SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education has, as its primary objective, the education and training of professional educators to serve children and adolescents who have exceptional challenges and require specialized support through educational, social, cognitive, rehabilitative, and/or behavioral management approaches to attain their maximum learning potential. In line with this primary objective, special education sees its role as contributing leadership in the areas of theory; assessment; understanding differences among children and youth with disabilities; the development and implementation of curriculum and intervention strategies; and the improvement of teacher-teacher, teacher-child, and teacher-parent relationships.

Graduate candidates may choose one of several sequences of study leading to certification, including the Master of Arts degree and the Sixth Year Certificate of Advanced Study (SYC). Undergraduate candidates may enroll in the Five-Year Integrated BA/MA Special Education program. These programs provide the preparation required by the Connecticut State Department of Higher Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the Council for Exceptional Children. Candidates may pursue a program leading to a Connecticut Initial Educator Certificate in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs in grades K-12 (Comprehensive Special Education) or to a Cross-Endorsement in comprehensive special education when certification in classroom teaching has already been earned.

In view of the essential responsibility of the program to assure the protection of the healthy development of children and adolescents served by special educators, the faculty reserve the right to discontinue the program of any candidate, at any time during his or her program, whose academic performance is marginal, whose comprehensive examination results are not rated as passing, or whose personal/dispositional qualities are deemed not appropriate to the field. Such a candidate may be denied recommendation for certification. In addition, the Disposition Statement presented in this catalog is applicable to the special education programs as it is to all programs offered by the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions.

Admission

Application deadlines are listed online (https://www.fairfield.edu/graduate/academics/graduate-school-of-education-and-allied-professions/how-to-apply).

A group or individual interview with faculty members is required for admission to the Special Education program. The interview is intended to clarify the applicant’s understanding of the program and the profession, and to evaluate the applicant’s potential success as a candidate. After admission, each candidate is required to meet with a faculty advisor to outline a planned program of study.

Courses

SE 0099 Comprehensive Examination in Special Education 0 Credits
Prerequisites: SE 0410, SE 0411, SE 0413, SE 0417.
The comprehensive examination is required of all candidates earning an MA degree in Special Education. The comprehensive exam is taken after successful completion of at least 18 credits in the program in special education and is designed to assess a candidate’s understanding, skills and knowledge base in the four areas associated with the State of Connecticut certification law: a) Psycho-educational theory and development of children with disabilities, b) Diagnosis of children and youth with disabilities, c) Program planning and education of children and youth with disabilities, and d) Curriculum and methods of teaching children and youth with disabilities. If the candidate fails one or more sections of the comprehensive examination, he/she will have one additional opportunity to re-take and pass the section(s) during the scheduled administration of the examination. Grading method: Pass with distinction/Pass/Fail.

SE 0400 Augmentative Alternative Communications and Assistive Technologies 3 Credits
This course provides prospective teachers with an overview of a range of assistive devices that can be implemented in a classroom setting for individuals in grades K-12 with communication deficits, visual and/or hearing impairments, physical challenges, and mild learning impairments. In this course, emphasis is placed on evaluating the needs of individuals whose exceptional needs create barriers to learning and on selecting the appropriate technology that will bypass their disability. Candidates will be provided with resources on current devices and given opportunities to examine and operate actual devices that they may encounter in the classroom setting.

Programs

- Five-Year Integrated Bachelor and Master of Arts in Special Education (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/five-year-special-education)
- Master of Arts in Special Education (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/ma-special-education)
- Master of Arts in Special Education with Cross-Endorsement (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/ma-special-education-xnd)
- Master of Arts and Sixth Year Certificate in Special Education with Initial Certification (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/ma-sync-special-education-initial-cert)
- Sixth Year Certificate in Special Education (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/syc-special-education) (SYC Only)
- Cross-Endorsement in Special Education (http://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/educational-studies-teacher-preparation/special-education/xnd-special-education)
SE 0403 Foundations in Research and Evaluation of Psychoeducational Issues in Special Education  3 Credits
This course is designed to introduce candidates to a range of children and adolescents with exceptional learning needs (ELN), to the intent of special education law and the process of identification and evaluation of exceptional learners, and to the foundational research on the complex issues and problems that affect these students. Topics include methods of identifying and working effectively with children and youth with special learning needs in the regular classroom; the roles and responsibility of counselors, psychologists, educators and ancillary personnel as members of a multidisciplinary team in planning educational services for exceptional learners; laws that impact on assessment, placement, parent and student rights, and support services. In this course, candidates are introduced to a range of quantitative and qualitative research designs and the methodological tools to analyze data. Through discussion of issues, candidates consider how research can be a valuable tool that helps teachers systematically reflect on learning and evidence-based practices. Using current scholarly research articles, each candidate investigates, writes, and presents on a psychoeducational issue that impacts a specific category of exceptional learners. This course requires a fieldwork component as part of the evaluation process.

SE 0410 Autism Spectrum Disorders: Theories and Interventions 3 Credits
This course highlights current research on theories and etiology of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Candidates examine characteristics and behaviors associated with ASD. Specific diagnostic assessment and screening tools are reviewed to examine how these tools are utilized to identify infants and children with ASD. The course also focuses on providing the candidates with understanding the role of families. The course helps create a framework for implementing effective pedagogical interventions, profiling the strengths and challenges of various interventions.

SE 0411 Introduction to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities  3 Credits
This course is designed to advance candidates’ understanding and knowledge of intellectual and developmental disabilities by critically examining theories and research regarding the psychological, sociological, and educational aspects of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Candidates are expected to display levels of competency and proficiency in all three aspects.

SE 0413 Theories of and Introduction to Learning Disabilities  3 Credits
This course introduces students to the area of learning disabilities, exploring various theoretical constructs pertaining to numerous facets of the disorder (e.g., cognition, executive function, attention deficits, etc.), by tracing the history of its development and discussing current issues about the definition and the types of learning disabilities. Educational and social emotional sequelae and implications of processing impairments on learning are examined in the context of the assessment-teaching process (includes a 10-hour field-based project).

SE 0417 Introduction to Children and Youth with Social and Emotional Disturbances  3 Credits
This core course introduces candidates to the area of emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD) by examining symptoms, etiology, diagnostic criteria, and assessment techniques of students K-12 who exhibit social, emotional, and behavioral deficits. Emphasis is placed on social and emotional development, the process of identifying students with EBD, analysis of behavior (ABA) and functional behavioral assessment (FBA), development of individual educational plans (IEPs) and instructional strategies designed to address the social and academic needs of students with EBD. This course includes a 5-hour field component. All students must have criminal clearance prior to registration.

SE 0419 Special Learners in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom  3 Credits
Designed to familiarize special educators, bilingual educators and ESL teachers with the developmental learning needs of children and adolescents who are exceptional, this course examines the special learning needs of linguistically and culturally diverse children, exploring methods of identifying and working effectively with exceptional children and adolescents in bilingual or ESL classrooms. Crosslisted with SL 0419.

SE 0432 Management Techniques in Special Education  3 Credits
Designed to offer training in techniques for improving the academic and social behavior of students with behavior problems, this course teaches candidates how to effect positive behavioral change and includes such topics as behavioral observation and analysis, task analysis, intervention strategies, and behavior change measurement and recording. Candidates complete a functional behavior assessment using data from a fieldwork component for this course.

SE 0486 Developmental Literacy I: Fundamentals of Reading and Language Development  3 Credits
This course is the first in a set of courses that address the foundational concepts, theories, empirical research, and developmental milestones associated with oral and written language. This course focuses on the development of essential decoding strand reading skills (phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency), as well as aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing. Candidates learn how to administer, score, and interpret universal screening and informal diagnostic measures in the areas of phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and fluency for the purposes of determining the most appropriate starting point for instruction and planning differentiated instructional groups. Candidates also learn how to select and deliver varied research-based instructional strategies to develop students’ foundational reading skills in the areas of phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and fluency. Crosslisted with RLD 0486.

SE 0487 Developmental Literacy II: Essentials of Vocabulary and Text Comprehension  3 Credits
This course is the second in a set of two courses that address the foundational concepts, theories, empirical research, and developmental milestones associated with oral and written language. This course focuses on the development of essential comprehension strand reading skills (fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), as well as aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing. Candidates learn how to administer, score, and interpret universal screening and informal diagnostic measures in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency for the purposes of determining the most appropriate starting point for instruction and planning differentiated instructional groups. Candidates also learn how to select and deliver varied research-based instructional strategies to develop students’ reading skills in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension. Crosslisted with RLD 0487.

SE 0534 Skill Development for Individualized Educational Plans  3 Credits
This course is designed to develop the skills necessary for creating comprehensive diagnostic educational plans for students with identified learning needs and utilizes comprehensive cognitive processing and academic achievement evaluations as a foundation. A non-categorical approach is utilized and topics of exploration include: the identification of patterns of strengths and weaknesses and resultant development of goals and objectives; determination of appropriate methodologies, programs, and strategies; selection and organizational sequence of materials; and consideration of various educational environments in which services may be provided.
SE 0537 Curriculum and Methods for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities 3 Credits
This course provides candidates with knowledge and skills in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating instruction based on knowledge of the student, the intended student outcomes, and the curriculum. The course focuses on students with dis/abilities, including students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Topics include student characteristics, research-based methods and strategies, curriculum standards, accommodations, and modifications. Most importantly, this course is designed to help candidates think and reflect on how to design instruction that is appropriate given the unique students and communities in which candidates will teach throughout their career.

SE 0550 Collaboration and Consultation for the Special Educator 3 Credits
This course presents an overview of models that support the role of the consulting teacher as a facilitator and collaborator with school-based personnel and families of students with disabilities in the process of decision making and service delivery to children, youth, and young adults with special learning needs. Major topics include: the application of consultation models and family systems theories to systems change; psychosocial stages of family structure and systemic interaction; stages of group process, working with paraprofessionals, and co-teaching. This class may require a fieldwork component.

SE 0561 Diagnostic Procedures in Special Education of Youth with Disabilities 3 Credits
This course includes selection, administration, scoring, and interpretation of individually administered cognitive processing and academic achievement diagnostic instruments that help drive instructional decision-making. Candidates are also provided with detailed information/data as it pertains to administering varied diagnostic assessments used for disability identification, interpreting results for purposes of determining eligibility for various disabilities (e.g., Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, etc.) and, understanding varied diagnostic assessments and procedures by using various models of interpretation and theoretical foundations. Also, the course provides a foundation for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of students undergoing diagnostic evaluations.

SE 0565 Evidence-Based Strategies in the Inclusive Classroom 3 Credits
Prerequisite: SE 0403.
This course builds on the foundational knowledge about exceptional learners examined during SE 0405, and shifts the focus to strategies that can be used to differentiate instruction for exceptional learners in the inclusive classroom. General education candidates will learn about their role in the pre-referral/referral process and how to develop IEP goals and objectives. Next, candidates will be introduced to a range of social and academic assessment devices that are used to drive instruction. Using videos and case studies, candidates will analyze patterns of behavior in order to design evidenced-based classroom behavior management plans. By the end of the course, candidates will be able to make modifications to their curriculum, and accommodations to their instructional delivery, to meet the needs of exceptional learners.

SE 0568 Special Topics (Shell) 3 Credits
This course explores advanced topics in the field of special education. Topics may vary each semester and are determined by the special education faculty as a reflection of pertinent themes of interest in the field.

SE 0575 Developmental Literacy Remediation for Students in Grades 3+ 1 Credit
Fee: $141 GSEAP Fee
This course examines reading research and the five essential components of reading in relation to students in Grade 3+ with persistent phonological coding deficits. Candidates will learn about the principles and practices of Structured Literacy and multi-sensory language instruction through study of the Wilson Reading System (WRS), including student identification and placement, program implementation, progress monitoring, scheduling, creating a successful classroom environment, principles of language structure, and how to teach language with direct, multi-sensory methods.

SE 0576 Intensive Instruction I for the Non-Responsive Reader Using the Wilson Reading System 3 Credits
Fee: $423 GSEAP Fee
Corequisite: SE 0577.
Prerequisite: SE 0575.
This course presents in detail how the principles and practices of multi-sensory, structured language instruction are applied to support the remedial reading needs of students with word-level deficits in Grades 3+ who have not adequately responded to intervention. This course features practical application of reading research, with particular emphasis on phonological awareness, phonics and spelling at the beginning levels of decoding and encoding. It also provided specific procedures to teach the following syllable types: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, and consonant-IE. The course includes additional topics on diagnostic teaching and differentiating instruction, program pacing, high frequency word instruction, vocabulary instruction, fluency instruction, dyslexia, listening and reading comprehension strategies, use of differentiated texts, and handwriting. Candidates explore the above in relation to Steps 1-6 of the Wilson Reading System (WRS).

SE 0577 Clinical Intensive Instruction I for the Non-Responsive Reader in Grades 3+ 1.5 Credits
Fee: $211.5 GSEAP Fee
Corequisite: SE 0576.
Prerequisite: SE 0575.
This supervised practicum experience prepares candidates to effectively implement a multi-sensory structured language reading program with students in Grades 3-12 that present with significant word-level reading and spelling deficits, including those diagnosed with a language-based learning disability or dyslexia. Candidates will acquire a sophisticated working knowledge of the sound-symbol system of English (phonology) and its structure (morphology) as well as the use of specific diagnostic methods in teaching reading and spelling. This Wilson Reading System Steps 1-6 web-based practicum is supervised by a Wilson Credentialing Trainer.
SE 0578 Intensive Instruction II for the Non-Responsive Reader Using the Wilson Reading System 3 Credits
Fee: $423 GSEAP Fee
Corequisite: SE 0579.
Prerequisite: SE 0576.
This course is a continuation of SE 0576 and presents in detail how the principles and practices of multi-sensory structured language instruction are applied to support the remedial reading needs of students with word-level deficits in Grades 3+ who have not adequately responded to intervention. This course features practical application of reading research, and expands upon the topics of phonological awareness, phonics and spelling at the beginning levels of decoding and encoding. It also provides additional opportunities to refine procedural skill associated with teaching the following syllable types: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, and consonant-l-e. The course includes additional topics on diagnostic teaching and differentiating instruction, program pacing, high frequency word instruction, vocabulary instruction, fluency instruction, dyslexia, listening and reading comprehension strategies, use of differentiated texts, and handwriting. Candidates explore the above in relation to Steps 1-6 of the Wilson Reading System (WRS).

SE 0579 Clinical Intensive Instruction II for the Non-Responsive Reader in Grades 3+ 1.5 Credits
Fee: $211.5 GSEAP Fee
Corequisite: SE 0578.
Prerequisite: SE 0576.
This supervised practicum experience is a continuation of SE 0577 and prepares candidates to effectively implement a multi-sensory structured language reading program with students in Grades 3-12 that present with significant word-level reading and spelling deficits, including those diagnosed with a language-based learning disability or dyslexia. Candidates will acquire a sophisticated working knowledge of the sound-symbol system of English (phonology) and its structure (morphology) as well as the use of specific diagnostic methods in teaching reading and spelling. This Wilson Reading System Steps 1-6 web-based practicum is supervised by a Wilson Credentialed Trainer.

SE 0591 Practica in Special Education 3 Credits
This course consists of an experiential opportunity for candidates pursuing a cross-endorsement in special education. Each practicum is individually designed to meet the candidate's needs and fulfill the certification requirement of working with at least two different disabilities. Practicum requirements include seminar attendance in one semester of student teaching in conjunction with the on-site experience and supervision. Candidates fulfilling the cross-endorsement in comprehensive special education confirm placements in conjunction with the candidate's University advisor and the Director of Student Teaching Placement. Enrollment requires successful completion of required courses, passing of the PRAXIS II in Special Education and the Foundations of Reading Test, and permission of the candidate's University advisor. Candidates must notify their University advisor and the Director of Field Experiences of their intent to start these courses in the semester prior to their anticipated practicum placement. For cross-endorsement candidates only. Pass/Fail.

SE 0592 Practica in Special Education 3 Credits
This course consists of an experiential opportunity for candidates pursuing a cross-endorsement in special education. Each practicum is individually designed to meet the candidate's needs and fulfill the certification requirement of working with at least two different disabilities. Practicum requirements include seminar attendance in one semester of student teaching in conjunction with the on-site experience and supervision. Candidates fulfilling the cross-endorsement in comprehensive special education confirm placements in conjunction with the candidate's University advisor and the Director of Student Teaching Placement. Enrollment requires successful completion of required courses, passing of the PRAXIS II in Special Education and the Foundations of Reading Test, and permission of the candidate's University advisor. Candidates must notify their University advisor and the Director of Field Experiences of their intent to start these courses in the semester prior to their anticipated practicum placement. For cross-endorsement candidates only. Pass/Fail.

SE 0593 Student Teaching and Practica Seminar in Special Education 6 Credits
This six-credit course consists of a semester-long, full-time placement in a public school or an approved setting working with a trained cooperating teacher who supervises the candidate pursuing an initial certificate in special education as he or she works with students identified with at least two different disabilities. Student teaching requirements include attendance in Student Teaching and Practica Seminar (SE 0594) in conjunction with the on-site experience and supervision. Candidates fulfilling the initial certificate in special education coordinate their site placements with their academic advisor, University supervisor, and/or the director of Student Teaching Placement. Enrollment requires successful completion of required courses and permission of the candidate’s University advisor. Candidates must notify their University advisor, and the Director of Field Experiences of their intent to start this course in the semester prior to their anticipated student teaching experience. For initial certification candidates only. Pass/Fail.

SE 0594 Student Teaching and Practica Seminar in Special Education 3 Credits
Corequisite: SE 0591 or SE 0592 or SE 0593.
Participants take this weekly seminar concurrently with student teaching/practica. Although much of the seminar’s subject matter flows from the ongoing student teaching/practica experience, it deliberately addresses areas such as understanding IEPs, goal writing, lesson planning, due process, mindfulness, communication with parents/caregivers, sensitivity to multicultural issues, and roles and responsibilities as a case manager. It also provides opportunities to collaborate with regular education certification candidates in ways authentic to the work of both categories of teachers and special education. The course stresses continued reflective practice and professional development, including development of a professional portfolio, continued study and research, and establishing a supportive collegial network. The job application process, including resume writing, interviewing skills, and developing a teaching philosophy, are also addressed. Candidates also receive information on the certification process.

SE 0595 Independent Study 3-6 Credits
The course provides opportunities for advanced candidates to pursue their interests in diverse aspects of special education under the guidance of a faculty member. Enrollment by permission of the instructor and the Director of Special Education only.
SE 0599 Seminar in Special Education 3 Credits

Prerequisite: Matriculation in the Special Education program and permission from the candidate's University Advisor and the Director of Special Education.

This advanced synthesizing seminar directs the candidate toward an in-depth study of special topics in the field, using a research-oriented approach.