SPECIAL EDUCATION, MASTER OF EDUCATION (M.ED.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Program goal
The Master of Education in Special Education program prepares graduates for work in one of three areas: early childhood, severe disabilities or general education. Applicants who do not already hold a teaching license must meet both licensure and degree requirements prior to the awarding of the Master of Education degree unless exempted as a professional from another discipline. Students should plan carefully with their adviser to ensure that the appropriate courses and experiences are completed. Successful completion of the degree program leads to endorsement in early childhood special education, special education-general education or severe disabilities.

The Master of Education in Special Education program with an early childhood concentration is a sequentially planned series of courses and clinical experiences designed to prepare individuals to work with young children, from birth through age 5, with developmental disabilities and their families. The courses are delivered using a hybrid of online and face-to-face formats. The program is learner-centered, innovative, interactive and collaborative. Through online discussions and face-to-face meetings with faculty members, community partners, student peers and program graduates, the ECSE teacher candidates have multiple opportunities to engage in interactive, proactive and dynamic dialogues.

Successful completion of the degree program qualifies students for teacher licensure with endorsement in early childhood special education by the Virginia Department of Education. Students are prepared to intervene with infants and young children representing a wide range of abilities, including those at risk for developmental delays. As a result of training, students will be prepared to serve children and families in diverse and high-need communities in a variety of early intervention roles. The program can be completed in five semesters of full-time study or six semesters of part-time study.

In addition to course work, candidates will create an electronic portfolio that will showcase their knowledge, skills and dispositions in the special education early childhood curriculum.

Student learning outcomes
1. Demonstrate content knowledge in special education: Candidates demonstrate content knowledge in special education as evidenced by the final portfolio and case-study paper.
2. Effectively plan instruction: Candidates demonstrate that they can effectively plan classroom-based instruction or activities for other roles as special educators as evidenced by the UDL/collaboration unit plan.
3. Effectively apply knowledge, skills and dispositions (clinical experience): Candidates demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions are applied effectively in practice as evidenced by the clinical evaluation continuum.
4. Effect on student learning: Candidates demonstrate effects on student learning as evidenced by the unit plan with curriculum-based measure – secondary.
5. Candidates demonstrate CEC standards proficiency: Candidates further demonstrate proficiency on CEC competencies as evidenced by the assessing a child/IEP assignment, the multicultural poster and paper, and the functional behavior assessment/behavior intervention plan.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs
The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.gradeuate.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regis)

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regis/grad/candidacy)

Graduation requirements
As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regis/grad/graduation-info)
Admission requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School, the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission:

1. Bachelor's degree in an appropriate discipline
2. Three letters of recommendation addressing the student's potential for graduate study in education
3. Student's written statement concerning career interests
4. Transcripts of all previous college work

Additionally, there are several tests that students must pass for admission to teacher preparation, admission to student teaching and licensure in Virginia. Students should consult the School of Education website for current testing requirements.

Admission to clinical experiences in schools requires a background check and fingerprinting.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements, students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students are required to complete a minimum of 37 credit hours.
2. Grade requirements: Receipt of a grade of C or below in two courses constitutes automatic dismissal from the program. Courses with a grade below C cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Curriculum requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUS 605</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUS/PSYC 607</td>
<td>Advanced Educational Psychology for Elementary Teachers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUS 673</td>
<td>Seminar on Educational Issues, Ethics and Policy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUS 660</td>
<td>Research Methods in Education</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECSE 500</td>
<td>Language/Communication Intervention for Young Children with Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECSE 542</td>
<td>Family/Professional Partnerships</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEDP 631</td>
<td>Behavior Support of Individuals with Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 37

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