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: https://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 interest area that includes one of the following:

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

This interest area focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary to lead and collaborate in a variety of early childhood settings that include young children with disabilities. This includes settings in which children are receiving special education services through early intervention (birth-age 3) as well as within early childhood education programs (preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten). Coursework within this program area have a foundation in inclusion and equity-centered practices, emphasizing service delivery that is asset-based, culturally-responsive, and interdisciplinary. Individuals will gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them to support the learning and development of young children in partnerships with their families and communities.

Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN)

This interest 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 (ESN)

Candidates in this interest 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 supports. Competencies in supporting students in inclusive settings, interacting effectively with families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds 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 (O&M)

This interest 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 effective use of residual vision. 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 other electronic devices in travel. Graduates take jobs in schools, adult rehabilitation centers, or work as private contractors.

Visual Impairment (VI)

This interest area prepares personnel to empower a diverse range of blind and low vision students and their families. This diversity ranges in age from birth to 22 years and is inclusive of those with additional disabilities including deafblindness. Our program commits to culturally responsive pedagogy as aligned with principles of anti-racism and anti-ableism. Graduates are prepared to bridge current evidence-based literature with practice-oriented instructional strategies that are focused on promoting students' access to core and expanded core curriculum areas while emphasizing barrier-free membership in school, home, and community settings. Graduates enter the workforce prepared to exercise evidence-based knowledge in a breadth of issues related to visual impairments such as consent, access technology, braille literacy, sensory efficiency, independent living skills, career education, self-determination, and multimedia accessibility.

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 https://sped.sfsu.edu/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, two letters of reference, a résumé and a statement of purpose that is assessed for evidence of successful completion of the Pre-Writing Admission Assessment (Level 1). 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://sped.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 interest area and are provided with program roadmaps. All students need to consult with their advisors before registration every semester.

Pre-Writing Admission Assessment/Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different levels.

Level One

Satisfactory performance on the Statement of Purpose should be achieved to gain admission to the degree program.

Special Education (M.A.) – 30 units

Core Program (9 units)

Code	Title	Units
SPED 788	Law, Ethics, and Instructional Planning	3
Select One:		3
ISED 797	Seminar in Educational Research	
SPED 881	Research in Special Education	
Select One:		3
SPED 747	Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments [1]	
SPED 779	Family-Centered Practices and Services for Young Children with Disabilities [1]	
SPED 801	Development, Diversity, and English Language Learners: Special Education	

[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 (6 units)

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

Culminating Experience (3 units)

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

Option 1

- SPED 890 Culminating Experience Seminar

Option 2

- SPED 894 Creative Work Project in Special Education

Option 3

- SPED 898 Master's Thesis