WESTERN
COLORADO UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Master of Arts in Special Education

Licensure & Added Endorsement

General Description

Being a special educator is one of the best jobs in the field of education. We are a passionate, loyal group of education professionals who are not afraid to advocate for our students. We are always problem-solving and finding what works for students to be successful, focusing on the whole student, their family, and collaborating with our teaching teams.

Our Western special education programs are grounded in the Colorado State Standards for Special Education and Teacher Quality. Each course includes the philosophical and legal perspective of "the why" alongside the practical application of a special educator's primary roles and tasks. We have eight courses in our special education licensure program with a yearlong student teaching residency.

Our Special Education Teacher Candidates are from a wide range of pathways entering our online special education program. In our initial licensure program, candidates are either (1) traditional or paraprofessional residents working 24 hours per week in a special education classroom or (2) alternative special educators working full-time in their classroom. In our added-endorsement program, we have pathways for already-licensed teachers. Our special education candidates are either (1) alternative full-time teachers in special education or (2) adding their special education endorsement while maintaining their role as a general education teacher. If students want to earn their Master's degree in Special Education, the second year of study is devoted to their research inquiry and capstone project.

The Program

MA in SPED + Licensure

New to teaching? This pathway requires **27** graduate credit hours for licensure and **10** additional graduate credit hours for the MA. In the 1st year, students complete their 1 year residency, completing their licensure courses or spreading them out over the years #1 & 2. Student pathways for initial licensure can be:

(1) Traditional student-teacher interning in special education classroom for 12-24 hours per week of student contact for an entire year;
(2) Paraprofessionals are working in special education program, completing 12-24 hours of their residency each week while working as a paraprofessional;
(3) Working as an alternative teacher of record in a special education classroom.

MA in SPED + Added-Endorsement

Students who are already licensed teachers can complete their added-endorsement in **24** credit hours and **13** credits hours for the MA. This pathway also requires 37 total graduate credit hours and a 1-year residency. Students can complete their added endorsement in one year. Student pathways for initial licensure can be:

(1) Working as a General Education (GE) teacher completing a residency in their GE classroom;
(2) Working as an alternative teacher of record in a special education classroom.



Questions?

Special Education Program

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Coursework

Summer Licensure Orientation (SLO)- Western Special Education Licensure & Added- Endorsement students are required to attend our SLO event at the end of July or early August.

- ◊ EDUC 615 - Student Teaching Exceptionalities (Initial Licensure Only)
- ◊ EDUC 611- Strategies for Exceptionalities
- ◊ EDUC 614- Inclusivity with Collaboration
- ◊ EDUC 632- Overview of Special Services
- ◊ EDUC 630- Inclusivity in Content Areas
- ◊ Year #2- Elective (3-6 credits) + Research, Elective choices on courseplan & Western.edu

- ◊ EDUC 615 - Student Teaching Exceptionalities
- ◊ EDUC 612 - Assessment and Programming
- ◊ EDUC 631 - Inclusive Methods for Literacy
- ◊ EDUC 633 - Differentiated Literacy Assessment
- ◊ Year #2- Capstone

Special Education Milestone Badges

These Milestones are the foundation of the knowledge and skills special education teachers must possess to fulfill the roles & responsibilities and the day-to-day abilities in a special education teaching position. These milestones are a compilation of coursework and teaching residency accomplishments for you to be recommended for special education licensure or endorsement. Graduate students work towards "mastery" of each milestone badge within their coursework and residency learning activities. For example, within your coursework, you will be learning about collaboration, practicing collaboration with your colleagues, and implementing a collaborative, differentiated unit in your K-12 residency setting.

