SPECIAL EDUCATION, M.S.

The M.S. degree program in special education offers two master’s tracks including a teacher certification track and a general track. The teacher certification and general master’s tracks prepare students to serve as resources and advocates for students with disabilities and their families, and to work cooperatively with schools and community agencies to improve the quality of life for students with disabilities. Graduates of the master’s program who are also certified to teach are eligible to apply for two Wisconsin Cross-Categorical Special Education licenses (Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence, ages 6–12/13, and Early Adolescence through Adolescence, ages 10–21).

Special education is one of the two academic areas in the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education. The areas are joined by a common mission of preparing professional leadership personnel to address the educational and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities across the life span. Both special education and rehabilitation psychology offer programs leading to Ph.D., M.S., and B.S. degrees. Special education addresses the needs of children, youth, and young adults through its teacher education, research and service programs. Rehabilitation psychology addresses the needs of older youth, young adults, and adults by preparing rehabilitation counselors at the M.S. level and rehabilitation counselor educators at the Ph.D. level. Department faculty in both areas join resources to provide training and research programs that promote successful transition from school to the world of work, postsecondary, education and successful psychosocial adaptation for individuals with disabilities.

Faculty research interests focus, on research methods, reading, adolescence, transition, vocational education, and diversity and equity issues in the field of special education. The department is a national and international leader in preparing Ph.D. professionals to serve in leadership positions in university teaching, research, and program administration. This leadership is evidenced by the publication and research record of its faculty and graduates, and by the routine placement of Ph.D. graduates in major universities and colleges. The program develops researchers and leaders who contribute to creating, integrating and disseminating new knowledge related to the education of individuals with disabilities.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.S., with available general, and teacher certification tracks

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

M.S. general track: 30 credits

M.S. teacher certification track: 30 credits (this track incorporates a professional program; average number of credits taken by students exceeds 30 credits).

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

16 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

M.S. general track:

15 credits must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

M.S. teacher certification track:

36 credits must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Students are allowed to count graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

With program approval, students are allowed to count 7 credits of coursework numbered 300 level or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree toward the graduate degree. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

M.S. general track: 30 graduate degree credits to include:

• RP & SE 700 Seminar: Rehabilitation Psychology Research
• Additional coursework to be determined in consultation with faculty advisor
• Master’s comprehensive exam
• Project and/or thesis (to be determined in consultation with faculty advisor)

M.S. teacher certification track: 30 graduate credits to include:

• Completion of the four-semester full time, sequenced Special Education teacher certification program (see attached).
• RP & SE 700 Seminar: Rehabilitation Psychology Research
• Completion of additional program related coursework before student teaching (may be met through prior coursework): RP & SE 300
Students are assigned a faculty mentor upon admission to the program.

ASSSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Master’s comprehensive exam
Project and/or thesis

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Master’s degree students who are absent for five or more years will not be given credit for prior work.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

No language requirements.

ADMISSIONS

Application information is available on the department website (http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/programs/graduate-degree-programs/special-education-graduate-programs/application-requirements-and-deadlines). Applicants are expected to meet general requirements for admission to the Graduate School. The admissions committee considers a variety of factors including academic preparation, letters of recommendation, personal statement, and professional experiences.

NO LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00 GPA required.

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

PROBATION POLICY

A semester GPA below 3.0 will result in the student being placed on academic probation. If a semester GPA of 3.0 is not attained during the subsequent semester of full time enrollment (or 12 credits of enrollment if enrolled part-time) the student may be dismissed from the program or allowed to continue for one additional semester based on advisor appeal to the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Students are assigned a faculty mentor upon admission to the program.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- General Master’s Program: Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in the field of study.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Special Education Advocacy and Leadership: Students will be prepared to advocate for and provide leadership in the education of students with a wide array of learning, cognitive, social/emotional and behavioral disabilities in accordance with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children.
- General Master’s Program: Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Special Education Advocacy and Leadership: Students will use knowledge of learners and human development to create responsive, inclusive, and respectful learning activities and environments that maximize learners’ cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development. Students will apply this knowledge to special education practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.
- General Master’s Program: Demonstrates understanding of the primary field of study in a historical, social, or global context.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Learner & Learning Environment: Students will use knowledge of learners and human development to create responsive, inclusive, and respectful learning activities and environments that maximize learners’ cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development. Students will apply this knowledge to special education practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.
- General Master’s Program: Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Learner & Learning Environment: Students will use knowledge of learners and human development to create responsive, inclusive, and respectful learning activities and environments that maximize learners’ cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development. Students will apply planning knowledge and skills to special education practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.
- General Master’s Program: Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Engage and Instruct: Students will use knowledge of learners, contexts, disciplines, pedagogies and standards to plan and adjust developmentally appropriate and challenging learning activities and assessments. Students will apply planning knowledge and skills to special education practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.
- General Master’s Program: Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of study.
- Master’s with Teacher Certification Program—Assess: Students will create and implement meaningful assessments and use assessment results to inform instruction, communicate with parents and others, and provide feedback to learners to guide their future performance and learning. Students will use research to implement evidence-based practices in the field of special education. Students will apply assessment knowledge and skills to special education practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- General Master's Program: Students recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.
- Master's with Teacher Certification—Professionalism and Ethics: Students will exhibit professionalism and adhere to ethical practices as they continue their own development and collaborate with others to improve their profession, school communities, and outcomes for students and families. Students will apply principles of professionalism and ethics to special education contexts as outlined in the practices as outlined in the student teaching handbook.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Bal, Chan (department chair), Doren (Special Education area chair), Gonzalez, Hanley-Maxwell, Phillips, Rosenthal, Ruppar, Smedema, Trainor, Tansey, Wilkerson