

## Why study **SPECIAL EDUCATION & INCLUSIVE LEARNING**

Aspiring teachers with an interest in special education acquire the knowledge and experience to differentiate instruction and manage classrooms of students who have a broad range of abilities and needs. Part of WCU's national award-winning School of Teaching and Learning, the SEIL program prepares future teachers to work in a special education area of their choosing. SEIL majors are invited to focus on a broad range of exceptionalities, including children with mild-to-moderate disabilities, severe disabilities, gifted and creative children, or adolescents with disabilities and their families, as they transition to post-secondary education. WCU values inclusion and hosts the University Participant Program, the first nationally-accredited program of its kind, an on-campus living and learning experience for college-aged people with intellectual disabilities.

Candidates complete an array of courses, field experiences and service learning, which prepare them to help students with and without disabilities learn together. From child development to educational philosophy, content methods to classroom management, language acquisition to English as a second language, candidates are well prepared to teach students with diverse learning needs.

## What is the **DEGREE OPTION?**

### **Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S. Ed.) in Special Education & Inclusive Learning**

*NOTE: There is also an option to minor in Special Education. WCU also offers a Master of Arts in Education (M.A. Ed.) and a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree.*



## What is the **TEACHER EDUCATION ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Admission into the Teacher Education program requires that students meet certain qualifications and submit an application. Students should apply at the end of the semester the student is enrolled in EDCI 201: Teacher Leadership in a Diverse Society. Students must earn at least a C in EDCI 201 and ENG 101; maintain at least a 2.75 GPA; achieve minimum required scores on SAT, ACT, or Praxis examinations; and submit their application. Please see full [admission requirements](#) for the Teacher Education program. *NOTE: Students must also pass licensure exams before becoming a licensed teacher in the state of NC.*

## What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on which concentration they choose, graduates of the Special Education & Inclusive Learning are

qualified to teach special education in a variety of areas. All concentrations are eligible to be recommended for licensure in Special Education: General Curriculum (K-12). Additionally, those with a concentration in Elementary Education are eligible for additional licensure in Elementary Education (K-6). The concentration in Adapted Curriculum is designed to lead to additional licensure in Special Education: Adapted Curriculum (K-12). Completion of the Gifted & Creative concentration can lead to an additional license in Academically & Intellectually Gifted (K-12).

## Who employs **SPECIAL EDUCATION & INCLUSIVE LEARNING** graduates?

Our graduates work in K-12 educational institutions including private, public, and charter school settings. Graduates may also work in residential facilities, hospitals, non-profit agencies, and youth service centers.

# MAJOR MAP

**How to use this map:** Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

## 1st YEAR

## 2nd YEAR

### EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Coursework your first year will focus largely on liberal studies requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Students in their second year should enroll in EDCI 201: Teacher Leadership in a Diverse Society before applying to the major. Other courses include introductory courses to Special Education & Inclusive Learning as well as additional liberal studies requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

### GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

Consider joining clubs or organizations related to your major such as WheeTeach or the Student Council for Exceptional Children.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

Start your field experience hours through EDCI 201.

If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete.

### BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Spark Award](#), a program aimed to encourage and recognize students who are connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Keep track of your volunteer hours for the Special Education & Inclusive Learning service learning requirement.

Consider the living-learning community for Education majors.

Consider volunteering with the [UP Program](#) on campus.

If you want to [study abroad](#), this is a good year to have that experience. The Study Abroad Office has excellent suggestions on places to go to study your major specifically.

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years; label your spreadsheet with each school's admission requirements and application materials so that you are aware of the expectations.

## 3rd YEAR

Courses in your third year will focus heavily on upper-level Special Education and concentration area courses. Students will complete required field experience hours through many of their required courses. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Continue your classroom field experience hours. Students must complete at least 24 hours throughout their courses. Please check with an advisor for more information.

Consider networking with professionals in your field. [The Council for Exceptional Children](#), for example, has many networking and professional development opportunities.

Continue your involvement with the UP Program; volunteer or become a Paid Support.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#).

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter (Make an appointment through MyWCU)

Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

## 4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will focus on upper-level Special Education and concentration area courses. Students will complete Internship I and II their last year for an intensive hands-on student teaching experience. Check out the [8-semester plan](#), make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Finish your required field experiences.

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs or graduate school admissions. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty, Suite 201 advisor, or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association of Special Education Teachers.

Network with employers and non-profits at the [Catamount Career and Networking Days](#).

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and [apply for jobs](#) between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by using the [CCPD](#).

Apply for and pass the [N.C. licensure examination](#) to become a licensed teacher in the state of North Carolina.

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

# DID YOU KNOW?

# MORE INFORMATION

## Required **FIELD & INTERNSHIP** Experience

Special Education & Inclusive Learning majors are required to complete 50 hours of service learning as part of the program. Service learning nurtures development of one's altruism, develops a respect for the dignity of others, and provides students with important experiences with community agencies and supports. Service appropriate for this requirement should involve working directly with individuals in a helping function.

### **Internship Information:**

Our students participate in a year-long internship during their senior year. Our two-stage internship gradually familiarizes you with real-world classrooms under the mentorship of dedicated, experienced public school teachers and a university supervisor.

Special Education & Inclusive Learning interns complete their internships in their chosen focus area, working with students who have exceptionalities as well as students in general education settings. Interns will spend time in the range of settings through which their teachers work and support their students.

While participating in Internship I, interns spend 15 hours a week in their K-6 public school classrooms while taking courses at WCU. During Internship II, interns work in the same public school classrooms full time, Mondays through Fridays. Interns are evaluated on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards using the Certificate of Teaching Capacity.

## **SKILLS LEARNED** in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- information handling and organization

- curiosity and creativity
- social awareness
- verbal and written communication
- flexibility
- critical thinking skills
- problem solving
- teamwork
- leadership

## **KNOWLEDGE** Base

This program will prepare students to:

- speak and write effectively.
- be flexible with plans and schedules, and keep a plan moving along.
- identify needed actions for presented problems, find and use appropriate information to address the action or problem, identify alternative solutions, and make decisions.
- work effectively in groups.
- present a variety of lessons in an enthusiastic way

## **QUESTIONS?**

For questions, please call Suite 201, the CEAP student success center, at 828-227-3317 or visit [sped.wcu.edu](http://sped.wcu.edu).

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or [careerservices@wcu.edu](mailto:careerservices@wcu.edu).