

Special Education (MA)

Introduction

Candidates in the Special Education Master of Arts degree program develop leadership skills in an area of critical needs. This degree prepares special educators for leadership positions in research, professional development, collaboration, policy analysis, program management, and other activities that advance the standards of Special Education.

This MA program, in and of itself, does not lead to certification in special education. Should a candidate wish to complete an MA program that leads to initial certification in Elementary or Secondary Special Education, they must complete additional designated courses and pass PRAXIS I and PRAXIS II (in Special Education K-12).

Professional Preparation

Using a combination of coursework and hands-on experiences in real settings, candidates gain a firm knowledge of best practices in assessment, instruction, behavior intervention, Response to Intervention (RTI), collaboration and consultation with families and related service providers, and transition from school to adult living and working for learners with exceptional needs. The program embraces the core tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), focusing on inclusion, self-determination, and equal opportunity.

Faculty

Faculty members in the Education Department have terminal degrees and offer more than academic instruction. They act as mentors and advisors, taking a personal interest in students to help them meet the rigors of their academic preparation. Education faculty represent a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and have an impressive list of achievements in research and publishing, as well as excellent leadership roles within the professional community.

Research and Experience

All Master of Arts in Special Education candidates must complete a Capstone Project, which can take one of the following forms:

(a) Research Thesis: Students must conduct an empirical research study, develop and write a thesis, and defend it before a faculty committee, or (b) Scholarly research and multimedia presentation: Students must write a scholarly research paper and deliver the contents in a multimedia presentation to a faculty committee.

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