

STUDENT HANDBOOK



SPECIAL EDUCATION



School of Education
& Human Development

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

CU IN THE CITY



Special Education Graduate Program Handbook

Updated August 2021

This handbook applies to students in the following programs:

- **Master of Arts (MA) in Special Education**
- **MA in Special Education with Endorsement in Special Education Generalist (Ages 5-21)**
- **Added Endorsement: Special Education Generalist (Ages 5-21)**

Your successful experience in the Special Education is important to us. This handbook is a tool to ensure you maintain academic progress according to SEHD and University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) policies and procedures. In addition to this handbook, students should refer to the School of Education and Human Development (SEHD) *Student Policy Handbook*, available on the [SEHD Current Student Resources website](#). **The Policy handbook includes information on registration, Financial Aid, grades, graduation, and other topics that relate to students in all SEHD MA, EdS, and Graduate licenses, endorsements, and certificate programs.**

The student assumes full responsibility for meeting all basic requirements for the degree, as well as the specific requirements outlined by their program.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As a member institution of the [National Network for Educational Renewal](#) (NNER), faculty in the University of Colorado Denver's School of Education and Human Development (SEHD) have committed to foster the nation's youth with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective participation in a social and political democracy; to ensure that the young have access to knowledge required for satisfying and living responsible lives; to develop educators who nurture the learning and well-being of every student; and to ensure competence in, and commitment to, serving as stewards of schools. To achieve these ideals, individuals choosing the CU Denver program will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and competencies in the following areas:

- *Cultural, Ethnic, Linguistic, Sexual, Age, Religious and Ability Differences.* We strongly believe in inclusive practices that honor diversity as we design and support differentiated educational programs to meet the needs of all learners.
- *Creating Equitable Student Access to Learning Opportunities.* We are committed to ongoing improvements and enrichments that foster school equity for all learners.
- *Research-based Approaches.* We emphasize the collective research and development efforts that span best practices for learners with disabilities from direct instruction (systematic, teacher-led approach) to indirect instruction (learner strives to make meaning from environmental experiences).
- *Transition Planning for Lifelong Learning.* Teachers learn to plan for transitions from neonatal units to home to preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, secondary, and eventually to adult life as they help learners develop self-advocacy skills.
- *Standards-based Curriculum.* Students are encouraged to reference the development of curriculum and instruction to state standards and to skills that will generalize to the domains of education, community, family and vocation.
- *Positive Behavior Supports.* Students learn to implement proactive strategies that prevent behavioral challenges. Individualized and whole group planning focus on environmental accommodations as well as prevention strategies. Teacher candidates are also encouraged to teach developmentally appropriate pro-social skills.
- *Family-School Partnerships.* Interaction between family members and school personnel promotes family leadership in developing individualized educational plans and individualized family service plans.
- *Ecological Approaches to Assessment.* Teachers determine student needs through assessments that acknowledge linguistic, cultural, ethnic and economic differences among learners, as well as intra-learner characteristics in cognitive, affective, communicative and physical domains.
- *Consultation & Collaboration Skills.* In order to work effectively with families, other educators, members of the trans-disciplinary team, paraprofessionals, and community agency representatives, special educators learn to function effectively as team members and collaborators.
- *Systematic, Data-Driven Instruction.* Decisions about how to teach are based on the careful and consistent assessment of instructional outcomes for individual learners. Refinements to the teaching process are based on student performance.
- *Leadership for School Renewal.* We emphasize the students' responsibility to uphold the principles of social justice and democracy and encourage leadership for school renewal.

The faculty in the Special Education program developed the following values to guide the learning experiences in our courses across programs of study. Our vision is that each graduate will acquire the awareness, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that align and promote our core values as follows:

- Moving from medical model to socio-cultural and socio-political understandings of disability.
- Acknowledgement of historical bias of racism/oppression directly and its disproportionate impact on students who are culturally linguistically diverse.
- Deconstructing deficit perspectives to promote strengths-based approaches and learning environments to support student's growth and learning throughout life.
- Valuing diversity as a resource rather than at-risk.
- Inclusion for all.
- Teacher as researcher (consumer and skeptic of research as well as skills to conduct).
- Understand different types of research, what is research versus literature.
- Data-based decision making to guide instruction, pre-referral, and programming.
- Developing mindful reflective practitioners for social justice.

Faculty in the University of Colorado Denver's Special Education program emphasize the development of reflective practitioners through trans-disciplinary training. The Special Education faculty foster reflective inquiry about teaching and learning, as well as the development of the skills and dispositions necessary to work effectively in elementary and secondary classrooms. Our Special Education conceptual framework addresses the complexity within our field while also emphasizing the values that we, as a faculty, share. Through rigorous course work, advanced study candidates are challenged in each course to translate these ideals into reality in schools through a variety of reflective experiences and activities. Reflection and inquiry provide an informed and integrated basis for advocating for all learners. Through this process, University of Colorado Denver advanced study candidates will develop the ability to:

- Integrate theory and practice
- Guide students to construct their own knowledge
- Understand the contextual nature of learning
- Collaborate with students, teacher, administrators, parents, policy makers and the community at large
- Engage in meaningful inquiry endeavors.

CURRICULUM

Special Education students may pursue the following program options:

Master of Arts (MA) Degree in Special Education

Students may pursue a stand-alone Master's degree in the field of Special Education. This program option does not lead to licensure as a special education teacher or director and is most often pursued by licensed teachers. Therefore, if you are seeking endorsement or licensure, please see other program plans of study (<https://education.ucdenver.edu/>). Students pursuing a Master's degree must complete a minimum of thirty semester (30) hours including a focus on special education content. Program length and a personalized plan of study are crafted through consultation with your Faculty Advisor. Development of the plan of study follows a thorough transcript review and an in-depth interview with the Faculty Advisor.

MA Degree with Special Education Generalist Endorsement (Ages 5-21 years)

The added endorsement in Special Education Generalist plus MA is designed for currently licensed teachers seeking career advancement and the expertise needed to work effectively with students with special needs and from diverse backgrounds. The program is fully accredited by the Colorado Department of Education and guided by the [Council for Exceptional Children's Professional Preparation Standards](#).

Students will complete a minimum of 30 semester hours, which might include an internship as part of the program plan of study. Upon admission, the Special Education faculty may require an Internship (elementary & secondary level in special education) on the job or through our professional development schools. Admitted students will receive that information upon acceptance into the program. Courses can be taken in either a traditional on-campus format, hybrid, or online.

Students who hold a CO license in anything other than Elementary or Secondary Education (English, Math, Science, or Social Studies) may be required to complete additional coursework in elementary or secondary literacy, mathematics content and methods, and human development. Special Education faculty will review transcripts to make that determination for completion of the program.

Special Education Generalist Endorsement (only)

The added endorsement as a Special Education Generalist is designed for currently licensed teachers seeking career advancement and the expertise needed to work effectively with students with special needs and from diverse backgrounds. The program is fully accredited by the Colorado Department of Education and guided by the [Council for Exceptional Children's Professional Preparation Standards](#).

Students will complete a minimum of 21 credit hours (seven graduate-level courses), which might include an internship as part of the program plan of study. Upon admission, the Special Education faculty may require an Internship (elementary & secondary level in special education) on the job or through our professional development schools. Admitted students will receive that

information upon acceptance into the program. Courses can be taken in either a traditional on-campus format hybrid, or online.

Students who hold a CO license in anything other than Elementary or Secondary Education (English, Math, Science, or Social Studies) may be required to complete additional coursework in elementary or secondary literacy, mathematics content and methods, and human development. Special Education faculty will review transcripts to make that determination for completion of the program.

MA Special Education

Students in the MA SPED program will choose a core area from the following:

1. Literacy/Specific Learning Disability: Leadership in support of the systematic literacy development of K-12 learners
2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports/ Leadership in support of the systematic social and emotional development of K-12 learners
3. Inclusion; or
4. Secondary Special Education.

In consultation and with approval from your Faculty Advisor, select 5 courses from the [Thematic Course Categories](#) to customize your learning (15 semester hours.) Finally, take RSEM 5080 Research for Teachers (3 credits) and then complete SPED 5401 Advanced Seminar which fulfills the capstone requirement (3 credits) for a total of 30 credits.

***This degree plan does not include a license or an endorsement.**

Degree Components	Courses	Credits	Semester Completed
Choose One Core Concentration; 9 credits required			
SPED Core	SPED _____	3	
	SPED _____	3	
	SPED _____	3	
Total Concentration Core		9	
Choice of 5 courses from the Thematic Course Categories; 15 credits required			
Course 1		3	
Course 2		3	
Course 3		3	
Course 4		3	
Course 5		3	
Total Thematic Course Categories Credits		15	
Concentration Research Course	RSEM 5080: Research for Teachers	3	
Concentration Capstone Course	SPED 5401: Advanced Seminar in Special Education	3	
Total Credit Hours		30 minimum	

Area	Prefix	Course Title
Literacy/ SLD	SPED 5740 <u>or</u> SPED xxxx	Intersections of Literacy, Culture, & Exceptionality OR Curriculum & Instruction in Inclusive Gifted Education
	SPED 5780	Literacy Interventions for Exceptional Learners
	SPED 5140	Assessment: Inquiry, Instruction, & Intervention
MTSS/ SED	SPED 5151	Slashing Stigmas: Promoting Positive Behaviors
	SPED 5140	Assessment: Inquiry, Instruction, & Intervention
	SPED 5010	Intentional Interventions for Exceptional Learners
Inclusion	SPED 5000	Universal Design for Learning
	SPED 5300	Family, Professional, and Community Collaboration
	SPED 5140	Assessment: Inquiry, Instruction, & Intervention
Secondary Special Education	SPED 5500	Transition and Secondary Methods in SPED
	LCRT 5029	Developing 21st Century Literacy Curriculum, Gr 4-12
	SPED 5010	Intentional Interventions for Exceptional Learners
Research	RSEM 5080	Research for Teachers
Capstone	SPED 5401	Advanced Seminar in Special Education

The Special Education program faculty integrates Special Education Law across coursework and utilizes a common textbook to support the concepts. All students must own a copy of the identified book at the beginning of your program; you will be referencing this book across coursework.

Chapman, R., (2008). The Everyday Guide to Special Education Law. ISBN 10: 0977017931; ISBN 13: 978-0-9770179-7-3. <https://disabilitylawco.org/resources/mighty-rights-press/everyday-guide-special-education-law>

MA in Special Education with Special Education Generalist Endorsement, Ages 5-21

The MA Special Education with Special Education Generalist Endorsement is designed for currently licensed teachers seeking career advancement and the expertise needed to work effectively with students with special needs and from diverse backgrounds. The program is fully accredited by the Colorado Department of Education and guided by the [Council for Exceptional Children's Professional Preparation Standards](#).

Recommendations for endorsements are made by the Special Education Program, but endorsement is granted by the State of Colorado. Individual State requirements vary and may include teaching experience and examinations in addition to a valid teaching credential. Students should consult with the Colorado Department of Education (http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/licensure_authorization_landing) or the state in which they wish to be endorsed for the most updated endorsement requirements.

Use this Course Plan to map out your coursework during your program.

Courses	Credits	Semester Completed
A) Special Education (21-26 hours)		
SPED 5030: Frameworks for Understanding (dis)Ability in Contemporary Classrooms (waived if already completed)	3	
SPED 5740: Intersections of Literacy, Culture, & Exceptionality	3	
SPED 5010: Intentional Interventions for Exceptional Learners	3	
SPED 5151: Slashing Stigmas: Promoting Positive Behaviors	3	
SPED 5300: Family, Professional, and Community Collaboration	3	
SPED 5780: Literacy Intervention for Exceptional Learners	3	
SPED 5140: Assessment: Inquiry, Instruction, & Intervention	3	
**If required by the Special Education faculty upon admission SPED 5932: Internship & Site Seminar (Approximately 128 Hours or 16 days); SPED 5933: Internship & Site Seminar (Approximately 192 Hours or 24 days)	(2-5)	
B) Advanced Study (9 hours)		
EDHD 5240: Cognition & Instruction OR SPED 5500: Transition and Secondary Issues in Special Education	3	
RSEM 5050: Classroom Assessment OR RSEM 5080: Research for Teachers	3	
SPED 5401: Advanced Seminar in Special Education	3	
Total Credit Hours	30-35	

Special Education Generalist Endorsement, Ages 5-21

Recommendations for endorsements are made by the Special Education Program, but endorsement is granted by the State of Colorado. Individual State requirements vary and may include teaching experience and examinations in addition to a valid teaching credential. Students should consult with the Colorado Department of Education (http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/licensure_authorization_landing) or the state in which they wish to be endorsed for the most updated endorsement requirements.

***This course plan does NOT lead to MA degree.**

Use this Course Plan to map out your coursework during your program.

Courses	Credits	Semester Completed
SPEDE 5030: Frameworks for Understanding (dis)Ability in Contemporary Classrooms (waived if already completed)	3	
SPEDE 5010: Intentional Interventions for Exceptional Learners	3	
SPEDE 5740: Intersections of Literacy, Culture, & Exceptionality	3	
SPEDE 5151: Slashing Stigmas: Promoting Positive Behaviors	3	
SPEDE 5300: Family, Professional, and Community Collaboration	3	
SPEDE 5140: Assessment: Inquiry, Instruction, & Intervention	3	
SPEDE 5780: Literacy Interventions for Exceptional Learners	3	
SPEDE 5500: Transition and Secondary Issues in Special Education	3	
**If required by the Special Education faculty upon admission		
SPEDE 5932: Internship & Site Seminar (Approximately 128 Hours or 16 days);	2-5	
SPEDE 5933: Internship & Site Seminar (Approximately 192 Hours or 24 days)		
Additional Courses as Necessary	varies	
Total Credit Hours	21-26	

INTERNSHIPS (ADDED ENDORSEMENT) – UPON SPECIAL EDUCATION FACULTY RECOMMENDATION

Licensure	SPED 5932	SPED 5933	Location	Internship Assessment
Added Endorsement (with or w/o MA)	2 credits (128 hours/16 days)	3 credits (192 hours/24 days)	PDS On the Job	TLIC/QRC/Prof Dispositions

Student may be required to experience one internship at Elementary (K-5) and Secondary (6-12) Levels, for a total of 2 internships.

Students must apply for internship placements, either on-the-job or in a CU Denver partner professional development school (PDS). The application documents can be found here under “Internship Documents & Forms”:

<https://education.ucdenver.edu/academic-services/student-resources/graduate/special-education>

For internship placements with CU Denver partner professional development schools, the [Special Education Internship Request Form](#) must be submitted by the deadline - April 1st for Fall Internship, October 15th for Spring Internship.

TEMPORARY EDUCATOR ELIGIBILITY (TEE)

TEE provides licensed teachers the opportunity to work in a Special Education classroom while they earn the added endorsement to their license. Please see the CDE web site for full information and forms at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/auth>

CONTENT LICENSURE EXAM POLICY

By Colorado State mandate, special education candidates must pass the Praxis Exam - 5354 “Special Education Core Knowledge & Applications” prior to being allowed to engage in the final semester of internships. **If the special education candidate has not passed the appropriate content exam AND submitted passing scores within 20 days of the final semester of internships beginning, the candidate will have to delay his/her final semester of internships and connected courses until the exam has been passed.** Please be aware that the exam is offered 4-5 times per year and requires advance registration. Also be aware that it typically takes 4-6 weeks to receive the results. Please see the table for more detailed information. If you need accommodations for the exam, please request those immediately from ETS. CU Denver Disability Resources & Services can support you as you navigate accommodations: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/disability-resources-and-services>

Information about preparing for the PRAXIS 5354 can be found at <https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5354>

Test scores should be sent to the University of Colorado Denver.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2021 Praxis 5205 will be a Colorado Department of Education required licensure exam for any teacher applying for added endorsement in special education generalist with the following allowances:

- Current elementary and special education candidates in a Colorado approved educator preparation program who have attempted and/or passed all or even one subtest of the Elementary Praxis 5001 series **prior to Oct. 1, 2021** will not be required to take Praxis exams 5901 and 5205, *as long as* they submit for their initial license or added endorsement **no later than Dec. 31, 2022.**

License Type	Prior Exam Requirements	New Requirements
Special Education Generalist	5354: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications	5354: Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications
	5001: Elementary Educ: Multiple Subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading/Lang. Arts • Mathematics • Social Studies • Science 	5901: Elementary Educ: 3 Subject Bundle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Social Studies • Science
		5205: Teaching Reading: Elementary

Full information about CDE’s Praxis requirements for the Special Education Generalist Endorsement, can be found on this page by scrolling down to “Special Education Teacher Endorsements”:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

Registration

CU Denver offers students a completely automated system to register for classes. UCDAccess will tell you when you may register. As a student, you are responsible knowing the deadlines, rules, regulations, course loads, prerequisites and policies of the university, as well as those of the SEHD. Visit the Registrar's website for further information, deadlines, policies and instructions on how to register: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/registrar>

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS IN ON-LINE & HYBRID LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In order to accommodate the working teacher, the SPED program utilizes innovative online and hybrid learning environments for many courses. When taking online/hybrid courses, please consider the following characteristics of the successful on-line student:

- Self-directed, independent learner.
- Does not need face to face contact (with either the professor or peers) for success.
- Reads and comprehends written instructions well.
- Consistently demonstrates the ability to advocate for self whenever there is a question, concern or frustration.
- Strong long range planning skills.
- Effective time management skills.
- Does not procrastinate.
- Committed to reading the materials without the weekly accountability of an on-campus class.
- Competent skill level with computer technology – or willing to seek out sources of information to learn.
- Has consistent, dependable access to computer with online capability and email access.

As with any university course, the time expectation for outside work is two hours for every hour spent in class. In a traditional on-campus 3 credit course the student attends a three hour class once per week and then is expected to spend at least six hours (2 hours for each of those 3 hours in class) working on assignments and other course-related activities. An online class has similar expectations. Students in the on-line course (or portion of the course that is hybrid) have interactive online learning activities to take the place of the three hours spent in class. The major assignments are the same. For a 3 credit on-line class, you should expect to spend approximately nine hours per week. In other words, the expectations for time for the online section are the same (it just looks a bit different). Please note for every special education course that is offered in an online format, it is also offered in a traditional face-to-face format.

What to expect from an online environment:

- Group work
- Possibility of a Zoom conference call with professor/classmates
- Involvement in class/small group dialogs
- Integration of innovative technologies to reinforce learning

If you struggle with any part of the online format, please discuss this with your instructor immediately and utilize the Success Center to support you. Canvas tutorial is available <https://guides.instructure.com/m/89727/l/1119803-introduction>

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS) is committed to providing equal opportunities and fostering the personal growth and development of students with disabilities. The DRS staff strives to meet the needs of a large and diverse community of students with disabilities. They are available to provide assistance and to arrange for reasonable accommodations that will address specific educational needs. It is the student's responsibility to initially seek out services.

Office of Disability Resources and Services
Student Commons Building, Suite 2116
303-315-3510, disabilityresources@ucdenver.edu

<https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/disability-resources-and-services>

LIVETEXT

LiveText is a web-based technology tool required for all advanced study candidates in the Special Education program. This tool allows advanced study candidates to complete performance-based assignments and program assessments in SPED as well as develop an on-line portfolio demonstrating their teaching abilities which can be showcased for potential employers. In addition, the LiveText system provides opportunities for advanced study candidates to get immediate feedback from instructors about their work and for the program to use data about teacher candidate performance to continually improve the program and maintain accreditation.

As an instructional tool, LiveText additionally provides advanced study candidates access to an extensive library of on-line instructional videos through United Streaming Video that can be used in teaching lessons in the classroom. It also provides access to an extensive library of lesson plans and other teaching ideas. These tools will be available to advanced study candidates well into their first years of teaching because students have access to LiveText for a minimum of five years.

Details on how all SEHD students obtain their LiveText subscription as well as important training workshops and other resources are available on the SEHD assessment website at <http://sehdassessment.ucdenver.edu/>.

STUDENT COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The University of Colorado Denver has a chapter of Student Council for Exceptional Children that meets monthly. This professional organization is an advocacy group for children with exceptionalities. The organization provides leadership and networking opportunities, professional development, and community involvement. Each year the students utilize university funds to attend the [Courage to Risk Conference](#) in Colorado Springs (Jan/Feb) at the

Broadmoor. Students will have an opportunity to get involved with the [{Colorado} Council for Exceptional Children](#).

GRADING POLICIES

A **“B-” grade or above is required in all required courses and internships with a cumulative SPED program GPA of 3.0 or higher.** Courses in which a student receives a grade below “B-” will not be counted toward the endorsement or degree and will need to be retaken.

COMPLETING THE PROGRAM: ENDORSEMENT, COMPS REQUIREMENTS

Endorsement through CDE

As you come to the completion of your SPED program, endorsement students will need to complete the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) endorsement application. Please review the instructions for applying here:

<https://education.ucdenver.edu/academic-services/student-resources/teacher-licensure>

Special Education MA COMPS

The Special Education course **SPED 5401: Advanced Seminar in Special Education** fulfills the university requirement for MA COMPS/Comprehensive Exam. Students should enroll in this class in their final semester.

Checklist for a Successful Program

Date Completed	Steps
	Identify which course plan of study you will be using
	Complete the plan of study by penciling in proposed semester dates for taking courses
	Plan when you will take the Praxis Exam(s): Date(s) Planned: _____
	Introduce yourself (ask questions) to your Faculty Advisor (insert name)_____
	Introduce yourself (ask questions) to your Academic Advisor (insert name)_____
	Update your Course Plan each semester (check in with advisors as needed)
	Get involved with Student Council for Exceptional Children (ask your advisor/professors about when it meets).
	<p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get support from the SEHD Success Center • Get services from Disability Resources & Services • Apply for a scholarship • Apply for an internship (if part of your course plan)
	Apply for graduation
	Apply for endorsement with CDE

CONTACTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Academic Services Manager

Rebecca Schell, 303-315-4978

Rebecca.schell@ucdenver.edu

SEHD Academic Services Center

Lawrence Street Center, 1380 Lawrence Street, Suite 701

303.315.6300

academicservices@ucdenver.edu

Special Education Program Resources:

<https://education.ucdenver.edu/academic-services/student-resources/graduate/special-education>

Special Education Faculty

<https://education.ucdenver.edu/about-us/faculty-directory/-in-category/categories/sehd/program-areas/special-education>