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 cross-categorical Special Education licensure at the middle childhood through early adolescence level (ages 6–12/13), and at the early adolescence through adolescence level (ages 10–21). The program is an applied professional training program, preparing students to go directly into positions as Special Education teachers.

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 course work 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 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. Department faculty in both areas join resources to provide training and research programs that promote successful transition from school to the world of work, post-secondary, education and successful psycho-social adaptation 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

Students apply to the M.S. in Special Education through one of the named options:

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

FUNDING

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 processes related to funding.

There is no guaranteed funding to complete either the Special Education Masters Research Track or the Teacher Certification Track. Periodically, the Department will have grant funding available. Interested applicants should send funding inquiries to rpseinfo@education.wisc.edu

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

Note: The major is currently non-admitting. Students are admitted through one of the named options (sub-majors), below.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Evening/Weekend: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Online: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

Hybrid: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Accelerated: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the
advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Credit Requirement</td>
<td>The Research and Theory named option requires 30 credits. The Teacher Certification option incorporates a professional program in its 43 required credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>16 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the requirement information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</td>
<td>See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the requirement information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments and Examinations</td>
<td>See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the requirement information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Requirements</td>
<td>No language requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIRED COURSES**

Select a Named Option for required courses.

**NAMED OPTIONS (SUB-MAJORS)**

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 list
View as grid

**POLICIES**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

**MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

The Graduate Program Handbook (http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/programs/graduate-degree-programs/forms-and-handouts) is the repository for all of the program’s policies and requirements.

**PRIOR COURSEWORK**

**Graduate Work from Other Institutions**

See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the policy information.

**UW–Madison Undergraduate**

See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the policy information.

**UW–Madison University Special**

See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the policy information.

**PROBATION**

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**

See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the policy information.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**

See either the M.S. named option in Research and Theory or Teacher Certification for the policy information.

**OTHER**

n/a

**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**

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.

15. (Teacher Certification option) Recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.

16. (Teacher Certification option) Adhere to professional ethical standards and conduct her or himself in a courteous and professional manner.

PEOPLE

Faculty:

Rehabilitation Psychology:
Malachy Bishop, Brian Phillips, David Rosenthal, Susan Smedema, and Timothy Tansey

Special Education:
Zhe An, Aydin Bal, Bonnie Doren, Taucia Gonzalez, Melinda Leko, Andrea Ruppar, and Kimber Wilkerson

For more information about faculty in the Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education Department, see: https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty