Special Education, Master of Education (M.Ed.) with a concentration in severe disabilities

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 conferring of the Master of Education degree for exemplary preparation in special education, adapted curriculum K-12. Throughout the program, emphasis is placed on person-centered planning, school and community inclusion, interdisciplinary teamwork and the role of the family. Successful completion of the degree program leads to licensure endorsement in special education, adapted curriculum K-12.

Courses address physical and medical management issues, functional assessment strategies, longitudinal curriculum planning, systematic instruction, augmentative and alternative communication systems, assistive technology, transition from school to adulthood, positive behavioral supports and the special needs of students with physical, sensory and health-related disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder.

All core courses are offered through the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Special Education Adapted Curriculum: Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities and Autism. Core courses are accessed through VCU. Students enrolled in the program complete a field-based externship in their school (if they currently serve students with severe disabilities) or in one of the many public schools in the Richmond area. A total of six credit hours of externship experience is spread throughout the course of study and is designed to meet the students’ needs for professional development.

All candidates are required to submit a final portfolio as the capstone requirement of the program. Successful completion of the 42-credit-hour program results in eligibility for Virginia endorsement in special education, adapted curriculum in addition to the Master of Education degree

Student learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate content knowledge in special education: Candidates demonstrate content knowledge in special education as evidenced by the final portfolio and the disability 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 intervention program plan with data.
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 the transition IEP.
5. Candidates demonstrate CEC standards proficiency: Candidates further demonstrate proficiency on CEC competencies as evidenced by the functional behavior assessment/behavior intervention plan, expanded present level of performance, low-tech device, teamwork project and physical management plan with assistive technology assignments.

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 published 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 VCU Graduate School website (http://www.graduate.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-regcs)

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-regcs/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-regs/grad/graduation-info)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry</th>
<th>Deadline dates</th>
<th>Test requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>GRE or MAT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
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<td>Summer</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
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In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), 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 Student Services Center (http://www.soe.vcu.edu/student-services-center) section on the School of Education website for current testing requirements.

Applicants who do not have a provisional or professional collegiate teaching license in special education must take SEDP 630 as a prerequisite course.

Applicants who hold bachelor’s degrees in areas other than special education must complete a review process with program faculty as part of the admissions process.

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

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students are required to complete a minimum of 42 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 603</td>
<td>Seminar in Child Growth and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUS 605</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUS/PSYC 607</td>
<td>Advanced Educational Psychology for Elementary Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUS 673</td>
<td>Democracy, Equity and Ethics in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUS 660</td>
<td>Research Methods in Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 42

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