

SPECIAL EDUCATION, M.S.

The M.S. degree in Special Education prepares 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. The M.S. degree in Special Education offers two named options: the Teacher Certification program and the Research and Theory program.

Graduates of the Teacher Certification program are eligible to apply for Wisconsin K-12 cross-categorical Special Education licensure. The program is an applied professional training program, preparing students to go directly into positions as Special Education teachers. Students enrolled in this program are not permitted to accept teaching assistantships, project assistantships, research assistantships, or other graduate appointments that would result in a tuition waiver. Additionally, students are unable to take courses outside the required courses listed under the "Requirements" section or dual major while in this program.

The Research and Theory program option focuses on graduate-level research and theory in the field of Special Education. A plan of study generally includes multiple research courses and theory courses in Special Education as well as related coursework from other departments that contribute to the student's academic and research interests. The program deepens students' academic preparation to understand key questions and issues in the field of special education and to strengthen students' analytical and research skills. These skills contribute to the development of high-quality scholars and leaders in the field. Most graduates choose to pursue further study in a doctoral program, or to pursue positions in schools or community-based agencies, or advocacy organizations that promote independence and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

Special Education faculty research focuses on the following areas:

- Research methodologies in special education
- Diversity and equity issues in the field of special education
- Literacy and reading instruction for individuals with disabilities
- Teacher education and preparation of high-quality special education teachers
- Evidence-based interventions with students with severe disabilities including multiple disabilities, intellectual disability and autism
- Special education issues in adolescence, transitional and vocational education