

MASTER OF ARTS AND SIXTH YEAR CERTIFICATE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION WITH INITIAL CERTIFICATION

Certification Requirements

The certification program in comprehensive special education at Fairfield University is sequentially organized across categories, providing participants with a frame of reference for evaluating the learning strengths and weaknesses of each child with exceptional learning needs (ELN).

The planned professional comprehensive program in special education is presented according to the format of Connecticut certification law and includes courses in the following areas:

- **Psychoeducational Theory and Development of Individuals with Exceptionalities**

Developmental growth from infancy to adulthood is a baseline against which children with exceptionalities are viewed. Various theories pertaining to areas of disability are also presented and explored.

- **Diagnosis of Children and Youth with Exceptionalities**

Graduate candidates possessing developmental information and theoretical foundations can view each child with an exceptionality against this background and thereby assess developmental strengths and weaknesses, and identify exceptional learning needs.

- **Program Planning and Education of Children and Youth with Exceptionalities**

Courses survey, analyze, and evaluate programs available for children with disabilities. Theory, development, diagnostic procedures, curricula, and methods are used as the baseline for comparison and for the development of individualized education plans designed to meet each student's needs.

- **Curriculum and Methods of Teaching Children and Youth with Exceptionalities**

The teaching process, although based upon sound diagnosis and expert knowledge of developmental sequences of education, must deal with each child's unique ways of functioning. The teacher cannot proceed without knowledge of the child's style of learning, tolerance for anxiety, attention, pace of cognitive processing, capacity for organization, and capability for developing appropriate relationships. Opportunity is provided within the special education program for future professional educators to be exposed to such variables. The future professional educator is expected to learn to observe children, to understand them, and to modify programs and plans to address the variables, as well as be able to shift gears, shift areas, and use several alternative approaches to achieve the same end goal.

- **Student Teaching in Special Education**

The student teaching experiences are designed to provide opportunities for the graduate candidate to engage in professional practice as a special education teacher under the supervision of University, school, and educational agency personnel. The experience offers the graduate candidate exposure in various settings to observe, evaluate, plan, instruct, and interact with pupils having special learning needs and challenging behaviors. Requirements are detailed in the Special Education Program Student Teaching

Handbook. Placements are coordinated through the Director of Teacher Education in collaboration with the candidate's advisor. An application for student teaching must be submitted to the Director of Teacher Education in the semester prior to the start of student teaching. Candidates work with a minimum of two different exceptionality categories and may have experiences at two different grade levels. Candidates must student teach in a district other than where they are currently working. Additionally, the student teaching placement must be in a diverse setting in comparison to current/past teaching experience.

- **Course Plans and Institutional Endorsement**

Special education course planning is in concert with the candidate's advisor.

The certification regulations in effect at the time of application for Connecticut certification must be met for the University to issue an institutional endorsement.

Requirements

Initial Educator Certification Sequence of Courses

The following list of courses is designed to reflect the current plan of study required by Fairfield University for Connecticut certification as an initial educator in comprehensive special education (51 credits). To be considered for an initial certificate and/or to receive an institutional endorsement from the Connecticut Department of Education, a candidate must successfully complete all coursework in the planned program, pass all PRAXIS (Praxis Core and Praxis II) assessments and the Foundations of Reading Test and the edTPA portfolio assessment required by the state for the intended certification, and pass the program's Comprehensive Examination in Special Education. The program for those seeking an initial certificate in special education is designed so that candidates first earn a Master of Arts degree (30 credits).

During the final semester of the MA, students make application to be awarded the MA degree and complete an abbreviated application for admittance into the SYC program. Application for admittance to the SYC is reviewed by the Director of Programs in Special Education and the faculty. At this time, candidates whose personal/dispositional qualities are deemed not appropriate to the field may be denied recommendation for admission to the certification portion of this Initial Certification Program. Please note that the Disposition Statement presented in this catalog is applicable to the special education programs as it is to all programs offered by the School of Education and Human Development.

Once admitted to the SYC program, candidates complete the additional 21 credits required for certification.

Master of Arts

Code	Title	Credits
SPED 5401	Augmentative Alternative Communications and Assistive Technologies	3
SPED 5403	Foundations in Research and Evaluation of Psychoeducational Issues in Special Education	3
SPED 5410	Autism Spectrum Disorders: Theories and Interventions	3

SPED 5411	Introduction to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities	3
SPED 5413	Theories of and Introduction to Learning Disabilities	3
SPED 5417	Introduction to Children and Youth with Social and Emotional Disturbances	3
SPED 5419	Special Learners in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom	3
SPED 5432	Management Techniques in Special Education	3
SPED 5486	Developmental Literacy I: Fundamentals of Reading and Language Development	3
SPED 5487	Developmental Literacy II: Essentials of Vocabulary and Text Comprehension	3
SPED 6999	Comprehensive Examination in Special Education	0
Total Credits		30

Sixth Year Certificate

The following 21 credits are required to complete the initial certification sequence:

Code	Title	Credits
SPED 6534	Skill Development for Individualized Educational Plans	3
SPED 6537	Curriculum and Methods for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities	3
SPED 6550	Collaboration and Consultation for the Special Educator	3
SPED 6561	Diagnostic Procedures in Special Education of Youth with Disabilities	3
SPED 6953	Student Teaching in Special Education	3
SPED 6954	Student Teaching/DSAP Seminar in Special Education	3
EDUC 6598	edTPA Portfolio ¹	0
Total Credits		18

¹ \$300 edTPA registration fee required

Note: Candidates are eligible to request an endorsement for initial certification after successfully completing the above courses.

9 CREDITS Self-Design

In collaboration with their academic advisor, candidates select 9 credits to complete the Sixth Year Certificate. Courses from EDTC, PSYG, EDUC, and/or programs that are related to the candidate's area of focus in special education may be used to fulfill these requirements.