



Special educators in today's world are dedicated professionals who want to make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities. They are committed to the field of special education. They appreciate and embrace the diverse range of students' needs. They remain lifelong learners as they seek out and implement validated practices supported by research in the field, and they are able to work effectively within a variety of settings, situations and personalities.

Special education teachers are able to assess and evaluate student progress, make appropriate accommodations, and deliver differentiated instruction that is based upon each student's Individualized Education Program. Finally, special educators are continuous agents of positive change in a demanding, yet exciting field.

Niagara University's master of science program in special education has been approved by the New York State Education Department for individuals who possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and hold initial teaching certification in either grades 1-6, or 7-12 in an academic content area.

WHAT MAKES NIAGARA UNIVERSITY'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?

Niagara University's masters program in special education emphasizes knowledge of the foundations of special education, characteristics of learners, assessment, as well as instructional methods, accommodations and modifications for students within various special education programs.

Candidates concentrate their studies on either childhood (1-6) or adolescence (7-12) through their selection of a specific certification track and elective courses.

Additionally, Niagara's special education program is part of a College of Education that was one of the first in New York state to obtain national accreditation

through NCATE, and has maintained this national accreditation continuously since 1984.



SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICUM

Candidates complete a special education practicum in a classroom that includes students with disabilities (eg., consultant teaching classrooms, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms). The practicum can also be completed in the candidate's own classroom as long as there are students with Individualized Education Programs enrolled in the class. Every candidate works under the guidance of a mentor who holds a master's degree and certification in special education.

WHO IS THE PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR?

The 40-credit-hour degree program is registered with the New York State Department of Education and is designed for initially certified teachers. Course offerings will be cycled so that a candidate may complete all work at an expedited pace or pursue the degree over a longer period of time while holding a full-time teaching position.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

This 40-credit-hour program leads to initial/professional certification in teaching students with disabilities, grades 1-6, or teaching students with disabilities, grades 7-12. Candidates must hold a teaching certificate in either grades 1-6 or a 7-12 academic content area to be admitted and therefore may also use this degree to satisfy requirements for professional certification in New York state.

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The graduate division of education offers a program leading to a Certificate of Advanced Studies in special education. The CAS may qualify candidates for special education certification in grades 1-6 or 7-12 provided all other New York state certification requirements are met.

The CAS in special education is open to students who hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and have completed an M.S. in Education from an accredited institution.

The certificate consists of 24 hours of course work. Fieldwork in various formats is also a requirement.

If judged to be relevant courses, up to six graduate hours of transfer credit may be accepted toward program fulfillment by the degree and certificate programs.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The required core courses are designed to meet the New York state requirements for approved programs.

• **Required Foundations Courses** (15 credit hours)

- EDU 528 Multicultural Education
- EDU 530 Behavior Management and Classroom Motivation
- EDU 539 Characteristics of Students with Exceptional Needs
- EDU 565 Assessment of Students with Exceptionalities
- EDU 595 Introduction to Educational Research

• **Required Advanced Courses** (12 credit hours)

- EDU 572 Reading Difficulties: Diagnosis and Intervention
- EDU 700 Educational and Assistive Technology
- EDU 720 Current Issues in Special Education
- EDU 768 Methods of Teaching Children with Disabilities (grades 1 – 6 only)
Prerequisite to EDU 795 with 50 hours of field work
OR
- EDU 770 Special Methods of Teaching Adolescents with Disabilities (grades 7 – 12 only)
Prerequisite to EDU 795 with 50 hours of field work

• **Required Field Courses** (Six credit hours)

- EDU 794 Seminar in Special Education
- EDU 795 Practicum in Special Education (100 hours)

• **Supplemental Electives** (Six credit hours)

- EDU 558 Using Literacy Technology
- EDU 561 Literacy: Early Grades
- EDU 562 Literacy: Intermediate Grades Syllabus
- EDU 575 Literacy: Upper Grades
- EDU 645 Curriculum Planning: Design, Implementation and Evaluation
- EDU 651 Introduction to Counseling
- EDU 666 Abnormal Psychology

• **Required Culminating Experience** (One credit hour)

- EDU 799 Comprehensive Portfolio Advisement

Total Graduate Hours: 40



HOW DO I APPLY TO THE PROGRAM?

Niagara University's graduate education application process is self-managed. Please submit application and ALL application materials (including official transcripts) in one packet to:

Graduate Education Office
Academic Complex, P.O. Box 1930
Niagara University
Niagara University, NY 14109

Once all materials are received, your file will be sent for review to a program adviser, the chair and the dean.

Application checklist:

- 1 Niagara University graduate education application (www.niagara.edu/advance).
- 2 \$30 nonrefundable application fee payable to Niagara University.
- 3 Official transcripts of all colleges and universities attended in a sealed institution envelope included with your application.
- 4 Two references (academic or professional) in sealed envelopes with the referee's signature across the seal included with your application. (Please use the Niagara University reference form.)
- 5 Statement of Intent. Two-page, double-spaced, typewritten statement discussing your desired special education-specific philosophy, professional goals, objectives, strengths, and weaknesses.
- 6 Applicants with an undergraduate GPA of less than 3.0 may be required to complete a personal interview and writing sample.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION

- GRADES 1– 6
- GRADES 7 – 12



GOAL OF THE PROGRAM

The goal of the program is to provide teachers with the knowledge of instructional principles and practices for teaching students with disabilities and to offer the opportunity to pursue a master of science in education degree. To that extent, the program provides an understanding of:

- The field of special education historically, theoretically and legislatively.
- Human diversity and its impact on families, cultures and schools.
- How individual learning differences provide a foundation for individualizing instruction.
- Instruction and instructional planning as instrumental in special education practice.
- The importance of assessment in the identification, planning and evaluation of individual learning needs and accomplishments.
- The ethical and professional standards and practices in special education.
- The fact that special educators work collaboratively with others and advocate for the learning and well-being of individuals with exceptional learning needs.



Education That Makes a Difference

College of Education
Academic Complex
Niagara University, NY 14109
716-286-8336 • 1-800-462-2111

www.niagara.edu/advance

