

Special Education Studies Master's Degree Distance Learning Program



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The Special Education Studies (SES) Master's degree program requires a minimum of 33 semester hours of study. The program is appropriate for individuals already certified in an area of special or general education or for individuals wishing to update or increase their knowledge of special education. **This program is not designed to meet teacher certification requirements in any state. It is not nationally accredited through NCATE nor is it an initial teacher certification program approved by the Florida Department of Education.** Eighteen of the 33 semester hours are required courses. The remaining 15 semester hours may be taken in one of the following areas of specialization: high incidence disabilities, severe disabilities, or early childhood special education.

Program Mission

The mission of the SES Program is to graduate individuals who are competent and confident educators who have a commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities and the lives of members of other minority groups. As such, students will be encouraged to:

- ◆ establish a value base that requires them to understand and respect persons with disabilities and members of other minority groups,
- ◆ focus professional efforts on empowering and enabling individuals with disabilities, members of other minority groups, and their families and on promoting their inclusion in all aspects of community and family life, and
- ◆ develop the abilities to think independently and creatively.

College of Education Conceptual Framework

The SES program is built around the conceptual framework of the College of Education at Florida State University. The conceptual framework is: *Instruction that moves, leadership that inspires, and research that makes a difference in the 21st century*. Additional information about the framework is provided in Appendix A of this Handbook and on the program Bb site.

Program Philosophy

The Philosophy of the SES Program is developed around the six tenants below:

- ◆ Learners with disabilities and members of other minority groups should receive services in normalized, natural, and least restrictive settings.
- ◆ A collaborative approach is needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and students who are members of other minority groups.
- ◆ Instruction should occur within the context of meaningful and age-appropriate activities, including the general education curriculum.
- ◆ Learners with disabilities, members of other minority groups, and their families should be self-determining.
- ◆ Positive behavioral supports are humane, effective, and socially valid methods of addressing behavior problems.
- ◆ Professionals must be responsive to the changing needs of the population who receive services.

Program Content

The content of the SES Program is based on national and state guidelines. The guidelines are provided by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The competencies identified by the CEC Common Core of Knowledge and Skills center around:

- *Philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education*
- *Characteristics of learners*
- *Assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation*
- *Instructional content and practice*
- *Professional and ethical practices*
- *Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment*
- *Managing student behavior and social interaction skills*
- *Communication and collaborative partnerships*

Additional information can be found at CEC's website: <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

Technology Requirements

Students will be required to obtain an FSU/ACNS e-mail account in order to access course websites. In order to complete class requirements, class participants will need to be able to:

- ◆ Access the Internet,
- ◆ Download and upload Word documents,
- ◆ Download, view, and listen to Powerpoint documents,
- ◆ Download PDF files,
- ◆ Utilize Real Player or Windows Media to download, view, and listen to digitized video-tapes, and
- ◆ Send and receive e-mails.

Florida State University uses Blackboard for its distance learning instructional platform. For more information regarding technology requirements to use Blackboard, please go to: <http://learningforlife.fsu.edu/online/usingbb/index.cfm>

Advising Process

The advising process is outlined below. Please take this process seriously, as it will facilitate successful completion of the program. Advice will be provided by e-mail, postings on the program Blackboard site, or by telephone. Face-to-face meetings can be scheduled at the student's request.

It is suggested that students obtain, retain, and read a copy of the *FSU Graduate Bulletin* published the year of admittance to the program. The *Bulletin* contains information regarding university regulations that must be followed, but are not necessarily contained in this document. In addition, legislative directives and rules and regulations of the State Board of Education may be implemented at anytime. The *Bulletin* is available at: <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/>

Major Advisor. The Program Advisor, Dr. Mary Frances Hanline, will serve as each student's major advisor. The Major Advisor provides advice regarding individual student program requirements, regulations, procedures, etc. Advice regarding courses to take, graduation checks, application to graduate school, Master's degree Programs of Study, etc., must be provided by Major Advisors. It is suggested that students communicate with Dr. Hanline before registering for an upcoming semester. This communication may take place in personal e-mail, telephone conversations, or in-person. The program Blackboard site (see immediately below) also provides ways for this advisement to take place.

Program Blackboard Site. The program maintains a Blackboard website for students, faculty, and staff. All distance learning students with a special education major code are entered into this Blackboard site when they have an FSU e-mail account and have informed Dr. Hanline that they have received an FSU e-mail account. Students may then go to "campus.fsu.edu" and log in using their FSU username and password. A link to the organization of "Online MS Program in Special Education" should appear. The Blackboard site will be used to send e-mails to students via FSU e-mail accounts. Advising and other information is routinely passed onto students through this communication vehicle. In addition, it is imperative that students check the Blackboard site frequently throughout the semester, as information is posted on a regular basis. Students must obtain and utilize an FSU e-mail account.

Advising Responsibilities. PLEASE NOTE THAT MAJOR ADVISORS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, FACULTY, AND STAFF OF THE SCHOOL OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION'S OFFICE OF ACADEMIC SERVICES WILL BE GLAD TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, IT IS ULTIMATELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH STUDENT TO MEET PROGRAM AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND TO MEET DEADLINES.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Students needing accommodations in the advising process are advised to speak with their assigned Major Advisor as soon as possible to arrange for necessary and needed accommodations.

Annual Reviews and Expectations for Continuing in the Program

At the end of each academic year, Program Faculty will meet and discuss each individual student's progress in the program. Based on the professional judgment of Program Faculty, at each annual review, students will be either:

- ◆ granted approval to continue in the program,
- ◆ be provided with a corrective/remedial plan that must be successfully completed in order to continue in the program, or
- ◆ not be allowed to continue in the SES program.

Factors that will be considered in this review process include:

- ◆ grades in required courses,
- ◆ performance in field-based activities,
- ◆ professional dispositions, and
- ◆ potential for being a successful graduate of the program.

Students must earn a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 and a "satisfactory" or "pass" in each required course in order to continue in the program.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in according to the code of ethics of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Professional behavior and attitude will be evaluated based on the standards established by this code of ethics. The CEC Code of Ethics states that special education professionals:

- ◆ Are committed to developing the highest educational and quality of life potential of exceptional individuals;
- ◆ Promote and maintain a high level of competence and integrity in practicing their profession;
- ◆ Engage in professional activities that benefit exceptional individuals, their families, other colleagues, students or research subjects;
- ◆ Exercise objective professional judgment in the practice of their profession;
- ◆ Strive to advance their knowledge and skills regarding the education of exceptional in-

- dividuals;
- ◆ Work within the standards and policies of their profession;
 - ◆ Seek to uphold and improve, where necessary, the laws, regulations, and policies governing the delivery of special education and related services and the practice of their profession; and
 - ◆ Do not condone or participate in unethical or illegal acts, nor violate professional standards adopted by the Delegate Assembly of CEC.

Additional information can be found on CEC webpage at: <http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/ps-ethic.html>

Required Coursework

Students must successfully complete a *minimum* of 33 semester hours. Eighteen of these 33 semester hours are required. These courses (3 semester hours each) are:

- ◆ EEX 5089: Adaptations and Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5708: Teaming with Families, Schools, and the Community
- ◆ EEX 5286: Preparing Individuals for Transition
- ◆ EEX 5248: Positive Behavior Support
- ◆ EEX 5256: Literacy for Learners with Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5225: Assessment of Students with Disabilities

The remaining 15 semester hours are taken in an area of specialization: high incidence disabilities, severe disabilities, or early childhood special education. Courses for each specialization area are listed below. Each is 3 semester hours each.

High Incidence Disabilities

- ◆ EEX 5087: Middle and Secondary Curriculum for Special Educators
- ◆ EEX 5704: Early Childhood and Elementary Curriculum for Special Educators
- ◆ EEX 5246: Mathematics for Students with Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5235: Instructional Environments: Ethical, Legal, Safety, and Classroom Management Considerations
- ◆ EEX 5765: Technology for Students with Disabilities

Severe Disabilities

- ◆ EEX 5234: Development and Assessment of Individuals with Severe Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5298: Teaching Students with Autism
- ◆ EMR 5235: Teaching the Student with Profound Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5774: Transition for Students with Severe Disabilities
- ◆ SPA 5432: Autism and Severe Communication Disabilities

Early Childhood Special Education

- ◆ EEX 5017: Typical and Atypical Early Development

- ◆ EEX 5456: Program Development for Young Children with Disabilities
- ◆ EEX 5455: Assessment and Methods in Early Childhood Special Education
- ◆ IDS 5349: Infant/Toddler and Family Assessment
- ◆ IDS 5348: Family-Centered Early Intervention

Appendix B provides a schedule of the semester in which courses are expected to be offered. As this schedule may change, students should check the Blackboard site each semester course scheduling information. This table also provides information about which courses meet Florida's requirements for the Endorsement in Autism, the Pre-Kindergarten Disability Endorsement, the Endorsement in Severe or Profound Disabilities, and the Part C Infant/Toddler Developmental Specialist Certification requirements.

Culminating Experience: EEX 8966 (Master's Comprehensive Examination)

In addition to coursework, students are required to complete a culminating activity. In order to do this, students register for EEX 8966 (Master's Comprehensive Examination) the final semester of their coursework. However, instead of an examination, students will be required to develop an electronic portfolio that documents how each student's professional goals established during the application process have been accomplished. The electronic portfolio will be developed at no cost to the student through Blackboard. More information is provided on the program Blackboard site under the button link, Graduation. Please be advised that EEX 8966 must be taken fall or spring semesters; it is NOT offered summer semester.

Student portfolios are evaluated by Dr. Hanline to determine if a student has successfully completed the portfolio development process. Students are informed in writing of the outcomes of the evaluation within approximately one month after the portfolio has been completed by the student. Students who do not successfully complete the culminating experience are assigned remedial work by Dr. Hanline.

Program of Study Form

Students are required to file a Program of Study form with the College of Education's Office of Academic Services the beginning of the semester immediately prior to graduation. The Program of Study form lists the courses to be taken to complete the Master's degree. The Program of Study form is available on-line at: <http://www.coe.fsu.edu/OAS/support.html> A link is provided on the Program Bb site under the button link, Graduation.

The completed Program of Study form is e-mailed to Dr. Hanline. Once Dr. Hanline receives the completed form through e-mail, she will obtain the necessary signatures and will file the Program of Study with the Office of Academic Services. This form must be completed, approved, and on file before students may complete their Culminating Experience and/or graduate.

Graduation

Students must apply for graduation in the first week of classes during the final semester of the Program at the Registrar's Office. This can be done online. Additional information is posted on the program Blackboard site under the button link, Graduation. Distance learning students are welcome to participate in commencement ceremonies. Information about renting caps and gowns is available on the program Blackboard site under the button link, Graduation.

Appendix A: School of Teacher Education Conceptual Framework

Instruction that *moves*

...from campus-based courses into pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school classrooms; community-housed literacy programs; facilities for populations with disabilities; art and music studios; recreational complexes; and other educational settings so that lessons learned on campus are applied to life;

...across academic disciplines, from one subject into others, in order to emphasize the fact that teaching and learning among adults requires attention to the whole person;

...within the intellectual and affective domains, giving attention to the academic, psychological, and emotional development of teachers, so that graduates have the knowledge and the dispositions of successful, effective teachers.

Leadership that *inspires*

...by modeling the dispositions of effective teaching by demonstrating a believe that every student can learn, and by supporting each student in his and her efforts to succeed;

...by participating in life-long learning through continual dedication to the professional development that grows in on-going scholarship and reflection, and systematic evaluation of one's academic strengths and areas for improvement;

...by exploring and experimenting with the use of available technologies that can enhance teaching and learning;

...by treasuring the works that have shaped the field, while providing time and space for consideration of new ideas to challenge the existing ideas;

Research that *makes a difference*

...through asking important questions about teaching and learning;

...through engaging in studies that explore significant issues related to teaching and learning, and to the ways that education is conducted and occurs in formal and informal settings;

...through disseminating results of studies to various groups of stake-holders who need to be informed about trends, improvements, weaknesses, and potential changes in education, including teachers, researchers, parents, policy-makers, school, district, state, and national-level, administrators, and politicians;

...through collaboration with counterparts in other schools and colleges across Florida State University and other colleges and universities, who can help us better understand the issues that are most pressing today and that will be most in need of attention tomorrow;

...through demonstrating unfailingly high ethics as we engage in scholarship of all kinds, including research that leads to the preparation of published manuscripts, research grants, personnel preparation and other service grants, professional presentations, and any other scholarship by which we represent Florida State University, the field of education, and the collective group of teacher educators.

SCHEDULE OF COURSE OFFERINGS

		Fall 09	Spring 10	Summer 10	Fall 10	Spring 11	Summer 11	Fall 11	Spring 12	Summer 12	Fall 12	Spring 09	Summer 09
REQUIRED COURSES	EEX 5089: Adaptations & Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities	•			•			•			•		
	EEX 5708: Teaming with Families, Schools, & the Community		•			•			•			•	
	EEX 5286: Preparing Individuals for Transition			•			•			•			•
	EEX 5248: Positive Behavior Support			•			•			•			•
	EEX 5259: Literacy for Learners with Disabilities	•			•			•				•	
	EEX 5225: Assessment of Students with Disabilities		•			•			•				•
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIZATION COURSES	EEX 5017: Typical & Atypical Early Development			•			•			•			•
	EEX 5456: Program Development for Young Children with Disabilities	•			•			•			•		
	EEX 5239: Assessment & Methods in Early Childhood Special Education	•			•			•			•		
	IDS 5349: Infant/Toddler & Family Assessment	•			•			•			•		
	IDS 5348: Family-Centered Early Intervention		•			•			•			•	
SEVERE DISABILITIES SPECIALIZATION	EEX 5234: Development & Assessment of Individuals with Severe Disabilities	•			•			•			•		
	EEX 5298: Teaching Students with Autism	•	•			•			•			•	
	EMR 5235: Teaching the Student with Profound Disabilities			•			•			•			•
	EEX 5774: Transition for Students with Severe Disabilities			•			•			•			•
	SPA 5432: Autism & Severe Communication Disabilities			•			•			•			•
HIGH INCIDENCE SPECIALIZATION COURSES	EEX 5087: Middle & Secondary Curriculum for Learners with Disabilities			•						•			
	EEX 5704: Early Childhood & Elementary Curriculum for Special Educators						•						•
	EEX 5246: Mathematics for Students with Disabilities	•						•					
	EEX 5235: Instructional Environments: Ethical, Legal, Safety, & Classroom Management Considerations		•			•			•			•	
	EEX 5765: Introduction to Special Education Technology				•						•		

¹ Florida residents wishing to earn the Florida Severe/Profound Disabilities Endorsement may take EMR 5803 fall semester if they have daily access to learners with severe disabilities. EMR 5803 may be taken instead of one of the required courses (except EEX 5248).

