

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

College of Education  
Division of Teacher Education

## Special Education Program Description

The Special Education Program is designed to offer candidates both core and advanced specialization in the delivery of special education services from infancy to adulthood. The program meets the needs of college graduates who wish to pursue careers in special education. Candidates can obtain the following: Master of Arts degree in Special Education, Education Specialist Instruction Preliminary Credentials (Mild/Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, and Early Childhood Special Education), Teacher Induction Program (Clear Credential), Early Childhood Special Education Added Authorization, and Assistive Technology Certificate. Credential, authorization, and certificate coursework combines theory, methods, and field experiences that enrich candidates' teaching practices. Master degree level courses combine theory, field assignments, and a culminating experience that enhances candidates' professional expertise and specialized knowledge.

The following information is described in detail on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) website at <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/assignment-resources/special-education-credentials> (<https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/assignment-resources/special-education-credentials/>). The Education Specialist Instruction Credential authorizes the holder to conduct Educational Assessments related to the candidate's access to the academic core curriculum and progress towards meeting instructional academic goals, provide instruction, and Special Education Support to individuals in the area of specialization listed on the credential in the following settings:

- General education settings
- Resource rooms or services
- Special education settings
- Non-public, schools and agencies
- Home/hospital settings
- Correctional facilities

The Education Specialist Instruction Credentials require specific course work to meet teacher performance expectations and competencies established by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). CSUDH Special Education programs are accredited by CCTC. The requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), ESSA (2016), California Curriculum Framework and Standards, and California Reading Initiative also serve as underpinnings for instruction, field supervision, and evaluation.

## Pre-Admission Disclosure for Academic Programs Leading to Licensure or Credentialing

Admission into programs leading to licensure and credentialing does not guarantee that students will obtain a license or credential. Licensure and credentialing requirements are set by agencies that are not controlled by or affiliated with the CSU and requirements can change at any time. For example, licensure or credentialing requirements can include evidence of the right to work in the United States (e.g., social security number or taxpayer identification number) or successfully passing a criminal background check. Students are responsible for determining whether

they can meet licensure or credentialing requirements. The CSU will not refund tuition, fees, or any associated costs, to students who determine subsequent to admission that they cannot meet licensure or credentialing requirements. Information concerning licensure and credentialing requirements is available from the **College of Education Dean's Office: COE 1410 - (310) 243-2779**.

## Master of Arts in Special Education

The MA program prepares candidates to assume advanced roles in the field of Special Education. Current research and evidence-based practices in the field of Special Education underpin the curriculum. The program consists of a core of advanced coursework, electives, and a culminating experience (project or thesis) that supports advanced study in the field of Special Education. There are 30 units of course work with a minimum of 19-semester units completed in residence. Candidates who apply to both the Master of Arts Degree and the Teacher Induction Program must adhere to the requirements for both programs (e.g., GPA and course grade requirements).

## Preliminary Credentials

The Special Education Program offers the following Education Specialist Instruction Credentials:

- Mild/Moderate Support Needs (MMSN), authorizes the holder to conduct assessments specific to student progress in the core academic areas and to provide services to students who have Autism (Autism), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and authorizes service in grades K-12 and classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- Extensive Support Needs (ESN), authorizes the holder to work with students who have Autism (Autism), Deaf-Blindness (DB), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Intellectual Disability (ID), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and authorizes service in grades K-12 and classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), authorizes the holder to work with children who have mild/moderate support needs and extensive support needs listed above and traumatic brain injury; and authorizes the provision of services to infants, toddlers, and young children from birth to age 5 with stated disabilities and their families.

CSUDH offers two credential pathways: Intern and Student Teaching. Both programs consist of pre-service, general and special education coursework, robust field experiences, and a culminating experience.

Student Teaching is a traditional credential pathway that allows candidates to student teach in public school P-12 classrooms under the guidance of a Master Teacher while completing university coursework. The University works with the candidate to match the candidate with Master Teachers in schools we have formal agreements with.

The Intern pathway allows candidates to work in P-12 schools as teachers of record while they complete the needed university coursework to become fully credentialed teachers. The Special Education program

has formal agreements with school districts, non-public schools (NPS), and charter schools where interns are employed.

## Teacher Induction Program (Clear Credential)

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) established a two-tier special education teaching credential structure. A five-year Preliminary Education Specialist Instruction Credential is the first document issued after an individual has met basic credential requirements. The Clear Credential is issued on completion of a CCTC approved Teacher Induction Program that focuses on the teacher's needs to expand and deepen knowledge, skills, and abilities targeted to the teacher's employment and career goals in their development as a special education teacher. An individual with special education preliminary teaching credentials completes the Clear Credential requirements through the development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) in the Teacher Induction Program. The ILP includes appropriate professional development and/or coursework designed to expand and apply the candidate's skills and knowledge based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. The ILP identifies the coursework, experiences, and/or tasks that must be completed and assessed while guiding the activities to support the growth and improvement of professional practice.

## Admission Requirements

Below are the general program admissions requirements for entry into the Special Education programs followed by program specific requirements. Candidates may apply to the Preliminary or Teacher Induction Program, the MA, or the MA and Teacher Induction Program. Candidates must hold a Preliminary credential to enroll in the Induction Program.

Candidates who desire to enroll in the Teacher Induction Program and MA are advised to do so simultaneously. In addition to the admission requirements listed below, candidates are advised to follow the detailed requirements on the Special Education program application.

## General Program Admission Requirements

1. Admission to the university.
2. Application (with resume) to specific credential and/or MA degree program.
3. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; official transcripts of all college course history including degree posted.
4. Acceptable grade point average (GPA): Preliminary credential programs require a 2.75 GPA in the last 60 semester units of upper-division and the Teacher Induction Program and MA degree require a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 semester units of upper-division and post-baccalaureate work.
5. Two professional references from supervisory individuals acquainted with the applicant's professional work with children or adolescents and his/her ability to complete successfully a graduate-level program.

## Master of Arts in Special Education Admission Requirements

In addition to the General Program Admission Requirements the following MA requirements must be met:

1. Valid initial and/or advanced Special Education credential (e.g., California Level I/II, Preliminary/Clear, or Life Special Education Teaching Credential; hold closely aligned certification

or demonstration of content knowledge in the field; out of state or international candidates must have equivalent credentials, or demonstration of deep content knowledge).

2. Candidates who are applying to both the MA and Teacher Induction Program must do so simultaneously.
3. Successful admission to the university with the following conditions:
  - Candidates who satisfy all the requirements for university and program admission will be admitted fully with Classified Standing.
  - Candidates accepted with Conditional Standing will have one semester to meet the conditions for Classified Standing.
4. The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) must also be met in order to advance to Classified status.
5. The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement can be met on the CSU Dominguez Hills campus by one of the following:
  - A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university in the United States.
  - A baccalaureate degree from an accredited non-US institution where English is the primary language of instruction.
  - Graduate students who earned a 4 or above on the analytical writing component of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).
  - Students from a baccalaureate program offered in non-English speaking university settings can qualify to enter a graduate program by meeting one of the following options: take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and achieve a score of 550 (paper-based); 80 (internet-based); 213 (computer-based); or achieve an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.5.

## Preliminary Credentials Admission Requirements

In addition to the general program admission requirements, the following prerequisites are common to all Preliminary credential programs (Intern and Student Teaching Options):

1. Verification of Subject Matter through the CSET Exam or through a CTC-approved Subject Matter Program or coursework (for additional information please see Ways to Meet Subject Matter ([csudh.edu](https://www.csudh.edu/coe/info-students/ways-to-meet-subject-matter/)) (<https://www.csudh.edu/coe/info-students/ways-to-meet-subject-matter/>) **Notes:** 1. Subject Matter is not required for the ECSE credential. 2. Subject Matter is required to enter Final Fieldwork in the Student Teaching Option. 3. Subject Matter is required to apply for an Intern Credential in both MMSN and ESN programs.
2. Verification of U.S. Constitution requirement through university coursework with a minimum grade of C or passage of the US Constitution Exam.
3. Valid Certificate of Clearance.
4. Tuberculosis test and vaccination verifications.

In addition to the general program admission requirements, the following are specific for the Intern Option only:

1. Verification of full-time employment in an appropriate teaching position in a public school district, non-public school (NPS), or

charter school with CSUDH Memorandum of Understanding (Intern Agreement).

2. Successful completion of the three pre-service courses (SPE 480 Educating Exceptional Children and Youth; SPE 458 Positive Classroom Environments and SPE 462 Language, Literacy and Cognition) or the equivalent with a grade of "B-" or better for advancement to Intern status. Candidates who hold a Preliminary or Level I credential in another specialization or General Education may take the Pre-services classes in the first semester of their Internship.
3. Proof of advisement from Special Education Faculty or Advisor prior to applying for the Intern Credential.
4. Submission of Intern Credential Application **and** obtaining verification of the Intern Credential issued by CCTC.

## Teacher Induction Program Admission Requirements

In addition to the general program admission requirements, the following are specific for the Teacher induction Program (Leading to a Clear Credential):

1. Initial credential (e.g., California Level I or Preliminary; out-of-state candidates must have equivalent credentials).
2. Verification of full-time employment in an appropriate teaching position in a public school district, non-public school (NPS), or charter school.
3. Agreement by the employer to provide a site-based mentor.
4. Certificate of Clearance.
5. Tuberculosis test and vaccination verification

## Program Requirements

All programs require candidates to adhere to specific requirements throughout the length of the program. Foremost, candidates must adhere to all ethical and professional standards required by the university, professional organizations, and/or accrediting affiliations associated with the degree and credential. Candidates must, at all times, demonstrate high-quality interpersonal skills with faculty, staff, fellow candidates, and others. If candidates fail to meet this requirement, they are subject to disqualification from the program. The following are the requirements for the MA degree and credential programs.

## Master of Arts in Special Education Program Requirements

1. A minimum GPA of "B" in all coursework. Candidates must maintain a "B" average in all coursework. No course grade lower than a "C" may be used toward the MA. However, for candidates who are simultaneously in the Clear and MA, no course grade lower than a "B-" may be used toward the Clear credential.
2. Continuous Enrollment. Candidates are required to maintain enrollment throughout their MA program. Candidates who have completed the maximum number of required units but have not completed their culminating activity (e.g., thesis or comprehensive examination) must enroll in SPE 600 Graduate Continuation Course every semester, not to exceed two semesters. As per University Policy graduate courses may only be taken two times. In order to enroll in SPE 600 Graduate Continuation Course, candidates must submit an application form (available online) prior to enrollment (see University Policy on Continuous Attendance Requirement).

3. Transfer Credit. A maximum of 12 units of coursework from an accredited college or university; coursework must be no older than seven (7) years from the date of MA degree completion.
4. Time Limit on Coursework. Candidates must complete all of the requirements for the degree or credential within seven (7) years. This time limit commences with the semester of the earliest course used on the candidate's program of study. Outdated coursework must be validated or repeated (see University Policy on Outdated Coursework).
5. Capstone Requirement for the Master's Degree. Candidates have the option of completing an approved project or a thesis and are required to make this decision when applying for classified standing. Once candidates have advanced to candidacy, they may not change from one option to the other.
6. Candidates completing a thesis must enroll in SPE 599 Graduate Capstone in Special Education for a minimum of one semester. To satisfy the continuous enrollment policy, students are expected to enroll in SPE 600 Graduate Continuation Course unless they are enrolled in other courses.

## Preliminary Credentials Program Requirements

1. A minimum GPA. Candidates must maintain an overall "B" average in all Special Education coursework. No course grade lower than a "B-" may be used toward any credential. **Note:** TED courses in the Preliminary credential must have a grade of "C" or higher.
2. Field Experience. Candidates must have access to classrooms to complete field experience coursework.
3. Transfer Credit. A maximum of 9 units of coursework from an accredited college or university; coursework must be no older than seven (7) years from the date of credential completion.
4. Time Limit on Coursework. Candidates must complete all of the requirements for the degree or credential within seven (7) years. This time limit commences with the semester of the earliest course used on the candidate's program of study. Outdated coursework must be repeated and validated (see University Policy on Outdated Coursework).

For information specific to undergraduate pathways please see BA Liberal Studies (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/liberal-studies/liberal-studies-ba/>)

## Post-Baccalaureate Programs Authorization

- Early Childhood Special Education Authorization (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/early-childhood-special-education-authorization/>)
- Pre-Service Teacher Bilingual Authorization in Spanish, Certificate (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/teacher-education/bilingual-authorization-certificate/>)

## Certificates

- Assistive Technology Specialist, Certificate (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/assistive-technology-specialist-certificate/>)
- Pre-Service Teacher Bilingual Authorization in Spanish, Certificate (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/teacher-education/bilingual-authorization-certificate/>)

## Credentials

- Early Childhood Special Education Authorization (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/early-childhood-special-education-authorization/>)
- PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/pk-3-credential/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education, Intern Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/early-childhood-special-edu-intern-option/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Early Childhood Special Education, Student Teaching Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/early-childhood-special-edu-student-teaching-option/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Extensive Support Needs, Intern Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/extensive-support-needs-intern-option/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Extensive Support Needs, Student Teaching Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/extensive-support-needs-student-teaching-option/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Intern Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/mild-moderate-support-needs-intern-option/>)
- Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Student Teaching Option, Credential (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/mild-moderate-support-needs-student-teaching-option/>)
- Teacher Induction Program (Clear Credential) (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/teacher-induction-program/>)

## Master's Programs

### Master

- Special Education, Master of Arts (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/academics/special-education/special-education-ma/>)

## Faculty

Dr. Kate Esposito, Chair

Drs. Kelli Beard, Jenny Chiappe, Kai Greene, Conrad Oh-Young

Dr. Elaine Semple, Clinical Practice Coordinator

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## Emeriti Faculty

Dr. Carrie Ann Blackaller, Dr. Judith Jackson, Dr. Caron Mellblom-Nishioka,  
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