

SPECIAL EDUCATION, B.S.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The emphasis throughout the Special Education program is upon a broad clinical teaching model. Course work and practicum experiences focus upon the identification and management of a wide range and degree of educational and behavioral problems of students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21. A core of Special Education courses aimed at general skill development in the areas of diagnosis, identification, development of materials and teaching strategies, implementation, and evaluation is required of all students.

This major focuses on teaching principles and methodologies, classroom and behavioral management, and the development of teaching materials for children and youths with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. This program helps prepare special education teachers to meet the needs of students enrolled in early intervention, elementary and secondary public school special education programs.

What is Special Education?

Our goal is an educational system in which teachers, families, and communities share responsibility and commitment for preparing students to live independent, productive, and personally satisfying lives to the fullest extent possible. This goal includes: Having a positive influence on the inclusion of persons who are culturally, physically or intellectually diverse in the mainstream of American life; Providing national leadership in the development of new knowledge in special education; Preparing teachers to use effective practices in special education. Students in the Special Education Program have an opportunity to enroll in an integrated undergraduate – graduate program with the Reading Specialist Program in which students earn a bachelor's degree and certification in both areas.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to make a difference in the lives of children, families, adolescents, and adults.
- You like working with individuals with disabilities in the home, schools, or community.
- You like a challenge.
- You want to teach, to be an agent of change, and to be an advocate.
- You seek out solutions.
- You want to know more!

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION (<https://ed.psu.edu/special-education-bachelor-science/>)

Entrance to Major

Eligibility for entry to the Special Education program is based on the following set criteria:

1. Cumulative grade-point average of 3.00 is required (all PA teacher preparation programs require a 3.0 at entry and exit of program)
2. Applicants must complete a number of prerequisite courses and other requirements. The following courses must be passed with a

grade of "C" or better: CI 280, EDPSY 10 or EDPSY 11, EDPSY 14, EDPSY 101, EDTHP 115, MATH 200, PSYCH 100, PSYCH 212.

3. Documentation of at least 80 hours of volunteer or paid education work experience with learners of the age group the candidate plans to teach. Candidates for Special Education must document two separate 40-hour experiences in two different settings, with learners who have special needs. One experience should include learners with a different level of severity or functioning (e.g., mild/severe, young/adult) from those learners in the other experience. One experience should also include learners with cultural, social, or ethnic backgrounds different from the candidate's own.
4. Completion of at least 48 semester credit hours, including ENGL 15 or ENGL 30H.
5. Approval from the professional education adviser or the head of the pertinent certification program.

Students may be admitted to the program by declaring Special Education as a major, transferring from a previously declared major, or transferring from another institution of higher education.

Students cannot be formally admitted to Special Education before their fifth semester.

Students are assigned to one selection pool. For example, Freshmen admitted in the summer or fall of 2014 are automatically assigned to the spring 2016 selection pool. Students who wish to transfer into Special Education from another major or university will be assigned to a selection pool based on the total number of credits they have earned and their completion of College of Education prerequisite courses.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education, a minimum of 122 credits is required (See also Teacher Education Programs (<https://ed.psu.edu/academics/teacher-testing-certification/>)):

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	6
Requirements for the Major	89

18 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 6 credits of GQ courses; 6 credits of GS courses; 6 credits of GH courses.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better per course is required for all Special Education prerequisites and teacher certification.

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better for all Special Education prerequisites and teacher certification</i>		
CI 280	Introduction to Teaching English Language Learners	3
EDPSY 14	Learning and Instruction	3
EDPSY 101	Analysis and Interpretation of Statistical Data in Education	3
EDTHP 115	Education in American Society	3
MATH 200	Problem Solving in Mathematics	3
PSYCH 100	Introductory Psychology	3

PSYCH 212	Introduction to Developmental Psychology	3
SPLD 395W	**SPECIAL TOPICS**	3
SPLD 401	Motivating Exceptional Learners	4
SPLD 404	Working with Families and Professionals in Special Education	3
SPLD 409A	Fundamental Literacy Skills for Students with Special Needs	3
SPLD 409B	Writing and Content Literacy for Students with Special Needs	3
SPLD 409C	Mathematics Instruction for Students with Special Needs	3
SPLD 410	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Special Education	3
SPLD 411	Intervention for Students with Severe Disabilities	3
SPLD 412	Instruction for Students with Mild Disabilities	3
SPLD 415	Early Special Education	3
SPLD 418	Technologies for Persons with Disabilities	3
SPLD 425	Foundations of Special Education, Etiologies, Law, and Implications for Practice	3
SPLD 454	Assessment for Instruction	3
SPLD 495D	Professional Development for Special Education Teacher Candidates	3
SPLD 495E	Experience with Exceptional Children	3
SPLD 495F	Practicum in Special Education	12
SPLD 495G	Experience with an Integrated Inclusion Classroom	4

Additional Courses

Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better for all Special Education prerequisites and teacher certification

EDPSY 10	Individual Differences and Education	3
or EDPSY 11	Educational Implications of Individual Differences in Childhood	
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
CSD 218	American Sign Language I	
RHS 402	Children and Families in Rehabilitation Settings and Human Services	
RHS 403	Medical Aspects of Disability	
RHS 404	Rehabilitation Services for Transition Age Youth with Disabilities: Theory and Practice	
RHS/LHR 410	Employment Strategies for People with Disabilities	
RHS 433	Trauma-informed care for school & human service professionals	
SPLD 461	Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders: Issues and Concerns	
SPLD 462	Autism and Applied Behavior Analysis	

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements ([https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-](https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/)

[education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/](https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education-program/)) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Integrated B.S. in Special Education and M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction

Requirements for the Integrated B.S. in Special Education and M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/curriculum-instruction/#integratedundergradgradprogramstext>).

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2023-24 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition (*Note: the archive only contains suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin*).

Special Education, B.S. at University Park Campus and Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15 or 30H ^{*#}	3 EDPSY 101 ^{*#†}	3
MATH 200 ^{*#†}	3 EDPSY 10 ^{*#†}	3
PSYCH 100 ^{*#†}	3 PSYCH 212 ^{*#†}	3
EDTHP 115 ^{*#†}	3 Literature Selection ^{*#†1}	3
EDUC 100	1 Science Selection ^{*†}	3
	13	15

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
EDPSY 14 ^{*#}	3 CAS 100A ^{*†}	3
Science Selection [†]	3 Science Selection [†]	3
Art Selection	3 Art Selection	3
Health and Physical Activity	1.5 Health and Physical Activity	1.5
Humanities Selection	3 Minor/Elective	3
	13.5	13.5

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SPLD 395W [*]	3 SPLD 404 [*]	3
SPLD 401 [*]	4 SPLD 411 [*]	3
SPLD 408 [*]	3 SPLD 412 [*]	4
SPLD 425 [*]	4 SPLD 454 [*]	4
EDPSY 421 [*]	3 SPLD 495E [*]	3
	17	17

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SPLD 409A [*]	3 SPLD 495F ^{*2}	15
SPLD 409B [*]	3	
SPLD 409C [*]	3	
SPLD 495G [*]	4	
SPLD 418 [*]	3	
ENGL 202A or 202B [†]	3	
	19	15

Total Credits 123

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

¹ Literature Selection list of acceptable courses available here (<https://ed.psu.edu/academics/departments/department-curriculum-and-instruction/undergraduate-teacher-education-pk-12/elementary-early-childhood-education-bs-pk-4/suggested-courses/>).

² No additional coursework permitted during student teaching.

Career Paths

Career opportunities for graduates with teaching certification include:

- An M.Ed. graduate degree (<https://ed.psu.edu/special-education-master-education/>) and eligibility for PA certification in special education.
- Special Education Supervisory program for PDE certification
- Focused program for working with all learners with Autism (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-educating-individuals-with-autism-postbaccalaureate-certificate/>)
- Professionals may also be interested in the focus the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program certificate (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-applied-behavior-analysis-graduate-certificate/>) to prepare BCBA's and behavior therapists
- Online programs for teachers to support all learners in Academic and Behavioral Supports program (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-special-education-masters-degree/>)

Professional Resources

- Council for Exceptional Children (<https://exceptionalchildren.org>)

Accreditation

The College of Education educator preparation programs are fully accredited at the Initial and Advanced levels by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The next CAEP program review will be Fall 2026. CAEP advances excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality

and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ACCREDITATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (<https://ed.psu.edu/about/accreditations/>)

Professional Licensure/Certification

Many U.S. states and territories require professional licensure/certification to be employed. If you plan to pursue employment in a licensed profession after completing this program, please visit the Professional Licensure/Certification Disclosures by State (<https://www.psu.edu/state-licensure-disclosures/>) interactive map.

Contact

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