DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

College of Education and Social Work

304 Recitation Hall
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 double-major with either Early Grades Preparation (PreK-4) or Middle Grades Preparation (4-8). To graduate, students enrolled in the B.S.Ed. Special Education 7-12 program are not required to double-major with a secondary or K-12 teacher certification program. However, to be eligible for PDE teacher certification in Special Education 7-12, students must double-major with a secondary education or K-12 education program. Students who do not double-major with a secondary or K-12 education program will not be eligible for PDE Special Education 7-12 certification. See the PDE for certification requirements.

Upon completion of the program and achievement of passing scores on state certification exams, students will qualify for a Pennsylvania Instructional I Certificate in both areas of their dual course of study (if applicable), which is valid for six years of teaching. Passing scores on state certification exams are not required for graduation.

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 Education

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)
- Early Intervention (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/education-social-work/special-education/early-intervention-minor)

Graduate Opportunities

See the graduate catalog for more information on the Special Education programs. (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 programs 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 dual 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 "external 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 2.90; 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

Claire Verden (cverden@wcupa.edu) (2006)
B.S., West Chester University; M.Ed., Temple University; Ed.D., Arcadia University

Donna Wandy (dwandy@wcupa.edu) (1999)
B.S., University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire; M.Ed., University of Utah; Ph.D., University of Florida
Typically offered in Fall.

This course is designed for any student who is interested in learning more about disability perspectives of individuals with disabilities and will be delivered through a multimedia format. Content will include rights issues, and social constructs surrounding disability on a global scale. Pre / Co requisites: EDA 103 requires prerequisite EDA 103.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

Pre / Co requisites: EDA 203 requires prerequisite EDA 103, EDP 250 and field clearances.

Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

Pre / Co requisites: EDA 250 requires prerequisite EDA 103 and Formal Admission to Teacher Education.

Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

Typically offered in Fall & Spring.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

Typically offered in Fall.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.

Typically offered in Fall.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
EDA 331. Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities. 6 Credits.
LEC (3), DIS (3)
This is a methods and field course that focuses on learning to work with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. It will include an exploration of the following: characteristics of typical development and the implications of disabilities on the development of young children; impact on the family; modification of the educational and care giving environments; and approaches to curriculum and assessment. Students will have the opportunity to work with infants or toddlers in an early intervention agency or family home environment. For this course, 3 credit hours will consist of instructor lecture of course content and 3 credit hours will consist of a minimum of 40 hours in the field, which provides students with the opportunity to apply content through observations and interactions with families and children, ages, birth to 3 years old, with regular observations completed by the course instructor.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 331 requires a prerequisite of admission to the Early Intervention Minor, department consent required for up-to-date clearances (FBI, PA Child Abuse, PA Criminal, TB), and Staff Health Assessment Form.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
Cross listed courses EDA 331, EGP 331.

EDA 332. Family Systems in Early Intervention. 3 Credits.
This course introduces the theory and practice of family intervention with diverse populations including families of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. It bases its objectives on the knowledge that the involvement of families is essential to the education and well being of young children. The methods of service delivery for young children with disabilities and their families are discussed in addition to the key aspects of collaboration, services coordination and family centered services with culturally responsive practices.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
Cross listed courses EDA 332, EGP 332.

EDA 333. Teaching Young Children with Disabilities. 6 Credits.
LEC (3), DIS (3)
This is a methods and field course that focuses on building skills in working with preschoolers with disabilities. The course covers curricula, instructional strategies, and classroom environments that facilitate development and learning for young children 3-5 years old with disabilities. For this course, 3 credit hours will consist of instructor lecture of course content and 3 credit hours will consist of a minimum of 40 hours in the field, which provides students with the opportunity to apply content through observations and interactions with professionals, families and children, ages, 3 to 5 years old with regular observations completed by the course instructor.
Pre / Co requisites: EDA 333 requires a prerequisite of admission to the Early Intervention Minor, department consent required for up-to-date clearances (FBI, PA Child Abuse, PA Criminal, TB), and Staff Health Assessment Form.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
Cross listed courses EDA 333, EGP 333.

EDA 334. Assessment for Early Intervention. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to provide the student with the knowledge and skills needed for assessment appropriate to young children with disabilities and those who are considered to be "at-risk". We will cover norm and criterion referenced assessment, developmental assessment and alternative assessment methodologies. This course bases its objectives on the knowledge that all early intervention professionals will need to know how to work with a diverse group of young children with disabilities. It will acquaint the student with the legal mandates of serving young children with disabilities in the least restrictive setting, as well as the characteristics of those children with disabilities, including family characteristics. Also, emphasis will be placed on working within the team structures, as appropriate to inclusive practices, and the various roles each professional takes on.
Typically offered in Fall, Spring & Summer.
Cross listed courses EDA 334, EGP 334.

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 EDA 302/350/360; 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. Repeateable 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 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.