Department of Special Education

Degrees Offered

• Master of Arts (Some Options Closed to Admission)
• Doctor of Education (Closed to Admission)

The graduate program leading to the M.A. in Special Education is designed to prepare teachers of infants, toddlers, children, and adults with exceptionalities or to prepare service providers in a range of disciplines who work with individuals with exceptionalities in community services programs.

The graduate program leading to the Ed.D. in Education with a major in Special Education is focused on personnel preparation in special education and is designed to prepare graduates to engage in teaching, scholarship, and services as faculty members and researchers at colleges and universities.

Master’s Degree with or without Certification Program Options

• Early Childhood Special Education (preschool special needs grades pre-K–K) (Closed to Admission)
• Gifted Education (gifted grades 1–12) (Closed to Admission)
• Multicategorical Special Education (intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, behavior disorders grades K–6 and/or 5–adult)
• Severe/Multiple Disabilities (severe disabilities grades K–adult) (Closed to Admission)

Master’s Degree Only Program Options

• Special Education (includes area of emphasis in Applied Behavior Analysis (Closed to Admission)

THE MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED ENTIRELY ONLINE ACROSS THE U.S. AND IN APPROVED INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS.

Applicants interested in one of the program areas should review the detailed information provided at https://specialed.wvu.edu or contact sped@mail.wvu.edu for a brochure and application or an update on availability of specific courses.

NOTE: The titles of teaching certification categories may differ in other states, so prospective students should contact the state education agency to determine whether a program will qualify them for certification in that state.

Doctoral Program Option

• Special Education with emphasis on Personnel Preparation in Special Education (Closed to Admission)

THE DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IS OFFERED ENTIRELY ONLINE ACROSS THE U.S.; IT IS NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS.

Applicants interested in the doctoral program should review the detailed information provided at https://specialed.wvu.edu or contact sped@mail.wvu.edu for a brochure and application or an update on availability of specific courses.

FACULTY

CHAIR
• Barbara L. Ludlow - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)

PROFESSOR
• Barbara L. Ludlow - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Severe/Multiple Disabilities, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, Personnel Preparation

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS
• Kimberly K. Floyd - Ph.D. (Old Dominion University)
  Preschool Special Needs, Inclusive Preschools, Assistive Technology
• Michael D. Mayton - Ph.D. (Tennessee Technological University)
  Applied behavior analysis, Autism spectrum disorders, Intellectual disabilities
• Ann M. Richards - Ph.D. (University of Arizona)
  Multicategorical Special Education, Transition, Law and Policy Issues
TEACHING ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

• Melissa B. Harley - Ph.D. (San Diego State University)
  High Incidence Disabilities, Personnel Preparation, Program Evaluation

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

• Carla B. Brigandi - Ph.D. (University of Connecticut)
  Academic enrichment, Environmental perceptions, Creativity & creative problem solving
• Alexandra Hollo - Ph.D. (Vanderbilt University)
  High-incidence disabilities, Applied behavior analysis
• Colleen F. Wood-Fields - Ph.D. (Old Dominion University)
  Assistive technology, Evidence-based reading instruction & curriculum development for students with moderate/severe disabilities

CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

• Bernard C. Jones - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Inclusive Education, Cultural Competency, Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

PROFESSORS EMERITI

• Thomas P. Lombardi - Ph.D.
• Diane T. Woodrum - Ed.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR EMERITUS

• Luise B. Savage - Ed.D.

Admissions

ADMISSION TO THE MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

All individuals seeking certification and/or a degree must be admitted into the special education program. Students are admitted on a rolling basis as regular, provisional, or non-degree students as follows:

REGULAR STATUS

The individual who meets all admission requirements is granted regular status as a certification and/or degree-seeking student.

• An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (regular admission)
• 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
• Other requirements specific to each program option

Other Requirements in Certification Programs

The individual must also meet these additional requirements:

• PRAXIS Core Academic Skills for Educators (Core) passing scores; scores may be waived in some circumstances - contact program personnel for current minimum scores
• Prior certification in education may be required in some program options - contact program personnel for current guidelines

PROVISIONAL STATUS

In some circumstances, individuals may be granted provisional status in the program if they meet ALL other admission requirements and fit into one of these categories:

• An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 2.75 (provisional admission);
• An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 2.50 IF prior successful completion of a Master's degree in education or a closely related area with GPA of 3.25 (provisional admission);
• An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 IF prior successful completion of a graduate TEACHER certification program of 12 credits minimum with GPA of 3.25 (provisional admission);
• An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 IF prior successful completion of an undergraduate program with earned GPA of 3.00 in the final 30 credits (provisional admission).
Provisional status allows the student an opportunity to remediate deficiencies in grade point average or other requirements in order to achieve regular status. Deficiencies must be made up by the deadline set in the admission letter.

**NON-DEGREE STATUS**

The individual who has earned a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university but who does not seek certification or a master’s degree may be admitted as a non-degree student. This status allows the student to take a limited number of courses for additional endorsement to the professional teaching certificate and/or for professional development and/or personal growth.

**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: The certification and Master's degree programs are online programs, and international students cannot obtain a visa for study in the U.S. but may participate while residing in their own home countries.

**APPLICATION**

All applications must comply with University, College, Department, and Program requirements. Teacher certification requirements are based on the West Virginia Department of Education’s Policy 5100 and Approval of Educational Personnel Preparation Programs and Policy 5202 Licensure of Professional/Paraprofessional Personnel.

**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

Decisions for admission are sent as soon as all applications materials are received and processed.

**ADMISSION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM (ED.D.) IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

All individuals seeking the doctoral degree emphasis in special education must be admitted into the special education program.

**REGULAR STATUS**

The individual who meets all of the following admission requirements is granted regular status as a degree-seeking student.

- An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of 3.0
- An earned master’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university in special education or gifted education or disability services with a minimum grade point average of 3.25
- Prior teaching certification in some area of special education (for personnel preparation option) or in special education or disability services (for school leadership option)
- Submission of Graduate Record Examination (current version) within a five-year period - contact program for current minimum scores
- Two years of documented experience providing direct service in instruction or intervention to children or adults with exceptionalities in special education and/or gifted education and/or disability services
- Three letters of reference addressing the candidate’s past academic performance and qualities which would make the person suitable for doctoral-level study (contact program for specifications for reference letters)
- A personal goal statement illustrating a lifelong commitment to excellence in special education and/or gifted education and/or disability studies and articulating career goals focused on a faculty career
- An academic writing sample documenting knowledge of special education and/or gifted education and/or disability services and skill in organizing and expressing ideas and citing current sources in the professional literature

Applicants who meet the criteria specified above will also be required to undergo:

- A personal interview demonstrating communication and interpersonal skills
- A proctored writing sample to verify ability to express ideas with logic, clarity, and correct grammar

**PROVISIONAL STATUS**

Admission to the program with PROVISIONAL student status may be considered if openings are available:
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--applicants who do not have a Master’s degree in Special Education but meet all other criteria may be admitted; they may need to complete additional graduate courses in special education or gifted education to enhance their knowledge and skills
--applicants who have only private school teaching experience but meet all other criteria may be admitted but may need to complete a practicum experience in a public school setting during the program

Admissions criteria are based on qualifications associated with academic success in doctoral study as well as qualifications that candidates applying for leadership positions are expected to have when seeking employment as faculty at colleges and universities. In recognition of the fact that no single criterion is an adequate predictor of satisfactory completion of a program of study or subsequent success in a professional career, faculty endorse multiple criteria for admission to this doctoral program. Requirements for admission are weighed using a +, 0, - system in judging each applicant and are considered necessary but not sufficient eligibility criteria for admission.

Applicants who meet all criteria are NOT automatically granted admission to the program. Admission is contingent upon number of applicants, number of current students, and availability of graduate faculty.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Not applicable

NOTE: The doctoral program is an online program, and international students cannot obtain a visa for study in the U.S. and the program is not currently available in international areas.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Each applicant will submit all application materials and supporting documentation by the following dates:

Requests for PRIORITY* admission beginning FALL semester: DUE JAN 15
Requests for LATE* admission beginning FALL semester: DUE APRIL 15

Soon after the deadline, the Doctoral Admission Committee will review application files and meet to discuss applicants. Decisions will be based on applicant qualifications, program openings, and available faculty.

ALL applicants will be notified of the committee’s decision in writing by the following dates:

Decisions for PRIORITY* admissions for FALL semester: SENT MARCH 1
Decisions for LATE* admissions for FALL semester: SENT JUNE 1

Disability Studies Certificate

CERTIFICATE CODE - CG11

The WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities, in collaboration with the Department of Special Education, offers a graduate certificate program in disability studies. The certificate in disability studies prepares students, as citizens, to cope with the complex economic and social issues related to disabilities by learning directly from persons with disabilities and their families. Students will be trained to enter the workforce with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to provide state-of-the-art services to persons with disabilities and their families and to interact with co-workers who have disabilities.

Through the certificate program, students collaborate with and learn from experts in the disability arena, including pediatric neurologists, geneticists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, special education leaders, social workers, physical and occupational therapists, and others. These professionals, who are experienced clinicians, researchers, and educators, provide didactic instruction, clinical instruction, and mentorship to students.

Students will also have the opportunity to gain leadership and management skills that prepare them to enter the workforce with increased professional independence. The certificate program exposes students to social justice issues, Appalachian concerns, principles of practice, and cultural diversity while developing their expertise in rural practice environments. As part of the program, students have the opportunity to observe programs that serve those with disabilities and their families.

• Students must take two three-credit hour mandatory interdisciplinary courses: one of which is DISB 580.
• Six hours may be elective courses that cover subject matter related to persons with disabilities or courses within the student’s own academic discipline for which they have received prior approval from the certificate program director and the course instructor. Students will be required to complete a project that applies coursework to issues relating to persons with disabilities.
• Two credit hours are earned through thirty volunteer hours in which the student has direct interaction with persons who have disabilities.
• One credit hour is the capstone experience (DISB 686) which includes samples of the student’s accumulated work in disabilities, a final essay, and an oral presentation.
• Students must earn a B- or better in all courses to be awarded the certificate upon completion of all requirements.

The graduate Interdisciplinary Certificate in Disability Studies is offered on campus.