

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION – SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Introduction

The master's degree program in special education provides advanced cognitive and educational skills for those who are presently working or expect to work as clinical/developmental personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities or as supervisors of special education programs. This degree program prepares candidates for work as an intervention specialist. Candidates will be introduced to advanced and in-depth teaching strategies which will provide understanding and provide the ability to implement tools as an intervention specialist working with learners with significant disabilities and exceptionalities.

## Welcome

Our program is designed to prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to best serve in schools and agencies in the area. Our accredited Special Education program seeks to meet the educational and service needs of Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. Our program is exemplified by the quality and diversity of classroom instruction, field experiences, program options, student, faculty, and graduates in the community. We have a long history of producing graduates who have served the area as Special Education teachers, Intervention Specialists, and Special Education Professionals. We have a strong connection with our alumni, program supervisors, schools and agencies, and others who support students with exceptional learning needs in the Youngstown area.

Undergraduate and graduate candidates will find a unique educational experience that prepares them for employment and/or advanced study in Special Education. For more information, review our website and contact Special Education faculty with any questions.

For more information contact the Department Office at 330-941-3251 or visit the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership Studies (<http://catalog.ysu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/college-education/department-teacher-education/>).

## Program Coordinator

For specific questions about the Master of Science in Education - Special Education program, please contact the program coordinator:

**Dr. Pam Epler**  
**Beeghly College of Liberal Arts,**  
**Social Sciences and Education**  
**Department of Teacher Education and**  
**Leadership Studies**  
**330-941-7230**  
**[pleplerbrooks@ysu.edu](mailto:pleplerbrooks@ysu.edu)**

## Mission

The Special Education Program supports the mission of both Youngstown State University and the Beeghly College of Liberal Arts, Social Sciences and Education through our work to:

- Prepare outstanding potential special education teachers by providing a rigorous educational program that is contemporary in its approaches, up to the minute in its content base knowledge, based upon didactic learning and practical experience and requiring demonstrated competency prior to graduation;
- Foster and require community and school based practicum experiences that involve the candidate developing cultural awareness and the acceptance of the diversity;
- Encourage candidates to expand their learning experiences through volunteerism by identifying campus and community opportunities for such practices;
- Connect candidates with community leaders and current practitioners in the field via guest lecturers and campus and community based presentations as a means of enhancing candidates' learning and advancing their awareness of the cultural and economic life of the community;
- Extend the University's efforts in advancing the intellectual and economic life of the state and region by providing advanced education and degrees to enable practitioners in the field to expand their knowledge base, meet the ever changing federal and state requirements to maintain licensure or certification in their field, and improve the economic status of those practitioners through acquisition of advanced degrees.

## Accreditation

The Master of Science - Special Education graduate degree program is accredited by the National Council Association of Teacher Education (NCATE). To contact our current accreditation body, please go to: [www.caepnet.org](http://www.caepnet.org).

Both the Intervention Specialist Mild/Moderate Disabilities and the Autism & Related Disabilities Special Education Graduate Programs have received full recognition from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) <https://www.cec.sped.org>.

## Graduate Faculty

**Marcia Matanin, Ph.D., Professor**  
 Assessment of student learning; program assessment; clinical partnerships

## Graduate Courses

**SPED 6900 Issues, Trends & Ethical, Legal and Professional Guidelines in Special Education 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to provide the candidate with an exploratory study of the issues, trends, as well as the ethical, legal and professional guidelines in special education. Candidates will become familiar with legal policies and procedures as well as practice ethical guidelines as related to students with exceptionalities. Candidates will understand how to advocate for improved outcomes for learners with exceptionalities and their families as well as design and implement professional learning activities to increase their own practices.

**SPED 6906 Understanding and Addressing the Characteristics and Behaviors of Learners with Exceptional Needs 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to provide the candidate with the knowledge and understanding of how individuals with exceptionalities grow and develop in an inclusive learning environment. Candidates will understand how multiple influences, including diversity, families, communities and individual differences shape an individual with an exceptionality's development and learning. The candidate will then use this knowledge to develop high-quality learning experiences based on strengths and needs.

**SPED 6914 Positive Behavior Supports/Intervention Strategies to Support Social-Emotional Needs of All Learners 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of children with mild to intensive needs, including those needing intensive support due to disability or trauma. It provides education candidates with effective routines and procedures consistent with the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to create a safe, caring, respectful and productive learning environment as well as a range of preventive and responsive practices. Candidates will apply specific tools grounded in the principles of ABA with ethical strategies being of particular focus. Candidate skills will be grounded in the ability to plan, implement and evaluate behavioral interventions and social skills programs within any special education service delivery model.

**SPED 6916 Planning, Teaching, Accommodating and Assessing Learners with Mild-Intensive Exceptional Needs 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to provide the candidate with knowledge of general and specialized curricula for students with exceptionalities. Based on each individual's needs, the candidate will understand how to use rigorous content standards to plan, accommodate and assess the curricula across all content area. The candidate will grasp how to modify the general and specialized curricula to make them accessible and in alignment with the rigorous content standards for individuals with an exceptionality.

**SPED 6917 Effective Instruction for Learners with Exceptional Needs 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to provide the candidate with the knowledge about individuals with an exceptionality development and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates will understand how to use explicit and systematic instructional strategies including active student engagement and motivation, differentiated instruction, flexible and small groups, specialized individualized instruction, self-regulated learning and meta-cognition strategies. The candidate will then use this knowledge to plan and guide instruction to meet the rigorous content goals for each individual with an exceptionality's academic and social-behavioral needs.

**SPED 6928 Transition to Adult Life 3 s.h.**

This course is designed to provide candidates with best practices of the professional collaboration process to include specific models and strategies to improve the transition from school to adult life, including career readiness, community, and domestic skills for students with mild to intensive learning needs. Candidates will develop a team training model and evaluate evidence-based practices regarding the transition process for students. Individual strengths and characteristics will be considered to facilitate social, vocational, and daily living skills for all learners. Successful completion of field related assessment project is required.

**SPED 6929 Assessment of Exceptional Learners 3 s.h.**

This course focuses on the educational assessment process for exceptional learners. Topics include state and federal regulations, data collection techniques, formative and summative assessment, and test interpretation. Importance of instructional alignment between objectives, assessment, and instructional strategies.

**SPED 6931 Field-based Practicum with Exceptional Learners in Grades K-6 3 s.h.**

Practicum experience, with mild/moderate exceptional learners within grades K-6, in which the candidate acquires and demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design and implement data guided standards-based instruction with differentiated methods, assessments that promote learner growth including effective feedback, and collaboratively work with teacher(s), parents/guardians, and related service professional(s) to implement instruction to meet learners' diverse needs. Field hours required.

**Prereq.:** SPED 6900, SPED 6906, SPED 6914, SPED 6916, SPED 6917, SPED 6928, SPED 6929.

**SPED 6932 Field-based Practicum on Inclusive Practices with Exceptional Learners in Grades 7-12 3 s.h.**

Practicum experience, with mild/moderate exceptional learners in an inclusion classroom within grades 7-12, in which the candidate acquires and demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design and implement data guided standards-based instruction with differentiated methods, assessments that promote learner growth through effective feedback, and collaboratively work with teacher(s), parents/guardians, and related service professional(s) to implement instruction and identify transition services to meet learners' diverse needs. Field hours required.

**SPED 6933 Field-based Practicum with Moderate/Intensive Exceptional Learners in Grades K-6 3 s.h.**

Practicum experience, with moderate/intensive exceptional learners within grades K-6, in which the candidate acquires and demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design and implement data guided standards-based instruction with differentiated methods, assessments that promote learner growth including effective feedback, and collaboratively work with teacher(s), parents/guardians, and related service professional(s) to implement instruction to meet learners' diverse needs. Field hours required.

**SPED 6934 Field-based Practicum with Moderate/Intensive Exceptional Learners in Grades 7-12 3 s.h.**

Practicum experience, with moderate/intensive exceptional learners within grades 7-12, in which the candidate acquires and demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design and implement data guided standards-based instruction with differentiated methods, assessments that promote learner growth including effective feedback, and collaboratively work with teacher(s), parents/guardians, and related service professional(s) to implement instruction to meet learners' diverse needs. Field hours required.