SPECIAL EDUCATION, M.A.

Special education graduate programs are designed to help establish, maintain and improve educational services to exceptional children by providing exemplary personnel resources. Courses of study leading to the master of arts (MA) degree and Class A professional educator certification in the education of exceptional children are offered.

Traditional Class A programs are available in
- collaborative education
- early childhood special education
- gifted and talented
- severe disabilities (Class A only)

Alternative Class A programs are available in
- collaborative education
- early childhood special education with dual certification in early childhood
- gifted and talented

Admission

In addition to meeting admission requirements for the Graduate School and the College of Education, students interested in the special education programs should also be aware of the admission requirements established by the Alabama Department of Education.

Traditional Class A Programs

For admission to traditional Class A programs of study in collaborative education, early childhood special education, or gifted and talented education, the appropriate prior certification must be held in a teaching field.

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

Alternative Class A (Master's-Level), Nontraditional, Initial Teacher Certification Program

The Special Education Program offers teacher education programs that do not require prior certification in a teaching field. These programs lead to Alabama Alternative Class A certification in special education (collaborative teacher, K–6; collaborative teacher, 6–12; early childhood special education, P-3; or gifted, P-12; or severe disabilities). To be eligible, candidates must hold appropriate prerequisite certification OR complete an Alternative Class A program and must complete all requirements for the MA degree in the chosen program as described in this catalog, including a comprehensive exam, state assessments (if applicable), and the Praxis subject assessment(s).

Effective September 1, 2017, passing scores on the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests of mathematics, reading and writing are required (or passing scores on all components of the previously accepted Basic Skills assessment before 9/1/17). Information about the Praxis Core Tests is available online at https://www.ets.org/praxis/al/al_teacher_ed or in the Office of Student Services & Certification (104 Carmichael Hall).

Certification

The Alabama State Board of Education grants Class A professional educator certification in special education (collaborative, K-6; collaborative, 6–12; early childhood special education, P-3; gifted, P-12; or severe disabilities). To be eligible, candidates must hold appropriate prerequisite certification OR complete an Alternative Class A program and must complete all requirements for the MA degree in the chosen program as described in this catalog, including a comprehensive exam, state assessments (if applicable), and the Praxis subject assessment(s).

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.

For admission to the Alternative Class A (non-traditional) program in collaborative education, early childhood special education, or gifted and talented education, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- An appropriate bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution with a minimum overall GPA of 2.75 OR a master's degree with a GPA of at least 3.0 is required.
- A transcript evaluation is required. Applicants should contact the Office of Student Services & Certification for a transcript evaluation to determine prerequisite courses.
- Applicants must meet current basic skills requirements of the Alabama Educator Certification Assessment Program (AECAP).