

# SPECIAL EDUCATION, MS

The mission of the Special Education and Communication Disorders Department (SECD) is to prepare dedicated practitioners, reflective scholars, and responsible citizens to facilitate, design, implement, and evaluate programs to support people with varying abilities in educational settings and the community across the lifespan. Our candidates develop essential interpersonal skills that enable them to become valued members of collaborative, interdisciplinary teams.

SECD accomplishes this mission by creating opportunities for the acquisition and maintenance of knowledge and skills, aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children, the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (for graduate program only), and state and federal regulations.

## Program Related Information

### Program Contact

402.554.2201  
unosecd@unomaha.edu

**Program Website (<https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-education-health-and-human-sciences/special-education-communication-disorders/graduate/special-education.php>)**

### Other Program Related Information

Candidates seeking a master's degree in special education must meet the criteria for admission to the Graduate College and the department. Graduate-level hours taken as a non-degree student may be subsequently included in a program of study at the discretion of the graduate program committee and the dean for graduate studies. The department adheres to all restrictions on non-degree students. No student with non-degree status may enroll in a practicum course. Candidates completing the degree program meet the academic requirements for PK-6, K-6 or 7-12 endorsement by the Nebraska Department of Education. Candidates may complete practicum experiences at both the K-6 and 7-12 levels. One of these practicum experiences may be completed in the candidate's classroom. The other must be completed outside the candidate's classroom.

### Initial Certification

The accelerated special education concentration (AC-SEP) is an accelerated program that is designed for individuals with a baccalaureate degree or higher who wish to earn an Initial Teaching Certificate issued by the Nebraska Department of Education to teach special education (K-6 or 7-12). Students who successfully complete the qualifications MS in special education with the accelerated special education concentration will be eligible for Nebraska certification in special education.

Initial certification requires completion of 100 hours of practicum experience.

### Unclassified Students

Students who are not planning to pursue a program leading to a graduate certificate or a master's degree can be admitted to the special education program as unclassified students. Candidates holding a previous master's degree in education who are seeking additional teaching endorsements may wish to choose an unclassified status. Unclassified students are allowed to take courses for which they meet the prerequisite. Successful completion of graduate courses as an unclassified student does not obligate the department to accept those courses for credit toward the

fulfillment of degree requirements. Formal advisement in an endorsement area is required.

## Praxis II Content Test Information

All candidates seeking an endorsement in special education (special education generalist, 33-hour behavior intervention specialist and accelerated SPED) for the first time, are required to receive a passing score on the Praxis II content test in each endorsement area of their preparation prior to the endorsement being recommended. This link (<http://www.ets.org/praxis/ne/requirements/>) will take you to the ETS website page for the Nebraska Department of Education requirements, which lists the Nebraska requirements for each endorsement area.

## Admissions

General Application Requirements and Admission Criteria (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/graduate/admission/>)

### Application Deadlines

- Spring 2026: December 1
- Summer 2026: May 1
- Fall 2026: August 1

### Other Requirements

- **English Language Proficiency:** Applicants are required to have a command of oral and written English. Those who do not hold a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from the United States, **OR** a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from a predetermined country on the waiver list (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/admissions/entrance-exams.php>), must meet the minimum language proficiency score requirement in order to be considered for admission.
  - Internet-based TOEFL: 80, IELTS: 6.5, PTE: 53, Duolingo: 110
- **Statement of Purpose:** Include a formal written statement, at least one page in length, of why you want to pursue a master's degree in special education. Explain your current job/position, career goals and additional experiences with individuals with disabilities.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Two letters of professional/academic recommendation are required. These recommenders should be able to speak to the graduate's undergraduate academic work, the applicant's potential to do graduate work, and/or the applicant's professional competence.
- Copy of teaching certificate (except for the Accelerated Program for Special Education concentration)
- All candidates must have completed TED 2300 Human Growth and Learning, SPED 1500 Introduction to Special Education or SPED 8030 Teaching Students with Exceptionalities (or an equivalent to any of these), and methods courses in reading and math.

## Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Concentration</b>		
Select an area of concentration:		
	Accelerated Program for Special Education	
	Behavior Intervention Specialist	
	Dyslexia Specialist	
	Special Education Generalist	

### Exit Requirements

Once course work is completed candidates must successfully pass a comprehensive examination or write a thesis to receive a Master of Science degree.

Code	Title	Credits
Comprehensive Examination		
SPED 8990	THESIS	6

All candidates should carefully review the Graduate College requirements for forming the supervisory committee, Thesis/Thesis Equivalent Proposal Approval forms and final approval and submission of the thesis.

All candidates must complete 6 credit hours in SPED 8990 in order to receive a Master's of Science degree in special education.

## Graduate-Level Practicums

All candidates must obtain the permission of their academic advisor prior to applying for and registering for practicums. All candidates who are adding an endorsement must complete one (or more) practicum experience(s) as part of their preparation. At least one of these experiences must be an all-day, 16-week experience in the endorsement area. **Applications will not be considered unless all materials are submitted by September 15 for spring practicum and February 1 for fall practicum.**

The department will issue a permit that allows the candidate to enroll in the appropriate practicum course. It is the candidate's responsibility to apply for the proper course. Professional seminars are required as part of the experience and attendance is mandatory.

Candidates may be removed from their placement at the request of the candidate, department, or school district/community agency.

## Concentrations

### Accelerated Special Education Program Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core Courses</b>		
SPED 8030	TEACHING STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES	3
SPED 8120	HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8980	PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3
<b>Concentration Courses</b>		
SPED 8236 or SPED 8656	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DISORDERS FOR TEACHERS TRANSITION PLANNING	3
SPED 8580	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND INTERVENTIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8720	GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8816	BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS	3
SPED 8016	MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS	3
SPED 8910	ASSESSMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8250	LITERACY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	3
<b>Electives* Select 9 hours from the following:</b>		<b>9</b>
TED 8210	EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION	
TED 8470	TEACHING THE LANGUAGE ARTS	
TED 8310	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - CONTEMPORARY IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING & LEARNING	
TED 8300	EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES	

TED 8560	TECHNOLOGY FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS	
*To be eligible for certification all courses in the elective list will need to be satisfactorily completed.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>39</b>

### Behavior Intervention Specialist Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prerequisites</b>		
All candidates must have completed the following prerequisite courses or an equivalent.		
an undergraduate reading methods course		
an undergraduate math methods course		
SPED 8030	TEACHING STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES	
<b>Core Courses</b>		
SPED 8120	HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8250	LITERACY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8810	RESEARCH METHODS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8910/TED 8850	ASSESSMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8980	PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3
<b>Concentration Courses</b>		
SPED 8820	CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	3
SPED 8830 or SPED 8840	GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SPECIALIST ADVANCED PRACTICUM IN BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	3
SPED 8850	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	3
SPED 8860	BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION	3
SPED 8870	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS	3
SPED/COUN 8016	MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS	3
SPED 8816	BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS <sup>1</sup>	3
SPED/COUN 8656	TRANSITION PLANNING <sup>2</sup>	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

<sup>1</sup> PK-6 must take SPED 8816

<sup>2</sup> 7-12 must take SPED 8656

### Dyslexia Specialist Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core Courses</b>		
SPED 8016	MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS	3
SPED 8120	HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8580	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND INTERVENTIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8720	GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3

SPED 8810	RESEARCH METHODS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8910	ASSESSMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8980	PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3

**Concentration Courses**

SPED 8260	DYSLEXIA: FOUNDATIONS & SCIENCE OF READING	3
SPED 8360	DYSLEXIA: LANGUAGE ESSENTIALS	3
SPED 8660	DYSLEXIA: ASSESSMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING	3
SPED 8690	DYSLEXIA: STRUCTURED LITERACY INSTRUCTION	3
SPED 8760	DYSLEXIA: PRACTICUM	3

**Optional Course**

SPED 8790	DYSLEXIA: ADVANCED PRACTICUM	
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**Total Credits** **36**

**Generalist Concentration**

Code	Title	Credits
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**Prerequisites**

an undergraduate reading methods course		
an undergraduate math methods course		

**Core Courses**

SPED 8120	HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8250	LITERACY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	3
SPED 8810	RESEARCH METHODS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8910	ASSESSMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8900	SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW	3
SPED 8980	PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3

**Generalist Concentration Courses**

SPED 8236	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DISORDERS FOR TEACHERS	3
SPED 8580	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND INTERVENTIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8720	GRADUATE PRACTICUM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	3
SPED 8816	BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS	3

**Generalist Concentration Option Courses**

Select one of the following options: 6

K-6 Option—Select six hours from the following:

SPED/COUN 8016	MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS	
SPED/COUN 8656	TRANSITION PLANNING	
SPED 8820	CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	
SPED 8850	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	
SPED 8870	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS	

Or other course as approved by your advisor

7-12 Option:

SPED/COUN 8656	TRANSITION PLANNING	
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Select three hours from the following:

SPED 8016	MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS	
SPED 8820	CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	
SPED 8850	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS	
SPED 8870	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS (Other course approved by your advisor)	

**Total Credits** **36**

**Academic Performance**

A student can enroll only twice in each graduate course included on a plan of study. If the course is not successfully completed on the second attempt, the student will be dismissed from the program. An enrollment is defined as being enrolled in the course after the last day to withdraw via MavLINK and receive a 100% refund. The last day to withdraw will be stated in the current academic calendar. (<https://www.unomaha.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.php>) In addition to the Quality of Work Standards established by the Graduate College, students may only repeat a graduate level course on a plan of study one time in which they receive any grade, including "W" or "I".