

# SPECIAL EDUCATION, BSE

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 after graduation. Employment opportunities are available all across the country.

The Special Education teacher certification 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.

The Special Education program prepares students 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.

Graduates receive a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Special Education and are currently eligible to apply for Wisconsin cross-categorical Special Education licenses at both the *Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence* and *Early Adolescence through Adolescence* levels and may teach ages 6–21.

Graduates will be eligible to apply for a Wisconsin kindergarten through grade 12 cross-categorical Special Education license as new teacher certification licensing options are implemented at UW-Madison.

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.

## 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 all 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 and are currently eligible to apply for both a Wisconsin Elementary Education license at the Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence level (ages 6–12/13), and a cross-categorical Special Education license at the Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence level. 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 (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/curriculum-instruction/elementary-education-bse/>) section of the Guide.

## NEW CERTIFICATION OPTIONS STARTING IN FALL, 2022!

Pending approval from UW-Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the department is thrilled to provide two new program options students may pursue to complete the Bachelor of Science in Education (BSE) in Special Education. These options will first be available with fall, 2022 program admission.

The first program option will prepare educator and interventionists to support young children with disabilities. This program, **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**, will lead to state certification in ECSE ages birth-Grade 3. The second program option will prepare educators to support the needs of students with disabilities ages birth through Grade 12. This program is a dual certification option wherein students

complete both the **ECSE program and the Special Education Cross-Categorical program**. Both new program options require four semesters of coursework and include multiple field experiences in local educational settings and schools. These changes align well with the priorities of the School of Education's Teacher Pledge (<https://tec.education.wisc.edu/teacher-pledge/>) program.

The new options will make it possible for students to become certified in Special Education in four ways:

1. Special Education Cross-Categorical, Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12)
2. Special Education Cross-Categorical, K-12 **and** Elementary Education, Kindergarten through Grade 9 (K-9)
3. Early Childhood Special Education, Birth-Grade 3
4. Early Childhood Special Education, Birth-Grade 3 **and** Special Education Cross-Categorical, K-12

Admitted students begin a four-semester professional sequence in the fall. Additional information and program requirements may be found here. (<https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/>)