better evaluate the student's academic potential. Students are notified of the provisional requirements in the admission notice from the college.

Most provisions must be completed within the first semester of enrollment. When students have satisfied the provisional requirements, they should confirm with their academic advisor that a change of status has been recommended. Students with provisional admission are not eligible to submit an interactive Plan of Study — the iPOS — until the conditions of admission have been satisfied.

Graduate Admission Services will withdraw students who have not met the provisions of their admission within the required time frame from the degree program.

Preadmission credit policy

With the approval of the degree program and the ASU Graduate College, students may include a maximum of 12 graduate-level credit hours with grades of B or better that were not used toward a previous degree. Preadmission credits must have been taken within three years of admission to the ASU degree program to be accepted. The complete preadmission credit policy can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

Tuition cost and financial aid

Tuition and fees

Tuition is set by ASU and the Arizona Board of Regents each year. [View the general tuition and fees schedule](#), or calculate a more specific estimate of charges using the [ASU Tuition Estimator](#). Most online courses carry mandatory fees in addition to tuition and other university fees.

Online tuition for resident students is capped at 11 credits for graduate students. Online tuition for nonresident students is billed per credit hour with no cap.

Financial assistance

Financial aid is available through a variety of sources. Please note that graduate certificate programs may not be eligible for fellowships, scholarships or other funding sources.

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College scholarships and fellowships

MLFTC offers a number of fellowship and scholarship opportunities for students. Information about these opportunities can be found on the [MLFTC website](#).

Opportunities available include:

- Mary Ann Graham Johnston Memorial Scholarship
- Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship

Graduate college fellowships

The Graduate College offers a number of fellowships to graduate students at ASU. Information about fellowship opportunities can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

Opportunities available include:

- Coverdell Fellowship for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
- Graduate College Fellowship
- Completion Fellowship

Financial aid

For information about financial aid related to this program, visit the [Financial Aid website](#). Disclosure information on the U.S. Department of Education Gainful Employment Program is [available here](#).

ASU payment plan

If tuition is not paid by the applicable tuition due date, or financial aid is not awarded and accepted by the due date, you will be automatically enrolled in the [ASU payment plan](#) and charged a nonrefundable enrollment fee.

Curriculum and graduation requirements

Program requirements

Students in the MA in Special Education (ASD) program complete 30 credits of graduate coursework, including a culminating experience. Courses in this program are offered in a predetermined sequence that includes summer terms. Summer enrollment may be necessary to complete program requirements.

The course sequence is based on the session in which you begin the program. Your academic advising team will provide you with the appropriate course sequence upon admission to the program. *If you take a course out of sequence, your time to degree completion or financial aid eligibility may be affected as not all courses are offered every session.*

Students complete one course per session, with six sessions offered each year. Course sequences are found on the [MLFTC Graduate Student Resources](#) site.

Program of study

Required core (3 credits)

SPE 525	Measurement, Data Display and Interpretation, Experimental Design	3
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Required concentration (15 credits)

SPE 521	Foundations of Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
SPE 540	Family-Centered Practices	3
SPE 541	Consultation Frameworks and Issues	3
SPE 566	Applied Behavior Analysis in Inclusive Settings	3
SPE 680	Practicum	3

Elective or research (9 credits) — *Select three*

SPE 520	Verbal Behavior	3
SPE 527	Behavior Analytic Assessment	3
SPE 560	Behavior Change Procedures: Implementing Interventions in Behavior Analysis	3
SPE 564	Controversial Therapies; Science, Fad, and Pseudoscience in Educational Settings	3
SPE 565	Behavior Change Systems	3
SPE 567	Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis	3
SPE 568	Behavior Assessment	3
SPE 598	Special Topics	3

Culminating experience (3 credits) — *Select one*

SPE 597	Capstone	3
SPE 593	Applied Project	3

Curriculum and tuition for all programs is subject to change based on ABOR and ADE updates.

Practicum

In the required practicum, students apply theoretical and practical information presented throughout their coursework in the ASD concentration in a real-world setting. The practicum provides the student with experiences and support for applying new skills as they continue to grow and evolve as qualified professionals. Students complete a minimum of 45 direct-contact hours of approved activities under the supervision of an on-site supervisor and the guidance of an ASU instructor.

Students arrange their own placements so they can best meet their personal and professional goals. ASU students are expected to complete practicum requirements in a geographic area appropriate for their needs. Students in the ASD concentration work with their on-site supervisor to design, deliver and evaluate practices while working with an individual or individuals with ASD. As part of the associated coursework, students submit a list of anticipated activities and other assignments to the ASU instructor for review and feedback.

An on-site supervisor assists the ASU student in determining appropriate activities and the sequence for those activities, while an ASU instructor provides guidance and feedback on the activities through electronic means.

Culminating experience

Two options are available, based on personal and professional interest and need.

The capstone option is based on all coursework taken over the 30 hours of the program. Through examination of each assignment or project, preparation of a professional digital archive, and a written paper, students demonstrate analysis and synthesis of material learned in the master's program and evidence of competency in the Council for Exceptional Children Advanced Knowledge and Skill Set for Developmental Disabilities–Autism Specialist.

The applied project option provides students pursuing professional careers in the field of autism spectrum disorders an opportunity to prepare a supervised applied project. As part of the applied project, students learn more about the research process and create their own research project, collecting and interpreting their own data.

Students must earn a grade of B or higher in the culminating experience course.

Interactive Plan of Study

All ASU graduate students are required to complete and submit a plan of study online through the [My ASU interactive Plan of Study](#). Students are required to submit their iPOS during their first semester. Students without an approved iPOS on file prior to completing 50% of the coursework required for the program will receive a hold.

Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment with their MLFTC advising team to discuss their plan of study and how to complete the iPOS. After submitting the iPOS, your advising team will approve it. The Graduate College has final approval over all iPOS submissions.

When evaluating your iPOS, your advising team will check to ensure all required coursework is included as part of your plan and that you are planning to take courses in the appropriate sequence/order. Your advising team will send your iPOS back to you for revision if it is incorrect.

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Professional Conduct Policy

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures listed in the MLFTC Satisfactory Academic Progress and Professional Conduct policies, and understand Graduate College policies related to academic progress found on the [Graduate College Policies, Forms and Deadlines website](#). This is not a complete representation of the [current SAPPC policy](#), which includes policies and procedures regarding academic progress, professional experiences, and appeals and grievances. Students are expected to read and understand the policy in its entirety.

To remain in good standing in Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress consisting of both academic performance and adherence to MLFTC's Professionalism Standards. This document sets forth the standards and expectations for "satisfactory academic progress" and "good standing" for undergraduate and graduate students and explains the consequences of failure to meet these standards.

In addition to the policies stated herein, students are expected to abide by applicable ASU and Arizona Board of Regents policies, including the [Student Code of Conduct](#), the ASU Academic Integrity Policy, ASU Graduate College Policies and Procedures (for graduate students), as well as all policies, procedures, rules, regulations and requirements established by the local education agency, school district and/or school in which they are engaged in field experience or residency. Failure to do so may lead to consequences that include dismissal from the program and expulsion from the university. Graduate students should also refer to the [ASU Graduate College website](#) for further information about ASU Graduate College policies.

Title IX

ASU prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. [Read ASU's Title IX policy](#). Title IX protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. As required by Title IX, ASU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities operated by the university, including in admission and employment. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary, or both. Contact TitleIXcoordinator@asu.edu or 480-965-0696 for more information. The Title IX office is located at 1120 S. Cady Mall, INTDSB 284. For information on making a report, visit ASU's [Report It! page](#).

Student responsibility

All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by university and program policies and procedures. Visit the following websites for policy and procedure information:

- [ASU Graduate College policy manuals](#)
- [ASU Graduate College Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College student forms and policies](#)

Student email

Email is a primary form of communication between MLFTC and students in the program. Students are expected to check their ASU student email account regularly to ensure timely receipt of information from faculty and staff.

Harassment

ASU is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation for the entire university community. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment and retaliation by employees, students, contractors or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and genetic information. [More information on ASU's policy on discrimination, harassment, and retaliation](#)

Academic integrity

Integrity is a character-driven commitment to honesty, doing what is right and guiding others to do what is right. ASU students and faculty are expected to act with integrity in their educational pursuits.

The ASU student [Academic Integrity Policy](#) lists violations in detail. These violations fall into five broad areas that include but are not limited to:

- Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment
- Plagiarizing
- Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information
- Aiding academic integrity policy violations and inappropriately collaborating
- Falsifying academic records

Student Code of Conduct

The [ASU Student Code of Conduct](#) sets forth the standards expected of students who choose to join the university community. Students who violate these standards will be subject to disciplinary sanctions to promote their own personal development, to protect the university community and to maintain order and stability on campus. All students are likewise expected to adhere to the [Arizona Board of Regents Student Code of Conduct](#).

[Complete resources regarding policies related to the ASU Student Code of Conduct](#)

Graduate College and graduate student responsibilities

Graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with all university and graduate policies and procedures. Each student should also communicate directly with their academic unit to be clear on its expectations for program completion.

Information is provided to students via My ASU. Students should frequently check their My ASU page for the most up-to-date information regarding their status, holds, items to attend to and other important information.

The Graduate College establishes policies that are consistent for all graduate students throughout the university. These policies include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining continuous enrollment
- Completion of the interactive Plan of Study
- Maximum time limit for completing degrees
- Preadmission credit
- Academic progress
- Graduate degree requirements

Students are responsible for understanding the policies set by the Graduate College. Complete policies and procedures for graduate students can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

Policies and procedures

Registration and drop/add Policies

All students are required to have proof of measles immunizations on file with [Student Health](#) prior to registration. Graduate students register through My ASU according to their enrollment appointment.

Complete details regarding registration and course drop/add procedures are provided in the [Registration and Tuition Payment Guide](#).

Enrollment verification guidelines

The University Registrar's Office will verify student enrollment each semester. Full-time and half-time credit requirements can be found at [Enrollment and degree verification](#).

Note for students in online programs: Typical enrollment in MLFTC online master's degree programs is six credits per semester. This is generally considered half time for enrollment verification purposes. Students beginning online programs in B sessions typically register for three credits in the first term, which is considered less than half time. Typical enrollment in graduate certificate programs is 3–6 credits per semester.

Maximum course load

MLFTC provides recommended course sequences for all graduate programs to guide students in their registration each term. Students are encouraged to follow the course sequence for their program or to discuss any alterations with an academic advisor. Course sequences are developed with program progression and student success in mind. The Graduate College does not mandate a maximum course load for graduate students. Anything in excess of 18 semester credit hours requires override approval.

Some MLFTC programs restrict the number of credit hours students may take within their academic program. Please consult your academic advisor if you have questions about your course sequence or the number of credits you may take in any given term.

Continuous enrollment

Once admitted to a graduate degree or graduate certificate program, students must be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, conducting a doctoral prospectus, working on or defending theses or dissertations, taking comprehensive examinations, taking Graduate Foreign Language Examinations, or in any other way utilizing university resources, facilities or faculty time.

Registration every fall and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students taking examinations, completing culminating experiences, conducting a doctoral prospectus, defending theses or dissertations, or graduating from the degree program.

To maintain continuous enrollment the credit hour(s) must:

- Appear on the student's iPOS, or
- Be research (592, 792), thesis (599), dissertation (799) or continuing registration (595, 695, 795) or
- Be a graduate-level course.

Grades of W or X are not considered valid registration for continuous enrollment purposes. W grades are received when students officially withdraw from a course after the drop/add period. X grades are received for audit credit.

Students completing work for a course in which they received an I grade must maintain continuous enrollment as defined previously.

Request to maintain continuous enrollment (leave of absence)

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a **Leave of Absence request via their Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)**. This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request a maximum of two semesters of leave during their entire program. Having an approved Leave of Absence by the Graduate College will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university.

Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Leave of Absence are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may re-apply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

Students with a Graduate College approved **Leave of Absence** are not required to pay tuition and/or fees, but in turn are not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources. These resources include university libraries, laboratories, recreation facilities or faculty and staff time. For more information see [Graduate College Policies](#).

Voluntary withdrawal

To withdraw from a graduate program and the university, students must complete the [Voluntary Withdrawal form](#). Submitting a voluntary withdrawal form does not remove a student from courses. Students must file separately with the University Registrar's Office to drop any courses.

Medical/compassionate withdrawal

A student may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal if the withdrawal is due to extenuating circumstances such as a previous serious physical or mental illness (medical withdrawal) or the death or serious illness of a family member (compassionate withdrawal). To request a medical or compassionate withdrawal, students must submit a [Request for a Documented Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#).

Maximum time limit to complete degree

Master's degree — All work toward a master's degree must be completed within six consecutive years. The six years begin with the semester and year of admission to the program. Graduate courses taken prior to admission that are included on the plan of study must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program.

Doctoral degree — Doctoral students must complete all program requirements within a 10-year period. The 10-year period begins with the semester and year of admission to the doctoral program. Graduate courses taken prior to admission that are included on the iPOS must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program. (Previously awarded master's degrees used on the plan of study are exempt.)

Any exception to the time limit policy must be approved by the supervisory committee, the head of the academic unit and the dean of the Graduate College. The Graduate College may withdraw students who are unable to complete all degree requirements and graduate within the allowed maximum time limits.

Student support resources

MLFTC Office of Academic and Career Success

Academic advising

All graduate students are assigned an academic advising team when admitted to a degree or certificate program. Academic advising contact information can be found on My ASU under “Academic Advising.”

Academic advisors work with students from admission to program completion and are the primary point of contact with the college. They can help students navigate program and degree requirements, registration, college and university policy, and can connect students to other resources as needed.

Students are encouraged to use the [MLFTC Graduate Student Resource Site](#) for general information about programs, processes and policies that may be specific to the academic program or college.

- Phone: 602-543-6358
- Email: GraduateEducation@asu.edu

Students can expect a response from a member of their academic advising team within 24–48 business hours. During times of peak volume, please allow up to 72 hours for a response. For urgent needs, contact 602-543-6358 to be connected with any available academic advisor.

Academic and professional development resources

ASU Libraries

The ASU library system gives you access to more than 32,000 electronic journals, 281,000 electronic books and 300 research databases online. Library support in person, through email, phone and chat is also available. You are encouraged to explore the resources offered by the ASU Libraries including:

- [ASU Online Library Guide](#)
- [Education subject course guide](#)
- [Research Databases](#)

ASU Writing Center

MLFTC expects that all submitted contributions in graduate-level courses will be of professional quality. Unless specifically stated, all assignments should conform to APA style. [Graduate Academic Support Center](#)

Career services

Students are encouraged to explore resources available through the [ASU Career and Professional Development Services Office](#). Services and events offered:

- Resume workshops and critique
- Career mixers
- Job search strategies
- Interviewing skills and mock interviews

Student support services

ASU Online student support and services

Students in online programs have access to dedicated support through success coaches and student services staff. Success coaches and contact information are listed on the student’s My ASU page. [ASU Online](#)

International Student and Scholars Center

The ASU International Student and Scholars Center provides a number of services and resources to international students. [ASU International Student and Scholars Center](#)

Health Services

ASU Health Services is dedicated to the well-being and educational success of each student by providing high-quality health care that is accessible, affordable and compassionate. Students can access health services by appointment online or in person, or by walk-in for immediate concerns. [ASU Health Services](#)

Counseling services

Counseling and mental health services are provided at ASU's Downtown, Polytechnic, Tempe and West campuses. ASU students may seek services at any campus counseling center regardless of their college affiliation. Visit [ASU Counseling Services](#) for complete information regarding these services, including after-hours and weekend support. Support is available 24/7. For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services

MLFTC is committed to student success and ensures an inclusive learning environment for all students. Students with disabilities or disabling health conditions who need accommodations are required to document their condition with SAILS. MLFTC encourages admitted students who believe they may need an accommodation to register with SAILS prior to enrolling in the program. [Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services](#)

Veterans and Military Affairs Office

MLFTC values the exceptional contributions of our veterans and welcomes current and former members of the military and their dependents as students preparing for careers in the education field. The Pat Tillman Veterans Center is available to student veterans and their dependents with locations on four campuses and online. [Pat Tillman Veterans Center website](#)

Graduate and Professional Student Association

[Graduate and Professional Student Association](#)

Business and Finance Services

Parking and transit

The [ASU Transportation website](#) has complete information about policies and procedures related to parking and transit, including parking passes, public transit and campus shuttle information.

Student Business Services

Student Business Services offers a variety of student account services including tuition and billing, student refunds (including financial aid), receipt and payment processing, support for past-due accounts, third-party sponsorship assistance and Perkins Loan repayment. [Student Business Services](#)

Sun Devil Card Services

ASU students may choose between the Pitchfork ID and the basic Sun Card to use as an official university ID card. [ASU Sun Devil Card Services](#)

Campus amenities

Housing

Living at ASU promotes creative connections and innovation inside and outside the classroom, providing a supportive, close-knit environment designed to set you up for success. [University Housing](#)

Dining services

Sun Devil Dining offers quality, value, variety and convenience with more than 50 dining locations, including dining halls, fast-casual restaurants, cafes and on-campus markets. [Sun Devil Dining](#)

Other departments and services

Provost's office

The Office of the University Provost provides leadership for all of the university's campuses and academic programs, fostering excellence in teaching, research and service to the community. [Office of the University Provost](#)

IT help office

The University Technology Office embraces its roles as an enabler and a catalyst for advancing the vision and work of the New American University. Students can access the service center from their My ASU page. [ASU Enterprise Technology](#)

ASU Safety and Security

ASU provides a safe, healthy and secure environment. Maintaining a healthy and secure campus community for students, staff and faculty means knowing what to do in the event of an emergency and having the right tools to respond. For information related to ASU safety practices and policies, visit [ASU Safety](#). For information related to the ASU police department, visit [ASU Police Department](#).