

# SPECIAL EDUCATION TRACK

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.

This program provides the preparation required by the Connecticut State Department of Higher Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the Council for Exceptional Children. Candidates will be eligible to earn a Connecticut Initial Educator Certificate in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs in grades Pre-K-12 (Comprehensive Special Education).

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 their program, whose academic performance is marginal 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 School of Education and Human Development.

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**  
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 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 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.

## • 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

Code	Title	Credits
<b>First Year Fall &amp; Spring</b>		
EDUC 2201	Explorations in Education	3
<b>Sophomore Year Fall &amp; Spring</b>		
EDUC 3350	Special Learners in the Mainstream	3
SPED 4410	Autism Spectrum Disorders: Theories and Interventions	3
SPED 4411	Introduction to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities	3
SPED 4417	Introduction to Children and Youth with Emotional Disturbances	3
<b>Junior Year Fall &amp; Spring</b>		
SPED 4413	Theories of and Introduction to Learning Disabilities	3
SPED 4486	Developmental Literacy I: Fundamentals of Reading and Language Development	3
SPED 4487	Developmental Literacy II: Essentials of Vocabulary and Text Comprehension	3
SPED 4561	Diagnostic Procedures in Special Education of Youth with Disabilities	3
<b>Senior Year Fall &amp; Spring</b>		

SPED 4419	Special Learners in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom	3
SPED 4432	Management Techniques in Special Education	3
SPED 4534	Skill Development for Individualized Educational Plans	3
SPED 4537	Curriculum and Methods for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities	3
SPED 4953	Student Teaching in Special Education	6
SPED 4954	Student Teaching/DSAP Seminar in Special Education	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>48</b>