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Special Education (MA) Program Details

Purpose

The advanced program in special education is an NCATE/NASDTEC (1998-99) approved, rigorous, non-categorical program, with emphasis on serving the needs of school students with high incidence disabilities. The program has been designed to enhance leadership, critical thinking/problem solving, and instructional skills of certified or certifiable teachers and teacher educators. The philosophy of the program is based on the following tenets that emanate from the stipulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and it?s subsequent reauthorizations and amendments, these are such that:

All children are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE);
Children with disabilities should be educated with age grade peers to every extent possible (LRE); and that the Zero Reject policy allows that all students with disabilities be educated to reach their individual potentials.

The advanced program in special education is also based on the inclusion philosophy, such that students with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to engage in the same routines, activities, and lifestyles as students without disabilities. The advanced program also addresses preparation for meeting the needs of students who have exceptional gifts and talents. In addition, the advanced program aims to strengthen educators? collaboration, team work, integration of technology, and research as applicable to provide necessary supports and services for students with disabilities in today?s educational settings. The advanced program in special education, therefore, primarily focuses on the sound rationale that extensive opportunities should be provided to program participants for the exploration of varied theoretical orientations and ideologies that significantly impact upon the development and utilization of best practices in the field of Special Education.

The advanced program in special education at Delaware State University is aligned with the Professional Education Unit?s conceptual model, with its component standards as follows: Diversity, Interpersonal Communication, Reflection, Effective Instruction/Assessment Strategies, Content and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills (DIRECT), Delaware State Teaching Standards (DSTS), and with the National Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Professional Practice Standards for instruction, assessment, behavior management, communication, consultation, and collaboration, inclusion, multi-cultural education, transition, the integration of technology to provide supports for all students to access the curriculum, and research necessary to maintain and further the field of Special Education.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the advanced program in special education are to:

1. Prepare certified or certifiable educators to engage in the responsibilities of leadership in

special education in both public and private sectors.
    1. Develop an understanding of program planning, funding, and implementations of programs and projects.
    2. Conduct program evaluations.
    3. Develop supervisory skills.
    4. Understand multidisciplinary service delivery, including inter and intra-agency communication, consultation, and collaboration.
    5. Facilitate parent participation in the assessment and education decision making processes .
    6. Accurately and effectively implement the legal aspects of special education.
2. Prepare certified or certifiable educators to employ critical thinking and problem solving knowledge and skills as they relate to working in a variety of special education and inclusive settings.
    1. Conduct quantitative and qualitative research utilizing various appropriate methodologies.
    2. Develop analytical and synthetical skills.
    3. Conduct research and assessment with diverse populations that is not culturally biased.
3. Prepare certified or certifiable educators to apply theoretical knowledge, to the development and implementation of current best practices in instruction, assessment, behavior management, materials selection and development, communication, consultation and collaboration, working with families and community agencies, inclusion, multicultural education, transition, technology, and research.
    1. Understand the historical, philosophical, and legal foundations of special education.
    2. Serve a diverse community of learners as it relates to special education.
    3. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of assessment procedures.
    4. Develop the necessary linkages between assessment and effective instruction in relation to program planning.
    5. Design and implement effective instructional strategies and curricula.
    6. Plan and manage classroom routines and behaviors.
    7. Consult and collaborate with various constituencies.
    8. Develop and implement plans and strategies to facilitate effective transitions from school to adult living.
    9. Integrate technology to enhance student learning.

Requirements

A special education masters program candidate must have completed nine to twelve (9-12) credit hours of masters level work, applied for candidacy, and been accepted into the Masters in Special Education Program. The program requirements component of the advanced program in special education includes courses of study that provide a strong foundation in knowledge of educational principles, practice and current trends, with emphasis on research in education. The required component also focuses on skills and practices that all students in the program must know and be able to perform as special educators and teacher educators. Whereas, the elective component of the program provides a window for participating graduate candidates to prepare in one or more areas of special education as specified by their choices related to their future professional goals. Thus, required course work provides depth and breadth in special education, while elective courses provide opportunities to specialize in one or more aspects of special education. The current Master of Arts in Special Education

requires that candidates take nine (9) three credit hour courses in the required component, and three (3) electives, covering a variety of topics (see program curriculum), for a total of thirty six (36) credit hours.

This program, in and of itself, does not lead to certification in special education. It is designed for certified or certifiable participants, who have taken the prerequisite courses that prepare them for certification in special education (see Masters of Arts in Teaching Elementary Special Education, and/or Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Special Education. These programs require 55 and 51 credit hours respectively because they include the required content strands that lead to certification). Certification is determined by the Delaware State Department of Education. Note: Additional content area course work may be necessary for Secondary Special Educators who wish to be considered highly qualified in the areas they teach.

REQUIRED COURSES [1]

Capstone Options

Program candidates have the option to choose between a six-hour research thesis, or complete 30 program credit hours and either a global comprehensive exam, or a scholarly multi-media research presentation as their capstone experience. These options are as follows:

1. **Research Thesis**: Students selecting the research thesis option must satisfactorily conduct an empirical research study and successfully defend the research study before a duly convened faculty committee.
2. **Scholarly Research and Multi-media Presentation**: This option requires students to write a research paper and present the contents of the paper in a multi-media presentation to a faculty committee.

Course Descriptions:

EDUC-611. THEORY TO PRACTICE IN EDUCATING INDIVIDUALS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

This course assists educators to identify, understand, and develop curriculum for meeting the exceptional needs of learners across ages and levels of intensity. Principles of practice and program development will be explored in light of accepted models and theoretical structures. 3 credits.

EDUC-621. TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
This course examines the infusion of technology in special education and general education classrooms and settings to support the learning of students who require special educational services. Students in this course will compare and analyze the utilization of technology for this purpose in the Unites States of America and other countries. Human factors and resources will be considered in the selection of devices, adaptation, and modification to accommodate the instructional and curriculum access of learners with disabilities. Prerequisite 12-611. 3 credits.

EDUC-625. INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICS AND RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION
This course covers application of basic statistical techniques and research methodologies employed in qualitative and quantitative research in education. Students will be introduced to descriptive and inferential statistics and the design of research. The focus of the course will be primarily on action research. 3 credits.

EDUC-628. CURRICULUM, METHODS, AND MATERIALS IN SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION
This course is designed to impart knowledge and skills in curriculum development, transition assessment and program planning, adaptations, modifications, and accommodations needed for individual students with disabilities to access curricula and make successful transitions to adult living and career development. (This course is for Secondary Special Education only.) 3 credits.

EDUC-629. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS
This course imparts specific knowledge and skills involved in utilizing formal and informal instruments and techniques to assess the strengths, needs, interests, and preferences of individuals with exceptional social and learning needs. Emphasis is placed on providing students with knowledge and skills necessary for selecting, administering, interpreting, evaluating, and reporting results from measurement and/or screening instruments and techniques commonly employed by professionals to facilitate special education placement, accommodations, and program decisions. 3 credits.

EDUC-630. CURRICULUM, METHODS, AND MATERIALS IN ELEMENTARY SPECIAL EDUCATION
This course is designed to impart knowledge and skills in curriculum development, adaptations, modifications, and accommodations for individuals with exceptional needs in a variety of elementary educational settings. Students will model and practice the selection and use of commercially available and teacher-made materials. (This course is for Elementary Special Education only.) 3 credits.

EDUC-633. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT
This course demonstrates various approaches, programs, and methods for assessing and implementing behavior change in classrooms and related settings. Emphasis is placed on the creation of a safe and conducive learning environment for all learners. Students model and demonstrate individual and group management techniques. Consideration is given to age and developmental level, cultural and familial expectations, and learning characteristics. 3 credits.

EDUC-640. MULTI-CULTURAL EDUCATION
This course explores the use of knowledge about cultures in the schooling process; presents

specific teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and communication strategies that have proven to be effective with culturally diverse populations; explores ways to identify and alleviate negative bias and prejudice in teaching materials, assessment instruments, school practices, and school organization. 3 credits.

EDUC-644/683. USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT
This course addresses current technologies from a practitioner?s point of view. The Internet, World Wide Web and production software are sued with the intent to make informed decisions both administratively and instructionally. Advance students will have the opportunity to focus on emerging technologies in their applications from the viewpoint of planning, enhanced communications, managing information, delivery of instruction and the latest technologies used by professionals in their respective fields. 3 credits.

EDUC-648. THEORIES OF INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM DESIGN
The course design provides an opportunity for graduate candidates to supplement their theoretical knowledge of curriculum and instruction by developing units or courses in step-by-step fashion. Participants design an actual course of instruction with the asset of guidelines and theoretical base. This combination of theory and process provide educators with a unique approach to learning curriculum development and enhancement skills. 3 credits

EDUC-602. IDENTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS WHO COME FROM DISADVANTAGED SITUATIONS
In this course, students learn to identify characteristics of the school population which have been classified as disadvantages. Students model and demonstrate approaches and techniques to ensure that all students access the curriculum which have proven successful at local and National levels. 3 credits.

EDUC-607/-633. THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
Study of techniques for managing the special education classroom. Behavioral and humanistic approaches are examined and evaluated in relation to managing both instructional programs and student behaviors. Individual and group management techniques will be explored. Consideration will be given to age, developmental level, behavioral, and learning characteristics of school students. 3 credits.

EDUC-608 . DIAGNOSTIC TEACHING OF READING
Analysis of the diagnostic teaching of reading and literacy; a review of current research and opinion; evaluation of materials, techniques, and programs for assessment and prescription of reading techniques. Practicum in implementing and evaluating a diagnostic-prescriptive reading program. 3 credits.

EDUC-609. IDENTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS AND TALENTS
In this course, participants will learn and discuss the process and issues involved with identifying, instructing, and providing social and learning supports for students who are classified as having exceptional gifts and talents. They will become familiar with national incentives and various statewide programs for students in this category of special education services. 3 credits.

EDUC-632. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
This course is focused on the areas of program planning, project development, and budgeting

for special education programs and services using federal, state, and local funding sources, faculty and staff development in-service programs, program evaluation, and supervision of special education and related service personnel. Additional topics addressed in this course are the relationships among special educators, general educators, and vocational educators in transition and program planning, working with families and advocates, inter-agency collaboration and cooperation in meeting the exceptional needs of individuals with disabilities. 3 credits.

EDUC-634 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
This course provides for an intensive study of the educational implications and ramifications of current issues in the fields of special education, human services, employment, and housing for persons with disabilities. An in-depth study of a particular problem area is required of each student. 3 credits.

EDUC-635 COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES
This course is designed for special educators, general educators, and vocational educators who need to be involved with research, methods, and techniques of guiding and counseling students, and their families. Topics include programming, services, and supports for students who are considered to have social and emotional maladjustment. Engineering group dynamics and structuring classroom activities to develop social awareness, knowledge, and skill-streaming are emphasized. Increased collaboration and cooperation with community mental health and developmental disabilities resources is promoted. 3 credits.

EDUC-636 LEGISLATION, LITIGATION, AND FINANCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Students in this course examine the impact of legislation, litigation, and funding that provides the basis for providing special education supports and services. Students explore and examine the roles of parents, educators, other professionals, and community representatives. They analyze how special education supports are financed at federal, state, and local levels. 3 credits.

EDUC-637 ISSUES IN SECONDARY TRANSITION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
Students in this course identify current issues related to secondary transition and vocational education (i.e., development and implementation of curriculum, using instructional strategies, infusing technologies, collaborating and coordinating to promote the development of self-determination skills and career development of individuals with disabilities.) Participants intensely study the educational implications and issues in relation to increasingly diverse, inclusive educational settings and classroom learning environments. Special emphasis is placed on life-long career development, vocational education, the role of rehabilitation services, and transitions of students with disabilities from school to adult living. Program candidacy is required. 3 credits.

EDUC-638 SEMINAR IN SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
Candidates in this course undertake a comprehensive study of specific topics in the education of individuals with disabilities. This study will be announced periodically and offered through the graduate seminar. Permission of the Program Coordinator or Department Chair must be secured in writing and filed in the Office of Graduate Programs prior to enrolling in this course. 3 credits.

EDUC-699 THESIS OPTION
Candidates seeking the Master of Arts Degree in Special Education at Delaware State

University will complete one of the following options: 1.) An approved program consisting of thirty six (36) credit hours, or (2.) a thesis plus and approved program consisting of 30 credit hours. Said thesis must be prepared according to the specifications of the Education Graduate Program Office. A preliminary application must be submitted to the Education Graduate Program Director in the semester prior to registration for the thesis credit. 6 credits.

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Source URL: http://desu.edu/health-and-public-policy/special-education-ma-program-details

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