

Special Education Program Application Packet

**University of Minnesota Duluth
Department of Education
Special Education
120 Montague Hall
Duluth, MN 55812**

218-726-7233

Special Education Programs Admission Procedures and Requirements

The Department of Education offers high quality programs for the preparation of special education teachers. The programs are characterized by an extensive knowledge-base preparation as well as strong emphasis on teaching skill development and practical field experiences.

The Special Education Program currently offers three licensure programs: Special Education/Early Childhood (preschool), Specific Learning Disabilities (K-12), and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (K-12).

The admissions process and requirements for the programs are as follows:

1. A cover letter to you application between one to two type written pages (single spaced) addressed to: Dr. Joyce Strand, Special Education Program Coordinator, UMD Department of Education, 120 Montague Hall, 1211 Ordean Court, Duluth, MN 55812-3012. This letter should be professional in nature and describe the reasons that you consider yourself a good candidate for our UMD Special Education Program. Please include a brief description of your experiences with students and others with disabilities. Letters that contain spelling, grammar and punctuation errors will negatively affect the evaluation of your application.
2. A completed and signed Application for Admission form.
3. A complete set of official undergraduate and graduate transcripts as evidence of a 2.7 grade point average (GPA) for both UMD and transfer credits. If your GPA is lower than 2.7, please call the Special Education Coordinator for assistance.
4. A Post-Baccalaureate Contract which is necessary for all graduate students seeking licensure in Special Education. This form may be obtained through the Student Affairs Office, College of Education and Human Service Professions, 113 Bohannon Hall, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, Minnesota 55812 (218-726-7156). Please note that *in addition to the official transcript you send with your Application for Admission* you need to include an unofficial transcript with the Post-Baccalaureate Contract.
5. A 250 word, typed, double-spaced, dated statement responding to a one of the three questions attached to the application should be submitted. This written response will be evaluated to determine if you need assistance in writing or additional coursework.
6. Confirmation of PPST completion.
7. Self assessment of dispositions.
8. Three letters of reference, which you collect and include as parts of the admissions packet, then, submit to the Department of Education, Special Education Program as a COMPLETE packet.

Please return the completed Post-Baccalaureate Contract and the unofficial transcript to the address noted on the Contract Form. If the application packet is missing any of the items noted above, then your application will not be evaluated and processed.

Return the rest of your materials in one envelope to which will include a copy of the signed Post-Baccalaureate Contract to:

Special Education Admissions
Dr. Joyce Strand
Department of Education
120 Montague Hall
1211 Ordean Court
University of Minnesota Duluth
Duluth, MN 55812

Note: Before a student is placed in the student teaching practicum, the student must have demonstrated satisfactory performance in practicum experiences throughout the program.

Applications received by week 7 of each semester will be processed the same semester.
Applications received after week 7 will be processed the next semester.
Summer applications will be processed with the fall semester applications.

Department of Education
Special Education Program
University of Minnesota Duluth
Duluth, MN 55812

Application for Admission to Special Education Program

Program preference (please check)

_____ Specific Learning Disabilities
_____ Emotional and Behavior Disorders
_____ Early Childhood/Special Education

Semester in which you seek initial enrollment in the Special Education Program:

_____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____ Year

Personal Information

Name: _____ UMD ID# _____

Local address _____ Phone _____

Permanent address _____ Phone _____

Social Security # _____ - _____ - _____

College standing (circle one):

Junior Senior Special Student Post Bac M.Ed. M.A.

Undergraduate major: _____ Name of advisor (if applicable): _____

GPA (A=4.0) based on all UMD and transfer credits: _____. A complete set of official undergraduate and graduate transcripts should be included with this form.

I have taken the PPST _____ -Yes _____ No

Current teaching licenses (if any) _____

Employment (list the most recent first)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Employer</u>	<u>Type of Work</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

References

List only persons who know you well, such as teachers, principals, Directors of Special Education, superintendents. **(Do not include names of personal friends or relatives)**. You are responsible for obtaining three letters of reference and including them in your application.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Address/Phone</u>
1.		
2.		
3.		

Statement of Applicant’s Permission to Release Information

For purposes of evaluating my application for admission to the UMD Special Education Program, I hereby give permission for the members of the Department of Education faculty to obtain records or contact persons who may have information relevant to my professional goals and any past performance. I understand that all such information, including that contained on this application form will be kept confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of program admission considerations.

Signature _____ Date _____

Statement of Applicant’s Understanding of Admission Standards

I have received a copy of the “Special Education Programs Admission Procedures and Requirements and I understand the basis by which my application will be evaluated.

Signature _____ Date _____

**University of Minnesota Duluth
Department of Education
Special Education Program
Disposition Assessment**

To be completed by Teacher Candidate

Name of Candidate: _____

Date: _____

Pretest or Posttest (Circle one)

The following definition of disposition has been adopted by the Special Education Program. The dispositions have been selected from the Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (INTASC) and are aligned with the dispositions encouraged throughout our curriculum.

Disposition: A habitual tendency or inclination. Disposition includes temperament, character, personality, nature, demeanor – these nouns refer to the sum of traits that identify a person which include frame of mind, emotional characteristics, moral and ethical qualities, distinctive traits that give him/her individuality, especially in his/her relationships with others, exhibited behaviors towards others. The American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd College Edition.

Please check the box that most closely represents your values.

Disposition	Highly Valued	Valued	Not Valued
1. I am committed to lifelong learning and appreciate multiple perspectives.			
2. I appreciate individual variation and diverse talents of all learners.			
3. I am sensitive to community and cultural norms.			
4. I value educational technology and flexibility in the teaching and learning process.			
5. I believe in establishing a safe and positive learning environment.			
6. I understand the power of effective and thoughtful communication.			
7. I value the planning process.			
8. I believe the ongoing assessment is essential to the learning process.			
9. I am committed to reflection, feedback and assistance in order to develop professionally.			
10. I appreciate collaboration, collegiality, and ethical considerations within my profession.			

**University of Minnesota Duluth
Department of Education
Special Education Program**

Please select one of the questions listed below and respond in a clear and concise manner. Please copy the question you are answering at the top of the file or paper. The response to the question will be evaluated on accuracy, writing style, grammar, spelling, and clarity. The response needs to be a minimum of 250 words or at least 1 page double-spaced using a 10-12 font (prefer APA style format).

1. Some special educators suggest that children with exceptional needs should be treated just like everyone else. Debate the following proposition:

“All students should have the same curriculum, be graded the same, and pass the same competency exams; we should not treat students with exceptional needs differently, and special students should have experiences exactly like those of regular students” (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992, p.64).

2. Which should be the dominant theme in American public education today; understanding and appreciating cultural diversity or building the allegiance of persons of all cultural heritages to American culture? Why? (What is American culture?)

3. If you accept the premise that all intelligence tests are biased, would it be possible to develop an unbiased intelligence? How? If not possible, what alternative methods could you use to assess intelligence?

 **University of Minnesota Duluth**
Department of Education Conceptual Framework
Learner-Sensitive Model



The operating philosophy for the education programs at the University of Minnesota-Duluth is the Learner-Sensitive Teacher. We emphasize five major themes across our programs: diversity, collaboration, reflection, empowerment, and technology. Please read and be familiar with the UMD Department of Education Conceptual Framework.

Objective of the Learner-Sensitive Model

The major objective of our program is to prepare learner-sensitive teachers. A learner-sensitive teacher is one who focuses instruction to enhance the academic achievement and social competence of the learner. Sensitivity to the needs of learners requires that new teachers exhibit knowledge and skill in promoting the learning of students across the five themes of our model.

Diversity

The Department of Education is committed to supporting diversity of perspective and individuality in the teachers who graduate from our program and in the ways that they teach. Diversity of perspective refers to the importance of developing teachers who can acknowledge differing views on accomplishing education in children and can accept the different views of others to that same end (Quintero & Rummel, 1997; Carlson & Holm, 1999).

Diversity of individuality refers to our commitment to recruit and graduate educators and service professionals from all walks of life including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, and mental and physical abilities (Anderson, Keller, & Karp, 1998). By individual diversity we also mean that our graduates are people who have learned of the socio-cultural context experienced by the diverse individuals they will serve (Ogbu, 1992; Carlson, Grover, & Anderson, 1994). Teachers and service professionals who graduate from our program are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skill in recognizing the diversity of the groups they serve as individuals with unlimited rather than limited potential (Sleeter & Grant, 1986).

As faculty we demonstrate our strength in diversity of perspective and individuality. As an example, our department is one of a very few in the world with an endowed chair for indigenous people (Tom Peacock currently holds the Ruth A. Myers Chair of American Indian Education). We use these strengths to instill in our students the capacity for diversity to empower rather than limit. In our classes, we promote readings, lectures, strategies, and methods that help our students learn to use a wide range of skills to teach all the students with which they come in contact. In discussing topics ranging from Ojibwa traditions to gender-related self-esteem issues, we hope to enable our students to comfortably and knowledgeably experience the world from many points of view (Miller-Cleary & Peacock, 1997). We do all these things from multiple perspectives and with multiple approaches because, in the end, we know we have to lead by example.

Finally, our approach to diversity is international in scope (cf., Forlin, Keller, & Thygesen, 1999). We have incorporated an understanding of diverse international approaches in teaching through direct participation of international speakers in classes, post-doctoral fellows, partnership activities with educators of other countries, and online videoconference interactions among our students and participating students of other countries. Our students have experienced regular and direct interactions with international educators from Norway, Sweden, Russia, Australia, Malaysia, and Turkey. Additionally, we have collaborative agreements with schools in New Zealand and Australia as options for students conducting their student teaching abroad.

Collaboration

Our programs promote the importance and the skill of collaboration among professionals and parents. We teach students effective methods for collaboration, such as communicating with adults, conducting effective meetings, and teaching children through cooperative learning experiences (Friend & Cook, 1999; West, Idol, & Cannon, 1989). We demonstrate the processes and concepts embodied in effective collaboration in many ways. Faculty members, across programs and departments, plan and teach in teams. Faculty members and students cooperate in joint research efforts such as those funded under the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP). Faculty and cooperating teachers confer about expectations for and experiences of students as well as joint research projects. Students learn through cooperative group experiences. Students, as teacher candidates, facilitate group learning among pupils. Faculty, cooperating teachers, and students seek to involve and support parents in their children's education. Inter- and intra-agency cooperation ensure high-quality programs for pupils. In all collaboration, a balance of task (movement toward a goal) with maintenance (positive interpersonal interactions) is sought.

Reflection

Synthesis is central to our preparation of learner-sensitive teachers. We teach students to understand, reflect on, and integrate all that they have learned. Our philosophy of teacher preparation draws on principles of education through experience—"active learning" (Dewey, 1916). We believe that teachers must be adept decision makers (what Donald Schon terms the 'teacher as Reflective Practitioner', Schon, 1990). Because of societal changes and concomitant classroom challenges these changes may bring, teachers cannot be prepared just with subject knowledge and teaching techniques. The knowledge base that they each have is just that—a basis on which to draw as they make decisions about the best professional practices to use in any given situation.

Our approach to reflective practice is an integration of action with considered study. As students learn educational theory, they do so in the context of practice. They learn to examine educational theories in a variety classes covering different educational topics. At the same time, they examine how theories can be applied situationally. Our courses usually include an associated practicum experience. Thus, students have the opportunity to bring real examples into their course work using such techniques as reflective journals where they integrate what is being studied with what has been observed and/or experienced. Through discussions with peers, role play, case study analysis and other techniques, and being coached by instructors, they are guided to develop the skills they will need in the classroom to make balanced well-considered pedagogical decisions (Norlander-Case, Reagan, & Case, 1999).

Our reflective approach is a process geared to motivate beginning teachers to pursue continued professional development throughout their careers thereby promoting their willingness to remain in the field. Just as in the saying: "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him to fish and he will eat for a lifetime," our program promotes the notion that existing knowledge about how to teach is constantly revised and strengthened by the experiences of practitioners. By instilling reflective practice in new teachers, we hope to empower them to reinvigorate their teaching throughout their careers changing to meet the needs of the contexts in which they find themselves.

Empowerment

Empowerment means helping pre-service teachers develop knowledgeable voices as professional educators and use their voices to articulate well-considered beliefs and rationales about what they do as practitioners. Building empowerment is, therefore, a process in developing skill and expertise and then confidence in one's capabilities. Empowerment is important because

we value emerging educators who, working from a well-studied foundation of personally chosen and developed philosophies of education and positions on key issues facing our schools, justify what it is they want to accomplish with their students, make choices to realize their goals, evaluate the efficacy of their choices, and reconsider their philosophies and positions in light of their experiences and new knowledge (Hefzallah, 1999; Cummins, 1989; Dunst & Trivette, 1993). Thus, we provide our teacher education candidates with opportunities to exercise this process in our courses and in practicum experiences in schools; we also challenge their thinking and help them push themselves further in their professional development. We believe that this process results in educators who have a stronger, more personal ownership of their role as professionals because they have constructed it themselves through study, effort, and practice (Freire, 1998; Ogbu, 1992).

Technology

Technology refers here to all facets of information technology used for purposes of teaching students and enabling students to learn effectively across multiple abilities and curriculum standards. Devices in which students in our programs are expected to demonstrate knowledge and competency include the following:

1. Computers,
2. Associated computer devices,
3. Assistive technology devices for individuals with special needs,
4. Software and applications for curriculum and skill development and usage,
5. Services for supporting student learning across abilities and needs
6. Laws and ethics governing appropriate use of information technology in teaching and learning.

In the short time it has existed, our educational technology program has received state and corporate recognition. In previous years when such sites were identified, this program was identified as a model training site by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, & Learning. Currently, UMD's educational technology program is certified by Microsoft Corporation as an official training site for technology use in education.

Every teacher candidate in our program is expected to gain knowledge and practice in the varied uses of information technology for personal productivity and pedagogical integration (ISTE, 1999; Male, 1996). Through sustained course work in basic computer operations and concepts students develop personal competency in using computers and the applications associated with them. Through sustained integration of computers and other advanced information technology devices within our pre-service education coursework, students observe, participate in, and practice technology skills for purposes of teaching children and adolescents.

Finally, our pre-service teacher candidates learn through direct integration within all course work the special uses of assistive and information technology in meeting the needs of individuals who exhibit learning and physical difficulties in the school setting. One example of this commitment to technology integration in the classroom is our on-going tradition of videoconferencing partnerships with educators around the world. By integrating our international perspective on diversity with technology innovation, we hope to establish a model for our students as they see the opportunities to expand their teaching skills afforded by the Internet and computer technology.

Our Logo

A logo (shown on the cover of this document) was developed to represent our model. The expanding figures symbolize two things. First, it represents an individual's development through the life span, as the child matures into adulthood. Also, the symbol at the center of the logo represents the learner surrounded by teachers, parents, and other significant individuals who nurture the learner. Each figure encompasses the next in an ever-expanding circle of influence and concern.

The logo is circumscribed by the five major themes of the program: These create a circular pattern symbolizing the global nature of education and the need for international understanding of all peoples and races. The college empowers its graduates by encouraging reflection, collaboration, technological competence, and appreciation of diversity. In so doing, graduates are aided in developing their full potential as learner-sensitive teachers.

The major objective of the program—to prepare learner-sensitive teachers—underscores the circle. When teachers are sensitive to learners, instruction centers on the needs of the learner. The needs and abilities of each learner provide the focus for designing learning experiences, which connect the real world of the learner with the educational world.

References for the Department of Education Learner Sensitive Model

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University of Minnesota Duluth
Department of Education

Revised 10/11/2002

UMD Special Education Program Decision Points and Methods of Assessment of Candidate Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions

The following is a listing of different points in the program where your knowledge, skills and dispositions will be evaluated which also includes progress in academic coursework. At any point during your special education a Special Education Professional Development Plan is available to assist teacher candidates who exhibit need in their professional progress in knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions. This plan can be self initiated or faculty initiated. The process of the Special Education Professional Development Plan is included in this application packet and will be distributed when you take Special Education 4433/5433.

Special Education Program Decision Points and Methods of Assessment of Candidate Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions

1. Admission to program and initial courses
 - a. Coordinator review of application packet
 - i. Cover letter
 - ii. Transcripts verifying 2.7 GPA
 - iii. Acceptable response statement
 - iv. Confirmation of passing PPST
 - v. Acceptable self assessment of dispositions
 - vi. Review of three letters of recommendation
 - b. Faculty review of candidate progress after completion of SPED 5433
 - i. GPA
 - ii. Disposition assessment by sped faculty
 - iii. Practica completion/assessment of satisfactory progress
2. Beyond Admission and Initial Coursework
 - a. Maintain 2.7 GPA in Special Education coursework
 - b. Dispositions are stated on all coursework as expectations of professional conduct- faculty assessment of candidates on an individual basis through the Special Education Professional Development Plan
 - c. Practica completion/assessment of satisfactory progress
3. Admission to Special Education student teaching practica
 - a. Required coursework completed (may student teach with concurrently taking one final course)
 - b. 2.7 GPA
 - c. Satisfactory progress in practica
 - d. Special Education Professional Development Plan, if needed.
 - e. Individualized goals (3-4) based on INTASC & CEC Standards with documented progress
 - f. Portfolio with documented progress
 - g. Documentation of Functional Behavioral Assessment & Curriculum Based Assessment
 - h. Self assessment of student teaching practica
4. Recommendation for Special Education licensure
 - a. Completion of all course requirements as documented by transcripts
 - b. Maintain 2.7 GPA
 - c. Satisfactory completion of candidate final practicum (student teaching)
 - d. Praxis II – PLT passed
 - e. Praxis II – Special Education Content test passed
 - f. Exit interview with special education faculty

Special Education Professional Development Plan

The major goal of the Special Education Professional Development Plan is to provide all teacher candidates seeking special education licensure an opportunity to be successful in their pursuit. The Special Education Professional Development Plan is predicated on the UMD Learner-Sensitive Model, CEC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and Standards of Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). UMD students seeking special education licensure in the State of Minnesota are expected to have attained a certain level of knowledge, disposition, and performance during their teacher education program. As educators it is easier to quantify knowledge and performance than disposition. Knowledge and performance are routinely assessed in the confines of coursework and practicum experiences. Dispositions are more difficult to define and quantify. This plan is meant to be proactive in identification of strengths and deficits of individual students. A primary objective is to assist the student in addressing those behaviors that may impede their progress in attaining special education licensure. Under the guidance of a special education faculty mentor, the student will develop reflective and evaluative skills in the areas of knowledge, disposition, and performance. Based upon these collaborative efforts, the student and faculty will develop a plan to assist the student in attainment of the attributes needed by all special educators.

Disposition: A habitual tendency or inclination. Disposition includes temperament, character, personality, nature, demeanor – these nouns refer to the sum of traits that identify a person which include frame of mind, emotional characteristics, moral and ethical qualities, distinctive traits that give him/her individuality, especially in his/her relationships with others, exhibited behaviors towards others. The American Heritage Dictionary 2nd College Edition

Special Education will have checkpoints to ascertain the progress of university students seeking special education licensure. Teacher candidates who are experiencing difficulty will be encouraged to arrange an appointment with any special education faculty. Because disposition is a critical component to the development of special education teachers, teacher candidates who are exhibiting difficulty will not have a choice if they have been referred to this process by a majority of special education faculty. However, all teacher candidates seeking special education licensure will have the opportunity to have a special education professional development plan upon request. If a teacher candidate has been referred for the development of a Special Education Professional Development Plan and does not want a plan developed for him/her, then a grievance procedure against having the plan developed can be initiated with the Head of the Education Department.

Special Education Professional Development Plan

1. The special education licensure program will be explained and discussed in SPED 4433/5433 each semester that it is taught. The following topics will be addressed; BOT standards, CEC and INTASC standards, knowledge, disposition, and performance expectations, post baccalaureate contracts, student teaching, special education professional development plan, and other information pertaining to the UMD special education program.
2. When teacher candidates reach 'decision points', faculty will determine student progress in the areas of knowledge, disposition, and performance. At each of these checkpoints university students may be referred. Prior to their referral, faculty responsibilities include addressing specific issues with the teacher candidates (as is typically done) and documentation that supports the need for a professional development plan.
3. The teacher candidate will have a meeting with either the coordinator of special education or an assigned special education faculty. The development of the plan will include mentoring by the faculty member, reflection and evaluation based on standards of effective practice (etc), and specific goals designed to enhance knowledge, disposition, and performance of the teacher candidate.
4. Each teacher candidate will have the responsibility of connecting with his or her mentor several times during the course of each semester. The faculty member will have the responsibility to monitor teacher candidate progress and assist the candidate in the reflection and evaluation of knowledge, disposition, and performance.
5. Teacher candidates will continue on the special education professional development plan until their goals have been met.
6. This special education professional development plan will constitute a contract with the teacher candidate in progressing towards their special education licensure.
7. Teacher candidates who fail to make progress as outlined in their special education professional development plan may be delayed or not allowed to enter their final practicum experiences and/or may not get recommended for State of Minnesota special education licensure through UMD.

Special Education Program Admissions Procedures Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

Specific Learning Disabilities _____ Emotional/Behavioral Disorder _____

Program Application:

- _____ admitted to UMD
- _____ application form
- _____ 3 letters of recommendation
- _____ official transcripts
- _____ GPA acceptable
- _____ conditional admit with comments*
- _____ written response to question
- _____ confirmation of completion of PPST
- _____ self assessment of dispositions

Post Baccalaureate Contract:

- _____ application form
- _____ contract form

*Additional comments: