

MASTER OF ARTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Graduate Advisors: All tenured/tenure-track faculty serve as graduate advisors. See Department website for program area and associated faculty: sped.sfsu.edu

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates of the program will attain mastery of a broad field of learning in special education and inclusive practices.
2. The program will foster students' development of competence as practitioners, researchers, and scholars, including their knowledge of the ways in which research influences practice.
3. Graduates of the program will demonstrate a mindset of inquiry as a reflective practitioner and use critical thinking skills.
4. The program will prepare educational leaders who demonstrate a mindset of inquiry as a reflective practitioner, use critical thinking skills, and work effectively with individuals, families, and communities from diverse backgrounds and settings.

General Information

Students may specialize in a program area that includes one of the following:

Early Childhood Special Education

This program area prepares individuals to provide quality early intervention and early childhood special education to young children, birth to 5, who are at risk or have been diagnosed with disabilities. Emphasis is placed on providing culturally competent, family-centered services through an interdisciplinary approach. Coursework and field experiences provide opportunities to use evidence-based and developmentally appropriate practices within inclusive infant/toddler and preschool settings. Graduates pursue a variety of jobs including teaching, early intervention, program administration, and non-profit work.

Mild to Moderate Support Needs

This program area is designed to provide professionals with the knowledge and skills to educate learners with mild to moderate support needs from diverse backgrounds who have a range of learning, developmental, social and emotional needs. Through specialized courses with concurrent field experiences and mentored student teaching, candidates gain competency in the historical, philosophical, and empirical foundations of general and special education practices within a culturally responsive, inclusive and neurodiversity framework. Among the topics covered are policy issues; professional, legal and ethical practices; characteristics of diverse populations; English language learners; assessment, curriculum and instruction; positive behavior and social-emotional supports; transition programming; universal design for learning; multi-tiered systems of support; interdisciplinary collaboration; and family and community partnerships. Graduates are prepared to enter professions in education, human service and related fields, as well as research and leadership positions.

Extensive Support Needs

Candidates in this program area must demonstrate their competence in providing quality educational services to students with extensive support needs (e.g., moderate/severe disabilities) including access to standards-based academic curricula and the use of systematic, data-based

approaches to instruction and models of curricular adaptation and social belonging. Competencies in supporting students in inclusive settings, interacting effectively with families and in developing educational goals using a transdisciplinary team approach are also essential components of the program emphasis. In addition, a two-semester sequence of supervised practica ensures that candidates are able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through course content and assignments to the instruction of students with extensive support needs in urban school settings.

Orientation and Mobility

This program area prepares professionals to teach people of all ages who have visual impairments (including those with multiple disabilities) how to navigate their environment safely and efficiently using a white cane or visual skills. The curriculum includes such things as independent travel in indoor and outdoor environments; sensory and motor development; daily living skills; use of low vision, GPS, and electronic devices in travel. Graduates take jobs in schools, adult rehabilitation centers, or work as private contractors

Visual Impairment

This program area prepares teachers to provide culturally diverse students from birth to 22 years who are blind or low vision access to core curriculum areas and additional skills needed to participate fully in school, home, and community settings through the school years and in transition to adult living. This includes research-based curricula and pedagogy in such areas as access technology, braille literacy, sensory efficiency skills with an emphasis on functional vision use, independent living skills, career education, and self-determination.

Admission to Program

Applying to the graduate program in the Department of Special Education and to SF State is completed simultaneously through the online Cal State Apply application at www2.calstate.edu/apply. (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>)

Complete the online Cal State Apply application. Applicants may choose the MA in Special Education or MA in Special Education plus Credential program. Upload all required admissions materials. More information about the specific requirements and instructions on completing the online application can be found on sped.sfsu.edu/content/apply-now. Follow all other requirements for admission to the University by accessing <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/apply>.

The program application requests background information, unofficial transcripts, a statement of purpose, two letters of reference, evidence of successful completion of the Level I Writing English Proficiency requirement, and a résumé. A minimum 3.0 GPA is required for admission to the MA in Special Education program. There are additional requirements for the MA in Special Education plus Credential program. The program application and application deadlines are posted at sped.sfsu.edu (<http://spedcd.sfsu.edu>) or call (415) 338-1161 or email sped@sfsu.edu

Upon acceptance into the program, students are assigned a faculty advisor within their selected program area and are provided with program roadmaps. All students need to consult with their advisors before registration.

Special Education (M.A.) - 30 units

Core Program (9 units)

Code	Title	Units
SPED 788	Law, Ethics, and Instructional Planning	3
ISED 797	Seminar in Educational Research	3
SPED 801	Development, Diversity, and English Language Learners: Special Education ¹	3
or SPED 779	Family Systems and Services for Young Children with Disabilities	
or SPED 747	Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments	

¹ SPED 779 is recommended for students interested in early childhood special education. SPED 747 is recommended for students interested in working in the area of orientation & mobility needs.

Upper-Division/Graduate Courses (12 units)

Courses in Special Education that align with the professional interest and career goals of the student, selected with a faculty advisor. No more than 9 units of upper-division coursework can be counted towards the degree.

Related Studies (3 units)

Selected upon approval of major faculty advisor in a program area.

Culminating Experience (6 units)

Students will be required to complete one of the following options for the approved culminating experience, following advancement to candidacy:

Option 1

- SPED 896EXM Culminating Experience Examination
- Two graduate seminars selected in consultation with an advisor. One must be outside of the student's interest area, which may include SPED 881 Advanced Research Seminar in Special Education.

Option 2

- SPED 894 Creative Work Project in Special Education
- One graduate seminar outside the interest area selected in consultation with an advisor, which may include SPED 881 Advanced Research Seminar in Special Education.

Option 3

- SPED 898 Master's Thesis
- SPED 881 Advanced Research Seminar in Special Education