Severe/Multiple Disabilities

Degree Offered

- Master of Arts with a major in Severe/Multiple Disabilities

The graduate program in Severe/Multiple Disabilities at WVU is designed to prepare professional educators to work with children, adolescents, and adults with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disabilities or such disabilities in combination with other impairments. This graduate level program prepares special education teachers and other professionals to engage in current research-based practices to provide high quality educational programs and services for students with significant disabilities on alternate assessment in elementary or secondary schools, or qualifying for developmental disability services in community-based programs for children or adults. WVU is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), while the program is approved as a teacher education program leading to teaching certification by the West Virginia Department of Education, accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and nationally recognized by the Council for Exceptional Children.

The program offers these options:

1. Master's degree in Special Education with certification in Severe Disabilities Grades K-Adult (or the equivalent in other states);
2. Master's degree only in Special Education with emphasis in Severe/Multiple Disabilities

PROGRAM DELIVERY FORMAT

This program is offered entirely ONLINE throughout the United States and in approved international locations.

RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

To maintain ACTIVE student status, students must enroll in at least one (1) course during the effective term of admission and also at least two (2) courses every year. Students who fail to sustain enrollment each year will be converted to inactive status and will be required to reapply to the university and program and meet any additional new requirements in effect at that time. Students are expected to comply with all academic and conduct policies as outlined in the WVU Graduate Catalog, in the WVU Student Handbook, and on the Department of Special Education website.

Retention in the program and/or graduation is based on SATISFACTORY PROGRESS or maintaining a GPA of 3.0 with a grade of A or B in ALL required courses. A grade of Incomplete will only be approved for emergency situations; all requirements must be completed BEFORE the end of the next academic semester. Students who DO NOT clear the grade of Incomplete by the deadline will be assigned a grade of FAIL by the instructor immediately after the due date.

Students who do NOT earn a grade of A or B in a required course will be required to RE-TAKE THE COURSE to be eligible for the culminating practicum or culminating project.

Students who do NOT maintain a GPA of 3.0 (includes courses with grade of Incomplete) in a given semester MAY be placed on PROBATION and permitted one (1) additional semester to increase the GPA to 3.0.

Students whose GPA is too low to be raised by a probationary period OR who do NOT obtain a GPA of 3.0 after the probationary period will be subject to DISMISSAL from the program.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty will be assigned 0 points for the assignment or exam for the first offense, an F for the course for the second offense, and dismissed from the program for the third offense.

Students dismissed from a program will NOT be permitted to re-apply to ANY special education program.

GRADUATION AND COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

The MINIMUM time to complete most certification or degree programs in special education is:

- TWO (2) calendar years at the rate of SIX (6) credits per semester (part-time study – recommended for students who are working full time and/or have extensive family responsibilities)

- ONE AND ONE HALF (1.5) calendar years at the rate of NINE (9) credits per semester (full-time study- recommended for students who are not employed and/or have minimal family responsibilities.

The MAXIMUM time to complete a graduate degree program at WVU (including all transferred courses) is EIGHT (8) years

REGULAR ADMISSION

REGULAR admission is granted ONLY WHEN ALL these criteria are met:

Requirements for ALL graduate programs:
--Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA* of 3.00 out of 4.0;
--Passing scores on a nationally standardized test of academic ability (Praxis Core or GRE or MAT) - contact program for current minimum scores and waiver conditions
--Permission for field and clinical experiences form signed by a public school system

--Permission for Field/Clinical Experiences (see Program Application Form) completed by a school administrator.

NOTE: SCHOOL SYSTEMS MAY REQUIRE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND FORMAL BOARD APPROVAL PRIOR TO PLACEMENT.

ADDITIONAL special requirements for ALL certification or certification plus degree programs only:
--PRAXIS Core Academic Skills for Educators (CASE) passing scores; scores may be waived in some circumstances - contact program personnel for current minimum scores

NOTE: OTHER TESTS MAY BE SUBSTITUTED IF DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED SHOWS CONTENT SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT TO CASE.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The individual who is not a native speaker of English must also meet these requirements:

• Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score - contact program personnel for current guidelines
• Personal interview and writing sample to document fluency needed for success in courses and field experiences

NOTE: U.S. VISA CAN NOT BE ISSUED FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS BUT STUDENTS CAN ENROLL AS RESIDENTS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES. INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE LEGAL RESIDENT ALIENS MAY PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE PROGRAMS IF THEY VERIFY THEIR RESIDENT STATUS.

PROVISIONAL ADMISSION

PROVISIONAL admission* MAY be considered under SOME circumstances IF ALL other criteria are met:
--Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA* of 2.75+ out of 4.0
--Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA* of 2.50+ out of 4.0 ONLY IF:
  a. undergraduate degree transcript documents minimum GPA of 3.0 in final 30 credits; OR
  b. graduate transcript documents at least 18 credits leading to teaching certification with minimum GPA 3.25; OR
  c. prior Master’s degree in education or closely related area with minimum GPA 3.25

NOTE: UNDERGRADUATE COURSES ONLY ARE COUNTED IN CALCULATING THE GPA. APPLICANTS WITH GPAs MAY BE ABLE TO RAISE THEIR UNDERGRADUATE GPA BY TAKING ADDITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE COURSES BEFORE APPLYING.

NOTE: Provisional admission is contingent upon maintaining GPA of 3.0 and grades of A or B (and/or making up any identified deficiencies) within the first 9 credits or within 2 semesters, whichever comes first.

Applications submitted before the due date with all supporting documentation are eligible for EARLY ADMISSION. Applications that are incomplete will be rejected. Applicants who meet all regular admission criteria will be admitted automatically to the program. Applicants who meet criteria for provisional admission are ONLY considered IF additional openings remain at that point. Under NO circumstances will ANY admission requirement be waived. Dual enrollment is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

The WVU Application for Graduate Admission is available at https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=wvugrad.
The Department of Special Education Program Application Form can be obtained at sped@mail.wvu.edu.
For assistance in completing applications, please contact sped@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-3450.

Application Submission Process

Applications for admission beginning FALL semester: DUE AUGUST 1
Applications for admission beginning SPRING semester: DUE JANUARY 1
Applications for admission beginning SUMMER semester: DUE MAY 1

Rolling admissions processing policy means that applications for admissions are processed and a decision is made as soon as all application materials are available, and applicants are notified immediately after the application review has been completed.

Master of Arts

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required
A grade of B or higher is required in all graduate coursework
Suggested Plan of Study (Full-time Study)

This plan is designed for full-time students who have no other major responsibilities or other students who wish to complete the program more quickly and believe they can manage the workload.

First Year

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<th>Fall Hours</th>
<th>Spring Hours</th>
<th>Summer Hours</th>
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Total: 9 9 9

Second Year

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<td>SPED 680</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
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Total: 9

Total credit hours: 36

NOTE: Courses may be completed in any order (except culminating practicum or project, which must be completed after all other required courses are completed) and students may start the program in any semester.

Suggested Plan of Study (Part-time Study)

This plan is designed for part-time students who are working full time and have other family responsibilities.
Major Learning Outcomes

SEVERE/MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

The Department of Special Education believes that children, adolescents, and adults with severe/multiple disabilities have a right to appropriate services designed to meet their unique needs in inclusive school and community settings; persons with disabilities must develop skills enabling them to participate as fully as possible in family and community life and to enjoy civil rights and personal freedoms as responsible citizens in a free society; and individuals and families should be empowered to make decisions about services and supports with sufficient support from service providers.

This program has been designed so that program graduates can accomplish the following learning outcomes:

1. provide high quality educational services to children, adolescents, and adults with severe/multiple disabilities in inclusive environments in elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools and/or community disability services programs;
2. demonstrate knowledge and application of current evidence-practices as exemplified by reputable research and professional standards to deliver individualized instruction and other supports to promote academic learning, social skill development and functional skill acquisition to lead to outcomes of independent or supported living, productive employment and community participation;
3. collaborate with other professionals and agencies in delivery of services and engage in individual and systems advocacy for individuals and their families, and empower individuals and families to participate in program planning and decision making; and
4. reflect in and on practice and respond responsibly to the legal, ethical, social, and cultural issues encountered when working with individuals with severe/multiple disabilities and their families in today’s world.