DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

College of Education and Social Work
304 Recitation Hall
610-436-2579 (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education)
Department of Special Education (http://www.wcupa.edu/specialEducation)
Beatrice Adera (badera@wcupa.edu), Interim Chairperson

The Department of Special Education stands out in the southeastern Pennsylvania and the tri-state region with its extensive early practicum experiences for its students; professionally diverse faculty; a high rate of employment opportunities; a heightened sense of collegiality and volunteerism among its students; and national (Council for Exceptional Children, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), regional (Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools), and state (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE]) approvals, recognition, and accreditations.

The faculty is committed to supporting the development of teachers who acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to construct effective, high-quality educational programs for children with disabilities. The mission is to foster knowledgeable, passionate, competent, and reflective graduates who will serve as eloquent, articulate advocates for all children, families, and special education professionals. This program provides students with field placement and experience in the same block of courses where they are concurrently learning characteristics, teaching methods, application, and theory. These placements give students an opportunity to reflect and question what they observe and experience in these settings, which is vital to the success of integrating theory and practice.

The field experiences in private or public schools are designed to give students first-hand opportunities with children in high-incidence and low-incidence settings. The course work taken concurrently provides students with the theory and research necessary to become effective teachers.

Programs of Study

The Department of Special Education offers two programs of study leading to certification at the PreK-8 or the 7-12 level. Students seeking certification in special education may be required to seek certification in an additional content area.

- The B.S.Ed. Special Education PreK-8 (dual major with PreK-4 or Middle Grades 4-8) will qualify students for PDE special education certification at the PreK-8 level and certification in PDE early grades preparation (PreK-4) or middle grades preparation (4-8).
- The B.S.Ed. Special Education 7-12 will qualify students for PDE special education certification at the 7-12 level when paired with PDE certification in a secondary content area, including biology, chemistry, earth and space science, English (literature or writing), general science, mathematics, physics, or certain K-12 education programs.

To graduate, students enrolled in the B.S.Ed. Special Education PreK-8 program are required to complete 47 credits, including 2.8 for students with 48 or more credits. Students enrolled in the B.S.Ed. Special Education 7-12 program are required to complete 12-47 credits, and 2.80 for students with 48 or more credits. Students who do not achieve the minimum cumulative GPA required for their earned credits: 2.65 for students with 12-47 credits, and 2.80 for students with 48 or more credits. Students admitted to this minor must maintain that minimum cumulative GPA in order to continue. Students who fall below the minimum cumulative GPA required are permitted to retake, in accordance with University policy, course work in the minor that contributed to their fall below the minimum required GPA. Such students will not be permitted to take additional course work in the minor until they achieve the minimum cumulative GPA.

Minor Programs

Minor in Special Education

Current trends, enforced by recent litigation, have increased the need for a general understanding of the individuals with disabilities in our culture, the department also offers a Minor in Special Education, which is designed to introduce students to individuals with disabilities through course work and field experiences. Students who desire admission to the Minor in Special Education must have achieved the minimum cumulative GPA required for their earned credits: 2.65 for students with 12-47 credits, and 2.80 for students with 48 or more credits. Students admitted to this minor must maintain that minimum cumulative GPA in order to continue. Students who fall below the minimum cumulative GPA required are permitted to retake, in accordance with University policy, course work in the minor that contributed to their fall below the minimum required GPA. Such students will not be permitted to take additional course work in the minor until they achieve the minimum cumulative GPA.

Minor in Autism

The Minor in Autism Education is an 18-credit program designed to provide students knowledge of, and the opportunity to demonstrate competencies related to, research-based assessment, intervention, instruction, and program management for persons with autism in PreK-12 settings. The minor is applicable for future professionals serving students with autism across age/grade levels (preschool through completion of high school) and various ranges of functioning. The need for professionals with working knowledge of autism continues to grow as the prevalence for individuals with autism continues to increase.

These minors do not lead to Instructional I teacher certification by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. However, students who complete the Minor in Autism Education are eligible for the PDE Autism Endorsement upon receipt of their Instruction I certification.

Programs

Majors in Special Education

- B.S.Ed. in Special Education - PreK-8 And Early Grades Preparation (PreK-4) (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education/special-education-bsed-prek-8)
- B.S.Ed. in Special Education - PreK-8 And Middle Grades Preparation (4-8) (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education/special-education-bsed-4-8)
- B.S.Ed. in Special Education (7-12) (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education/special-education-bsed-7-12)

Minors in Special Education

- Special Education (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education/special-education-minor)

Graduate Opportunities

See the graduate catalog for more information on the Special Education program. (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/education-social-work/special-education)
Policies

- See undergraduate admissions information. (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/general-information/admissions-enrollment/undergraduate-admissions)
- See academic policies. (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures)

All undergraduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures outlined in the undergraduate catalog. Students are encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department program(s) may be listed below.

Requirements for B.S.Ed. Programs

In order to be eligible for graduation, an undergraduate student must satisfactorily complete the following requirements:

1. 135 credits for the B.S.Ed. in Special Education/Early Grades Preparation; 135 credits for the B.S.Ed. in Special Education/Middle Grades Preparation; 136–154 credits for the B.S.Ed. in Special Education/secondary (dual program content area) or B.S.Ed. in Special Education/B.A. in History (dual degrees); and 120 credits for the B.S.Ed. - Special Education (7-12) as a single degree

2. Formal Admission to Teacher Education (FATE) (see below)

3. Minimum GPA of 3.0

4. State licensure examinations relevant to each area of the chosen major/dual degrees noted above, which would grant teacher certification in both special education and the selected dual program (if applicable). Exams must be taken prior to student teaching.

Admission to Special Education Degree Programs

For formal admission to the special education degree program, see the Educator Preparation Programs (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/educator-preparation-programs) section of this catalog.

Requirements for Transfer to the Majors in Special Education

Students seeking to transfer in to the Special Education PreK-8 program must simultaneously obtain admission in to the Early Grades Preparation (PreK-4) or Middle Grades Preparation (4-8) programs. Students seeking transfer in to the Special Education 7-12 program may opt—but are not required—to seek enrollment into a secondary content area. These students must secure the signatures from the chair of the Department of Special Education as well as the chair of the department in which the desired dual major program resides.

Students may apply for "internal transfer" when transferring from another post-secondary institution. Students already admitted to West Chester University as pre-majors or in another major may apply for "internal transfer." Students seeking external or internal transfer must have a minimum of 12 college-level credits. Students with 12–47 credits must also have a minimum GPA of 2.65. The required minimum cumulative GPA for students with 48–59 earned credits is 2.80. Students with 60 or more earned credits must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.80; must have achieved passing scores on either the PPST (if testing was started prior to April 2, 2012) or the PAPA; and must have completed college–level studies in English composition (three credits), literature taught in English (three credits), and mathematics (six credits). External or internal transfer to the major in special education does not represent or confer formal admission to teacher education (See “Formal Admission to Teacher Education” in the Educator Preparation Programs section (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/educator-preparation-programs)).

In addition to the general requirements for Formal Admission to Teacher Education, B.S.Ed. candidates who are admitted to the major in special education must also complete 20 hours of pre-approved, unpaid community service for agencies/organizations serving children and/or youth and/or adults with special needs and/or families (at least ten of these hours must be provided in one setting); and (2) a written reflection that has been assessed as satisfactory on how this service has influenced their development as teachers. The nature of the service must provide a direct, concrete benefit to the population(s) an agency/organization serves. The hours that candidates devote to this community service requirement may not also be used to fulfill any requirement for a credit-bearing course.

Application and Approval for Student Teaching

Students must apply through the Office of Field Placements and Student Teaching for approval for student teaching placements. Prerequisites for student teaching include the following:

- Formal Admission to Teacher Education (FATE)
- 96 credits, including all professional educational courses and all specialized preparation courses with necessary grade prerequisites, with a cumulative GPA of 2.8
- Completion of the following forms: student teaching application, child abuse history clearance form, request for criminal record check, FBI records check, and a TB test. Students should allow enough time to receive responses for clearance. All clearance forms are valid for one year, except the TB test, which is valid for the duration of attendance at WCU but must be administered within three months prior to entering the initial field placement.

The application for student teaching must be filed within one full year prior to the academic semester in which student teaching is to be scheduled. Application meetings will be announced at the beginning of the fall semester each year. Students register for student teaching as they would for any other University courses.

Field Placement in Schools

All field placements, including student teaching, are arranged by the department. Students are not to solicit placements. While student needs are considered in assigning placements, no particular placement can be guaranteed. Transportation to and from field placements is the responsibility of the individual student.

West Chester University does not place students at religiously affiliated schools when public schools are available for a student teaching experience. In addition, the University will make every attempt to first place students into public (vs. private) schools for student teaching and related activities. Further, students will not be assigned student teaching or other related duties at nonsectarian private schools or agencies unless they specifically request such placement. Each request will be considered individually to ensure that the private entity does not receive special benefit from the arrangement that outweighs the benefit to the University and its students.

Faculty

Professors

Vicki A. McGinley (vmcginley@wcupa.edu) (1997)
B.A., University of Pittsburgh; M.A., Ph.D., Temple University
Corinne Murphy (cmurphy@wcupa.edu) (2006)
B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Ohio State University
Donna Wandry (dwandry@wcupa.edu) (1999)
B.S., University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire; M.Ed., University of Utah; Ph.D., University of Florida

Associate Professors

Beatrice Ader (badera@wcupa.edu) (2010)
Chairperson, Special Education
B.S., University of Nairobi (Kenya); M.Ed., Ph.D., University of North Texas
N. Kim Doan (ndoan@wcupa.edu) (2008)
B.A., M.A., California State University; Ph.D., University of Virginia
Tara C. Guerriero (tguerriero@wcupa.edu) (2008)
B.S., M.A., Ph.D., Northwestern University
S. Christy Hicks (shicks@wcupa.edu) (2011)
Graduate Coordinator, Special Education
B.A., M.A.T., Western Carolina University; Ph.D., University of North Carolina
Claire Verden (cverden@wcupa.edu) (2006)
B.S., West Chester University; M.Ed., Temple University; Ed.D., Arcadia University
York Williams (ywilliams@wcupa.edu) (2009)
B.A., North Carolina Central University; M.A., West Chester University; M.Ed., Ph.D., Temple University

Assistant Professors
Mary A. Houser (mhouser@wcupa.edu) (2013)
B.F.A., Kutztown University; M.A.T., The College of New Jersey; Ed.D., Fayetteville State University
Dawn Patterson (dpatterson@wcupa.edu) (2016)
M.Ed., Ed.D., University of North Carolina Charlotte
Dean Alexander Schofield (dschofield@wcupa.edu) (2013)
B.A., Keene State College; M.Ed., Western Carolina University; Ph.D., University of Virginia

Courses

EDA

EDA 103. Foundations of Special Education. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to acquaint the prospective teacher with the historical legal evolution of the field, as well as characteristics of individuals with disabilities. Distance education offering may be available. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDA 175. Introduction to Autism: Characteristics & Etiology. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to inform students about the characteristics and etiology of autism. Students will complete observations of individuals with autism in multiple school- and community-based settings. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 175 requires prerequisite EDA 103 OR KIN 205 and KIN 206. Typically offered in Spring.

EDA 195. Workshop. 1-3 Credits.
Intensive examination of a selected area of study in the field of special education. Topics will be announced in advance. Typically offered in Summer. Repeatable for Credit.

EDA 203. Field: Students with Exceptionalities. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to have the prospective teacher observe and reflect upon the characteristics of students with disabilities within the context of school and clinical settings. The content will focus on issues relative to special education in a diverse society and will rely heavily on reflective teaching and learning. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 203 requires prerequisite EDA 103. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDA 212. Understanding Disability through Cultural Perspectives. 3 Credits.
This course will provide students with a general introduction to social justice theory, human rights issues, and social constructs surrounding disability on a global scale. Content will include perspectives of individuals with disabilities and will be delivered through a multimedia format. This course is designed for any student who is interested in learning more about disability within the context of today's society. Typically offered in Fall.

EDA 230. Inclusive Classroom. 3 Credits.
The purpose of this course is to prepare preservice early childhood, elementary and special education students to teach students with disabilities effectively in general settings. The course will be co-taught by special education and early childhood education faculty. Gen Ed Attribute: Diversity Requirement.

EDA 250. Inclusive Practices in Music Education. 1 Credit.
Designed to acquaint music educators with the philosophy of inclusive education and provide them with skills to accommodate students with disabilities in music classes. For music educators only.

EDA 275. Autism: Families, Inter-agency, and Community Collaboration. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to foster professional relationships between future service providers and families that are supporting an individual with autism and make those relationships meaningful, cooperative and productive. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 275 requires a prerequisite of EDA 175; field clearances. Typically offered in Summer.

EDA 280. Integrating the Arts. 3 Credits.
Fine art, music, puppetry, and dance are combined as creative processes to be adapted for use with children with disabilities. Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDA 303. Special Ed: Processes/Procedures for General Educators. 2 Credits.
The purpose of this course is to prepare preservice students to teach students with disabilities effectively in general education settings. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 303 requires prerequisite EDA 103 and Formal Admission to Teacher Education. Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDA 304. Special Ed Processes/Procedures for Secondary Educators. 3 Credits.
The purpose of this course is to prepare pre-service students to teach students with disabilities effectively in secondary general education settings. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 304 requires prerequisite EDA 103, EDP 250 and field clearances. Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

EDA 307. Families and Special Education. 3 Credits.
The Families and Special Education course is a writing emphasis course designed to help pre-service teachers foster family professional relationships that are meaningful, cooperative, and productive. Roles that parents have played in the education of children and youth with disabilities will be emphasized. This course bases its objectives on the knowledge that involvement of families of individuals with disabilities is essential for the person's education and well being, and is necessary from a legal perspective. The family is studied so that the perspective teacher can best know how to work with diverse families of children with disabilities, and within family systems. Gen Ed Attribute: Writing Emphasis.

EDA 312. Introduction to Early Intervention. 3 Credits.
This course is an overview of the field of early childhood special education. Students will explore the processes of early intervention including screening, assessment, instructional programming, integrating children with and without disabilities, and family involvement.

EDA 314. Curriculum and Instruction for Individual Learning Differences I. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to prepare students to assist children with disabilities achieve skills in academics and functional life domains. Emphasis is placed on understanding and analysis of learning problems, and the design and planning of instructional interventions. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 314 requires prerequisites of EDA 103, EDA 203, and Formal Admission to Teacher Education. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

EDA 320. Behavior Management. 3 Credits.
An exploration of current practices in management of behavior with emphasis on teacher-delivered systems. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 320 requires prerequisites of EDA 104 co-requisite of EDA 347.

EDA 321. Behavior Management & Field Experience. 6 Credits.
An exploration of current practices in management of behavior with emphasis on teacher-delivered systems. It includes a field placement in a school where students will assess and develop interventions for a child with behavioral challenges. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 321 requires prerequisite of EDA 103 and EDA 203. Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDA 341. Inclusion & Reading in the Content Area. 3 Credits.
This course is co-taught by special education faculty and literacy faculty. It will help prepare secondary education and special education majors to effectively teach all students, including those with disabilities, in general education, content-specific settings. Practical guidelines, content literacy strategies, and adaptations will be emphasized to prepare pre-educators to meet the academic, social and affective needs of all students in the inclusive secondary classroom.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 341 requires prerequisites of EDP 250, and EDF 100 or EDF 300. Honors students take HON 312 in lieu of EDF 300.
Gen Ed Attribute: Diversity Requirement.
Cross listed courses EDA 341, EDR 341.
EDA 361. Assessment and Special Education. 3 Credits.
An introduction to instructional assessment in special education and the development of relevant educational plans to meet federal regulations.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 361 requires prerequisites of EDA 103, EDA 203, and Formal Admission to Teacher Education.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDA 375. Autism Studies: Assessment & Instruction I. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to inform students about assessment and instructional planning for individuals with autism. Emphasis will be placed on students demonstration of planning for and implementing assessments across the range of domains including behavior.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 375 requires prerequisite EDA 175; Field Clearances.
Typically offered in Summer.
EDA 380. Career Development and Transition. 3 Credits.
This course is a study of life-span issues for individuals with disabilities. It stresses curriculum content and instructional strategies that are sensitive to human diversity and promote career development and transition.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 380 requires prerequisites of EDA 104; EDA 320/347 or EDA302/350/360; and formal admission to teacher education.
EDA 410. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.
Special topics or projects initiated by the student that will enable her or him to do extensive and intensive study in an area of special education.
Consent: Permission of the Department required to add. Repeatable for Credit.
EDA 413. PreK-8 Aspects of Transition. 3 Credits.
This course will address support structures that serve students with disabilities as they transition from homebound to and throughout K-8 school based instruction, stressing legislative foundations, interagency linkages, school partnerships, referral processes, and systems of service delivery. The teacher practitioner as change agent will be an underlying theme.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 413 requires prerequisite Formal Admission to Teacher Education, EDA 103, EDA 203.
Distance education offering may be available.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.
EDA 414. Secondary Career Development and Transition. 3 Credits.
This course will address support structures that serve students with disabilities as they transition from middle to high school to and to adult life, stressing legislative foundations, interagency linkages, school partnerships, referral processes, and systems of service delivery. The teacher practitioner as change agent will be an underlying theme. We will examine the life span issues for persons with disabilities - addressing assessment, planning, and instructional strategies that promote career development and transition education at secondary age levels. Attention will be given to curricular benchmarks and standards, and how functional outcomes interact with those benchmarks and standards.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 414 requires prerequisites of EDA 103, EDA 203, and Formal Admission to Teacher Education.
Distance education offering may be available.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.
EDA 416. Student Teaching for Exceptional Learners. 6 Credits.
Participation in teaching and all other activities in the student teaching role related to the teacher’s work. PREREQ: 96 semester hours including all professional education courses and all specialized preparation courses with standards. Field clearances required.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 416 requires formal admission into teacher education, EDA 103, EDA 203, EDA 314, EDA 321, EDA 361, EDA 413, EDA 421, and EDA 429.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.
EDA 417. Student Teaching for Exceptional Learners. 6 Credits.
Participation in teaching and all other activities in the student teaching role related to the teacher’s work. PREREQ: 96 semester hours including all professional education courses and all specialized preparation courses with standards. Field clearances required.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 417 requires formal admission into teacher education and prerequisites of EDA 103, EDA 203, EDA 314, EDA 321, EDA 361, EDA 413, EDA 421, and EDA 429.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.
EDA 421. Curriculum and Instruction for Individual Learning Differences II and Field. 6 Credits.
This course and field is designed to prepare students to assist children with disabilities achieve skills in academics and functional life domains. Emphasis is placed on understanding and analysis of learning problems, and the design, plan and implementation of instructional interventions. Field clearances required.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 421 requires prerequisites of EDA 103, EDA 203, EDA 314, EDA 321, EDA 361, and formal admission to Teacher Education.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDA 429. Communication Development and Assistive Technologies for Students w/ Disabilities. 3 Credits.
This course will provide a broad overview of normal and atypical communication development. Importance will be given to communication disorders, characteristics of students with disabilities and the impact of high and low technology.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 429 requires prerequisite EDA 103, EDA 203 and Formal Admission to Teacher Education.
Typically offered in Fall & Spring.
EDA 475. Autism Studies: Assessment & Instruction II. 3 Credits.
Students will use the science of applied behavior analysis to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current instructional strategies for students with autism. Students will demonstrate evidence-based instructional strategies and apply these strategies in field settings supporting individuals with autism.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 475 requires prerequisite EDA 375; Field Clearances.
Typically offered in Summer.