DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Programs of the Department

The Department of Special Education is responsible for courses leading to certification in Maryland as a special education teacher. The department offers a major in Special Education, a major in Early Childhood & Special Education (EESE), and a major in Early Childhood & Special Education (ECSE). Special education is a screened major; applicants must achieve qualifying scores on Praxis CORE or SAT/ACT as established by MSDE, and a minimum GPA of 2.75 (with a grade equivalent of 2.00 or higher on all prerequisite course work required for the major). A writing sample is also required.

The education course listings include core education courses that provide knowledge and skills for general application in teaching and learning. The instructional technology and special education offerings also have Prek-12 applications. Reflecting the Professional Education Mission and Vision statements, students are assigned by their department and/or the Center for Professional Practice to field and clinical experience placements that are diverse and inclusive. Placements are made that enable the Teacher Education Unit to meet state and national accreditation mandates. All professional year placements will be in identified Professional Development Schools (PDS), or approved satellite schools, based on ongoing and systematic PDS partnership agreements with school systems. These mandates and the size and scope of our education program do not permit personal preference or geographic convenience in placements.

Special Education majors must meet with their advisers every term to ensure that their planned programs of study meet Towson University, the major and Maryland State Department of Education certification requirements. Students must consult with their advisers prior to taking courses on a Pass grading option. Courses in the major and courses required for Maryland State Department of Education certification may not be taken with this option. All tracks of the Special Education program begin in the fall with the exception of the ECSE program.

Exceptions, changes, waivers and/or substitutions from the program pattern for Special Education majors in content or sequence are permitted only with the written consent of the chair of the Special Education Department.

Graduate programs include the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Master of Education.

The Professional Year

Special Education majors follow the school system calendar for the Professional Development School to which they are assigned as interns. The professional year starts in August, when the teachers begin the school year, and follows the school system spring break schedule.

Graduate Programs in Special Education

Director: Michelle Pasko
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This Master of Education program prepares currently certified teachers for careers as special educators. The Certification Track meets the requirements for MSDE special education certification at infant/primary, elementary/middle or secondary levels. The Teacher as Leader in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) M.Ed. program is designed to provide specialized instruction in ASD to educators currently certified in special education, related services or related fields. The Master of Arts in Teaching offers certification in special education for individuals who hold an undergraduate degree outside of education. See the Graduate Catalog for details.

Admission Requirements for Teacher Education

The Teacher Education Executive Board, representing all initial teacher education programs at Towson University, utilizes the following minimum requirements as conditions for admission into teacher education programs, maintaining candidate status and formal entry into the capstone internship. Programs may include additional requirements for admission into the program and/or the capstone internship.

The College of Education admits students either as freshmen or as undergraduate transfer students from accredited, post-secondary institutions. During the freshman and sophomore years, students are generally engaged in pre-professional courses or courses that fulfill Core Curriculum requirements, as well as all identified prerequisites (e.g., specific and sequential courses in Core Curriculum) for admission to COE screened majors and programs.

All College of Education undergraduate programs are screened majors. As an integral part of the teaching/learning experience, students work with advisers in a strategic planning process across all years at TU. Accordingly, to support student success, all COE students are required to confer prior to registration each term with their assigned advisers.

I. PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO ALL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Complete a notarized self-disclosure criminal background form to be filed in the major department, with a written application. For Secondary Education content programs, the criminal background forms will be filed in the Secondary and Middle School Education Department.

2. Submit a written application for formal admission to the program. Students seeking admission to teacher education programs must contact their department chairperson or program coordinator by 45 credit hours for program-specific procedures and requirements for admission to professional education programs.

3. Document a minimum GPA of at least 3.0 during the most recent two years of the candidate's general education. A grade of PS (Pass) is not accepted for courses required in the major/minor per the undergraduate catalog. AP credits can be applied towards requirements in the major/minor, but not towards the GPA.

4. Provide documentation of meeting the MSDE Basic Skills Assessment Requirement (http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/testing_info/praxis1.aspx).
II. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Special Education is a screened major. All candidates for the Special Education, ECSE or EESE majors will be ranked according to cumulative GPA in all college or university courses (transfer GPA and/or TU GPA). All applicants must submit an application to the Special Education department including a writing sample.

The Special Education department is responsive to the transfer student and will accept those credits which are compatible with the Core Curriculum requirements, Special Education, ECSE and EESE majors and state certification requirements. Please note: although credits might qualify toward graduation, only an evaluation conducted by the Special Education adviser will determine which credits will also apply toward the major. Students must earn a minimal grade equivalent of 2.0 in all transfer courses. Students must first have their transcripts evaluated by University Admissions before requesting a special education transcript evaluation.

Majors in Special Education

- Special Education - Elementary/Middle Track (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/education/special-education/special-education-elementary-middle)
- Special Education - Secondary/Adult Tracks (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/education/special-education/special-education-secondary-adult)
- Early Childhood & Special Education Major (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/education/special-education/early-childhood-special-education) (ECSE)
- Elementary Education & Special Education Major (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/education/special-education/elementary-education-special-education) (EESE)