



CEPS 17-01

Department of Special Education  
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**To:** College of Education and Professional Studies Curriculum Committee  
Council on Graduate Studies  
Council on Teacher Education

**From:** Department of Special Education

**Date:** February 1, 2017

**Re:** Proposed Revisions to Graduate Catalog Copy for the MS: Special Education

**Proposal:** To eliminate MAT/GRE and 3-6 page paper requirements

**Effective Immediately**

**Current Catalog Copy:**

## **Special Education**

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**Program Mission:** The graduate major in Special Education program mission is to prepare graduates for advanced professional practice with individuals with exceptional learning needs. Individuals may pursue additional endorsements which may include earning a supervisory endorsement, earning an LBS II for "Curriculum Adaptation Specialist" or "Behavior Intervention Specialist," or preparing to be a "Director" of Special Education.

**Admission Requirements:** To be eligible for degree candidacy, applicants must meet all of the requirements for admission to the Graduate School (see "[Admission to Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs](#)"). In addition, the student must provide the following documents:

- Official transcripts to the department and university documenting all prior course work and evidence of having earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution approved by Eastern Illinois University with a cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or a 2.75 GPA for the last 60 hours of graded academic coursework as defined by the Graduate School. If these standards are not met, the student may complete nine semester hours of graduate level courses in the department with a grade point average of 3.3 or higher.
- Two letters of recommendation which must address the student's potential to engage successfully in graduate study. One letter should document experience with children or adults with exceptionalities such as teaching, student teaching volunteer work, private or public agency experience.

- Official admission test scores (GRE, MAT, or GMAT).
- A written statement of future professional goals minimally one paragraph in length.
- A three-to-five page position paper, literature review, or research paper. The paper must be submitted in a format consistent with the most recent edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual and include a minimum of five references.
- Dispositional check sheet representing candidate dispositions for advanced practice.

These documents will be considered as the advisor and student formulate a study plan that will include the student's professional goals, extent of experience with individuals with exceptionalities, and the students' professional writing competencies.

**Degree Audit:** The graduate plan of study is the EIU Degree Audit, which is generated automatically in the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) at the time of degree or certificate candidacy. Modifications of the standard EIU Degree Audit are submitted by the graduate coordinator to the certification officer in the Graduate School at the time modifications are approved. The Degree Audit serves as an unofficial summary of requirements for the program. Degree and certificate candidates are advised to review the comprehensive summary of the Degree Audit process specified on the "Requirements for All Degree and Certificate Candidates" section of the *Graduate Catalog*. Individual programs may require candidates to submit plans of study in addition to the Degree Audit, candidates should consult with the program coordinator.

## Degree Requirements

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Degree requirements include those outlined for the master of science in education degree by the Graduate School (see "[Requirements for the Master of Science in Education Degree](#)"). The program offers a thesis and non-thesis option.

### Curriculum for the Master of Science in Education in Special Education Non-Thesis Option

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#### **Total. Credits: 36**

Students in the non-thesis option must complete a minimum of 36 semester hours of study for the degree. A minimum of 17 semester hours of all graduate work must be in courses numbered 5000 or higher.

- Basic Education Courses. Credits: 8 to 9 (selected from the list below)
- Special Education and Elective Courses (minimum). Credits: 21 to 22

Core Courses in Special Education:

- [SPE 5120 - Current Issues in Special Education](#). Credits: 3
- [SPE 5900 - Research in Special Education](#). Credits: 3

### Curriculum for the Master of Science in Education in Special Education Thesis Option

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#### **Total. Credits: 33 to 36**

Students in the thesis option must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of study in addition to thesis hours for the degree. A minimum of 15 semester hours of all graduate work must be in courses

numbered 5000 or higher.

- Basic Education Courses. Credits: 8 to 9
- Special Education and Elective Courses (minimum). Credits: 15 to 16
- Thesis. Credits: 3 to 6

Core Courses in Special Education:

- [SPE 5120 - Current Issues in Special Education](#). Credits: 3
- [SPE 5900 - Research in Special Education](#). Credits: 3

**The 8 semester hours of basic education courses may be selected from the list that follows:**

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- [EDF 5500 - Theory Into Practice: Curriculum Development](#). Credits: 3
  - [EDF 5510 - Theory Into Practice: Social Foundations for Educational Practice](#). Credits: 3
  - [EDF 5530 - Theory Into Practice: Philosophy for Educational Practice](#). Credits: 2
  - [EDF 5535 - Philosophy of Education: Clinical](#). Credits: 2
  - [EDF 5540 - Theory Into Practice: History for Educational Practice](#). Credits: 2
  - [EDF 5550 - Comparative and International Education](#). Credits: 3
  - [EDP 5300 - Psychological Foundations for Educational Practice](#). Credits: 3

**The Following Regulations Apply to Both Degree Options**

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- A minimum of 21 semester hours must be in courses in the field of special education. Students may select courses or electives from other departments with advisor approval.
  - A maximum of 10 semester hours of courses numbered 4750 to 4999 may be applied to the degree.
  - A maximum of six semester hours of appropriate transfer courses (graded courses earning a grade of B or better) from an accredited institution may be applied to a degree.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

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Information on graduate assistantships may be obtained by contacting the Coordinator of Graduate Studies or Chair, Department of Special Education, Buzzard Hall 1212, EIU.

## Special Education

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### **Rationale for online delivery:**

Eastern's Graduate mission included developing opportunities for the discovery and application of knowledge with graduate faculty who reflect the University's teaching and mentoring priority and who have a record of research/creative activity and professional service.

Provision of the Special Education Masters Program online will provide opportunities for practicing licensed Special Educators to access graduate education across the State of Illinois and beyond. Currently no state supported universities provide a Masters in Special Education online. The online format will make the Masters with major in Special Education accessible to geographically underserved areas and to special educators for whom taking courses on campus is not realistic. It also provides that graduates of the undergraduate EIU Special Education Program have the opportunity to continue to enhance their knowledge base and be further mentored as they mature as professionals by faculty with whom they have a relationship from an institution they already value, EIU.

The GRE/MAT has been required since the inception of the Special Education graduate major. No minimum scores have been applied. Multiple tests are now required prior to licensure; our M.S. requires licensure. It is perceived continuing to require a score that is not being used in a meaningful way serves as a deterrent for prospective candidates.

Across the set of special education courses, masters candidates write numerous papers. The 3-6 page paper for application purposes has not provided meaningful insights into candidate's ability to be successful in the major.

**Approved:**

**DCC: 2/1/2017**

**CEPS Curriculum Committee:**

**CGS:**

**COTE:**