Department of Special Education

The Department of Special Education offers master’s degree and credential programs for candidates seeking a California Preliminary Education Specialist Credential with either a mild/moderate or moderate/severe disabilities specialization authorizing them to teach in the public K-12 environment. All Preliminary Education Specialist Credential programs are approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) (https://www.ctc.ca.gov).

APU candidates are prepared to work in schools as education specialists. Candidates must demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, writing skills, and dispositions necessary to help all children learn. APU candidates are highly regarded in fulfilling these high professional standards. The department assesses all candidates from admission, throughout their program, and up to the recommendation of credentials. Assessments are used to evaluate and inform candidate learning and include the following assessment areas: CTC teacher performance expectations, APU student learning outcomes, and teacher candidate dispositions.

Master’s

- Master of Arts in Education: Special Education and Mild/Moderate Disabilities Education Specialist Credential (http://catalog.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/education/teacher-education/special-education/master-arts-education-special-education-mild-moderate-disabilities-specialist-preliminary-credential-nonintern-intern)

Credentials

- Mild/Moderate Disabilities Education Specialist Credential (http://catalog.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/education/teacher-education/special-education/mild-moderate-disabilities-k12-specialist-credential-preliminary-nonintern-intern)
- Moderate/Severe Disabilities Education Specialist Credential (http://catalog.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/education/teacher-education/special-education/moderate-severe-disabilities-k12-specialist-credential-preliminary-nonintern-intern)

EDUC 540, Essentials in Learning and Technology, 1 Unit
This course focuses on introducing and developing proficiency with the essential skills necessary for the Master of Arts in Education: Learning and Technology emphasis. Students utilize a variety of applications and skills necessary for competency in the program. This course must be taken in the first term of the program.
Prerequisite: Admission into a M.A. in Education: Learning and Technology program: Mild/Moderate Disabilities Education Specialist Credential, Moderate/Severe Disabilities Education Specialist Credential, Multiple Subject Teaching or Single Subject Teaching Credential

EDUC 546, Digital Communications, 3 Units
This course engages students in collaborative, investigative, and reflective learning opportunities through the exploration of relevant digital communication tools. Attention is given to current modes of communication that utilize a digital platform, and effective strategies for implementation within teaching/learning environments.
Prerequisite: EDUC 540

EDUC 547, Special Topics in Educational Technology, 3 Units
Current technologies, trends, and a variety of special topics in educational technology are explored. This course covers practical and theoretical aspects, effectiveness, and problems related to the implementation of the topic into relevant teaching/learning environments. Different topics may be taken and repeated for credit.
Prerequisite: EDUC 540, or permission of program to take course as elective

EDUC 548, Emerging Trends in Technology, 3 Units
This course covers the historical development of educational technology and the social issues influencing its growth and implementation. Attention is also given to a synthesis of research related to the field, professional organizations serving the discipline, and emerging innovative uses of educational technology.
Prerequisite: EDUC 540
EDUC 549, Capstone Experience in Learning and Technology, 2 Units
The primary focus of this capstone experience is a research-designed multimedia eportfolio that showcases skills and concepts the student has acquired in the Master of Arts in Education: Learning and Technology program. This course incorporates each student’s research, use of applied technologies in learning and technology, a growth assessment, a comprehensive eportfolio, and defense. The course must be taken at the end of the program, and passed in order to meet the final requirements for the master's degree.

Prerequisite: EDUC 540, EDUC 546, EDUC 547, and EDUC 548; may be taken concurrently: TEP 552, TEP 562, SPED 552, or SPED 572

SPED 500, Candidate Support and Supervision, 1-3 Units
This course allows Special Education Teacher Candidates to complete unit requirements for their credential or degree program. Current educational practices and a variety of special topics in the field of special education are explored, and course material covers practical and theoretical aspects relevant to the teaching/learning environment. Special Education Intern Candidates may be required to take this course during their program in an effort to meet program requirements while receiving mandated supervision and support. This course may be repeated four (4) times for credit for a total of 4-12 units.

SPED 525, Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing, 3 Units
This course prepares teacher candidates to deliver a comprehensive program of systematic instruction in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, aligned to the state-adopted English Language Arts Content Standards, the Reading/Language Arts Framework (2007), and the Common Core State Standards for English-Language Arts (2012). Through application of research-based instructional practices introduced in the course, candidates learn to address the needs of special education students and the full range of diverse learners, as referenced in the framework and the RICA Content Specifications.

SPED 526, Specialized Academic Instruction: Reading, Writing, and Math, 3 Units
This course introduces candidates to multifaceted and multilayered methodologies and strategies necessary for teaching and engaging diverse students with disabilities in mathematics and language arts. Candidates become proficient in making explicit connections between ongoing assessment, student characteristics and strengths, instruction, and curriculum. They learn to analyze data to plan effective and differentiated instruction and interventions, and also how to collaboratively design effective IEP goals while considering the role of technology in those goals.

SPED 528, Assessment and IEP Development, 3 Units
This course examines current assessment mandates for students with mild to moderate to severe disabilities. Teacher candidates study test development and learn to evaluate assessment tools based on current research-based policies and mandates. Candidates also learn to administer and interpret norm-criterion reference assessment instruments and informal surveys or assessment instruments, and come to understand the influence of cultural and linguistic factors in the development of Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and Individual Transition Plans (ITPs).

Corequisite: SPED 551 or SPED 571

SPED 529, Positive Behavior Supports for Students with Exceptional Needs, 3 Units
This course provides teacher candidates with the skills and legal framework essential to the development of positive behavior supports and self-management outcomes for students with disabilities. Candidates examine foundations of behavior disorders, appropriate communication, and behavioral support strategies that align with best practices. The foundations of functional analysis of behavior that leads to the development of positive behavior intervention plans are examined. Models of collaborative practices that lead to positive relationships and critical partnerships with students, families, educators, and agencies are investigated through skill development and self-analysis.

Corequisite: SPED 552 or SPED 572

SPED 551, Clinical Practice I: Mild to Moderate Disabilities, 2 Units
Students with mild/moderate disabilities require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of specific learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, autism, other health impairments, or other identified disabilities for which placement in a classroom for students with mild/moderate disabilities is deemed appropriate. Teacher candidates, as part of their clinical practice, get on-site experience providing the support described in students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These experiences include, but are not limited to, creating an appropriate classroom physical environment for students with mild/moderate disabilities, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine students’ current levels of performance, planning for students’ grade and instructional levels, and capturing data to support progress on annual goals and short-term objectives that are aligned with California Content Standards. Candidates also monitor students’ progress toward instructional goals and state-adopted standards, and, if necessary, identify behaviors impeding learning, and remediate by implementing positive behavior supports. Candidates complete a semester of full-time, supervised student teaching in appropriate public school classrooms, with assignments in classroom grade levels K-12. Each placement provides teaching experiences with English language learners and ethnically diverse students. Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.
SPED 552, Clinical Practice II: Mild to Moderate Disabilities, 2 Units
Students with mild/moderate disabilities require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of intellectual, behavioral, emotional, communication, sensory, autism spectrum disorder, and/or motor impairments. Teacher candidates, as part of their clinical practice, get on-site experience providing the support described in the students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These experiences include, but are not limited to, creating an appropriate classroom physical environment for students with mild/moderate disabilities, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine students’ current levels of performance, planning instructional-level annual goals and short-term objectives that are aligned with California Content Standards, monitoring students’ progress toward instructional goals and short-term objectives, and identifying behaviors impeding learning and then remediating by implementing positive behavior supports. Candidates complete a semester of full-time, supervised student teaching in appropriate public school classrooms, with assignments in classroom grade levels K-12. Each placement provides teaching experiences with English language learners and ethnically diverse students. Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.
Prerequisite: SPED 551

SPED 571, Clinical Practice I: Moderate to Severe Disabilities, 2 Units
Students with moderate/severe disabilities require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of intellectual, behavioral, emotional, communication, sensory, autism spectrum disorder, and/or motor impairments. Teacher candidates, as part of their clinical practice, get on-site experience providing the support described in the students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These experiences include, but are not limited to, creating an appropriate classroom physical environment for students with moderate/severe disabilities, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine students’ current levels of performance, planning instructional-level annual goals and short-term objectives that are aligned with California Content Standards, monitoring students’ progress toward instructional goals and short-term objectives, and identifying behaviors impeding learning and then remediating by implementing positive behavior supports. Candidates complete a semester of full-time, supervised student teaching in appropriate public school classrooms, with assignments in classroom grade levels K-12. Each placement provides teaching experiences with English language learners and ethnically diverse students. Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.

SPED 572, Clinical Practice II: Moderate to Severe Disabilities, 2 Units
Students with moderate/severe disabilities require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of intellectual, behavioral, emotional, communication, sensory, autism spectrum disorder, and/or motor impairments. Teacher candidates, as part of their clinical practice, get on-site experience providing the support described in the students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These experiences include, but are not limited to, creating an appropriate classroom physical environment for students with moderate/severe disabilities, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine students’ current levels of performance, planning instructional-level annual goals and short-term objectives that are aligned with California Content Standards, monitoring students’ progress toward instructional goals and short-term objectives, and identifying behaviors impeding learning and then remediating by implementing positive behavior supports. Candidates complete a semester of full-time, supervised student teaching in appropriate public school classrooms, with assignments in classroom grade levels K-12. Each placement provides teaching experiences with English language learners and ethnically diverse students. Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.
Prerequisite: SPED 571

TESP 501, Art of Teaching I: Foundations of Teaching, 3 Units
This course provides an introduction to basic pedagogy, including classroom management, lesson planning and teaching, standards-based instruction, teaching strategies for students with diverse identities and needs, and the application of technology to support teaching and learning. Teacher candidates consider strategies, models, and processes for meeting the needs of a broad range of K-12 students, including special needs students, gifted students, English language learners, speakers of nondominant varieties of English, and students of all cultural or ethnic identities. This course is designed for direct application of classroom learning by candidates in a collaborative context that implements inclusion. Candidates examine Christian character and develop an understanding of grace in the Christian worldview as applied in classroom contexts, in consideration of meeting the needs of students and building community within the classroom. This course includes 15 hours of required field experience in a K-12 school.

TESP 502, Science of Teaching I: How Students Learn, 3 Units
This course comprises a basic overview of human growth and development for all students in the K-12 environment. Teacher candidates identify how research on the neuroscience of learning, theories of learning, and student motivation affect current understanding of student development through the K-12 education experience. They then creatively and collaboratively investigate how this knowledge can enable them to meet the needs of all students, including underserved populations, English language learners, and individuals with diverse learning needs (from gifted learners to individuals with mild to severe disabilities). Candidates also examine their own cultural beliefs, attitudes toward diversity, and related assumptions, identifying how these might affect student learning and achievement in their classrooms. Candidates demonstrate applied knowledge of communication styles and strategies for fostering positive cross-cultural interactions among students who are diverse in terms of culture, language, and ability. Finally, candidates reflect on the need to support the development of all students from a Christian worldview. This course includes 15 hours of required field experience in a K-12 school. Meets the General Education Requirement: Social Science.
TESP 503, The Soul of Teaching: Tapestry of American Education, 3 Units
This course introduces teacher candidates to the history of American education and a sampling of modern philosophies of education, examined through the lens of a Christian worldview. Specific consideration is given to the ways in which historical trends have contributed to today's education system, including how social and philosophical movements, as well as policy changes, have shaped the growth and inclusiveness of education in the U.S. Candidates reflect on the continued need for education equity for all students in U.S. schools, and explore inclusive practices for diverse populations, professional dispositions, teacher resiliency, and their role in perpetuating social justice in education. They engage culturally appropriate response strategies that enhance learning opportunities in a cross-cultural context, and identify how a Christian worldview enables and directs a commitment to principles of equity and justice in their practice. Meets the General Education Requirement: Intercultural Competence.

TESP 504, Schools and Educational Systems, 3 Units
This course explores the legal, ethical, and organizational systems (federal, state, district, and school) within which teachers conduct their work. Teacher candidates engage in an examination of school and community cultures and their impact on learning, by focusing on the ways teachers communicate and collaborate with external and internal stakeholders to provide equitable access to all students. Additionally, contractual responsibilities and professional expectations are addressed. Candidates also consider the ways in which educators, from a Christian worldview, can advocate to transform social problems impacting school culture. Meets the General Education Requirement: Civic Knowledge and Engagement.

TESP 511, Art of Teaching II: Pedagogy and Instructional Design, 3 Units
This course explores pedagogy as the combination of teachers’ professional knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are directed to create effective learning opportunities and outcomes for all students in a range of contexts. Building on broad themes from TESP 501 Art of Teaching I, teacher candidates explore pedagogical methods and specific models for meeting individual student needs, utilizing universal and individualized strategies. Attention is given to culturally responsive teaching practices for learners with diverse cultural and ethnic identities, as well as differentiation practices for students with various learning needs. Candidates further analyze the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Finally, candidates examine and reflect on the Christian worldview in relation to student diversity and developing a climate of equity and collaboration within classrooms. This course includes 15 hours of required field experience in a K-12 school.
Prerequisite: TESP 501

TESP 512, Science of Teaching II: Effective Assessment Strategies for All Learners, 3 Units
This course explores strategies for designing standards and data-driven curricular plans and units to serve diverse student populations (e.g., culturally, linguistically, and/or ability-diverse learners). Teacher candidates engage in the administration and analysis of formative, summative, diagnostic assessment to inform the ongoing development of differentiated instruction that serves the unique academic needs of students from diverse, intersecting backgrounds and identities. In view of the academic achievement gap that exists in California K-12 schools, candidates utilize assessment results, alongside state frameworks and current standards specific to their specialization, in development of further curriculum/planning, instruction, and assessment cycles; these will demonstrate the use of instructional strategies, materials, technologies, and other resources to make content connected, contextualized, and accessible to all students. Candidates consider how a Christian worldview catalyzes their commitment to engage fully in the work of creating classrooms that meet the needs of all their students. This course includes 15 hours of required field experience in a K-12 school.
Prerequisite: TESP 502