Special Education (MEd)

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The Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Special Education is a fully online, 30-credit hour graduate program designed for professionals who seek to specialize in supporting individuals with disabilities. The flexible self-paced program permits working adults to customize their degree by selecting concentration tracks and research options for original investigations that fit their career goals. Built on a foundation of faith-integrated learning, the program bridges advanced academic theories with neuroscience on disabilities, learning, and neurodivergent experiences across life span. The program courses and personalized mentors focus on legal frameworks, behavioral interventions, assessment techniques, advocacy, and collaborative methods to prepare graduates for impactful leadership roles in school systems and community organizations.

Special Education (MEd)

The Master of Education degree in Special Education requires 30 credit hours and 100 hours of clinical experiences.

Core Requirements

SED 601	3	Leadership: Issues and Ethics
SED 605	3	Educational Evaluation and Programs
SED 610	3	Neurocognitive Science and Teaching
SED 615	2	Transition for Beyond School
SED 620	3	Advanced Curriculum and Instructional Design
SED 625	2	Law and Advocacy

Research Requirements

Complete one research option:

Thesis Research Paper

SED 630	3	Capstone Project: Thesis Research
SED 635	2	Capstone Project: Thesis Research Clinical

Action Research Paper

SED 640	3	Capstone Project: Action Research
SED 645	2	Capstone Project: Action Research Clinical

Select one concentration from the following:

Autism Spectrum Disorder

SED 602	3	Nature and Identity of Autism Spectrum Disorder
SED 607	3	Analytic Assessment of Behavior Interventions
SED 617	3	Language and Literacy

Mild Intervention

SED 530	3	Foundations of Special Education
SED 555	3	Methods of Special Education
SED 560	3	Science of Reading: Instruction and Intervention in Special Education

Intense Intervention

SED 575	3	Low-Incidence Disabilities-Instruction and Learning
SED 580	3	Low-Incidence Disabilities-Independence and Self-Determination
SED 590	3	Low-Incidence Disabilities-Collaboration and Individualized Programs

Special Education Courses

SED 520 Exceptional Children **3 hours**
This course is designed to prepare the teacher candidate for the challenge of meeting the needs of exceptional children in the classroom. A general study of exceptional children focuses on the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Topics addressed in the course are the identification process for individuals with disabilities, their characteristics and unique needs, delivery of services, and instructional strategies within all content areas.

SED 525 Educating Exceptional Learners **3 hours**
This course studies the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education and prepares teachers to apply knowledge and skills to meet the diverse needs of students with exceptionalities. Candidates will be empowered to discern the various abilities of students with mild to moderate characteristics. Topics include concepts of teaching, lesson planning, and inclusion through the lens of InTASC, state, and professional organizational principles. This course includes a field experience.

SED 530 Foundations of Special Education **3 hours**
This course is a study of the special education profession, encompassing the philosophical, historical, ethical, and legal foundations of special education. The responsibilities and rights of students, their parents, all involved educators, and other professionals are studied as they relate to meeting the needs of exceptional learners. Course content addresses P-12 students regarding early intervention, human growth and development, individual differences, diversity, and families and communities to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

SED 535 Critical Issues in Special Education **3 hours**
This course is an overview of the contemporary issues surrounding the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in public schools. The purpose of this course is to empower the prospective teacher of special education through their preparation to respond to issues they will encounter in the profession. Students will explore a wide variety of issues and trends currently impacting the field of special education. Students will gain an understanding of the important issues surrounding the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in public schools. *Prerequisites: SED 520 and SED 530.*

SED 540 Assessment of Exceptional Learners **3 hours**
This course focuses on formal and informal assessments, including how to effectively assess reading and writing. Instructions are presented on how to use assessment results to identify, plan for, and teach students with exceptional needs, including the use of that information to develop individual education plans. Communication of that information with students, parents, and other professionals is discussed. Includes a field experience component. *Prerequisites: SED 520 and SED 530.*

SED 550 Behavior Management **3 hours**
This course focuses on creating and supporting safe, respectful, and productive learning environments for students with disabilities. Topics covered include the use of a range of preventive and responsive practices to support social, emotional, and educational well-being. Students employ behavioral assessments in developing behavior intervention and progress monitoring plans for students with disabilities. Includes a field experience component. *Prerequisites: SED 520 or SED 525; and SED 530.*

SED 555 Methods of Special Education **3 hours**
This course prepares students to apply an understanding of academic subject matter content of the general curriculum and specialized curricula to inform programmatic and instructional decisions for learners with exceptionalities. Students are required to use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs, and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Students will implement explicit, systematic direct instructional strategies in core content areas to individualize instruction to support students with exceptionalities. Includes a field experience component. Prerequisites: SED 520 or SED 525; and SED 530.

SED 560 Science of Reading: Instruction and Intervention in Special Education 3 hours
This course introduces special education teachers to literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based instructional and assessment practices that support students with disabilities. Topics include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, with spelling and writing instruction embedded throughout. The course addresses diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring, and data-informed instructional decision making, as well as the implementation of direct, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading interventions in special education settings. A field experience component provides opportunities to apply course concepts in authentic instructional contexts.

SED 575 Low-Incidence Disabilities-Instruction and Learning **3 hours**
This course is designed for candidates to operationalize knowledge of the curriculum principles to design systematic instruction for individuals with intense disabilities. The focus is on research-based strategies for promoting academic and social-emotional success. Historical and legal aspects will inform instruction to meet students' current learning needs as well as preparation for adulthood. Candidates will relate characteristics and etiological backgrounds of preschool children through adolescence with intense disabilities to assess and design individualized and effective instruction. The roles and types of technologies in the teaching and learning process will be included. This course includes a field experience teaching students with intense disabilities.

SED 580 Low-Incidence Disabilities-Independence and Self-Determination 3 hours
This course provides candidates with the skills to evaluate and design effective individualized programs based upon instructional needs related to independence and self-determination for students with intense disabilities. An informed decision-making process based upon student, family, and diagnostic procedures are the focus. Theories and principles related to the skills for independence and self-determination are applied to design individualized programs to address daily living, job and community, and self-management of behaviors for students. This course includes a field experience teaching students with intense disabilities.

SED 590 Low-Incidence Disabilities-Collaboration and Individualized Programs 3 hours
The course focuses on the application of effective strategies of communication and collaboration for promoting the success of children and adolescents with intense disabilities. The consultative and collaborative skills and roles of special education teachers will be applied to advance the learning experiences and outcomes for students. Content includes current issues and trends related to various programs, and services. Culturally competent services, parent involvement, and the role of students with intense disabilities are addressed. This course includes a field experience teaching students with intense disabilities.

SED 601 Leadership: Issues and Ethics 3 hours
This course is an examination of special education issues in regard to barriers that impact programming and service delivery. Aspiring leaders will learn educational leadership styles, the function of roles, responsibilities, communication, and interpersonal skills. Essential knowledge and skills will be applied to cultivate school environments to foster collaboration. Management of diverse stakeholders' expectations from within the community, school, outsourced services, and parents/families will be included. Areas of teacher competency for professional improvement and collegial coaching and mentoring that leads to quality programming and services will be included in regard to cultivation of learning environments. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 602 Nature and Identity of Autism Spectrum Disorder 3 hours
Introduces current research and theoretical models for understanding autism spectrum disorder and approaches. Emphasis on medical, human, personality, co-occurring disabilities, and social-emotional across lifetime are examined in regard to research and models. Candidates engage in topics related to educational, social-recreational, and vocational long-term challenges to develop applicable plan for a case study. The involvement of families and individual with autism are included. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 605 Educational Evaluation and Programs 3 hours
This course is an advanced study of diagnostics and programs for individualization. Through this study, disability impact across lifespan is explored and the involvement of various stakeholders. This incorporates stakeholders changing roles and responsibilities. Candidates' competencies are developed through coursework in current issues related to diagnostic assessment, programs, and individualization. Models and range of service delivery and transitions are examined to design programs that individualized. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 607 Analytic Assessment of Behavior Interventions 3 hours
Advance skills in behavior interventions to evaluate functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans including the resulting effects from implementation procedures. Apply analytic principles, research, and theories for empirically-supported interventions in the evaluation process. This would include identifying issues related to implementation fidelity, professional and ethical conduct, and the home-school connection. Examine practices for compassionate interventions accounting for individualization, sensory sensitivities, and mental health masking. Promote social skills, self-regulation-management, and social communications. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 610 Neurocognitive Science and Teaching 3 hours
Advance understanding of cognitive processes to inform and enhance educational practices. Examine how the brain regions' development, learns, retains information, and adapts. This includes cognitive load theory in relation to teaching and learning. Critically interpret current neuroscience research and neurodiversity of cognitive processes to inform and design teaching practices for students. Individualize and tailor practices for assessment, communication, and interventions aligned to current neurodivergent research to optimize learning experiences and outcomes. Apply research to create environments conducive to learning. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 615 Transition for Beyond School 2 hours
Prepare individuals for quality lives through a critical analysis of programming. Examine various delivery models related to education and vocations through research, state and federal laws governing transition as they influence and inform service deliveries. This is applied to create realistic plans aligned to students and families' goals using a collaborative process. The collaboration process infuses vocational and non-vocational planning in school curricula for work-based learning that is between school and community businesses, adult transition services and education, as well as transition agreements. Gain skills to promote students' empowerment and self-determination skills to self-advocate needs and make decisions about futures. Have the ability to deepen special education mentoring with colleagues in designing effective transitions. This course included 10 hours of clinical experience.

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SED 617 Language and Literacy 3 hours
Typical and atypical language development that includes receptive, expressive, semantic, phonological, social, morphological, and syntactical domains regarding autism are analyzed. This includes evidence-based practices for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Advance skills to apply the science of reading to effect students' reading and their communication skills. Evaluate assistive technology needs in a systematic process that includes evaluation, selection, and training with family involvement. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 620 Advanced Curriculum and Instructional Design 3 hours
Advancing candidates' knowledge and skills in designing curriculum and instruction for diverse learners is the focus of this course. Topics covered include models/types of curriculum designs, school policies and practices on curricular reforms, theories of learning for modern society, and technology for instruction, access, and teaching. Special education leaders will apply their understanding of research and theories to incorporate technologies, core content areas, and practices for effective programs and evaluations. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 625 Law and Advocacy 2 hours
In this course candidates will delve into the legal landscape to examine policies and funding. The examination includes current legal trends, issues, and changes in regard to legislation and judicial decisions related to individuals with disabilities. School regulations along with funding from the federal and local levels impact on professional responsibilities of special education leaders to balance compliance with challenges in the field. Content within the course includes homeless students, twice exceptional, diverse disabilities, programming, and advocacy. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 630 Capstone Project: Thesis Research 3 hours
The Capstone Project: Thesis Research introduces thesis writing at the graduate level. This will be applied to a thesis paper proposal development and approval which will progress to a final paper. A special education topic to further professional skills will be the focus of the investigation. Engagement includes the formulation of a research question, literature review interpretation, methodology identification and selection, and data collection with analysis. The thesis is composed with a synthesis of the research process and evaluation of findings as evidence for professional proficiency within the field. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 635 Capstone Project: Thesis Research Clinical 2 hours
The Capstone Project: Thesis Research Clinical engages students in experiences related to the selected capstone project. This is a course continuation to refine the thesis research paper with a clinical participation. As a preparation to launch career goals and interest in connection to the field of special education, individualization will be the focus in the clinical experience design and research completion. At capstone thesis paper and clinical completion findings will be presented. 10 clock hours of clinical experience aligned with capstone project.

SED 640 Capstone Project: Action Research 3 hours
The Capstone Project: Action Research introduces a graduate-level approach to action research which will included a proposal development and proposal approval process which culminate in a final project. The project will focus on a practical application to address a specific problem or improve practice that will further professional skills. Engagement includes problem identification, literature review interpretation, methodology planning, and data collection with analysis. The project is developed with a synthesis of the research process and evaluation of findings as evidence for professional proficiency within the field. The course includes 10 hours of clinical experience.

SED 645 Capstone Project: Action Research Clinical 2 hours
The Capstone Project: Action Research Clinical engages students in experiences related to the selected capstone project. This is a course continuation to refine the action research project with a clinical participation. As a preparation to launch career goals and interest in connection to the field of special education, individualization will be the focus in the clinical experience design and research completion. At capstone action research project and clinical completion findings will be presented. 10 clock hours of clinical experience aligned with capstone project.