

# Special Education (MA)

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*This program is offered by the School of Education. It is available online and at the St. Louis main campus. The Emphasis in Specialized Approaches for Exceptional Learners is available online via asynchronous modality. The Emphasis in Applied Behavior Analysis is available online via asynchronous modality.*

- Collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services

## Program Description

The master of arts (MA) in special education provides practicing educators, related professionals and other qualified individuals opportunities to study and research special education practices and services. Current issues and emerging trends are explored on a global level, with a strong focus on social justice and ethical themes at the local, national and/or international level.

The program emphasizes developmentally oriented theory and research in the areas of cognitive and socio-emotional development, and students are expected to use this knowledge to design and promote evidence-based interventions and instructional practices to enhance pupil learning. Candidates explore opportunities for collaboration and advocacy within their educational settings that are designed to improve the quality of life of individuals with disabilities in general. The program recognizes the rapidly changing dimensions of special education and promotes the philosophy of integrated and inclusive learning experiences for all children and youth.

The program offers students opportunities to either seek a specialized approach for all types of exceptional learners or a concentrated learning experience by specializing in unique areas of study based on a specific population of exceptional learners. The emphasis areas are designed to provide flexibility within a structured sequence of coursework. Students may choose to complete specialized approaches for exceptional learners or concentrate in applied behavior analysis, mild/moderate disabilities, or specialized approaches to exceptional learners.

The master of arts in special education program does not lead to initial teacher certification in special education. For more information about initial teacher certification in special education (mild/moderate disabilities), please refer to the Teacher Certification section under the MAT with an emphasis in special education section of this catalog.

## Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program are able to:

- Use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias.
- Use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula to improve programs, supports and services at classroom, school, community and system levels.
- Facilitate the continuous improvement of general and special education programs, supports and services at the classroom, school and system levels for individuals with exceptionalities.
- Conduct, evaluate and use inquiry to guide professional practice.
- Provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices, and create positive and productive work environments.
- Use foundational knowledge of the field and professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, engage in lifelong learning, advance the profession, and perform leadership responsibilities to promote the success of professional colleagues and individuals with exceptionalities.

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- SPED 5703 Functional Behavioral Assessment and Interventions (3 hours)
- SPED 5850 Single-Subject Research Design\* (3 hours)
- SPED 5890 Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
- SPED 5900 Concepts and Principles of Behavior Analysis (3 hours)
- SPED 5901 Behavior Change Procedures (3 hours)
- SPED 5902 Supervision and Staff Performance (3 hours)
- SPED 5903 Ethics and Professional Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis\* (3 hours)

\*Core course requirement

## Emphasis in Mild/Moderate Disabilities

**This emphasis is available only at the St. Louis main campus.**

The emphasis in mild/moderate disabilities is intended for certified educators who are interested in developing expertise in teaching students with mild/moderate (cross-categorical) disabilities. While the emphasis does not lead to an initial teacher certificate in mild/moderate disabilities, the program of study offers currently certified teachers an opportunity to acquire the foundational knowledge in preparation for an endorsement in mild/moderate disabilities: cross-categorical.

**The following coursework is required for an emphasis in mild/moderate disabilities:**

- READ 5190 Advanced Studies in Language Development and Acquisition (3 hours)
- SPED 5240 Psychoeducational Assessment (3 hours)
- SPED 5380 Methods for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities I (3 hours)
- SPED 5381 Methods for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities II (3 hours)

One course (3 hours) from the following or other advisor-approved graduate course pertinent to the student's program of study:

- READ 5235 Understanding Diverse Reading Profiles, including Dyslexia (3 hours)
- READ 5950 Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Problems (3 hours)
- SPED 5010 Differentiated Mathematics Instruction (3 hours)
- SPED 5050 Language Development (3 hours)
- SPED 5245 Counseling for Life's Transitions (3 hours)
- SPED 5250 Behavior Management for Children with Special Needs (3 hours)
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