

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Graduate Program Head	P Karen Murphy
Program Code	SPLED
Campus(es)	University Park (Ph.D., M.S., M.Ed.) World Campus (M.Ed.)
Degrees Conferred	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Master of Science (M.S.) Master of Education (M.Ed.) Dual-Title Ph.D., M.S., and M.Ed. in Special Education and Comparative and International Education
The Graduate Faculty	View (https:// secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/? searchType=fac&prog=SPLED)

Exceptional children are those who deviate so far from average in physical, intellectual, emotional, or social characteristics that they require highly specialized instruction and related services. The purpose of the M.Ed. program in Special Education is to prepare educational service providers of exceptional children in advanced training in academic and behavior management strategies. M.Ed. students are trained in behavior management and instructional design, implementation, and evaluation appropriate for effective work with children and youth who qualify for services for intellectual, behavioral, or physical disabilities at all age levels and degrees of severity. The purpose of the M.S. and Ph.D. programs is to prepare researchers and college and university teachers in areas encompassing the education of the children and youth who qualify for services for intellectual, behavioral and/or physical disabilities. The former program is professional in nature; the latter two, academic.

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Applicants for master's and doctoral programs must present evidence of superior academic achievement, complete a personal statement, and provide professional references. Applications for the M.S. and Ph.D. programs must also present GRE verbal and quantitative test scores. Minimum GPA for master's and doctoral applicants are, respectively, 3.00 for M.Ed. and M.S., and 3.50 for Ph.D. Minimum GRE test scores are (verbal and quantitative combined): 290 for M.S., and 300 for Ph.D. Applicants for doctoral study must have had at least three years of relevant experience with special-needs children or youth. Exceptions to the admissions criteria may be made only for highly qualified students with special backgrounds, abilities, and interests. At the discretion of a graduate program, a student may be admitted provisionally for graduate study in a program without these scores.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.

Degree Requirements

Master of Education (M.Ed.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Prerequisites for the M.Ed. program include 10 credits basic to the education of exceptional children (courses comparable to SPLED 400, SPLED 403A or SPLED 403B, and SPLED 418). M.Ed. candidates are expected to complete the core:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
SPLED 525	Teaching Learners with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings	3
SPLED 573	Introduction to Research in Special Education	3
SPLED 521	Capstone Seminar in Special Education (or the equivalent)	3
Electives		
Elective credits ¹		23-28
Total Credits		32-37

¹ At least 21 must be taken in special education and include courses selected by students in conjunction with their adviser.

M.Ed. students must submit a master's paper.

All requirements for the M.Ed. must be met within six years or a period spanning seven consecutive summers.

Master of Science (M.S.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

M.S. candidates are expected to complete the core:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
SPLED 573	Introduction to Research in Special Education	3
EDPSY 400	Introduction to Statistics in Educational Research	3
Electives		
Of these 18 credits, 6 credits must be taken from one discipline outside of education.		18
Culminating Experience		
SPLED 600	Thesis Research	6
Total Credits		30

Students must complete a total of 18 credits in special education; and 12 credits at the 500 and 600 level, combined. M.S. students must submit a master's thesis and pass a comprehensive examination.

All requirements for the M.S. degree must be met within six years or a period spanning seven consecutive summers.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

The communication and foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree is prescribed by each student's Ph.D. committee. Minimum requirements for the Ph.D. degree include:

- 24 credits of research methods;
- 18 credits in a cognate area such as psychology, sociology, or child development; and
- 36 credits in education.

The student also must enroll in SPLED 500 each semester prior to successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. A qualifying examination is required after the first semester of full-time study; written and oral comprehensive examinations also are required. A student is required to complete the program within seven years from the date of successful completion of the qualifying examination.

Dual-Titles

Dual-Title M.Ed., M.S., and Ph.D. in Special Education and Comparative and International Education

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-titles/>).

Admission Requirements

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Special Education and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Comparative and International Education dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Comparative and International Education Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/comparative-international-education/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Comparative and International Education prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Special Education. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Comparative and International Education, listed on the Comparative and International Education Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/comparative-international-education/>).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Special Education and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Comparative and International Education program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Special Education and Comparative and International Education. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the

qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of a Special Education and Comparative and International Education dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Comparative and International Education Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Comparative and International Education, the member of the committee representing Comparative and International Education must be appointed as co-chair. The Comparative and International Education representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Special Education and Comparative and International Education. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>) and GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/>)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/>)
- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/>)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/>)

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/>) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/>) set by The Graduate School.

The following award typically has been available to graduate students in this program:

U.S. Office of Education Assistantships or Traineeships in Special Education

Open to graduate students being prepared as leadership personnel in special education; stipend varies, depending on conditions of existing grants. Other graduate assistantships also may be available. Apply to the Graduate Admissions Committee, 125D CEDAR Building.

World Campus students in graduate degree programs may be eligible for financial aid. Refer to the Tuition and Financial Aid section (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/>) of the World Campus website for more information.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Special Education (SPLED) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/spled/>)

Contact

Campus	University Park
Graduate Program Head	P Karen Murphy
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	David Lee
Program Contact	Elizabeth Renae Davis 125 CEDAR Bldg University Park PA 16802 erd5338@psu.edu (814) 863-1699
Program Website	View (https://ed.psu.edu/academics/departments/department-educational-psychology-counseling-and-special-education/special-education/)
Campus	World Campus
Graduate Program Head	P Karen Murphy
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	David Lee
Program Contact	Paul Smith pms5249@psu.edu (814) 863-4452
Program Website	View (https://ed.psu.edu/academics/departments/department-educational-psychology-counseling-and-special-education/special-education/)