

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 to moderate support needs or extensive support needs 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 knowledge, 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 program learning outcomes, and teacher candidate dispositions.

Programs

Master's

- Master of Arts in Education: Learning and Technology and Mild to Moderate Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/education-ma-learning-technology-mild-moderate-disabilities-education-specialist-credential/>)
- Master of Arts in Education: Learning and Technology and Extensive Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/education-ma-learning-technology-moderate-severe-disabilities-education-specialist-credential/>)
- Master of Arts in Education: Special Education and Mild to Moderate Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/education-ma-special-education-mild-moderate-disabilities-education-specialist-credential/>)
- Master of Arts in Education: Special Education and Extensive Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/education-ma-special-education-moderate-severe-disabilities-education-specialist-credential/>)

Credentials

- Mild to Moderate Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/mild-moderate-education-specialist-credential/>)
- Extensive Support Needs Education Specialist Credential (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/school-education/teacher-education/special-education/moderate-severe-education-specialist-credential/>)

Courses

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 560

EDUC 547, Special Topics in Educational Technology, 3 Units

Students in this course explore the current technologies, trends, and a variety of special topics in educational technology. Course material covers practical and theoretical aspects, effectiveness, and problems related to the implementation of the topic into relevant teaching/learning environments. Different topics are offered at different times, so the course may be repeated for credit.

Prerequisite: EDUC 560

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 560

EDUC 556, Historical and Philosophical Perspectives of Disability Studies, 3 Units

This course explores and analyzes the historically key definitions of disability in light of the major theories, methodological approaches, and proposed public policy uses that have shaped them. It also considers how civil rights, human rights, self-determination, social policy, and participative action research have influenced disability studies. A diverse set of current and historical research articles on disability studies is analyzed to model the ways in which different research topics have been addressed and introduce how current research can stimulate future studies. Emphasis is given to the formulation of important research questions and the development of testable hypotheses based on previous theory, literature, and experience, as master's candidates begin to develop initial sections of their capstone research project.

Prerequisite: EDUC 560

EDUC 557, Current Trends in Curriculum and Disability Studies, 3 Units

This course equips candidates with practical and theoretical understanding of curriculum in schooling, with an emphasis on the role performed by the special education teacher or differentiation expert. Course material covers the various approaches to curriculum construction and organization in schools by examining the principles of curriculum improvement, change, and evaluation. Focus is on the theories, research, and best practices related to planning and developing curriculum and its implementation in schools and classrooms in order to address the needs of students in diverse communities.

Prerequisite: EDUC 560

EDUC 558, Research and Collaboration for Special Education, 3 Units

This course provides educational specialists the communication and problem-solving skills to successfully collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and individuals with exceptionalities within the K-12 education environment. Additionally, this advanced course enables master's degree candidates in special education to build upon earlier courses and examine educational research within the special education framework, with an emphasis on data collection for action research.

Prerequisite: EDUC 560

EDUC 560, Action Research in Education, 1 Unit

This course introduces students to basic qualitative and quantitative research methods, designs, and reporting strategies. Master's degree candidates are enabled to develop an understanding of the research process by introducing the basic principles of research and academic writing. Through activities integrating theory with practice, candidates learn how to identify problems to study, develop research questions, specify data collection methods and design their action research projects which are continued in a subsequent course.

EDUC 569, Capstone Seminar, 2 Units

Culminating the MA emphasis courses, the capstone seminar helps students build on the coursework representing their repertoire of academic preparation from the credential and master's programs. Master's candidates complete their action research projects, and create an ePortfolio for compiling assignments that profile their professional identities (personal philosophy, identity and dispositions narrative), their scholarly work (ethnography, curriculum assessment, literature review), and their practical applications (lesson and unit plans, classroom management) in the classroom. In this way, students refine and contribute further to a body of work representing their accomplishments and professional identity. Finally, through this course, candidates enhance their understanding and experience of a community's connection to the school environment.

Prerequisite: EDUC 536, EDUC 537, and EDUC 538; or EDUC 546, EDUC 547, and EDUC 548; or EDUC 556, EDUC 557, and EDUC 558

SPED 500, Candidate Support and Supervision, 1-3 Units

Teacher candidates explore current educational practices and a variety of special topics in the field of education, and course material covers practical and theoretical aspects relevant to the teaching/learning environment. Interns 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 517, Art of Teaching II: Pedagogy and Instructional Design for Education Specialists, 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 in 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, and, finally, examine and reflect on the Christian worldview in relation to student diversity and developing a climate of equity and collaboration within classrooms. Course includes embedded field experience requirements for a total of 15 hours.

Prerequisite: TESP 501

SPED 518, Science of Teaching II: Effective Assessment Strategies for Learners with Special Needs, 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, which 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

SPED 525, Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing, 3 Units

This course prepares teacher candidates to implement a comprehensive literacy program of systematic instruction in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language aligned with the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework. Through application of research-based instructional practices, candidates learn specific ways to address the diverse needs of all students.

SPED 526, Specialized Academic Instruction: Reading, Writing, and Math, 3 Units

This course introduces candidates to multifaceted and multitiered 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 527, Teaching Students with Extensive Support Needs, 3 Units

This course provides teacher candidates with a systems perspective for understanding and supporting individuals with extensive support needs and their families who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Using a person-centered planning approach, candidates examine effective collaborative strategies for team building, Individual Education Program (IEP) development, joint problem solving, and transition planning. Course material covers evidence-based strategies, adaptations, modifications, and technologies that provide access to Common Core standards, functional academics, and life skills. Various models are reviewed, including co-teaching, inclusion, community-based instruction, and vocational training.

SPED 528, Assessment and IEP Development: Mild to Extensive Support Needs, 3 Units

Teacher candidates in this course examine current assessment mandates for students with mild to extensive support needs, studying test development and learning to evaluate assessment tools based on current research-based policies and mandates. Candidates also learn to administer and interpret norm-criterion reference assessment instruments as well as informal surveys or assessment instruments, and gain an understanding of the influence of cultural and linguistic factors in the development of Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and Individual Transition Plans (ITPs).

Corequisite: SPED 550 or SPED 551 or SPED 570 or SPED 571

SPED 529, Positive Behavior Supports for Students with Exceptional Needs, 3 Units

This course equips 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 553 or SPED 572 or SPED 573

SPED 550, Clinical Practice I: Mild to Moderate Support Needs, 2 Units

Students with mild to moderate support needs require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of specific learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, other health impairments, emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, or other identified disabilities for which placement in a classroom for students with mild to moderate support needs 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 physical classroom 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 learners and ethnically diverse students. *Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.*

Corequisite: SPED 528

SPED 553, Clinical Practice II: Mild to Moderate Support Needs, 2 Units

Students with mild to moderate support needs require specialized support to address unique learning needs resulting from a range of specific learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, other health impairments, emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, or other identified disabilities for which placement in a classroom for students with mild to moderate support needs was deemed appropriate. During their clinical practice experience, teacher candidates are provided with on-site experiences that provide 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 to moderate support needs, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine the students' current levels of performance, planning for their grade and instructional level, and capturing data to support progress on annual goals and short-term objectives 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 learners and ethnically diverse students.

Prerequisite: SPED 550;

Corequisite: SPED 529

SPED 570, Clinical Practice I: Extensive Support Needs, 2 Units

Students with extensive support needs 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 extensive support needs, 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 learners and ethnically diverse students.

Corequisite: SPED 528

SPED 573, Clinical Practice II: Extensive Support Needs, 2 Units

Students with extensive support needs 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 extensive support needs, conducting formal and informal assessments in order to determine students' current levels of performance, planning instructional-level annual goals and short-term objectives 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 learners and ethnically diverse students.

Prerequisite: SPED 570;

Corequisite: SPED 529

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.*