

SPECIAL EDUCATION, MS

The MS 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 MS 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

ADMISSIONS

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Students apply to the MS in Special Education through one of the named options:

- Research and Theory (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-ms/special-education-research-theory-ms/>)
- Teacher Certification (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-ms/special-education-teacher-certification-ms/>)

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

For current funding opportunities, visit the department's Funding and Financial Aid page (<https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/admissions-and-aid/funding-and-financial-aid/>).

Special Education with Teacher Certification Program Restrictions

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.

Teacher Pledge

The School of Education pledges to pay the equivalent of in-state tuition and fees, testing, and licensing costs for all teacher education students, including Special Education Teacher Certification MS students. In return, you pledge to work at a Wisconsin PK-12 school for three to four years after graduation. Restrictions apply. Please see the Teacher Education Center's website (<https://tec.education.wisc.edu/teacher-pledge/>) for more information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum Credit Requirement	See Named Option for policy information.
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	See Named Option for policy information.

Overall	See Named Option for policy information.
Graduate	
GPA	
Requirement	
Other Grade	n/a
Requirements	
Assessments and Examinations	See Named Option for policy information.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Select a Named Option for required courses.

NAMED OPTIONS

A named option is a formally documented sub-major within an academic major program. Named options appear on the transcript with degree conferral. Students pursuing the Master of Science in Special Education must select one of the following named options:

View as listView as grid

- **SPECIAL EDUCATION: RESEARCH AND THEORY, MS ([HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/GRADUATE/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-MS/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-RESEARCH-THEORY-MS/](http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-ms/special-education-research-theory-ms/))**
- **SPECIAL EDUCATION: TEACHER CERTIFICATION, MS ([HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/GRADUATE/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-MS/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-TEACHER-CERTIFICATION-MS/](http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-teacher-certification-ms/))**

POLICIES

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Students should refer to one of the named options for policy information:

- Research and Theory (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-ms/special-education-research-theory-ms/>)
- Teacher Certification (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/rehabilitation-psychology-special-education/special-education-ms/special-education-teacher-certification-ms/>)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. (Research and Theory option) Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in the field of study.
2. (Research and Theory option) Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
3. (Research and Theory option) Demonstrates understanding of the primary field of study in a historical, social, or global context.
4. (Research and Theory option) Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
5. (Research and Theory option) Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
6. (Research and Theory option) Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of study.
7. (Teacher Certification option) Special Education Advocacy and Leadership: 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.
8. (Teacher Certification option) Professionalism: Adhere to professional ethical standards and conduct her or himself in a courteous and professional manner.
9. (Teacher Certification option) Collaboration and Communication: Collaborate and effectively communicate with students their families, other educators, related service providers and members of the community to address the needs of students with disabilities.
10. (Teacher Certification option) Assessment: Collect information on student backgrounds, learning characteristics and achievement that can be used to determine students' present level of performance and guide instruction.
11. (Teacher Certification option) Special Education Evaluation and Individualized Educational Planning: To the maximum possible the teacher candidate will participate in the Educational Evaluation and Individualized Educational Planning process.
12. (Teacher Certification option) Instructional Planning: Plan instruction that meets the needs of students, is consistent with State and local standards and provides access to the general education curriculum.
13. (Teacher Certification option) Instructional Presentations: Present lessons and units of instruction that gain and maintain student attention and are consistent with students' interests and IEP goals.
14. (Teacher Certification option) Classroom Management: Create and maintain a safe, positive and supportive learning environment that is conducive to learning and the mental health of the students.

PEOPLE

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FACULTY

Rehabilitation Psychology

Malachy Bishop, Jina Chun, Garrett Huck, Kyesha Isadore, Sang Qin, Susan Smedema, Timothy Tansey, and Susan Wiegmann

Special Education

Zhe An, Aydin Bal, Heather Dahl, Sarah Lent, Hailey Love, Dian Mawene, Carlyn Mueller, Andrea Rupp, Susan Syverud, Renee Tennant, Beverly Trezek, Ashley White, and Kimber Wilkerson

STAFF

Kayla Armstrong Alfstad, Rebecca Bradbury, John Loeffelholz, Melissa Otto

For more information about faculty in the Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education Department, see: <https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/fac-staff/>

UW-Madison has taken reasonable efforts to determine whether this program satisfies the educational requirements for certification/licensure in states where prospective and enrolled students are located and is disclosing that information as follows.

Disclaimer: This information is based on the most recent annual review of state agency certification/licensure data and is subject to change. All students are strongly encouraged to consult with the individual/office listed in the Contact Information box on this page and with the applicable state agency for specific information.

The requirements of this program meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Wisconsin

The requirements of this program do not meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Not applicable

Updated: 1 June 2024

CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE

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SPECIAL EDUCATION: TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Recommendation for certification to the state of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for a teaching license also requires successful completion of state mandated certification requirements including:

- Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test - WFoRT: Minimum passing score - 240 or successful completion of the WFoRT Alternative Portfolio Assessment and completion of RP & SE 465 Language and Reading Instruction for Students with Disabilities with a grade of B or higher
- Final Performance Assessment Portfolio

For more information on required tests, see: <https://tec.education.wisc.edu/current-students/applying-for-your-wisconsin-license/>

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE DISCLOSURE (NC-SARA)

The United States Department of Education (via 34 CFR Part 668 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-668/?toc=1>)) requires institutions that provide distance education to disclose information for programs leading to professional certification or licensure. The expectation is that institutions will determine whether each applicable academic program meets state professional licensure requirements and provide a general disclosure of such on an official university website.

Professional licensure requirements vary from state-to-state and can change year-to-year; they are established in a variety of state statutes, regulations, rules, and policies; and they center on a range of educational requirements, including degree type, specialized accreditation, total credits, specific courses, and examinations.