

# SPECIAL EDUCATION, BSE

## HOW TO GET IN

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#### SPECIAL EDUCATION DECLARATION OVERVIEW

Students typically enter UW-Madison as Pre-Special Education students (PSR) and spend the first two years completing liberal studies, general education, and some professional education requirements. The Special Education major is declared during the sophomore year for the final two years on campus.

On-campus students starting at UW-Madison in other majors can move to Pre-Special Education by completing a Pre-Professional Declaration (<http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/>). A GPA of 2.5, based on all UW-Madison coursework or the last 60 credits (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#policiesandregulationtext>), is required to transfer into Pre-Special Education. It is not necessary to be a Pre-Special Education student before declaring the major.

Note: Students cannot complete the Certificate in Disability Rights and Services in conjunction with this program.

#### ELIGIBILITY TO DECLARE SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education currently accepts declarations once a year, usually from December 1 – February 1. This period may be extended if additional spaces are available after the initial deadline. The on-campus declaration form is located on the School of Education's Undergraduate Admissions (<http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/>) page, along with information about the declaration period, deadline, and current eligibility requirements. Students should consult this site prior to submitting a declaration as this information may be modified from one declaration year to the next.

Off-campus students wishing to transfer directly into Special Education should complete the on-campus declaration and must also be admitted to UW-Madison. See Transfer Students and Students with a Previous Degree, below.

#### Current Eligibility Requirements

- Complete at least 40 transferable college-level credits by the end of the fall semester of the declaration year.
- Successfully complete RP & SE 300 (<https://guide.wisc.edu/search/?P=RP%20%26%20SE%20300>) Individuals with Disabilities (3 cr.) by the end of the summer of the declaration year.
- Earn a minimum 2.5 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale on all transferable college-level coursework attempted.<sup>1</sup>
- Submit all program declaration form(s), transcripts, and other related declaration materials by the deadline specified on the School of Education's Undergraduate Admissions (<http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/>) page.

[www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/](http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/academics/undergraduate-students/academic-program-admission/)) page.

<sup>1</sup> Last 60 Credits Rule - Two grade point averages may be calculated to determine a candidate's eligibility to declare. A GPA may be calculated using (1) UW-Madison and all other all transferable college level coursework attempted and (2) the last 60 credits attempted. The higher GPA of these two calculations will be used for determining eligibility. Once declared, students must earn a semester GPA of 2.75 each semester after declaration. More information on this rule is available here (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#policiesandregulationtext>).

#### TRANSFER STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH A PREVIOUS DEGREE

Transfer students and students who already hold a Bachelor's degree must be admitted to UW-Madison to enroll in a School of Education program. Admission to the campus has its own application, admission process, and application deadlines; see Office of Admissions and Recruitment (<http://www.admissions.wisc.edu>) for campus application information.

Students wishing to enter directly into Special Education should complete both the on-campus declaration and the UW-Madison application. All eligibility requirements must be met. Transfers who do not meet the declaration eligibility criteria will be admitted to UW-Madison with the Pre-Special Education designation.

An applicant with a previous undergraduate degree will be admitted to Special Education as a second degree candidate or as a School of Education "Special Student," depending on their academic background.

Second degree candidates in the School of Education are changing their academic direction and wish to complete a degree that is unrelated to their first. A large number of credits are usually required to complete the new degree requirements and a second degree is awarded upon its completion; more information is available here (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/education/#policiesandregulationtext>). Most applicants to Special Education will be second degree candidates.

In rare cases a student may be admitted as an Education Special Student. Admission with this designation indicates that they have an interest in pursuing teacher certification in Special Education and have already studied this subject area extensively during their initial degree. A student enrolls as an Education Special Student to complete the requirements that were not taken during the first degree; these are assessed on a case by case basis. Another degree is not awarded for this "certification only" coursework.

All off-campus students are strongly encouraged to meet with an advisor in the School of Education Student Services office in advance of their declaration. Consultations are available in person, virtually, or via telephone; email [studentservices@education.wisc.edu](mailto:studentservices@education.wisc.edu) or call 608-262-1651 to schedule an appointment.

#### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Pursuant to State of Wisconsin law PI 34.018(2), the School of Education is required to administer a background check on all students entering teacher education programs. This check is intended to determine if the applicant has engaged in any behavior that endangers the health, welfare, safety, or education of PK-12 pupils. Local school districts frequently conduct background checks on teacher education students prior to the start of their in-classroom field work, and the Department of Public

Instruction (DPI) will also conduct a background check on each applicant for a Wisconsin educator license.

Students should be aware that background checks may be initiated by other agencies or organizations when they are seeking employment or a professional license. School administrators have the authority to determine the appropriateness of a student placement and may choose not to permit a placement based on a student's background check results.

An individual who has been deemed ineligible to participate in field or clinical experiences based on the results of their background check may not be able to complete the requirements for their degree or certification. Students with questions about these processes should contact the Teacher Education Center, [tec@education.wisc.edu](mailto:tec@education.wisc.edu).