MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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The School of Education offers two tracks in the Master of Science in Special Education program. One leads to cross-endorsement in Connecticut #165, Comprehensive PreK-12 Special Education for those already holding an initial endorsement, and the second track is for anyone in a related field who is interested in earning a Master of Science in Special Education.

Program Description

The field of special education requires an in-depth understanding of the laws that frame it, particularly the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The program provides certified teachers with opportunities to better understand the purposes and protections of these laws, as well as their implications for teaching and working with students with special needs and their families. Through these lenses, program candidates will understand how students identified with special needs learn, and how their particular special needs impact their lives inside and outside of school academically, socially and emotionally. The knowledge and understanding developed through the program will enable graduates to design individual programs of learning for students, with supports that allow all identified students to access the curriculum together with their non-disabled peers in inclusive settings.

The program will provide graduate candidates with two options to achieve their professional goals. Teachers who already have a valid teaching certificate will be able to pursue a cross-endorsement in comprehensive special education along with their Master of Science in Special Education (30 credits) in accordance with the requirements and regulations of the Connecticut State Department of Education. Graduate candidates who are in a related field but still desire an MS in Special Education (30 credits) will complete a similar course of study.

MS in Special Education Leading to Cross-Endorsement

Code	Title	Credits
SPED 545	Introduction to the Exceptional Child	3
SPED 564	Teaching Students with Reading and Math Disorders	3
SPED 565	Specific Learning Disabilities: Identification, Instruction and Assessment (LD)	3
SPED 566	Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
SPED 571	Emotional and Behavioral Disorder Identification, Management, and Assessment	3
SPED 568	Assessment/Program Planning and Evaluation of Children with Special Needs	3
SPED 570	Special Education Law	3
SPED 572	Educating Young Children with Special Needs	3
SPED 579	Practicum in Special Education I [1]	3
SPED 580	Practicum in Special Education II	3
Total Credits		**30**

MS in Special Education Curriculum

Code	Title	Credits
SPED 545	Introduction to the Exceptional Child	3
SPED 564	Teaching Students with Reading and Math Disorders	3
SPED 565	Specific Learning Disabilities: Identification, Instruction and Assessment (LD)	3
SPED 566	Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
SPED 571	Emotional and Behavioral Disorder Identification, Management, and Assessment	3
SPED 570	Special Education Law	3
SPED 573	Reading Disorders: Assessment, Planning and Instruction	3
SPED 568	Assessment/Program Planning and Evaluation of Children with Special Needs	3
SPED 581	Research in Special Education	3
One of the following		**3**
SPED 575	Working with Gifted and Talented Students	
SPED 576	Designing and Utilizing Assistive Learning Technologies	
SPED 574	Understanding and Teaching Students with Intellectual Disabilities	
Total Credits		**30**

[1] Both SPED 579 and SPED 580 are required for candidates seeking a cross-endorsement in Connecticut #165 Comprehensive Special Education PreK-12. If student is under a DSAP, these courses will be replaced by SPED 575 and SPED 576.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Master of Science in Special Education, graduates will understand and be able to:

1. **Demonstrate a working knowledge** of federal and state laws and guidelines that govern eligibility, protections and services for students with special needs.
2. **Administer, score and interpret** a wide range of criterion-referenced, norm-referenced and curriculum-based measurements.
3. **Utilize Scientifically-Based Research Interventions** (SBRI) to identify the presence of specific learning disabilities in school-age children.
4. **Collaborate with other professionals** in related services to provide the supports necessary for students with special needs to access the curriculum in inclusive settings with their non-disabled peers wherever possible.

5. **Assume leadership positions** in Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings by advocating for the social, emotional and academic needs of students in order to design an appropriate Individual Education Program (or IEP) for each identified student.
6. **Identify and apply** interventions and strategies to meet the unique educational needs of exceptional learners and their families, including but not limited to preparing young adults to self-advocate and develop the life skills necessary for independent living as they transition into adulthood and their respective careers.

Admission

Applications for the online Master of Science in Special Education program are considered on a rolling basis. Students may apply to enter during the fall or spring semester. We encourage candidates to submit applications as early as possible to ensure consideration for the semester desired.

To qualify for admission to the program, students must have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a preferred minimum GPA of 3.00. Candidates must submit:

1. completed application form
2. resume
3. letter of intent
4. official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work completed

Foundations

The 18 credits of foundation courses are designed to provide an in-depth study of the characteristics and outcomes of four of the areas identified under IDEA. The remaining 12 credits include coursework in special education law, policy and ethics; assessment, program planning and evaluation; and evaluation and instruction in reading disorders. Those seeking the cross-endorsement are required to take a 3-credit course in educating young children with special needs.

Capstone Experience

Candidates following the cross-endorsement track are required to successfully complete two 3-credit practicums, each in a different area of special education.

Retention

To remain in the program, a student must maintain a GPA of 3.00. A student who receives a grade of C+ or below in a course will have to retake the course to earn a minimum grade of B-. Students who fail to maintain the minimum GPA in any semester may be allowed to remain in the program with probationary status at the discretion of the dean of the School of Education; however, granting of probationary status is subject to the dean's approval and is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

The School of Education is fully accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The U.S. Department of Education recognizes CAEP as a specialized accrediting body for schools, colleges and departments of education.