Special Education

The Undergraduate Special Education program prepares professional educators to teach students with exceptionalities in grades K-12. Students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to modify content for special education students in a wide range of subjects including reading, math, and the natural and social sciences and to apply the special strategies needed to teach exceptional learners. Special educators can consult and co-teach in general education inclusion classrooms, teach small groups of exceptional students in a resource room, teach students with more significant disabilities in a self-contained classroom, or work with exceptional students in a variety of other settings. This innovative program is based on the Urban Professional Educator model and combines theoretical principles of education, best practices in special education, and extensive, supervised fieldwork. Students pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education and enroll in a four-year sequence of courses. Students may become eligible for State of Illinois Educator Licensure in Special Education (Learning and Behavior Specialist I [LBS1]) provided additional State requirements are met.

Unique Aspects

The faculty has intentionally designed a program of the highest quality by incorporating cutting-edge, evidence-based features into the program curriculum. Recent research shows that these features are very effective and recommends that they be incorporated into all special education programs:

* Content-focused methods coursework combined with highly structured field experiences. We have designed a 2-course sequence for teaching math and another 2-course sequence for teaching literacy that combine knowledge of the subject matter with special educator “know-how.” In each course, candidates have an opportunity to teach the subject matter in a supervised on-campus laboratory setting.
* Pedagogies that promote active learning. We incorporate group and individual activities and projects, rich case studies, video modeling and micro-teaching into coursework and encourage active learning and engagement. We also teach and encourage a cycle of assessment, instruction, reflection, and improvement.
* Coursework paired and aligned with high-quality field experiences. We have designed an early service learning component and two school-based practicum courses. Each practicum immediately follows and is closely aligned with a sequence of relevant coursework. Field-work is strategically placed throughout the curriculum to ensure that students have multiple high-quality opportunities to apply their learning.
* Opportunities for special education and general education preservice teachers to collaborate. Collaboration should begin at the pre-service level. We plan to schedule several of our courses in the same time-slot as at least one section of similar courses in the Elementary and Secondary Education programs and hold some class meetings jointly. Students will engage together in case studies and projects and will be challenged to learn what it means to work together to serve all students.
* Extended, rather than abbreviated, opportunities to learn to teach. In addition to the four 10-week “labs” and two school-based “practicums,” described above, we have designed a 16-week experience with placements at both the elementary and secondary level, since candidates will be qualified to teach in grades K-12.

* Teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Students take a course in teaching English Language Learners. Also, the on-campus “labs” serves diverse students from Chicago after school (50% Hispanic, 25% African American, 25% white and other). Many diverse private and public schools within and the suburbs are used for field experiences and student teaching so that students have multiple opportunities to teach a diverse range of learners.

College of Education Highlights

DePaul’s College of Education is one of 53 universities selected to participate in the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program. This program addresses the need for talented young teachers who represent a rich ethnic diversity and who are prepared to be successful in classrooms with the greatest need. The College of Education also participates in several community-serving educational programs. Faculty, staff, and students provide instruction in mathematics, science, and literacy to low-income minority students through a comprehensive tutoring program and other educational programs.

Faculty Highlights

The Special Education faculty has expertise in both literacy and special education. Faculty specializations include reading and learning disabilities, autism, behavior disorders, cognitive disabilities, deafness, and students’ academic, social, and emotional learning. By studying a range of cultures and theoretical frameworks, they are equipped to prepare candidates to work with an increasingly multicultural student population. The diverse faculty stays at the leading edge of developments in their fields through involvement in professional organizations, research, and international travel. Faculty are leaders in the field and present at local, national, and international conferences, actively publish in leading journals, and participate in partnerships with schools both locally and nationally.

Accreditation

The Special Education program is fully accredited by Illinois State Board of Education.

Numbers of majors

The program expects to recruit approximately 20-25 new freshman and transfer students each year.

Career Possibilities

Graduates may work in urban and suburban, public and private elementary, middle, and high schools as special education teachers. Private practice and private learning centers are other options. A critical shortage of special education teachers makes job opportunities plentiful.

Job Placement Statistics

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2018, the number of open positions in special education will increase by 17 percent. In 2011, Illinois school districts were asked to project the demand for applicants for 48 educational positions. Special Education (LBS1) ranked second in projected need for future positions.

Graduate Schools That Students Enter

The State of Illinois provides a more specialized licensure opportunity for special educators who have already earned the LBS1. Specialist (LBS2) endorsements are available at the graduate level in Transition, Technology, Bilingual Special Education, Deaf/Blind, Behavioral Intervention, Curriculum Adaptation, and Multiple Disabilities. In addition to the College of Education’s graduate programs, DePaul graduates enroll in graduate schools around the country and locally at colleges such as University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola University, and Northeastern Illinois University.

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Special Education
BS degree (192 quarter hours) 2014-2015 Major Info Sheet
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Special Education ~ College of Education Curriculum

* SCU 336 Adolescent/Adult Growth and Development
* LSI 300 Intro to Special Education I: Exceptionality and Learning
* LSI 301 Intro to Special Education II: Foundations and Characteristics
* LSI 302 Instruction and Differentiation in Special Education: Content Areas
* BBE 311 Fundamentals of English Language Learner Education
* LSI 303 Classroom and Behavior Management in Special Education
* LSI 310 Teaching Mathematics to Exceptional Students I: Foundation
* LSI 311 Teaching Mathematics Lab I
* LSI 312 Teaching Mathematics to Exceptional Students II: Instruction
* LSI 313 Teaching Mathematics Lab II
* LSI 314 Teaching Literacy to Exceptional Students I: Foundations
* LSI 315 Teaching Literacy Lab I
* LSI 316 Teaching Literacy to Exceptional Students II: Instruction
* LSI 317 Teaching Literacy Lab II
* LSI 320 Collaboration and Special Education
* LSI 321 Formal Assessment in Special Education
* LSI 322 Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities I: Academic and Life Skills
* LSI 323 Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities II: Communication and Social Skills
* LSI 324 Practicum I: Inclusion Setting
* LSI 325 Topics in Special Education
* LSI 326 Transitional and Vocational Planning
* LSI 327 Practicum II: Self-Contained Setting
* LSI 328 Contemporary Issues in Special Education
* LSI 329 Teaching Literacy in the Content Areas to Exceptional Learner
* LSI 383 Student Teaching Seminar –Special Education
* LSI 385 Student Teaching in Special Education: Elementary
* LSI 386 Student Teaching in Special Education: Secondary
* Two Teacher Education Electives. Suggested Electives:
  EE 347 Children’s Literature
  EE 334 Elementary Sci Inquiry & Teaching Strategies
  EE 355 Methods: Contemporary Teaching of SocStd
  EE 344 Art and Music in the Elementary School

Non-Course Requirements: Advanced Standing, Field Experiences, State Licensure Tests

Schedule for Transfer (major courses only)*

3rd year

Fall: LSI 321 & 315  LSI 328 & 324  LSI 383
Winter: LSI 329  LSI 310 & 311  LSI 323
Spring: BBE 311  LSI 322  LSI 324 & 325

4th year

Fall: LSI 327 & 328  LSI 326  LSI 384
Winter: LSI 321  LSI 320  LSI 386
Spring: LSI 329  LSI 383  SCU 336  LSI 385

Schedule for Transfer (major courses only)*

3rd year

Fall: LSI 300  LSI 301  LSI 303
Winter: LSI 314 & 315  LSI 316 & 317  LSI 312 & 313
Spring: LSI 302  LSI 310 & 311  LSI 323

4th year

Fall: LSI 327 & 328  LSI 326  LSI 384
Winter: LSI 321  LSI 320  LSI 386
Spring: LSI 329  LSI 383  SCU 336  LSI 385

* Suggested course sequence. Schedule may differ for individual students.