



Special Education Exam Snapshot

Time Allowed:	240 minutes	
Format:	Multiple-choice	
Number of Questions:	125	
On-Screen Exhibits: (available as relevant)	None	
Passing Score:	Proficient: 278 Distinguished: 312	(The number of questions answered correctly is converted to a scaled score ranging from 0 to 500.)
Exam Summary:	Content Domains	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	Professional Skills and Background Knowledge	22%
	Understanding the Special Needs Student	23%
	General Special Education Practices	37%
	Language Development Strategies	18%

About This Exam

The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence believes that highly skilled special education teachers should possess a comprehensive body of knowledge that is research-based and promotes student achievement. The special education exam is designed for candidates who intend to teach in any pre-K-12 special education program. The topics assessed include the basic principles of special education, including the foundations of special education, language development, assessment, and instructional delivery.



Professional Skills and Background Knowledge

Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education

- Implications of the disability labeling process
- Historical movements and trends and supporting empirical research
- Federally mandated components of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Key federal laws

Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education

- Critical evaluation of professional literature
- Specific roles and responsibilities of special education teachers
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Professional Communication and Collaboration

- Information sharing with general education staff
- Oral and written communications with diverse audiences
- Positive team decision making processes
- Communication between individuals with disabilities and others
- Local, community, and state resources
- Interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration

Understanding the Special Needs Students

Characteristics of Learners with Disabilities

- Characteristics of individuals with frequently occurring disabilities
- Effects of one or more disabilities across a life span
- Selection of instructional strategies
- Typical and atypical adolescent development in the sensory, communication, behavioral, physical, social, and cognitive domains

Cultural Competence

- Instructional content, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences
- Learning environments that respect cultural, linguistic, and gender differences
- Cultural biases and their influence on the referral, identification, placement, and learning of individual with disabilities

Family Participation

- Role of families in the educational process
- Parental due process rights

Learning Environments and Social Interactions

- Positive behavioral strategies and techniques
- Research-based classroom management techniques
- Benefits of various instructional groupings
- Functional behavioral assessments and support plans
- Increasing and sustaining student motivation



General Special Education Practices

Assessment

- Validity, reliability, and standard error of measurement
- Assessment accommodations and modifications
- Interpretation of assessment results
- Development of measurable education goals and objectives

Effective Instructional Delivery

- Instructional design principles to evaluate, adopt, or modify instructional sequences and curriculum
- Initial teaching, expansion activities, and review teaching
- Strategies for rate of instructional delivery and rate of student opportunity to respond

Instructional Planning

- Individualized transition plans
- Work habits and skills related to employment success
- Instructional and assistive technology support
- Theories of curriculum development

Student Self-Determination and Transition

- Self-advocacy and self-management skills
- Organizational and study skills
- Career and vocational assessments

Language Development Strategies

Reading and Language Acquisition and Development

- Scaffolding student oral language
- Implicit phonics, explicit phonics, analytic phonics, synthetic phonics, embedded phonics, and non-embedded phonics
- Vocabulary-building activities
- Similarities and differences among phonemes
- Fluency-building activities
- Phonemic awareness activities
- Common reading errors and error patterns
- Fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary diagnostic assessments
- Graphic organizers
- Word families

Spelling

- Phonetic patterns
- Stages of spelling development
- Structural and morphographic strategies

Writing Strategies

- Audience and purpose in written compositions
- Strategies for evaluating student writing
- Strategies to teach the writing process
- Editing strategies