Special Education

The Master of Science in Special Education is designed for people teaching exceptional children, whether new to the profession or already having experience. The master’s provides: (a) courses and internships for initial teacher certification in teaching students with mild to moderate disabilities, (b) coursework in various specialty areas such as teaching students who are gifted and talented and those on the autism spectrum, and (c) preparation to collaborate effectively in school-wide multi-tiered systems of support, e.g., RTI. Current general education teachers, specialty area professionals such as occupational therapists, special education teachers, paraeducators, and people with bachelor’s seeking a new teaching career in special education are among those for whom the program is intended.

Program Highlights

Pre-Service Concentration: Teaching Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities
The Teaching Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities concentration provides initial special education teacher certification coursework and student teaching for Maine 282 Teacher of Students with Disabilities (K-8 and 7-12). Unique features of the Teaching Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities concentration include:

- All coursework is offered online for the recommendation for the 282 special education teacher certification.
- Focus on the evidence-based instruction in areas such as reading and math, and assessment practices for the continuum of needs and tiers of increasingly specialized services from the mild/moderate disabilities to severe disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders.
- Readiness to collaborate with educators school-wide in the Response to Intervention system and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports systems.
- Internships statewide for candidates who are conditionally certified teachers or educational technicians already working in schools.

In-Service concentration for in-service teachers
The In-Service Concentration provides coursework for practicing teachers who are interested in working with students with disabilities, those who are gifted and talented, and those on the autism spectrum. Special education teachers, general education teachers, occupational therapists, and other educators who are not seeking special education initial teacher certification may individualize a program of study with a faculty advisor that meets their interests and needs. Many courses are available online. Teacher Certification is required for the in-service concentration. Unique features of the In-Service Concentration include:

- Flexible program planning with at least 15 credits need to be directly related to working with students with disabilities. Includes three research courses and 24 elective credits.
- Certificates of Graduate Study that can be completed through the elective credits include: Gifted and Talented; Youth with Moderate–to-Severe Disabilities; Teaching ALL students; and Applied Behavior Analysis (CABA).
- With prior advisor approval, courses can be taken from any graduate department at USM.
- Electives range from working with students with mild disabilities in a general classroom to working with students in a life skills classroom who have severe disabilities.
- Educators who are already certified in special education (286) may pursue the 282 certification.

Certificates of Graduate Study in
Gifted and Talented; Teaching ALL Students

Master of Science in Special Education: Pre-Service (39 credits)

Master of Science in Special Education: In-Service (33 credits)
Admission Requirements for the In-Service Option:

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Rolling with priority deadlines May 1 for fall matriculation and October 15 for spring matriculation

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:
Minimum Requirements: Applicant must have a bachelor's degree, from a regionally accredited college or university, and have earned a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) in a baccalaureate degree program. Applicants who do not have a 2.5 overall GPA must enclose a letter asking for special consideration, in which they provide evidence of an ability to complete graduate studies successfully.

The in-service concentration includes a core set of courses specifically designed for teachers. The concentration requires teaching in a teaching position and professional teacher certification for entrance.

Application must include:

• A submitted online graduate admission application.
• The application fee of $65.00.
• Official transcripts for all colleges or universities attended.
  The Office of Graduate Admissions is able to obtain transcripts of courses completed after 1985 from any University of Maine system campus, so you do not need to request those; however, you do need to list them on your application.
• Three letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's knowledge of current scholarship, capacity to connect theory and practice in posing and solving educational problems, achievement of success in educational practice, and demonstrated capability and motivation to engage in advanced graduate study. Recommendations are submitted using our online application form.
• Essay: see essay question on website.
• Current resume.
• Completed and signed Teacher Credential Summary form.
• Certification of finances (international students only).
• Submission of official TOEFL or IELTS scores (if English is not the applicant’s first language).

For more information:
Special Education
(207) 780-5300
kathleen.bickford@maine.edu
8 Bailey Hall, USM Gorham Campus
usm.maine.edu/special-education

Admission Requirements for the Pre-Service Option:

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Application Deadline for the Initial Certification Strand: Rolling with priority deadlines: March 1 for summer matriculation, May 1 for fall matriculation, Oct 15 for spring matriculation

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:
Minimum Requirements: Applicant must have a bachelor's degree, from a regionally accredited college or university, and have earned a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) in a baccalaureate degree program. Applicants who do not have a 2.5 overall GPA must enclose a letter asking for special consideration, in which they provide evidence of an ability to complete graduate studies successfully.

Prerequisites: Maine certification Exceptionality Course SED 540, SED 335, or course course approved by the Maine Office of Certification. Passing scores for Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Reading, Writing, and Mathematics.

Application must include:

• A submitted online graduate admission application.
• The application fee of $65.00.
• Official transcripts for all colleges or universities attended. The Office of Graduate Admissions is able to obtain transcripts of courses completed after 1985 from any University of Maine system campus, so you do not need to request those; however, you do need to list them on your application.
• Three letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant’s knowledge of current scholarship, capacity to connect theory and practice in posing and solving educational problems, achievement of success in educational practice, and demonstrated capability and motivation to engage in advanced graduate study. Recommendations are submitted using our online application form.
• Essay: see essay question below.
• Current resume.
• Praxis Core exam passed based on Maine's standards.
• Completed and signed Completion of Exceptionalities Course Form. Completion of Maine's required exceptionality course for all teachers at USM or another institution. See website for details.
• Certification of finances (international students only).
• Submission of official TOEFL or IELTS scores (if English is not the applicant’s first language).
• In addition to the above submitted materials, applicants must complete a free Tk20 Application in order for your application to be reviewed. The link to the instructions can be found here: http://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/educatorpreparation/How-to-Create-Free-Admission-Application-Account-in-Tk20.pdf

For assistance with the application process:
Office of Admissions
(207) 780-4386
usmgrad@maine.edu