The Special Education program is the academic home to many students who enjoy working with children and youth, especially children and youth with disabilities. Special Education graduates enter a high-need field with an almost 100% job placement rate, with graduates finding employment in Wisconsin and across the country.

The program prepares educators to serve as resources and advocates for persons with disabilities and their families. This includes being a leader, collaborating with others, and working creatively within and outside schools to create inclusive educational experiences to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Graduates are prepared to work effectively across disability categories, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and emotional/behavioral disorders. The program emphasizes coursework and experiences in elementary, middle, and high schools with students who have a wide range of abilities, including students with severe disabilities.

The Special Education program emphasizes coursework in areas including:

- Assessing learning needs in all core academic areas
- Creating individualized education programs
- Implementing instructional strategies for helping students with a variety of abilities succeed
- Using assistive technology
- Understanding behavior and intervention strategies for social and academic success
- Diversity issues in special education
- Working collaboratively with teachers and other school professionals to create successful inclusive learning environments

Students learn about these topics through a four-semester sequence of coursework, practicum experiences, and student teaching experiences in elementary, middle, and high schools.

**NEW CERTIFICATION OPTIONS!**

The department is thrilled to provide two new certification programs beginning with fall 2022 program admission. The first is a certification program in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). Graduates will be certified in ECSE, ages birth-grade 3. This program prepares early intervention and early childhood special education professionals to serve young children ages birth through eight years who have, or are at-risk for, developmental delays and disabilities, and also the families of these children. Graduates may work in a variety of settings including, but not limited to, the birth-grade 3 program. These might include Early Head Start, Head Start, licensed child care centers, 4K programs, and grades kindergarten-grade 3.

The second new program option will prepare educators to support the needs of students with disabilities ages birth through Grade 12. This program provides a path for students to become certified in both ECSE and Special Education Cross-Categorical K-12. Both new program options require four semesters of professional coursework and include multiple field experiences in local educational settings and schools.

Effective with fall 2022 program admission, new teacher certification licensing options are being implemented at UW-Madison in response to changes in Wisconsin teacher licensing requirements. Pending final approval from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, students admitted to Special Education can pursue one of four certification paths:


Students intending to teach in Wisconsin may be eligible for the Teacher Pledge ([https://tec.education.wisc.edu/teacher-pledge/](https://tec.education.wisc.edu/teacher-pledge/)), an opt-in loan forgiveness program for teacher education students.

Madison College students should also investigate the new transfer agreement ([https://tec.education.wisc.edu/become-a-teacher/uw-madison-school-of-education-transfer-agreement/](https://tec.education.wisc.edu/become-a-teacher/uw-madison-school-of-education-transfer-agreement/)) between Madison College and UW-Madison. Students meeting the requirements of the agreement are guaranteed admission to UW-Madison’s School of Education and to Special Education.

**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DUAL MAJOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

Students interested in Special Education may want to consider another program option that certifies students in both Elementary Education and Special Education. The job placement rate for students graduating from this program is almost 100%. Employment opportunities are available across the country.

The Elementary-Special Education teacher certification program prepares educators who foster high academic achievement in all children—particularly students of color, students from minoritized racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities. The program helps students become leaders who collaborate and work creatively within and outside schools to foster inclusive educational experiences for all pupils, including those with disabilities. Program graduates understand the important role that families play in supporting students’ development and achievement.

This program emphasizes collaboration, with training in both Elementary and Special Education program areas. It focuses on inclusion and gaining a strong background in working with students across disability
categories, including learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, and other high incidence disabilities.

Graduates receive a bachelor of science degree in Education. Effective with fall 2022 program admission, students will be eligible to receive an Elementary Education license in grades K-9 and a Special Education license in grades K-12.

The Elementary Education-Special Education program emphasizes coursework in areas including:

- Recognizing how our backgrounds and experiences shape thinking and actions; reflecting and adapting to best serve students
- Assessing learning needs in all core academic areas
- Creating individualized education programs
- Understanding behavior and intervention strategies for social and academic success
- Diversity and social justice in education
- Working collaboratively with teachers and other school professionals to create successful inclusive learning environments

Students learn about these topics through a four-semester sequence of coursework, practicum experiences, and student-teaching experiences in elementary and middle schools. The sequence begins in the fall after program admission.

Information about requirements and application procedures for the Elementary-Special Education dual teacher certification program is available in the Elementary Education program (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/curriculum-instruction/elementary-education-bse/) section of the Guide.

**PROGESTIVE TRANSFER STUDENTS**

Applicants not already enrolled on the UW–Madison campus must be admissible to the University to enroll in a School of Education program. Admission to UW–Madison requires a separate application and admission process. See UW–Madison Office of Admissions and Recruitment (http://admissions.wisc.edu/) for application information. Prospective transfer students are strongly advised to meet with an advisor in the School of Education Student Services office in advance of their application; call 608-262-1651 or email soeacademicservices@education.wisc.edu to schedule an appointment with an advisor.

**STUDENTS WITH A PREVIOUS DEGREE**

Prospective applicants who already hold an undergraduate degree are strongly encouraged to meet with an advisor in the School of Education Student Services office in advance of their application. Consultations with advisors are available in person, by telephone or online; call 608-262-1651 or email soeacademicservices@education.wisc.edu to schedule an appointment.

Applicants who already hold an undergraduate degree are admitted to the School of Education as either an Education Special student or a second degree student, depending on their interests and academic background. Admission as an Education Special student indicates that the student has an interest in pursuing certification in a subject area studied during the initial degree; another degree is not awarded for this “certification only” coursework. Second degree students are seeking a second, unrelated degree from the School of Education, which may, or may not, include teacher certification. Candidates for limited enrollment programs must meet all admission eligibility requirements for the program and must compete with the eligible applicants for program admission. More information is available here (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#policiesandregulationstext).

**APPLICATION AND ADMISSION**

Certification to teach special education requires that a student be admitted into the professional part of the degree program. The School of Education admits students into the special education program one a year, effective for summer following selection. In recent years the program has been able to accommodate all qualified applicants.
PROGRAM ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Requirements and selection criteria may be modified from one application/admission period to the next. Any changes to these criteria may occur up until the application period begins. Potential applicants should consult the School of Education’s Undergraduate Admissions (http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/) page for application deadlines and detailed information regarding current eligibility requirements and selection criteria prior to submitting an application.

To be eligible for admission to the professional program, applicants must:

• complete at least 40 transferable college-level credits by the end of the fall semester before application.
• successfully complete RP & SE 300 Individuals with Disabilities (3 cr) by the end of the summer semester of the application year.
• earn a minimum 2.5 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale on all transferable college-level coursework attempted.1
• submit all program application form(s), transcripts, and other related application materials by the application deadline specified on the School of Education’s Undergraduate Admissions (http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/) page.

A comprehensive cumulative GPA of all college-level, transferrable coursework attempted on both the UW–Madison campus coursework and coursework taken at any other colleges or universities may be calculated for the exclusive purpose of establishing an applicant’s eligibility for consideration. Both the comprehensive cumulative GPA and the comprehensive cumulative GPA based on a student’s last 60 credits may be calculated. See Last 60 Credits Rule (detailed below). If admitted, students must earn the minimum cumulative GPA for UW–Madison coursework established by their program and the School of Education each semester after admission.

Last 60 Credits Rule

Two grade point averages will be calculated to determine candidates’ eligibility for program consideration. GPAs will be calculated using

• all transferable college level coursework attempted, and
• the last 60 credits attempted.

The higher GPA of these two will be used for purposes of determining eligibility. If fewer than 60 credits have been attempted, all credits will be used to calculate the GPA. Graded graduate coursework will also be used in all GPA calculations. (“Attempted” coursework indicates coursework for which a grade has been earned.) More information on this rule is available here (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/ #policiesandregulationstext).

PROGRAM SELECTION CRITERIA

The special education faculty will review all completed applications that meet eligibility criteria. When reviewing an application, special education faculty want to learn as much about the applicant as possible and will make every effort to take into account the whole person. Applicants are encouraged to provide, in writing, whatever they would want to share in a face-to-face interview.

The selection committee members will consider several factors when selecting students for the program. Although the grade point average (GPA) is considered an important indicator of success, it is not the only basis on which applicants will be selected for admission. Trends in the applicant’s grades, difficulty of course load, and outside work load will be considered (see factors 1, 2, and 3 below).

In addition to the GPA, faculty will consider the following factors:

• College grading and course selection pattern. Transcripts will be examined individually. Account will be taken whether an applicant has clearly followed an unusually easy or difficult pattern of courses or if the GPA reflects a poor grade in an exceptionally difficult subject area.
• Trends of college grades. An applicant who started very poorly or showed a decline in their early phases of college, but performed strongly in later college years, may be judged more favorably than another with the same GPA but level or declining record.
• Diversity of experience or background. Work/life experience, college activity, political activity, and other experiences or background that adds a diverse perspective to the special education student body may work in the applicant’s favor. Volunteer or paid work with people with disabilities will be taken into account in the selection process. Volunteer or paid work with people from a background different than the applicant’s may also be taken into account in the selection process.
• Writing sample (Statement of Purpose). Application materials must include an essay in which the applicant gives reasons for becoming a special education teacher. Writing is so important in the professional life of teachers and in the teacher education program that the quality of the applicant’s writing will be taken into account in making admissions decisions.
• Letters of recommendation. Recommendation letters will play an important role in helping the selection committee judge the applicant’s prospects for academic success in the program. Careful, thoughtful letters from mentors, teachers, or employers will provide information about the applicant’s intellect, imagination, or prospects for becoming a successful teacher. Working with people with disabilities will be taken into account in the selection process. Working with people from a background different than the applicant’s may also be taken into account in the selection process.
• Other factors. The program’s quest for diversity leads the selection committee to take into account fully qualified applicants from under-represented groups. Race, ethnicity, cultural, geographic background, and economic disadvantage are among the factors that will be considered, taking into account the needs of the schools. A full-time or extra heavy part-time work load will be considered a factor in close cases.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is required by law to conduct a background check on each applicant for a Wisconsin educator license. This check is intended to determine if the applicant has engaged in any behavior that endangers the health, welfare, safety or education of PK–12 pupils. Local school districts also will conduct criminal background checks routinely on teacher education students prior to the start of in-classroom field work. Admitted applicants to any teacher education program who have a positive background check should confer with the
Academic Dean’s Office (Room 139 Education, 1000 Bascom Mall) about the potential impact of this on field placements and licensure.

An individual who is deemed ineligible to participate in field or clinical experiences based on the results of their background check may not be able to complete the requirements for their degree or certification. Students with questions about these processes should contact the Teacher Education Center.

Note: Students cannot complete the Certificate in Disability Rights and Services in conjunction with this program.

## REQUIREMENTS

### UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements ([http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext)) section of the Guide.

#### General Education

- Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits
- Breadth—Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits
- Breadth—Social Studies: 3 credits
- Communication Part A & Part B *
- Ethnic Studies *
- Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B *

* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION LIBERAL STUDIES REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to complete a minimum of 40 credits of Liberal Studies ([http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext)) coursework. This requirement provides an opportunity to do some academic exploration beyond the scope of the major. Students take courses in areas of particular interest and also have an opportunity to sample the wide selection of courses offered across the university. Coursework is required in humanities, social studies, science, and cultural and historical studies. Some elective coursework is also needed to reach the required number of credits.

The School of Education’s Liberal Studies Requirements automatically satisfy most of the University General Education Requirements outlined above, including ethnic studies, humanities/literature, social studies, and science. Students pursuing most School of Education degree programs may also complete Communication Part B, Quantitative Reasoning Part A, and Quantitative Reasoning Part B through courses required by their degree program. If a student cannot complete a General Education Requirement within the curriculum of their chosen School of Education program, academic advisors can offer suggestions for courses that meet the requirement and augment the student’s primary area of study.

A basic outline of the liberal studies is included below. Students must consult the detailed version of the requirements ([http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext)) for information about course selection and approved course options.

### Humanities, 9 credits

All students must complete a minimum of 9 credits to include:

- Literature
- Fine Arts
- Humanities Electives

### Social Studies (Social Science)

All students must complete a minimum of 9 credits. Teacher certification programs and Kinesiology have unique requirements in this category.

### Science

All students must complete a minimum of 9 credits to include:

- Biological Science
- Physical Science
- Laboratory Science
- Science Electives

### Cultural and Historical Studies

All students must complete three requirements (9 credits) met by separate courses. Any of these courses can also be used to meet the Humanities or Social Studies (Social Sciences) requirements if it has the relevant breadth designation.

- Ethnic Studies
- U.S./European History
- Global Perspectives

Complete Liberal Studies Electives ([http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#requirementstext)) to total 40 Credits.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Special Education program has four primary components:

- **Liberal studies** courses expose students to a broad range of academic disciplines. The university-wide General Education requirements also encourage this breadth of study.
- **Professional education** coursework includes an examination of the schools’ relationship to our society and the processes by which students grow and learn.
- **Core Requirements** offer an in-depth study of Special Education, including a four-semester professional sequence of teaching methods coursework and field experience in schools. This sequence is designed so that students can complete the program in four years.
- **Elective** coursework is taken to reach the required minimum of 120 credits.
SPECIAL EDUCATION OPTIONS - SELECT ONE

View as listView as grid

- SPECIAL EDUCATION: EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION BIRTH - GRADE 3, BSE (HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/EDUCATION/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-EARLY-CHILDHOOD-SPECIAL-EDUCATION-BIRTH-GRADE-3-BSE/)
- SPECIAL EDUCATION: EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION/SPECIAL EDUCATION DUAL CERTIFICATION BIRTH-GRADE 12, BSE (HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/EDUCATION/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-BSE/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-EARLY-CHILDHOOD-SPECIAL-EDUCATION-SPECIAL-EDUCATION-DUAL-CERTIFICATION-BIRTH-GRADE-12-BSE/)
- SPECIAL EDUCATION: KINDERGARTEN - 9TH GRADE/SPECIAL EDUCATION KINDERGARTEN - 12TH GRADE DUAL CERTIFICATION, BSE (HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/EDUCATION/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-BSE/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-KINDERGARTEN-9TH-GRADE/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-KINDERGARTEN-12TH-GRADE-DUAL-CERTIFICATION-BSE/)
- SPECIAL EDUCATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION CROSS CATEGORICAL K-12, BSE (HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/EDUCATION/REHABILITATION-PSYCHOLOGY-SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-BSE/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-SPECIAL-EDUCATION-CROSS-CATEGORICAL-K-12-BSE/)

ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

Complete additional coursework to reach the minimum of 120 credits.

GPA AND OTHER GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete all requirements and also obtain the endorsement of the program faculty advisor(s) to receive certification through UW–Madison. The State of Wisconsin requires that anyone wishing to teach in a public K–12 setting hold a valid teaching license issued through the Department of Public Instruction. In addition to completing a certification program, students must submit a separate application for this license. Requirements below are based on UW–Madison coursework.

- 2.75 cumulative grade point average. This may be modified by the Last 60 Credits Rule (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#policiesandregulationstext).
- 2.75 cumulative grade point average across all professional education courses (excluding practicum and student teaching).
- 2.75 cumulative grade point average in the major.
- Minimum 120 credits (degree candidates only). Most students will need more than the minimum to complete all requirements.
- Major residency: Degree candidates must complete at least 15 credits of upper-level major coursework (numbered 300–699) in residence on the UW–Madison campus.
- Senior residency: Degree candidates must complete their last 30 credits in residence on the UW–Madison campus. Student teaching and practicum are considered part of the 30 credits.

DEGREE AUDIT (DARS)

UW–Madison uses “DARS” to document a student’s progress toward the completion of their degree, including any additional majors and certificates. A DARS (Degree Audit Reporting System) report shows all the requirements for completing a degree and, against courses that are planned or completed, shows the requirements that have been met, and those that are unmet. A report can offer suggestions about courses that may be taken to meet specific requirements and can assist in the academic planning and enrollment process. Students can access a DARS report in the Course Search & Enroll app or Student Center via My UW.

DARS also has a "what-if" function. This feature makes it possible to request a DARS report as if pursuing another program, major or certificate. It is an excellent tool if considering a new or additional area of study. School of Education students in a pre-professional classification such as Pre-Elementary (PRE), or Pre-Kinesiology should request a "what if" DARS report of their professional program of interest.

More information on how to request a DARS report is available on the registrar’s website (https://registrar.wisc.edu/dars-student/).

DARS is not intended to replace student contact with academic advisers. It creates more time in an advising appointment to discuss course options, research opportunities, graduate school, or issues of personal interest or concern to students.

DARS is used as the document of record for degree program, major and certificate completion in the School of Education.
ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLYING FOR A LICENSE

In addition to completing UW-Madison’s program requirements, students must also complete Wisconsin statutory requirements and certification requirements established by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Many of these requirements are embedded within the program’s requirements and require no additional attention. The endorsement of the program coordinator/faculty is also required to receive certification through UW-Madison.

The State of Wisconsin requires that anyone wishing to teach in a public K–12 setting hold a valid teaching license issued through the Department of Public Instruction. In addition to completing a certification program, students must submit a separate application for this license.

Detailed information about certification requirements and applying for a license is available under Certification/Licensure. (p. 7)

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree
To receive a bachelor’s degree from UW-Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.

Residency
Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW-Madison. "In residence" means on the UW-Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW-Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW-Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

Quality of Work
Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. (Professionalism) Adhere to professional ethical standards and conduct her or himself in a courteous and professional manner.
2. (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.
3. (Assessment) Collect information on student backgrounds, learning characteristics and achievement that can be used to determine students’ present level of performance and guide instruction.
4. (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.

5. (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.
6. (Instructional Presentations) Present lessons and units of instruction that gain and maintain student attention and are consistent with students’ interests and IEP goals.
7. (Classroom Management) Create and maintain a safe, positive and supportive learning environment that is conducive to learning and the mental health of the students.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Refer to the available named options for more information on the four-year plans.

ADVISING AND CAREERS

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ADVISING

Students not yet admitted to special education meet with their assigned advisor in the School of Education Student Services office, Room 139 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, see below. Students are assigned an additional faculty advisor when admitted to the professional component of their degree program.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ADVISING

Dedicated to supporting and promoting student success, the School of Education Student Services (https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#resourcestext) staff is here to assist students with the adjustment to college, understanding their degree and career goals, and connecting to resources. ESS supports prospective and current School of Education students in all programs through:

- academic and career advising
- mentoring and advocacy for underrepresented and international students
- requirements monitoring
- interpreting academic policy
- and more!

Students in the School of Education are encouraged to make Student Services a vital part of their academic and employment journey.

To schedule an appointment: Current students can schedule an appointment online through the Starfish app (https://advising.wisc.edu/facstaff/starfish/starfish-student-resources/) in MyUW. Appointments can also be made through email at soeacademicservices@education.wisc.edu,
(soeacademicservices@education.wisc.edu) by calling 608-262-1651, or in person.

CAREER ADVISING IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The School of Education Career Center provides students with the knowledge needed for connecting their classroom experiences with real-world application. Through individual appointments, events, and online resources, the Career Center provides students and alumni with the tools...
needed to be successful in their career development. From building resumes, conducting job and internship searches, developing interview skills, and negotiation strategies, the Career Center provides a foundation for developing the essential skills for the ever-changing world of work.

Students can set up their profile on Handshake (https://app.joinhandshake.com/login/), the campus online career management system, to find open internships, jobs, and career events. In addition to Handshake, there are many other job search sites to consult such as Indeed, Glassdoor, and some that are industry-specific. Students majoring in Special Education have searched for titles such as Classroom Teacher, Human Resources Manager, Curriculum Specialist, Camp Director, Disability Services Coordinator, Inclusion Facilitator, Behavior Therapist, Training Consultant, Early Childhood Family Educator, and Special Education advocate.

Current School of Education students can make an appointment with a Career and Internship Advisor by logging into Starfish (https://wisc.starfishsolutions.com/starfish-ops/) from the MyUW dashboard and selecting a day and time that works best with their schedule.

School of Education Alumni can schedule an appointment by completing the appointment request form (http://bit.ly/CCAppf).

For more information, visit the School of Education Career Center website (https://careercenter.education.wisc.edu/) or reach out at career-center@education.wisc.edu.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Students interested in special education may also want to consult the following resources:

- **Read about** the [relationship between Special Education and regular education programs](https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty/).
- **Watch a Video** describing the work of Special Educators.

**PEOPLE**

Information about faculty, staff, and other contributors to the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education can be found on the department’s website [https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty/](http://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty/).

**CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE**

**ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

*Note: In August of 2018, the Department of Public Instruction issued new administrative rules governing educator licensing. Changes in certification requirements and also the license types and levels will occur as program areas implement the new requirements.*

Students must complete all requirements and also obtain the endorsement of the program faculty to receive certification through UW-Madison. These requirements include those required by UW-Madison, the Department of Public Instruction, and those mandated by state statutes. While most of these requirements are embedded in course content, some (e.g., the Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test) are not related to course enrollment.

Students pursuing certification should be aware of the following requirements. See the Teacher Education Center website [https://tec.education.wisc.edu/](https://tec.education.wisc.edu/) for additional information/requirements.

Certification requirements should be monitored carefully. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) periodically implements regulations that affect all certification programs; teacher certification candidates are responsible for having up-to-date information about certification requirements.

**Disclosure Statement and Background Checks**

**Disclosure Statement**

Applicants to School of Education programs that involve a practicum, internship, or other field placement must complete a disclosure statement indicating (1) whether they have been admitted to, then withdrawn from, asked to withdraw from, or been dropped from a student teaching, clinical experience, or other intern/practicum program, and (2) if they have ever been placed on probation or disciplined by any college or university for academic dishonesty.

**Background Checks**

Pursuant to State of Wisconsin law PI 34.018(2), the School of Education is required to administer a background check on all students entering teacher education programs. This check is intended to determine if the applicant has engaged in any behavior that endangers the health, welfare, safety, or education of PK-12 pupils. Local school districts frequently conduct background checks on teacher education students prior to the start of their in-classroom field work, and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is required by law to conduct a background check on all Wisconsin educator license applicants.

Students should be aware that background checks may be initiated by other agencies or organizations when they are seeking employment or a professional license. School administrators have the authority to determine the appropriateness of a student placement and may choose not to permit a placement based on a student's background check results.

An individual who has been deemed ineligible to participate in field or clinical experiences based on the results of their background check may not be able to complete the requirements for their degree or certification. Students with questions about these processes should contact the Teacher Education Center, tec@education.wisc.edu.

**Environmental Education**

This licensing requirement is mandatory for all UW-Madison students in Elementary Education, Secondary Science and Secondary Social Studies certification programs. Students with previous degrees in their subjects must also monitor and complete this requirement for certification and licensure.

Depending on the program area, students meet this requirement through their methods courses or by taking an environmental studies course.

**Student Teaching and Assessment**

Students in teacher education programs are required to complete a significant performance assessment prior to certification and eventual licensure. This assessment demonstrates the candidate's preparedness to teach. Until recently, the edTPA was the required assessment tool; it is
no longer the only option. Additional tests may also be required, although this varies by certification area.

Detailed information related to these requirements, along with fee and registration information can be found on the Teacher Education Center website; see the Exams section of Become a Teacher (https://tec.education.wisc.edu/become-a-teacher/). A brief description of these tests and assessments is provided below.

**Content Proficiency**
Students completing professional education programs must demonstrate proficiency in their content area. This is accomplished a number of ways, varying by certification area. For example, Elementary Education students must have a major GPA of 3.0. World Language Education students must have a 3.0 in their major or minor area, meet an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview requirement, and also pass the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT). A student may be required to take and pass an approved examination in their content area, usually the appropriate Praxis II: Subject Assessments/ Specialty Area Tests through the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

**Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test**
As of January 31, 2014, individuals seeking an initial Wisconsin license to teach in kindergarten through grade 5 or in special education, an initial Wisconsin license as a reading teacher, or an initial Wisconsin license as a reading specialist, must take and pass the Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test. Students in Special Education have an additional portfolio option that can be used as a substitute for the WFORT. Undergraduate programs impacted by this requirement are Elementary Education and Special Education.

This test is for Wisconsin licensing purposes only. Students who choose not to pursue Wisconsin educator licensing need not take and pass this test.

**Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA)**
Until recently, students were required to pass the edTPA to be recommended for licensure. Students may still elect to use it as an assessment tool, but it is no longer required. The edTPA is a subject area-specific, performance-based assessment for pre-service teacher candidates, which is centered on student learning. Evidence of candidate teaching proficiency in the areas of planning, engagement and instruction, and assessment is drawn from a subject-specific learning segment, 3–5 lessons from a unit of instruction. Assessment artifacts include video clips of instruction, lesson plans, student work samples, analysis of student learning, and reflective commentaries. These artifacts will be taken together and scored by trained evaluators using the standardized set of edTPA rubrics.

**Field Experiences**
School-based field experiences are a critical part of students’ professional preparation for teaching. Under Wisconsin State regulations, students seeking teaching certification from UW–Madison are required to complete at least one pre-student teaching practicum and at least one full semester of student teaching. Most programs at UW–Madison require students to complete additional field experiences.

**Pre–Student Teaching Practicum**
The pre–student teaching practicum gives students firsthand knowledge of the classroom environment and the teacher’s role. For many students, the practicum is the initial encounter with the real world of teaching. Practicum students do not assume the degree of classroom responsibility they do during student teaching. Under the supervision of an experienced teacher, practicum students observe classroom activities, assist the teacher with day-to-day classroom management tasks, interact one-to-one with students, and instruct small groups. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor use the practicum to assess the student’s readiness for the student teaching experience.

**Student Teaching Experience**
Student teaching, the culminating field experience, is a full-time, school district semester assignment that places a university student under the guidance of an experienced, qualified cooperating teacher. After an orientation period, the student teacher gradually assumes more responsibility for planning, instruction, and overall classroom management. Student teachers follow the daily schedule of the cooperating teacher and the building policies of the school, and function as regular staff members in arrival and departure times and attendance at school events.

The student teaching experience follows the calendar of the local school district. A fall semester assignment will typically begin the latter part of August and end the latter part of January. A spring semester assignment will begin the latter part of January and end mid-June. Holiday breaks follow the school district calendar. Carrying other formal course work during the student teaching semester is strongly discouraged.

Detailed policies and regulations regarding field experiences can be found on the Teacher Education Center website (https://tec.education.wisc.edu/resources/). Students and staff are responsible for knowing and complying with the Field Experience policies. Many professional programs have their own separate handbooks and specific policies; students are also responsible for those policies and procedures.

**Withdrawing From/Failing Field Experience Assignments**
Withdrawing from a field experience has serious implications for the student’s progress in the program. Students who withdraw or receive an unsatisfactory grade (including a “D”) from a field experience may not repeat such experiences without approval from the program coordinator. Students withdrawing from or receiving an unsatisfactory grade in field experiences in one major or program may not enroll in another major or program without written permission from the program coordinator. Because of the consequences that withdrawal from a confirmed assignment may have on a student’s future progress in the teaching certification program, a student who contemplates such action is strongly urged to consult with the program coordinator to fully understand the implications of such action and the options available.

**Minority Group Relations and Conflict Resolution**

**Minority Group Relations**
Wisconsin State teacher education regulations require students to complete a section titled Minority Group Relations. The rules identify Minority Group Relations as
Resolving conflicts between pupils and between phonics statutory requirement. required, so no additional course work is needed to meet this programs. UW–Madison students fulfill this requirement Elementary Education and Special Education certification. The Phonics requirement applies to students completing the phonetic value of letters, letter groups and syllables. teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning methods, including phonics. “Phonics” means a method of reading and language arts using appropriate instructional assessment in the school program. • Minority group relations through direct involvement with various racial, cultural, language and economic groups in the United States.

UW–Madison teacher education programs address these areas through course work and experiences in each professional education program. Students who successfully complete their professional program will have satisfied each of the areas of Minority Group Relations.

Conflict Resolution Requirement Wisconsin State teacher education regulations require all individuals pursuing teacher certification to have formal training in conflict resolution. This includes:
• Resolving conflicts between pupils and between pupils and school staff.
• Assisting pupils in learning methods of resolving conflicts between pupils and between pupils and school staff, including training in the use of peer mediation to resolve conflicts between pupils.
• Dealing with crises, including violent, disruptive, potentially violent or potentially disruptive situations that may arise in school or activities supervised by school staff as a result of conflicts between pupils or between pupils and other persons.

All teacher certification programs include conflict resolution training in their required course work.

Phonics As of July 1, 1998, the State of Wisconsin requires that all persons seeking initial and renewal licenses to teach reading or language arts in grades Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6 (PK–6) must have successfully completed instruction in teaching reading and language arts using appropriate instructional methods, including phonics. “Phonics” means a method of teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning the phonetic value of letters, letter groups and syllables.

The Phonics requirement applies to students completing Elementary Education and Special Education certification programs. UW–Madison students fulfill this requirement through the successful completion of courses that are already required, so no additional course work is needed to meet this statutory requirement.

Cooperatives This licensing requirement is mandatory for secondary Social Studies Education certification. Students with previous degrees in their subjects must also monitor and complete this requirement for certification and licensure.

Students typically complete the cooperatives requirement after being admitted to the Secondary Social Studies program and should consult with the program coordinator regarding its completion.

Teacher Standards UW–Madison teacher education students must meet all state licensing requirements for initial teaching certification in Wisconsin. These requirements, sometimes referred to as administrative rules “PI 34,” mandate that individuals demonstrate proficiency on state-approved teaching standards. Each teacher education institution in Wisconsin has adopted a set of teacher education standards that meet state guidelines. These standards must be met by all students completing a licensing program.


APPlying for a Teaching license The State of Wisconsin requires that anyone wishing to teach in a public K–12 setting hold a valid teaching license issued through the Department of Public Instruction. In addition to completing a certification program, students must submit a separate application for this license. Students intending to complete a teacher certification program should monitor program requirements carefully. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) periodically implements regulations that affect all certification programs; teacher certification candidates are responsible for having up-to-date information about certification requirements.

Licensing Levels The Department of Public Instruction recently issued new administrative rules governing educator licensing. Changes in requirements and also the license types and levels will occur as program areas implement the new requirements.

Pending final approval from DPI, the following licensing options will be offered at UW–Madison.

• The core Elementary Education licensing level will be Kindergarten through Grade 9. Early Childhood, or English as a Second Language Kindergarten through Grade 12, may be added to the K–9 option. These new levels will replace the current licensing levels of Early Childhood and Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence.
• Special Education will offer licensing at the Early Childhood level, Kindergarten through Grade 12 level, and a program option that licenses in Early Childhood and K–12 Special Education. The Special Education/Elementary Education dual major option certifies
students in Special Education Kindergarten through Grade 12 and Elementary Education Kindergarten through Grade 9. These new levels will replace and expand the current licensing levels of Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence and Early Adolescence through Adolescence.

- Secondary Education program areas will license in their subject area Grades 4 through 12, and also in English as a Second Language Kindergarten through Grade 12. These new levels will replace the current licensing level of Early Adolescence through Adolescence.
- World Language Education program areas will license at the Prekindergarten through Grade 12 level, replacing the current level of Early Childhood through Adolescence.
- Students in special fields such as Art, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Music, and Physical Education will be licensed at the Prekindergarten through Grade 12 level, replacing the current level of Early Childhood through Adolescence.

**Wisconsin State Licensing**

The State of Wisconsin issues an initial teaching license to certified teachers. The current fee is $125. An online license application is available through the Department of Public Instruction (http://dpi.wi.gov/tepdl/elo/). A background check will also be conducted by DPI. Information about fingerprint submission, when necessary, is available through the Department of Public Instruction (http://dpi.wi.gov/tepdl/licensing/fingerprint/electronic-submission/).

Before applying for a license, DPI requires the electronic submission of “Endorsed Candidate for Licensure” (ECL) data by the certifying officer of the institution where the teacher preparation was completed. For UW–Madison teacher certification students, the endorsement will come from the School of Education, 139 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall. Once this information has been submitted to DPI, students are notified by email that they may begin the application online.

Before endorsing a student, UW–Madison requires that

1. all certification requirements are met;
2. student teaching (following the school district calendar) is completed;
3. final grades are posted and reviewed;
4. the degree is “posted” by the registrar’s office (one to four weeks after graduation); and
5. a recommendation for certification is received from the program faculty.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction may require an additional 6 to 8 weeks for license processing.

**Licensing Outside of Wisconsin**

To apply for a license in a state other than Wisconsin, first check out the application requirements of that state. The University of Kentucky has a website (https://education.uky.edu/accreditation/certification/states/) that provides links to teacher licensing agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Many states have a verification form that needs to be signed by a UW–Madison certification officer. This form verifies that a state-approved licensing program has been completed. These forms should be sent to the School of Education Student Services Office at 139 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706, or by email (mlpatton@wisc.edu) to be completed. You must complete your personal information on the form before sending it to Student Services. If the form requests information about practicum and student teaching assignments (names of schools, grade levels, dates, etc.), this information must also be completed before sending the form to Student Services.

**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:


**RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

Information about scholarships, academic and career advising, study abroad opportunities, student diversity services, and other resources for students in the School of Education can be found on the school’s Resources (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#resourcestext) page.