

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION (ATP) PROGRAM
MILD/MODERATE LICENSURE
Frequently Asked Questions

General Information Regarding the USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program

1. *How is the USU ATP Program different than a traditional university special education teacher preparation program?*

The USU ATP Program is a cooperative effort between Utah State University, participating school districts, the Utah State Office of Education, and the Utah's State Personnel Development Project. The goal of either a traditional or alternative teacher preparation program is to produce competent special educators. The primary difference between a traditional teacher preparation program and the USU ATP program is that the alternative preparation program requires academic coursework taken concurrently while the individual is working in a special education setting in one of the participating school districts listed below.

Note: The Utah State University Mild/Moderate Alternative Teacher Preparation Program is not to be confused with other alternative teacher preparation programs (i.e. USOE Alternative Route to Licensure program, BYU Public School Partnership, or SUU SEAL Program).

2. *Which districts participate in the USU ATP Program?*

At the present time, the following districts participate with Utah State University. Contact information is:

Box Elder School District 960 So. Main Brigham City, UT 84302	Kathryn Broughton Fax: 435-734-4833	Kathryn.Broughton@besd.net
Canyons School District 9150 So. 500 West Sandy, UT 84070	Ginny Eggen Fax: 801-501-1355	ginny.eggen@canyonsdistrict.com
Davis School District 70 East 100 North Box 588 Farmington, UT 84025	Jolene Bell Fax: 801-402-5189	jbell@dsdmail.net
Granite School District 2500 South State Street Salt Lake City, UT 84115	Elementary: Deb Spark Secondary: Brandy Moon Fax: 801-646-4601	dbspark@graniteschools.org bmoon@graniteschools.org
Jordan School District 7387 So. Campus View Dr. West Jordan, UT 84084	Julie Brown Fax: 801-567-8090	julie.brown@jordan.k12.ut.us
Ogden School District 1950 Monroe Ogden, UT 84401	Mild/Moderate: Paula Kashiwaeda Severe: Kevin Thorpe Fax: 801-625-8972	kashiwaedap@m.ogden.k12.ut.us thorpek@m.ogden.k12.ut.us
Salt Lake School District 440 E. 100 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111	Randy Schelble Cheryl Hostetter Fax: 801-578-8536	randy.schelble@slc.k12.ut.us cheryl.hostetter@slc.k12.ut.us
Tooele School District 66 West Vine Tooele, UT 84074	Dolene Pitt Fax: 435-833-1904	dpitt@m.tooele.k12.ut.us
Weber School District 5320 So. Adams Ave. Parkway So. Ogden, UT 84405	Ann Miller Fax: 801-476-8139	amiller@weber.k12.ut.us

Program Structure of the USU Mild/Moderate Alternative Teacher Preparation Program

3. *What is meant by a “mild/moderate licensure”?*

Teachers in public schools are required to be licensed. A special education teacher can receive either a mild/moderate license or a severe license. The difference is in the severity of the disabilities of the students being taught.

An individual who earns a mild/moderate teaching license teaches students who may have mild cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, or other disabilities requiring special education services. The emphasis in the mild/moderate program is on identifying strategies and developing special education programs to address the educational demands needed for the student to meet the state core curriculum.

4. *In a nutshell, what does the ATP program look like?*

- The program is structured to be completed over approximately 15 months (Year 1: late-July to end of June; Year 2: September to December) in which students are registered for approximately 30 semester hours of coursework.
- Students begin the program with a **MANDATORY** introductory course that in late July and proceed through the remaining courses as a cohort.
- In Year 1, students attend USU classes two nights a week in addition to being employed by a participating school district in a special education setting.
 - Besides attending classes two nights a week, students are also registered for a field-based practicum (fall semester) and student teaching (spring semester).
 - At the end of their first year, students attend a week-long conference on the USU campus in mid-June. If they are unable to attend the week-long conference, alternative coursework must be completed and pre-arranged with the ATP Program Director.
- In Year 2, students are registered for two additional classes during fall semester.
- Coursework is designed to meet state teacher licensure standards as well as provide a direct relationship between what is taught in the classes and what is required to meet district “on the job” expectations in the special education setting.
- Students need to start the program at the beginning and are not admitted into the program at mid-year (spring or subsequent semesters).

Note: The exact locations for the classes for the 2009-2010 school year are yet to be determined but are held at locations along the Wasatch front. Year 1 classes are taught on Monday and Wednesday nights during Fall and Spring Semesters from 4:30 to 7:30. Students are informed of the nights and locations that Year 2 classes are held prior to the beginning of the semester.

Program Expectations

5. *What are the basic requirements that I must meet?*

- You must have a posted bachelor’s degree;
- You must successfully complete an assessment of basic literacy and math requirements required by USU; and
- You need to be hired to teach in an approved mild/moderate special education setting by a participating school district.

Note: Passing the USU literacy and math requirements and submitting an application to a participating school district **does not** presume admission to the USU ATP program. Local school districts fill vacancies on different timelines and are based on vacancies. Interested candidates are expected to follow district procedures.

6. What does it take to be successful in the program?

Key personal qualities that immediately come to mind are: time management, hard work, focus, commitment, a positive attitude, and the ability to adapt and accept feedback.

Anytime an individual takes on a new and probably unfamiliar job **and** is registered as essentially a full-time college student, the challenges are great. In addition to assuming the responsibilities of the new job as a special education teacher (with limited background knowledge associated with being a special education teacher), there are assignments to complete, textbooks to read, tests to study for, and classes to attend.

Given the expectation of the school district and the Utah State Office of Education that you complete your special education licensure during your enrollment in this program, full attendance at classes must have priority over other responsibilities (i.e., coaching, part-time jobs, child care, etc.).

In addition, you must:

- pass graded courses with a C or better and non-graded courses with a Pass,
- pass the field-based practicum during Fall semester,
- pass student teaching during Spring semester,
- pass a state-required test for licensure, **AND**
- be recommended for continued employment in your respective school district.

7. What technology is required?

The USU courses are not only face-to-face class time but also include internet-based coursework. Accepted ATP students must have daily access to a computer with a high-speed internet connection. Required computer applications for the USU coursework include: Adobe Acrobat, Excel, and either Word or Word Perfect. Students must be proficient in accessing the internet, word processing, and creating spreadsheets.

8. What support am I provided during the time I am enrolled in the ATP program?

Because this is a collaborative program between USU and participating school districts, structured support is built into the program to help you with your first year as a special educator.

- The course instructors are highly qualified and available to problem solve concerns and offer suggestions on how to apply the coursework to your day-to-day teaching assignment.
- Through your district, you will be assigned a cooperating teacher/instructional coach who is a master teacher. Your cooperating teacher/instructional coach will be expected to (1) provide you with feedback on assignments prior to turning them in, (2) regularly observe your teaching and give feedback, and (3) be available to help you navigate through school- and district-level expectations and procedures.
- Your district special education department will provide additional trainings and teacher specialists who will be available to provide ongoing support.
- Your principal (or assistant principal) will provide you feedback by completing an administrative feedback form for the Alternative Teacher Preparation program in the fall and spring of Year 1.

Financial Expectations and Obligations

9. What are my expected out-of-pocket costs?

Tuition and books costs are approximately \$6500. You are expected to pay tuition and books costs. For the 2009-2010 school year, tuition has yet to be set by Utah State University. Tuition costs are greater in the Fall semester of the first year because the mandatory mid-July/early August *Orientation to Teaching Student with Mild/Moderate Disabilities* course tuition is included in Fall semester.

In addition, textbooks and supplemental materials are required for all classes. You will be given a list of textbooks for Fall Semester to order during the *Orientation to Teaching Student with Mild/Moderate Disabilities*. You will need to purchase these prior to the beginning of Fall Semester in September. These can be ordered through USU's Bookstore by calling 1-800-662-3950 (Express-A-Book). In addition to textbooks, you may be expected to purchase additional supplemental materials at the beginning of each semester. Approximate textbook and supplemental materials costs are \$250-\$300. The majority of costs for the first year will be incurred in the Fall semester, because two of the texts are used for both fall and spring semesters.

10. *Is there help with out-of-pocket expenses?*

School districts **DO NOT** provide stipends or reimbursements for tuition or textbooks for students enrolled in this program.

If hired by a school district and accepted into the ATP program, you will receive information regarding state and federal financial assistance programs. You may also apply for student loans. You will be responsible for completing any applications and applying for any financial assistance.

Note: For the past several years, the state-funded PEJEP (Public Education Job Enhancement Program) scholarship has been available to support getting a special education special education license. Funding for this scholarship was significantly reduced by the state legislature this past year with little to zero funds available for new applicants.

Prior to applying for financial aid, you will need to complete necessary applications and registrations which include: (1) applying to Utah State University to become a matriculated student, (2) completing the application to the Alternative Teacher Preparation program after being hired by the participating school district, and (3) registering for Fall semester classes. Anyone applying for financial aid will not receive financial aid remuneration until after the beginning of the fall semester.

You may also independently search and apply for scholarships and/or grants. If information becomes available regarding scholarships and/or grants that students may be eligible for, districts or course instructors will share the information with students.

11. *When is tuition due?*

Tuition is due just prior to the first week of each semester. During the August *Orientation to Teaching Student with Mild/Moderate Disabilities*, you will receive course numbers and registration information for courses you will need to register for fall semester. After you receive this information at the orientation, you will register and pay for classes. This can be done at the USU Extension sites (e.g., Salt Lake USU Extension is located at 2500 South State, So. Salt Lake. Location: 5th floor of the north building in the Granite Education Center). Timely payment of tuition is the responsibility of the student.

USU does offer a number of payment options including deferred fee options. Again, for further information you need to contact the USU Office (Salt Lake location) at 801-269-9422 for additional information

During the first year of the program, you will be expected to pay tuition for spring and summer semesters typically just prior to the first week of both of those semesters. For Fall semester of the second year, you will be expected to pay tuition prior to the beginning of the semester.

District Procedures and Expectations

12. *Do I apply for admission to the USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program before being hired by a district?*

NO. It is imperative that prospective students first be hired by a participating school district in an approved mild/moderate special education setting. Prospective students need to adhere to district hiring procedures when applying for a position.

USU's Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation **CANNOT** admit a student who has not been hired by a participating school district. Priority is given to teachers teaching on letters of authorization. Occasionally, space permitting, paraeducators who have a bachelor's degree and are working in an approved setting may be considered for admittance to this program.

Note: Individuals with an expired special education license or who are working in general education classrooms, private schools/programs, or correctional facilities/YIC programs are not eligible for admission to the USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program. Students from Utah State Office of Education's Alternative Route to Licensure program are not eligible to participate in the USU Alternative Teacher Preparation program for special education licensure.

13. What factors do districts use to determine which interested candidates to interview?

Approximately 150 - 175 inquiries about the USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program are received each year. Openings are available for approximately 50. School districts have an obligation to fill vacancies with qualified candidates. When vacancies in a school district are greater than the number of certified candidates, districts then begin to hire individuals on a "letter of authorization", which may include USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program candidates.

Participating school districts will expect those individuals interested in employment to have (1) read and become familiar with these Frequently Asked Questions, (2) taken and passed the basic literacy and math assessments, and (3) submitted a *USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Candidate Information* sheet to the identified school district special education personnel (see the Admission Information for Prospective Candidates).

When a vacancy becomes available in a district, district special education personnel will review submitted *USU Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Candidate Information* sheets and schedule screening interviews. If you are called for a screening interview, the following will be considered: (1) your responses to interview questions, (2) your prior experience with either teaching or working with school-age youth, (3) academic history and record, and (4) references.

14. What should I expect once I have had my screening interview with a district?

After district special education personnel conduct screening interviews, candidates who are being considered for open positions will be contacted. Schools will interview a pool of candidates and make their decision on which candidate to recommend for hire.

Individuals who are offered employment must meet all requirements of the district for hiring. This will include a posted degree from a college or university and a required background check. The background check must be completed by mid-September. You will be expected to pay a mandatory fee for the background check.

15. What should I do if I am not hired by any district prior to the beginning of the August Orientation to Teaching Student with Mild/Moderate Disabilities?

If you are not hired by any district prior to of the *Orientation to Teaching Student with Mild/Moderate Disabilities*, you **CANNOT** attend the orientation.

On occasion, participating school districts fill vacancies after the orientation. If you are hired after the orientation, you will be expected to attend a make-up Introduction to Special Education Orientation, which will occur in early September.

16. What should I do next?

- Review and follow the steps provided in the Admission Information for Prospective Candidates sheet.
- If you have additional questions, contact Dr. Marilyn Likins, Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation. She is the Coordinator of the Utah State University Mild/Moderate Alternative Teacher Preparation Program. Contact information: marilyn@nrcrepara.org