The Ph.D. degree is a research-based program preparing leaders in the field of special education to bring systemic change to educational and community settings in ways that improve access and equity for children and youth with disabilities and their families. The program provides research, teaching and service experiences that prepare graduates to address issues in the field including:

- Improving teacher preparation in special education
- Increasing equity across increasingly diverse groups of students
- Improving post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- Enhancing teacher efficacy in secondary education methodologies with students with disabilities

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.

Financial support, although limited, is available to qualified graduate students and may include scholarships, traineeships, teaching assistantships, and research/project assistantships. Prospective students should see the program website (http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/programs/funding-and-financial-aid) for funding information.

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.

**DOCTORAL DEGREES**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT**

56 credits

**MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT**

32 credits

**MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT**

28 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 ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE**

No credits taken as an undergraduate are allowed to count toward the post-master’s credits for the degree.

**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 toward the minimum graduate degree credit requirement; those courses numbered 700 level or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student may count toward the minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED**

- 20 credits of seminar to include: RP & SE 871 Foundations of Special Education, RP & SE 872 Seminar in Special Education Research, RP & SE 873 Professional Development for Future Special Education Researchers and Faculty in Higher Education, RP & SE 710 Multicultural Issues in Special Education and additional credits to reach 20 with courses identified in consultation with faculty advisor. (Choice courses are listed as RP & SE 660s, or special topics, and include issues in teacher education and diversity—focused and adolescence—focused courses).
- 6 credits Internships to include RP & SE 930 Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology-Practice Teaching and RP & SE 941 Internship: Research
• 9 credits academic minor to be chosen in consultation with faculty advisor.
• 15 credits of research design and statistics to include: ED PSYCH 760 Statistical Methods Applied to Education I, ED PSYCH 761 Statistical Methods Applied to Education II, CURRIC/COUN PSY/ED POL/ED PSYCH/ELPA/RP & SE 719 Introduction to Qualitative Research, and other research/statistics courses chosen in consultation with faculty advisor
• 6 credits RP & SE 990 Research or Thesis (dissertation)
• Exams (not directly linked to coursework to include qualifying, preliminary, and dissertation

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS
All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.

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
When a student is first admitted to the doctoral program a faculty member in the special education area will assume major advisor responsibilities on a temporary basis. In many instances, the doctoral student-major advisor relationship established at the time of admission will extend throughout the doctoral program. However, both the student and the major advisor have the prerogative to change the relationship should personal, academic, or other considerations make it necessary. If a change is desired, the matter should be discussed first by the major advisor and the student. If the student and/or the major advisor can arrange for another faculty member to assume major advisor responsibilities, the name of the new major advisor should be submitted in writing to the SEGSC. If the student and/or the major advisor cannot arrange for a new major advisor, a written request for one should be submitted to the SEGSC. The SEGSC will take reasonable actions designed to assist the student to arrange for a new major advisor.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXaminATIONS
Formal admission to doctoral study

Preliminary examination: Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis).

Dissertation Final Oral Committee Examination

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Doctoral students have five years from the date of passing the preliminary examination to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation. In some departments, if the professor(s) in charge is satisfied with the preparation, the preliminary examination may be construed as the final examination.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination within five years after passing the preliminary examination is required to take another preliminary examination and be admitted to candidacy a second time.

Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.

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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Conceptual Knowledge: Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques within and beyond the current boundaries of knowledge, or practice within the field of study; demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
• Research Skills: Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of study; creates research, scholarship, or performance that makes a substantive contribution.
• Teaching/Advising Skills: Shares knowledge and research in the field with students in a clear and engaging manner; effectively communicates with students within and outside of class; advances contributions of the field of study to society.
• Communication and Leadership Skills: Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner to a variety of audiences.
• Service: Participates in public and professional service.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Professionalism/Ethics: Demonstrates the ability to work well with others, participates in professional organizations, adheres to ethical standards of research protocol and professional behavior.

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