

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). 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 at [fairfield.edu/gseapdeadlines](https://www.fairfield.edu/gseapdeadlines) (<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.

Programs

- Master of Arts in Special Education (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/special-education/ma-special-education>) (MA Only)
- Master of Arts in Special Education with Cross-Endorsement (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/special-education/ma-special-education-preparation-cross-endorsement>)

- Master of Arts and Sixth Year Certificate in Special Education with Initial Certification (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/special-education/syc-special-education-preparation-initial-certification>)
- Sixth Year Certificate in Special Education (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/special-education/special-education-syc-program>) (SYC Only)
- Cross-Endorsement in Special Education (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/education-allied-professions/programs/special-education/cross-endorsement-certificate-special-education>)

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.

SE 0403 Psychoeducational Issues in Special Education 3 Credits

This foundational course covers a range of disability categories and is designed specifically to introduce candidates to children and adolescents with exceptional learning needs (ELN) and to the foundational research on the complex issues and problems that affect these students. 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. Candidates investigate a topic on a psycho-educational issue in special education and write a research paper using APA format.

SE 0405 Exceptional Learners in the Mainstream 3 Credits

This course familiarizes the mainstream professional with the special learning needs of children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, severe disabilities, multiple disabilities, and/or students who are gifted and talented. 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. This course may require a fieldwork component as part of the evaluation process. Note: This course is not for those pursuing an initial certificate or cross-endorsement in special education; it is for general educators and students in affiliated fields of study.

SE 0410 Autism Spectrum Disorders: Theories and Interventions 3 Credits

This core 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. Previously SE 0500.

SE 0411 Introduction to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities 3 Credits

Candidates develop an understanding and working knowledge of intellectual and developmental disabilities in this core course, which emphasizes the definitional, medical, psychosocial, and educational issues that affect the lives of people who have been diagnosed as having intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. This course requires a fieldwork component as part of the evaluation process.

SE 0413 Theories of and Introduction to Learning Disabilities 3 Credits

This core course introduces candidates to the various types of learning disabilities, exploring various theoretical constructs pertaining to numerous facets of the disorder (e.g., cognition, executive functioning, attention deficits, etc.). Candidates examine educational and social emotional sequelae and implications of specific receptive, memory, and expressive processing impairments on learning using actual case evaluations. The important role of assessment in the identification process, in response to intervention (RTI), and in creating instructional educational goals is emphasized. This course requires a fieldwork component as part of the evaluation process.

SE 0417 Introduction to Children and Youth with Social and Emotional Disturbances 3 Credits

This core course introduces candidates to emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) in students K-12. Symptoms, etiology, diagnostic criteria for special services, and assessment devices are examined that prepare candidates to design instruction around behavioral goals for students whose behavior interferes with learning. Emphasis is placed on typical versus atypical social and emotional development, the identification process, analysis of behavior and functional behavior assessment (FBA), evidence-based cognitive behavioral interventions and the development of positive behavior support plans. This course requires a fieldwork component as part of the evaluation process.

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 0429 Principles of Structured Literacy I: Fundamentals of Reading and Language Development 3 Credits

This course covers the foundational concepts of oral and written language including the language processing requirements of proficient reading and writing: phonological, orthographic, morphologic, semantic, syntactic, and discourse processing. Candidates will learn other aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing such as attention, executive function, memory, processing speed, and grapho-motor control. Candidates will learn the typical developmental progression of oral language (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic), phonological skills, printed word recognition, spelling, and reading fluency. Candidates will also learn how the relationships among major components of literacy development change with reading development (i.e. changes in oral language, including phonological awareness; phonics and word recognition, spelling; and reading and writing fluency). The research and instructional strategies for phonological awareness, systematic phonics, and reading fluency will be taught. Crosslisted with RLD 0429.

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 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 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 0529 Principles of Structured Literacy II: Essentials of Decoding and Encoding 3 Credits

This course covers vocabulary and comprehension research and explicit instructional strategies. The candidate will learn about the role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in comprehension. This course includes research-based comprehension teaching strategies that are appropriate for before, during, and after reading that promote reflective reading (e.g., prediction, prior knowledge, monitoring, think-aloud, text structure, visual representation, mental imagery, summarization, questions-questioning, etc.). Candidates will learn the factors that contribute to deep comprehension including background knowledge, vocabulary, verbal reasoning ability, knowledge of literary structures and conventions, and use of skills and strategies for close reading of text. Semantics, the ability to identify examples of meaningful word relationships or semantic organization and syntax, the ability to distinguish among phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses in sentence structure, are presented. This course includes an introduction to discourse organization, explaining the difference between narrative and expository text and knowledge of cohesive devices in text and inferential gaps in the surface of text. Crosslisted with RLD 0529.

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 presents curriculum and methods for use with students having mild to moderate disabilities in learning.

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: ED 0350 or SE 0405.

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 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/Fall.

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, fulltime 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.

Faculty**Assistant Professor**

Martin, *Co-Director*

Assistant Visiting Professor

Shamash, *Co-Director*