

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Psychology Building 307

Phone: 410-704-4984

Fax: 410-704-4985

Vision Statement

Towson University will be recognized for preparing innovative and socially just professionals who advocate on behalf of children, families, and the profession. We will empower educators with strong knowledge of research-based pedagogies, a technology-rich skillset, a deep understanding of how children, youth, and adults learn, and caring dispositions to lead and succeed in inclusive and equitable settings.

Mission Statement

The mission of Educator Preparation Programs at Towson University is to:

- Prepare the next generation of diverse educators and leaders committed to meet the individual needs of all learners.
- Advance scholarship around significant priorities in the profession.
- Collaborate with and advocate for children, families, and communities.
- Develop and implement innovative solutions to education challenges.

Programs of the Department

The Department of Special Education is responsible for courses leading to certification in Maryland as a special education teacher. The department offers a major in Special Education, a major in Elementary Education & Special Education (ESEE), and a major in Early Childhood & Special Education (ECSE). Special Education is a screened major.

The education course listings include core education courses that provide knowledge and skills for general application in teaching and learning. The instructional technology and special education offerings also have PreK-12 applications. Reflecting the Professional Education Mission and Vision statements, **students are assigned** by their department and/or the Center for Professional Practice to field and clinical experience placements that are diverse and inclusive. Placements are made that enable the Teacher Education Unit to meet state and national accreditation mandates. All professional year placements will be in identified Professional Development Schools (PDS), or approved partner schools, based on ongoing and systematic PDS partnership agreements with school systems. These mandates and the size and scope of our education program do not permit personal preference or geographic convenience in placements.

Special Education majors must meet with their advisors every term to ensure that their planned programs of study meet Towson University, the major and Maryland State Department of Education certification requirements. Students must consult with their advisors prior to taking courses on a Pass grading option. Courses in the major and courses required for Maryland State Department of Education certification may not be taken with this option. All tracks of the Special Education program begin in the fall term with the exception of the ECSE program.

Exceptions, changes, waivers and/or substitutions from the program pattern for Special Education majors in content or sequence are

permitted only with the written consent of a program advisor following approval from the chair of the Special Education Department.

Graduate programs include the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Master of Education.

The Professional Year

Special Education majors follow the school system calendar for the Professional Development School to which they are assigned as interns. The professional year starts in August, when the teachers begin the school year, and follows the school system spring break schedule.

Graduate Programs in Special Education

Director: Michelle Pasko

Psychology Building 305, 410-704-3835

This Master of Education program prepares currently certified teachers for careers as special educators or deepens the knowledge and expertise of educators currently serving in special education roles. The Special Education track provides opportunity to gain knowledge aligned with MSDE requirements for special education endorsement at infant/primary, elementary/middle or secondary levels and also offers opportunities, through customizable sequences of electives, for special educators to deepen their knowledge in areas such as multilingual learner services, behavior, trauma or related areas. The Teacher as Leader in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) M.Ed. program is designed to provide specialized instruction in ASD to educators currently certified in special education, related services or related fields. The Master of Arts in Teaching offers certification in special education for individuals who hold an undergraduate degree outside of education. See the *Graduate Catalog* for details.

Admission

Admission Requirements for Teacher Education

The Teacher Education Executive Board, representing all initial teacher education programs at Towson University, utilizes the following **minimum** requirements as conditions for admission into teacher education programs, maintaining candidate status and formal entry into the capstone internship. Programs may include additional requirements for admission into the program and/or the capstone internship.

The College of Education admits students either as freshmen or as undergraduate transfer students from accredited, post-secondary institutions. During the freshman and sophomore years, students are generally engaged in pre-professional courses or courses that fulfill Core Curriculum requirements, as well as all identified prerequisites (e.g., specific and sequential courses in Core Curriculum) for admission to COE screened majors and programs.

All College of Education undergraduate programs are screened majors. As an integral part of the teaching/learning experience, students work with advisers in a strategic planning process across all years at TU. Accordingly, to support student success, all COE students are required to confer prior to registration each term with their assigned advisers.

I. PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO ALL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Complete a self-disclosure criminal background form to be submitted to the major department with the application.
2. Submit an application for formal admission to the program. Students seeking admission to teacher education programs must contact their department chairperson or program coordinator by 45 credit hours for program-specific procedures and requirements for admission to professional education programs.
3. A cumulative/overall GPA of 3.00 or higher is required for admission to an initial licensure teacher education program.
 - i. Applicants with a GPA between 2.50 - 2.99 may be admitted conditionally if they provide evidence of passing scores on a Basic Skills Assessment* as identified by the Maryland State Department of Education (i.e. SAT, ACT, GRE, Praxis Core) and receive approval from the department chairperson/program coordinator.

**Candidates may apply for a test waiver directly to the department. Such waivers should only be granted if it is predicted, based on the individual candidate's transcript data, that the candidate's final cumulative/overall GPA will be above a 3.00.*

Associate Teaching Professor: Toni Guidi, Jessica Moore, Michelle Pasko (Graduate Program Director), Jennifer Schnur, Natalie Thomas, Elizabeth Wynkoop

II. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Special Education is a screened major. Students are admitted as program admission requirements are met. All applicants must submit an online application, via the Watermark system, to the Special Education department including a writing sample.

The Special Education department is responsive to the transfer student and will accept those credits which are compatible with the Core Curriculum requirements, Special Education, ECSE and EESE majors and state certification requirements. Please note: although credits might qualify toward graduation, only an evaluation conducted by the Special Education adviser will determine which credits will also apply toward the major. Students must earn a minimal grade equivalent of 2.00 in all transfer courses. Students must first have their transcripts evaluated by University Admissions before requesting a special education transcript evaluation.

Majors

- Special Education Major - Elementary/Middle Track
- Special Education Major - Secondary/Adult Tracks
- Early Childhood and Special Education Major (ECSE)
- Elementary Education and Special Education Major (EESE)

Faculty

Professors: Patricia Doran (Chairperson), Deborah Gartland, Laila Richman

Associate Professors: Darlene Fewster, Katherine Holman (Graduate Program Director), Kandace Hoppin, Gregory Knollman, Amy Noggle

Assistant Professors: Rachel Billman, Briella Chen, Roba Hrisseh

Clinical Professor: Elizabeth Neville

Assistant Teaching Professor: Ashley Burton, Ashley Cudmore, Kelly Davis, Jennifer Evans, Holly Fox, Kara Hodgson, Michelle Hoover, Meryl Klein, Eric Kuhn (Graduate Program Director), Gina Laupert, Kirsten Merashoff, Katherine Naimon, Erin Richmond