**SPECIAL EDUCATION, PH.D.**

The Ph.D. program prepares 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 prepares graduates to address pressing issues in the field including increasing equity across diverse groups of students, improving post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities, and enhancing teacher efficacy in special education.

Faculty research focuses on the following areas:
- Research methodologies in 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

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. 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.

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.

**ADMISSIONS**

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/)) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).**

Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>January 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>The program does not admit in the spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>The program does not admit in the summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>May be required in certain cases; consult program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Proficiency Test**

- Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/english-proficiency](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/english-proficiency)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation Required</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application information is available on the department website ([https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/admissions-and-aid](https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/admissions-and-aid)). 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.

**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/](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 RESOURCES**

Financial support is available to admitted students and may include scholarships, traineeships, teaching assistantships, and research/project assistantships. The Special Education Ph.D. program seeks to provide four academic years of funding to qualified admitted students. Funding includes tuition remission and stipend and access to the University’s health insurance program among other benefits. Prospective students should see the program website ([http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/programs/funding-and-financial-aid](http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/programs/funding-and-financial-aid)) for funding information.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

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

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accelerated:</strong> Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students are able to complete a program with minimal disruptions to careers and other commitments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirements Detail

| Minimum Credit Requirement | 54 credits |
| Minimum Residence Credit Requirement | 31 credits |
| Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement | 27 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(http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle/)). |
| Overall Graduate GPA Requirement | 3.00 GPA required. |
| Other Grade Requirements | The Graduate School requires that students maintain a graduate grade-point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) for all graduate courses (excluding research) to receive a degree. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester. |

Assessments and Examinations

Language Requirements No language requirements.

Doctoral Minor/Breadth Requirements All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.

REQUIRED COURSES

Complete a minimum of 54 post-master’s degree credits to include the following:

| Code | Title | Credits |
| Special Education Core/Seminars | | |
| RP & SE 871 | Foundations of Special Education | 3 |
| RP & SE 872 | Seminar in Special Education Research | 3 |
| RP & SE 710 | Multicultural Issues in Special Education | 3 |

Seminars: Additional RP & SE seminar courses, with at least one course focused on adolescence, to reach a total of a minimum of 18 credits of seminar/core courses

RP & SE 660 | Special Topics (Chosen in consultation with faculty advisor) |
RP & SE 715 | Equity and Full Participation for Individuals with Significant Disabilities |
RP & SE 777 | Educating Students in Alternative Settings |

Doctoral Minor (chosen in consultation with faculty advisor) |

Research Design and Statistics

| ED PSYCH 760 | Statistical Methods Applied to Education I | 3 |
| ED PSYCH 761 | Statistical Methods Applied to Education II | 3 |
| RP & SE/COUN PSY/CURRIC/ED POL/ED PSYCH/ELPA 719 | Introduction to Qualitative Research | 3 |

Additional courses in research design/statistics/methods chosen in consultation with the faculty advisor to total a minimum of 15 credits

Internships

| RP & SE 930 | Rehabilitation Counselor Education - Teaching | 3 |
| RP & SE 941 | Internship: Research | 3 |

Dissertation (minimum of 6 credits)

| RP & SE 990 | Research or Thesis | 3 |
| RP & SE 990 | Research or Thesis | 3 |

In addition to the course requirements noted above, students must pass a qualifying examination and a preliminary examination.

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

PRIOR COURSEWORK

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.

UW–Madison Undergraduate

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

**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**

Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission to the program. See the program handbook for additional information about advising.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**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.

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.

**GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
  - Dean of Students Office (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
  - Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
  - Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
  - Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
  - Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
  - Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
  - Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
  - Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Any student who feels that they have been treated unfairly by a faculty or staff member has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing of the grievance, following these grievance procedures. The complaint may concern course grades, classroom treatment, program admission, or other issues. To insure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect both the rights of the student and the person at whom the complaint is addressed, the procedures below are used in the School of Education.

The person whom the complaint is directed against must be an employee of the School of Education. Any student or potential student may use these procedures unless the complaint is covered by other campus rules or contracts. The following steps are available within the School of Education when a student has a grievance:

1. The student should first talk with the person against whom the grievance is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. If the complaint is directed against a teaching assistant, and the student is not satisfied, the next step would be to talk to the TA’s supervisor, who is usually the course professor. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, the student may continue to step 2.

2. If the complaint does not involve an academic department, the procedure outlined in Step 4 below should be followed. If the complaint involves an academic department, the student should contact the chair of the department. The chair will attempt to resolve the problem informally. If this cannot be done to the student’s satisfaction, the student may submit the grievance to the chair in writing. This must be done within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.

3. On receipt of a written complaint, the chair will refer the matter to a departmental committee, which will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed. This response shall be shared with the person filing the grievance. The chair will provide a timely written decision to the student on the action taken by the committee.

4. If either party is not satisfied with the decision of the department, they have five working days from receipt of the decision to contact the dean’s office (at the number below), indicating the intention to appeal. If the complaint does not involve an academic department in the school, the student must contact the dean’s office within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.

5. In either case, there will be an attempt to resolve the issue informally by the associate dean. If this cannot be done, the complaint can be filed in writing with the dean’s office. This must be done within 10 working days of the time the appealing party was notified that informal resolution was unsuccessful.

6. On receipt of such a written complaint, the associate dean will convene a subcommittee of the school’s Equity & Diversity Committee. This subcommittee may ask for additional information from the parties involved and may hold a hearing at which both
parties will be asked to speak separately. The subcommittee will then make a written recommendation to the dean of the School of Education who will render a decision. Unless a longer time is negotiated, this written decision shall be made within 20 working days from the date when the grievance was filed with the dean's office.

Questions about these procedures can be directed to the School of Education Dean's Office, 377 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, 608-262-1763.

State law contains additional provisions regarding discrimination and harassment. Wisconsin Statutes 36.12 reads, in part: “No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the system or its institutions or center because of the student’s race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status.” In addition, UW–System prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. Students have the right to file discrimination and harassment complaints with the Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/), 361 Bascom Hall, 608-265-6018, uwcomplianceoffice@wisc.edu.

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. (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.

2. (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.

3. (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.

4. (Communication and Leadership Skills) Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner to a variety of audiences.

5. (Service) Participates in public and professional service.

6. (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:

Malachy Bishop, David Rosenthal, Susan Smedema, and Timothy Tansey

Special Education:
Zhe An, Aydin Bal, Bonnie Doren, Melinda Leko, Andrea Ruppar, Beverly Trezek, 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 (https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty/)

CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE DISCLOSURE (NC-SARA)

The United States Department of Education requires institutions that provide distance education to disclose information for programs leading to professional certification or licensure about whether each program meets state educational requirements for initial licensure or certification. Following is this disclosure information for this program:

The requirements of this program meet Certification/Licensure in the following states:
Wisconsin

The requirements of this program do not meet Certification/Licensure in the following states:
Not applicable

The requirements of this program have not been determined if they meet Certification/Licensure in the following states: