10.9 DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND MULTIPLE ABILITIES (SPE)

Department Head: Associate Professor Sandra Nichols, Office: 201-B Graves Hall

See the Admission Criteria and Degree Requirements sections of this catalog for detailed information on those topics.

Special Education Program
Special education programs offered in the College are designed to help establish, maintain, and improve educational services to exceptional children by providing exemplary personnel resources. Courses of study leading to certification in the education of exceptional children (Class A and Class AA) and to the master of arts (MA) and educational specialist (EdS) degrees are offered. Emphases are available in gifted and talented, collaborative education, early childhood special education, and severe disabilities (Class A only).

The doctor of education (EdD) degree program is offered to provide competencies in teacher education, administration, and research. In preparing for any of these three professional activities, EdD students usually specialize in one of the fields within special education; they are also expected, however, to acquire broad-based information across the spectrum of exceptional children and youth. The doctor of philosophy (PhD) program is designed to prepare major researchers for roles as university professors or administrators.

The sequence of advanced study followed by the postgraduate student in special education is contingent on the skills and background brought to the program and on the student's career plans.

Special education faculty are involved in a number of demonstration and research projects designed to develop and evaluate innovative procedures for training professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents to work with various types of exceptional children. These projects are also concerned with the development and evaluation of instructional programs and techniques for exceptional individuals. Students have access to an array of practicum and research opportunities from a variety of resources.

Certification
The Alabama State Board of Education grants a Class A professional certificate with an endorsement in gifted and talented, early childhood special education, collaborative teacher (K–6), collaborative teacher (6–12), or severe disabilities. To be eligible, students must hold appropriate Class B certification and must complete all requirements for the MA degree in the chosen program, including a comprehensive exam, state assessments (if applicable), and the Praxis II (if required), as described in this catalog.

The EdS in special education program leads to Class AA certification with an endorsement in gifted and talented, early childhood special education, collaborative teacher (K–6), or collaborative teacher (6–12). To be eligible, students must hold appropriate Class A certification and must complete the appropriate number of semester hours of work in an approved program beyond the master’s degree and successfully complete a comprehensive exam and state required tests as applicable.
Collaborative Education [K-6, 6-12, or K-12]  
Early Childhood Special Education  
Gifted and Talented Education  

To enter the Class A alternative programs of study in collaborative education, early childhood special education, or gifted and talented education, an appropriate bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution must be held. A transcript evaluation must also be completed. Refer to Nontraditional, Alternative Initial Teacher Certification Program in the College of Education section of this catalogue for important information.

Class A Certification (Traditional)  
Collaborative Education [K-6, 6-12, or K-12]  
Early Childhood Special Education  
Gifted and Talented Education  
Severe Disabilities  

To enter the Class A programs of study in collaborative education, early childhood special education, or gifted and talented education, the appropriate prior certification must be held.

To enter the Class A program of study in severe disabilities, the appropriate prior certification in special education must be held.

Class AA Certification  
Collaborative Education [K-6, 6-12, or K-12]  
Early Childhood Special Education  
Gifted and Talented Education  

To enter the Class AA programs of study in collaborative education or early childhood special education, the appropriate prior certification must be held.

To enter the Class AA programs of study in gifted and talented education, the appropriate prior certification must be held.

Degree Requirements  
Pay careful attention to the Degree Requirements section of this catalog for important information on time limits, plan of study, advancement to candidacy, etc.

Curriculum and Teaching (9 hours)  
- SPE502 – Advanced Behavior Management for Special Educators (3 hours)  
- SPE503 - Master’s Seminar in Special Education (3 hours)  
- SPE514 Teacher Consultant Models in Special Education (3 hours)  

Foundations of Professional Studies (3 hours)  
- Advisor approved course from the list (3 hours)  

Educational Research (3 hours)  
- SPE501 – Diagnostic & Assessment of Exceptional Children & Youth (3 hours)  

Technology (3 hours)  
- CAT531 - Computer-based Institutional Technology (3 hours)  

Teaching Field (12 hours)  
- SPE592 – Academic Methods – Secondary (3 hours)  
- SPE594 - Methods & Severe Disabilities (3 hours)  
- SPE597 – Transit in Special Education (3 hours)
• SPE596 – Practicum in Collaborative - 6-12 grades (3 hours)

Additional Requirements/Electives (6-9 hours)
• SPE500 - Intro to Exceptional Children & Youth (3 hours)
• SPE583 - Creative Problem Solving (3 hours)
• SPE590 - Intro to Mild Disabilities (3 hours)
• SPE593 - Intro to Severe Disabilities (3 hours)

NOTES:
• Candidates who have not taken a special education survey course within the last 6 years are required to do so.
• All A-level Candidates in this program are required to complete a practicum.
• A passing score on a comprehensive written exam covering the content of the curriculum is required.
• If admitted to this program, one must hold AL Class B certification before applying for Class A.

Financial Aid
Graduate assistantships, student stipends, and fellowships in special education are available in limited numbers. Interested students must complete the financial assistance form, and/or the application for graduate teaching or research assistant form.

MA Program Admission
In addition to meeting admission requirements for the Graduate School (Admission Criteria) and the College of Education (General Admission), students interested in the special education programs should be aware of the state certification program admission requirements listed in the chart above.

Nontraditional, Alternative Master’s, Initial Teacher Certification Program
The Special Education Program offers teacher-education programs that lead to Alabama Class A certification in collaborative teacher (K–6) (special education), or collaborative teacher (6–12) (special education), early childhood special education, and gifted, but do not require Class B certification in any teaching field. These programs are designed to allow individuals with undergraduate degrees in nonteaching fields to enter the field of education.

Admission to a nontraditional, alternative certification program in special education requires full admission to the Graduate School and the completion of specified undergraduate prerequisite courses. Applicants seeking admission to the alternative master’s program should contact the Office of Student Services & Certification in the College of Education for a transcript evaluation to determine prerequisite courses. A passing score on each subtest of the Basic Skills Assessments of the Alabama Educator Certification Testing Program (AECTP) is also required for admission. (Information about the Basic Skills Assessment is available online at https://actapps.act.org/wkala/wkala or in Student Services, 104 Carmichael Hall.) The MA degree is awarded when program requirements are completed.

EdS Program Admission
In addition to meeting the Graduate School’s admission requirements, a student interested in the EdS program must have earned an MA with appropriate certification.

EdD and PhD Program Admission
Prerequisites for admission to doctoral work in special education are an earned MA degree in special education (or a related area) and three years of appropriate experience, defined as three years of work in agencies serving children and youth, one year of which must have been spent in direct interaction with exceptional children on a full-time basis. Graduate faculty
members individually evaluate and collectively discuss admission applications.

Course Descriptions

**SPE 500 Introduction to Exceptional Children and Youth.** Three hours.
Introduction to programs and problems of children and youth who deviate from the norm in physical, mental, emotional, and social characteristics.

**SPE 501 Diagnosis and Assessment of Exceptional Children and Youth.** Three hours.
Comprehensive study of diagnosis and assessment, emphasizing concepts of tests and measurements, formal and informal assessment, test administration, and use of diagnostic results in educational intervention.

**SPE 502 Advanced Behavior Management for Special Educators.** Three hours.
Prerequisite: SPE 435 or equivalent.
Concepts and principles of behavior change and management; practical experience in developing plans to prevent and remedy behavior problems. Research project required.

**SPE 503 Master's Seminar in Special Education.** Three hours.
Critique of research and research problems in current special education issues.

**SPE 506 Family Intervention with Exceptional Children and Youth.** Three hours.
Examination of the effects of an exceptional child on the family, and the various approaches to intervention with the family.

**SPE 505 Professionalism.** Two hours.
Prerequisites: Satisfactory completion of all MAP 300-level classes; admittance to the Graduate School, admittance to the graduate Multiple Abilities Program cohort. The focus is on methods and materials for teaching music to children in grades 4–6.

**SPE 509 The Learner.** Two hours.
Prerequisites: Satisfactory completion of all MAP 300-level classes; admittance to the Graduate School, admittance to the graduate Multiple Abilities Program cohort. The focus is on methods and materials for teaching music to children in grades preschool–3.

**SPE 511 Reading and Research in Special Education.** Variable credit (registration for fewer than 3 hours requires permission of the program chairperson). To assist master's students with intensive review of new research in a particular area of exceptionality.

**SPE 514 Teacher Consultant Models in Special Education.** Three hours.
Introduction to various direct and indirect service delivery models for students with mild disabilities; consultant techniques demonstrated.

**SPE 516 Communication and Collaboration.** One hour.
Prerequisites: Satisfactory completion of all MAP 300-level classes; admittance to the Graduate School, admittance to the graduate Multiple Abilities Program cohort. The focus is on developing number sense and mathematical power in children at grades K–6.

**SPE 517 Facilitating Learning.** One hour.
Prerequisites: Satisfactory completion of all MAP 300-level classes; admittance to the Graduate School, admittance to the graduate Multiple Abilities Program cohort. The focus is on curricular materials that support children’s reasoning in elementary school mathematics.

**SPE 518 Field Experience.** Six hours.  
Prerequisites: Satisfactory completion of all MAP 300-level classes; admittance to the Graduate School, admittance to the graduate Multiple Abilities Program cohort. The course consists of a clinical placement in the Summer Enrichment Workshop, a program for high-ability children.

**SPE 527 Professionalism.** Two hours.  
Prerequisites: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a general education classroom. Professional discourse, dress, ethics, and decision making receive intensive scrutiny.

**SPE 528 The Learner.** Two hours.  
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a general education classroom. Students will gradually assume more and more of the responsibility for planning and teaching in responsive, developmentally appropriate ways that support the learning of ALL children in the classroom, culminating in a 2-week “solo” teaching episode.

**SPE 530 Communication and Collaboration.** Two hours.  
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a general education classroom. Students will continue to develop and be evaluated on the communication and collaboration abilities they have developed in previous MAP coursework.

**SPE 534 Facilitating Learning.** Two hours.  
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a general education classroom. Students will assume responsibility for teaching all content areas in the elementary curriculum, including music, dance, and art by means of an integrated curriculum. The integrated unit they produce will be their major product of the semester.

**SPE 535 Field Experience.** Three hours.  
Prerequisites: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a general education classroom.

**SPE 538 Research Seminar.** One hour.  
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. This seminar will acquaint students with relevant areas of research in general and special education. It provides a scaffolded approach to the development of a research proposal that will be required in the fifth semester of MAP. Attention is given to selecting problem areas for investigation by reviewing historical, descriptive, and experimental methods of research. Students will read a variety of research articles and learn to identify an appropriate question for various types of inquiry. They will study the types of data that should be collected, the types of analyses typically done with such data, and how to relate their study’s findings to the question for which the study was undertaken.
**SPE 550 Professionalism.** Two hours. 
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a special education classroom. Professional discourse, dress, ethics, and decision making receive intensive scrutiny.

**SPE 554 The Learner.** Two hours. 
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a special education classroom. Students will gradually assume more and more of the responsibility for planning and teaching in responsive, developmentally appropriate ways that support the learning of ALL the children in the classroom, culminating in a 2-week “solo” teaching episode.

**SPE 556 Communication and Collaboration.** Two hours. 
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a special education classroom. Students will continue to develop and be evaluated on the communication and collaboration abilities they have developed in previous MAP coursework.

**SPE 557 Facilitating Learning.** Two hours. 
Prerequisite: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a special education classroom. Students will produce a case study of one struggling learner, including an analysis of the student’s social and academic environment, an IEP, and lesson plans from the previous semester’s integrated unit that show how they would be modified to meet the student’s academic and social needs.

**SPE 558 Field Experience.** Three hours. 
Prerequisites: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
The major activity of the semester consists of a 12-week internship in a special education classroom.

**SPE 560 Research Seminar.** One hour. 
Prerequisites: Completion of all previous MAP coursework with a grade of “B” or better. 
In this course, students will design and implement action research in the special education classroom in which they are completing their internship. Students will develop an instructional or behavioral intervention, design and implement an action research validation study, collect data, analyze it, and write up their research in APA style. Students will then prepare an oral presentation of their research for the MAP Differentiated Instruction Conference. The action research resulting from this seminar will be used as a form of master’s thesis in lieu of a master’s comprehensive examination.

**SPE 571 Education of Young Children with Disabilities.** Three hours. 
An introductory course to the field of early childhood special education, including rationale, legal issues, and characteristics of children from birth through kindergarten.

**SPE 575 Practicum in Early Childhood Special Education.** One to six hours. 
Prerequisite: Teacher certification in special education or a related area. Completion of 80% of curriculum. 3.0 GPA. 
Involves a demonstration of teaching expertise of candidate with students identified with severe/profound and/or multiple disabilities in special and general education classrooms.

**SPE 576 Assessment of Young Children.** Three hours.
Prerequisite: **SPE 571** or permission of the instructor.
Selection, administration, and interpretation of assessments of young children (birth through kindergarten).

**SPE 578 Methods of Teaching Young Children with Disabilities.** Three hours. Prerequisite: **SPE 571** or permission of the instructor. Use of curricula, materials, and management techniques for young children (birth through kindergarten) with disabilities.

**SPE 579 Internship in Education of Young Children with Diverse Abilities.** Three to nine hours. Prerequisites: **SPE 571, SPE 576,** and **SPE 578.** Intensive supervised teaching experience with young children with and without disabilities.

**SPE 581 Psychology of Gifted and Talented Children and Youth.** Three hours. Examination of the nature of youth with high potential in multiple areas. Contemporary theory, research, and the relationship between definition/identification and educational planning are considered.

**SPE 582 Teaching the Gifted and Talented.** Three hours. Use and evaluation of teaching-learning methods for education of the gifted and talented, including consideration of roles, expectations for learning, and organizational procedures.

**SPE 583 Creative Problem Solving Seminar.** Three hours. A guided sequence of exercises and experiences leading to increased personal creative behavior, with emphasis on methods for nurturing creative talent in students of all ages.

**SPE 584 Special Populations in Gifted Education.** Three hours. Examination of a variety of administrative designs, curriculum options, instructional models, and strategies to meet the unique cognitive and affective needs/abilities of special populations of gifted students.

**SPE 585 Teaching Thinking Skills: Integrating Programs.** Three hours. Prerequisite: **SPE 582** or permission of the instructor. Corequisite: **SPE 589.** Survey of existing thinking-skills programs and techniques for creating new programs for thinking. Emphasis is on integrating thinking skills into gifted education and regular education.

**SPE 586 Social & Emotional Components of Talent Development.** Three hours. Explores current research, psychological theory and practical counseling techniques relevant to the social and emotional components of giftedness. Some topics include perfectionism, gender issues, underachievement, and special populations.

**SPE 587 Indiv Needs Talents Classroom.** Three hours. This course will outline instructional and managerial techniques that can be used in the grade level or heterogeneous classroom to address the individual learning needs, strengths, styles, and preferences of all students.

**SPE 589 Internship in Gifted/Talented.** Three to nine hours. Prerequisites: **SPE 581** and **SPE 582.** Corequisite: **SPE 585.** Intensive, supervised teaching experience in programs for gifted and talented.

**SPE 590 Introduction to Mild Disabilities.** Three hours. An intensive study of the background and current perspective on mild disabilities. Emphasis
on developing professional knowledge base.

SPE 591 Academic Methods: Elementary. Three hours. Designed to develop skills in the use of curriculum, materials, and strategies for students with disabilities at the elementary school level.

SPE 592 Academic Methods: Secondary. Three hours. Designed to develop skills in the use of curriculum, materials, and strategies for students with disabilities at the secondary level.

SPE 593 Introduction to Severe Disabilities. Three hours. An intensive study of the background and current perspective on severe disabilities. Emphasis is on developing professional knowledge.

SPE 594 Methods for Severe Disabilities. Three hours. Emphasizes educational programming, subject matter, professional responsibilities of teachers and related service personnel, curriculum development, communication, and physical management and handling procedures of individuals with severe disabilities.

SPE 595 Practicum in Severe Disabilities Education (K-12). One to six hours. Prerequisite: Teacher certification in special education or a related area. Completion of 80% of curriculum. 3.0 GPA. Involves a demonstration of teaching expertise of candidate with students identified with severe/profound and/or multiple disabilities in special and general education classrooms.

SPE 596 Practicum in Collaborative (K-6 or 6-12). One to six hours. Involves a demonstration of teaching expertise of candidate with students identified with severe/profound and/or multiple disabilities in special and general education classrooms.

SPE 597 Transition Methods for Adolescents with Disabilities. Three hours. Focuses on the strategies, methods, curriculum, and measurement for facilitating an effective transition from school to adulthood of adolescents with disabilities.

SPE 598 Internship in Special Education. Three to nine hours. Prerequisites: SPE 502 and SPE 591. Intensive, supervised teaching experience in a special education program.

SPE 600 Doctoral Seminar in Special Education. Three hours. Required for all first-year doctoral students; diagnostic in function. Activities include examination of career goals and assessment of skills in written and oral presentations. Offered fall semester.

SPE 601 Seminar: College Teaching in Special Education. Three hours. Prerequisite: SPE 600. Course structure, lecturing and other delivery techniques, student evaluation, and practicum supervision are included among topics that are reviewed to develop skills in college training. Offered fall semester.

SPE 602 Seminar: Research in Special Education. Three hours. Prerequisite: SPE 600. Focuses on the unique aspects of the exceptional population in relationship to typical statistical and research design procedures. Offered spring semester.
SPE 606 Topical Seminar in Special Education. Three hours.
Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.
May be repeated for credit. Selected topics, review and critique of current literature, research problems, and methodology.

SPE 609 Practicum in Special Education. Three to six hours.
Designed for advanced graduate students. Students practice effective supervision skills or college teaching skills under the direction of the course instructor.

SPE 611 Independent Study in Special Education. Three to nine hours.
Intensive investigation of a specific aspect of special education, by one student under the supervision of a faculty member in the student's area of concentration.

SPE 612 Readings and Research in Special Education. Three to twelve hours.
For doctoral students, an opportunity to initiate, develop, and successfully defend a dissertation topic dealing with a problem of magnitude in the field of special education.

SPE 613 Consultation Processing in Special Education Programs. Three hours.
Training in human-relations techniques and administrative strategies designed to facilitate communication and interaction with individuals and groups in special education programming.

SPE 614 Assessment of Teaching and Learning in Special Education. Three hours.
Strategies for curricular designs, teaching methods, and program models using informal and observational techniques to assess teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes (academic and behavioral) in special education programs.

SPE 616 Advanced Professional Development. Three hours.
Theories and types of training and development programs will be reviewed and analyzed, needs assessments will be explored and conducted, and professional development sessions will be developed, facilitated, and evaluated.

SPE 617 Special Education Leadership, Policy and Law. Three hours.
This course is designed to instruct the ethical, legal, and leadership principles that govern the field of special education. It includes emphasis on preparing for administrative positions in special education programs in local education agencies.

SPE 621 Issues in Special Education: Early Childhood. Three hours.
Discussion of current research and investigation of major issues in the education of young students with disabilities, focusing on best practices, assessment and learning, programming, evaluation, community involvement, and facilitation.

SPE 622 Advanced Curriculum Workshop: Early Childhood Special Education. Three hours.
This course assists leaders in early childhood special education in applying studies in basic disciplines to the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum for young students with disabilities. It includes emphasis on application of diverse teaching models and the use of a variety of program alternatives and skills in designing, managing, and evaluating program alternatives.

SPE 623 Issues in Collaborative Education. Three hours.
Discussion of current research and investigation of major issues in the education of students with disabilities, focusing on best practices, assessment and learning, programming,
evaluation, community involvement, and facilitation.

**SPE 624 Advanced Curriculum Workshop in Special Education: Collaborative.** Three hours.
This course assists leaders in collaborative education in applying studies in basic disciplines to the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum for students with disabilities. It includes emphasis on application of diverse teaching models and the use of a variety of program alternatives and skills in designing, managing, and evaluating program alternatives.

**SPE 681 Issues in Gifted Education.** Three hours.
Discussion of current research, and investigation of major issues in the education of gifted and talented youth, focusing on definition, identification, programming, evaluation, community involvement, and guidance.

**SPE 682 Advanced Curriculum Workshop in Gifted Education.** Three to six hours.
Prerequisites: SPE 581 and SPE 582, or permission of the instructor.
Assists leaders in gifted education in applying studies in basic disciplines to the development and implementation of appropriate curriculum for the gifted. Emphasis is on application of diverse teaching models and the use of a variety of program alternatives and skills in designing, managing, and evaluating programs.

**SPE 699 Dissertation Research.** Variable credit. Three-hour minimum.