

Master of Science in Abilities and Disabilities Studies

The master of science in abilities and disabilities studies is designed for regular, specialty, and special education teachers who are already certified and want to complete further coursework in the field of exceptional children. Concentration programs require 36-39 credits of coursework, and students must submit a professional portfolio, which is completed at the end of the program. There are three concentrations: one in Teaching ALL Students, another in Gifted and Talented Education, and a third in Self-Design in Special Education. There is also a course sequence in special education administration offered for those individuals matriculated into the educational leadership program.

Abilities and Disabilities Studies Program Core Values

- Educators interact with others based on a belief in the infinite possibilities of and for human growth and development; all youth have the potential to learn and express knowledge through their unique styles of acquiring and demonstrating knowledge.
- Educators are responsible for supporting and guiding each student on his/her journey from potentials to performances through personally meaningful, respectful, and accessible pathways.
- Educators create learning opportunities that honor and enhance the gifts and talents of each individual and make possible the contributions of each student to self and to society.
- Educators create learning environments where every child feels welcome and accepted for their unique attributes, including her/his cultural background, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Educators always use person-first language and thinking; everyone is valued and viewed as a whole person, not strictly by a label or one characteristic.
- Educators use multiple assessments and evaluations when measuring students' successes and abilities and in understanding their needs.
- Educators are collaborative, respectful, and supportive with all educators they come in direct and indirect contact with, including parents, maintenance workers, and administrative assistants.
- Educators base all of their behaviors on the belief that each individual has intrinsic and global value to the evolution of human kind.

Special Admissions Requirements

In addition to the general requirements of the College, candidates to the master's program must submit proof of teacher certification, provisional or professional level, which can be in any area or from any state. And, in place of the standard essay, in two to three pages:

1. Describe why you are enrolling in this program.
 - a. What goals do you have for yourself by earning a master's degree in this concentration?
 - b. What is at least one aspect of your teaching that you feel you will strengthen through earning this master's?

And

2. Describe your past experiences with youth, either in teaching or another capacity.
 - a. What did you learn about youth through this experience?
 - b. What did you learn about yourself through this experience?

Testing Requirements As of March 2009 standardized testing for graduate admission to the Abilities and Disabilities Studies program has been eliminated. Students are no longer required to submit GRE or MAT scores. Applicants must submit proof of teacher certification, which can be in any area or from any state.

Submit official TOEFL scores of 550 or higher on the paper-based test, 79 or higher on the Internet-based test, or 213 or higher on the computer-based test if the applicant is an international student whose first language is not English. International students who have received their undergraduate degree from an English-speaking institution may apply for a waiver of this requirement.

Transfer Credit Previously completed graduate courses may be approved for transfer into a graduate program within the Abilities and Disabilities Studies pro-

gram if credits for the courses were earned no more than five years prior to matriculation, with grades of B or better. A syllabus for each course submitted for transfer credit must be provided upon application.

For previous work completed through the University of Maine System (UMS), up to twelve (12) credits may be accepted if the courses meet the requirements above and they are equivalent to core courses or elective courses in the relevant USM program of study. Up to six (6) graduate credits completed at institutions outside of the University of Maine System may be accepted if the courses meet the requirements above and are equivalent to core courses or elective courses in the relevant USM program of study.

Transfer of more than twelve (12) University of Maine System credits or six (6) non-University of Maine System credits may be approved by the program coordinator and faculty. These credits may include certificate of graduate study program courses and professional development in-service graduate courses.

Program Requirements

I. Gifted and Talented Education Concentration (36 credits)

Core (12 credits)

EDU	600	Research Methods and Techniques
SED	653	Assessment in Special Education
SED	601	Introduction to Student Programming and Master's Goal Setting (1 credit)
SED	698	Capstone Seminar and Portfolio – last course only (2 credits)
SED	699	Directed Study

Specialization (12 credits)

SED	618	Programming for Learners with Special Needs
SED	659	Education of the Gifted/Talented
SED	660	Curriculum and Methods for Teaching the Gifted
SED	662	Productive Thinking and the Gifted Learner
SED	666	Models in Education of the Gifted

Electives (12 credits)

SED	550	Teaching Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom
SED	663	Management in Education of the Gifted
SED	664	Gifted Students in Special Populations
SED	665	Institute for the Program Planners in Education of the Gifted/Talented
SED	667	Social/Emotional Needs of the Gifted
SED	670	Secondary Programs in the Gifted and Talented

Other electives as approved by program or advisor

II. Self Design in Special Education (36 credits)

Core Courses (12 credits)

EDU	600	Research Methods and Techniques
SED	601	Introduction to Student Programming and Master's Goal-setting (1 credit)
SED	697	Universal Design Implemented
SED	698	Capstone Seminar and Portfolio (must be taken last) (2 credits)
SED	699	Directed Study

III. Teaching ALL Students Concentration (39 credits)

Core Course (7 credits)

EDU	600	Research Methods and Techniques
SED	601	Introduction to Student Programming and Master's Goal Setting (1 credit)
EDU	562	Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

Special Education (12 credits)

SED	614	Methods of Teaching Mathematics for Students with Special Needs
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SED 615 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
SED 618 Programming for Learners with Special Needs
SED 679 Consultation and Special Education

Gifted and Talented (6 credits)

SED 550 Teaching Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom
SED 662 Productive Thinking and the Gifted Learner

English Language Learners (9 credits)

EDU 559 Aspects of Reading for Multilingual Learners
EDU 561 Aspects of the English Language
EDU 563 ESL Language Testing and Assessment

Capstone (5 credits)

SED 697 Universal Design Implemented
SED 698 Capstone Seminar and Portfolio—last course
only (2 credits)

Electives (24 credits)

The elective courses allow students to tailor their master's programs to their interests and the areas they feel they need further study in to become better teachers for students with exceptionalities. These courses will be discussed with the student's advisor and written in an agreement between the student and his/her advisor. Any course changes from this agreement will need to be approved, in writing, by the student's advisor.

At least 15 of these credits need to be directly related to working with students with disabilities. All courses need to be graduate level. They can be taken from any graduate department at USM with prior approval by advisor.

Program Requirements

Portfolio Students in all concentrations will create, in SED 601, the goals and objectives they plan to accomplish through their plan of study and their teaching philosophy statement. Goals and objectives can be an expansion of the admissions essay they use for matriculation into the program.

The professional portfolio will consist of the student's reflection of their goals and objectives and teaching philosophies created in SED 601 and on their evidence of meeting five (5) of the Council for Exceptional Children's Teaching Standards.

The purpose of the portfolio is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate and reflect upon what they have gained in the program. It is expected that the goals and objectives will integrate the principles of one's concentration, the application of knowledge to practice, an understanding of research methodology, and the ability to communicate effectively.

Students are responsible for compiling the elements of their portfolio throughout their program of study. Completion of portfolios will occur during SED 698, after all their other courses are completed. The portfolio will demonstrate how students have met the goals and objectives they planned at the beginning of their program, and the new and unexpected knowledge that they gained in their program. Students will then present live, or via video, their portfolios. Presentations occur two times a year, at the end of the fall semester and spring semester.

If a student fails all or part of the portfolio, the student will meet with program advisors to discuss the results. Note that students are permitted to resubmit their portfolios only once.