



**Special Education Graduate Programs
Student Handbook**

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Program Philosophy

Graduate programs in Special Education at the University of Maine are designed to prepare educators to support P-12 students with disabilities to attain high levels of achievement and community participation.

Program experiences are developed to prepare professionals who:

- Meet national standards of excellence
- Appropriately apply evidence-based practices
- Design data-driven interventions
- Advocate for students and families through collaboration
- Commit to inclusion of students with disabilities in all aspects of school and society

Important Information

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Graduate Programs In Special Education

Master of Education in Special Education (M.Ed.)

Education Specialist (Ed.S.)

4 Concentrations Within the Program

Low Incidence Disabilities

High Incidence Disabilities

Dual High and Low Incidence Disabilities

Early Intervention - Early Childhood Special Education

3 Graduate Certificates

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Positive Intervention and Support: Response to Intervention (RTI) for Behavior

High Leverage Practices to Promote Inclusion

Graduate Programs in Special Education

Program Overview

A master's degree (M.Ed.) in special education from the University of Maine provides graduates with an understanding of how to apply current evidence-based practices in PreK-12 classrooms for children with special needs. Understanding a child's needs is essential to ensure that he or she receives the proper attention, assistance and intervention to succeed in school. Our graduates apply effective practices to address the needs of students in inclusive, general-education learning environments as well as in special education settings. We also offer a Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree that goes beyond the master's level and can serve as a good introduction to graduate research in the field of special education.

Careers in special education

Most states, including Maine, report shortages of qualified special education teachers. Program graduates are likely to find numerous employment opportunities in schools and early intervention programs. A graduate degree in special education can also lead to opportunities for career advancement, including positions as lead teachers, coaches and special education directors.

Program delivery

All of the M.Ed. degrees in special education at the University of Maine require at least 36 credit hours. Students can choose one of four concentrations or do an individually designed program in consultation with a faculty advisor. Those seeking an Ed.S. will complete an individually designed program of study. The master's concentrations are:

- Early Intervention - Early Childhood Special Education: Leads to state certification as a Teacher of Children with Disabilities (birth to age five). This program is designed to prepare students in the fundamentals of professional practice in early intervention for inclusive environments, provide students with advanced content in a variety of research areas (e.g., early childhood, early childhood special education, family relationships, collaborative consultation), and support students in practicum experiences with high needs children birth to age five and their families. To ensure program success, potential students should be currently working or volunteering with young children, birth to age five, and their families.
- High incidence: Leads to state certification as Teacher of Students with Disabilities (K-8 or 7-12). The program prepares master's level special educators to serve students in the areas of reading, math, writing and challenging behavior. All courses require fieldwork, so students must be working or volunteering in K-12 schools.
- Low incidence: Leads to state certification as an Educational Specialist for Students with Severe Disabilities. This program prepares master's level special educators to serve students with autism spectrum disorder, significant intellectual disabilities, and students

with multiple disabilities. All courses require fieldwork, so students must be working or volunteering in K-12 schools.

Professional portfolio and teacher certification

All students must complete a professional portfolio that demonstrates their competencies and achievements in the program. Elements of the portfolio are completed in each of the core courses. Teacher certification is granted by the Maine Department of Education, not by the University of Maine. Students who successfully complete all the requirements of our NCATE-approved, professional preparation programs — including documentation of passing scores on Praxis II in Special Education — will be eligible for certification. Specific information regarding certification is available from the Maine Department of Education, Certification Services, State House Station 23, Augusta, Maine 04333. Praxis II Tests required are #5545 for Low Incidence Disabilities with a passing score of 158, #5691 for Preschool/Early Childhood with a passing score of 159, or #5354 for High Incidence Disabilities with a passing score of 151. (www.ets.org/praxis/me)

To apply

In addition to the University of Maine Graduate School application, all applicants must submit passing scores on the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators test, as well as the MAT or GRE. However, the MAT/GRE requirement is waived for students whose undergraduate GPA is 3.0 or better. The special education programs have a rolling application deadline, but it is recommended that you complete your application by June for a fall start date and by October for a spring start date.

Program of Study

Within six weeks of the beginning of the first semester, you should contact your advisor concerning the development of a Program of Study (see POS forms for each concentration on the following pages). The Program of Study form should be filed with the Graduate Records Administrative Assistant in the College of Education and Human Development for transmittal to the Graduate School by the end of the first semester.

Courses for the M.Ed. in Special Education are defined on the program of study form with the exception of electives. In planning the program of study, the faculty strongly urge consideration of the student's professional background and goals, prior academic work, and areas calling for professional growth.

Please see [our website](#) for the most up to date Program of Study for each concentration and certificate program.

Time until Degree

All coursework for the Master's Degree or Educational Specialist must be completed within six years.

Residence Requirement

At least 50% of the course credits applied toward the Master's Degree or Educational Specialist must be taken through the University of Maine. Course credit taken in an approved University of Maine graduate outreach program and/or from the University of Maine via distance education technology may be used to satisfy this requirement.

Courses Taken at Other Institutions

A student wishing to take a course offered by another campus of the University of Maine System or by another college or university must obtain advance approval of the course from her/his advisor.

Up to six credits of graduate coursework taken from another institution may be transferred in upon admission on recommendation of the advisor. A total of 12 University of Maine graduate credit hours, taken within the prior 6 years, may be transferred in upon admission with permission of the advisor.

Combined transfer courses should total no more than 12 credit hours; however, students may petition for an Exception to Regulation if there are extenuating circumstances.

Continuous Enrollment throughout Your Program

Continuous enrollment means every graduate student admitted for full-time study is required to register each fall and spring semester for at least 6 credit hours except as noted in the General Policies and Regulations of the Graduate School. Full-time students must register each semester from the time of the first enrollment in the Graduate School until the completion of all requirements for the graduate degree, including filing the thesis or dissertation and passing the final oral examination.

If you are unable to maintain continuous enrollment, you may remain in good standing and return without reapplication by filling out, with your advisor, the Request for On-Leave Status form.

Note: A graduate student who has been admitted on a part-time basis is required to enroll and register at least once every 12 months from the time of first registration in the Graduate School until the completion of all requirements for the graduate degree. All students must also be registered in the semester in which they graduate.

Program Expectations for Students

Respectful Learning Environment

A central tenet of the Special Education Program is a commitment to respect and inclusion regardless of race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, and socio-economic status. This commitment comes through every aspect of our program and in each of the courses we offer. Therefore we expect that students honor and respect one another inside and outside of the classroom. We expect students and faculty alike to conform to the APA Guidelines for reducing bias in language. We highly encourage you to ask questions if you do not understand a particular concept or how to address a particular population. Respect of others is inclusive of others' ideas and opinions, even if we do not necessarily always agree with them. We ask that you keep an open mind in all situations and remember that an important part of the learning process is the growth that occurs in how we see what we are studying, each other, and ourselves.

Class Attendance

Special education courses are offered online and each instructor maintains an individual class attendance policy. Please refer to the syllabus for each course. Any announcements regarding class changes (e.g., snow cancellations) will typically be e-mailed to students. Students are also advised to check with 581-SNOW if there is a question about the University of Maine being open in inclement weather.

Class Participation

We expect students to fully participate in each course. Participation means being present and prompt, but it also means being prepared to discuss the topic or concepts covered at each class. Such preparation includes completion of required readings and assignments, and any online assignments and listening as discussion proceeds. Thinking through any comments you desire to make in the class is important, asking yourself if the comment is on topic or related to the topic at hand, and to the preceding thread of discussion. Finally, an important part of communication is listening as well as speaking. Dominating the discussion does not allow others to voice their opinions and does not give you the opportunity to learn from your peers.

Adherence to Graduate School Policies and Procedures

The most up-to-date versions of Graduate School policies and procedures and forms may be downloaded from the **Graduate School's webpage:** <https://umaine.edu/graduate/>.

It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures outlined on the UMaine Graduate School website under the Current Students tab. Students are encouraged to seek clarification regarding Graduate School policies and procedures from his or her adviser.

Policy on Incomplete Grades

- *I, for “Incomplete.”* This grade means that, in consultation with the student, the instructor has postponed the assignment of a final grade to allow the student to complete specific work not turned in before the end of the semester. Instructors assign the “I” grade only when they are persuaded that events beyond the student’s control prevented the completion of assigned work on time and when the student has successfully participated in more than 50% of the class, with a grade of B or above. A contingency contract will be created by the instructor outlining the work to be completed and the due dates. The student, advisor and/or program coordinator, and instructor will sign this contract. If the incomplete work is not submitted within the time allotted by the faculty member, the incomplete work will earn a grade of “0” and the overall grade for the course will be recorded as the final grade. A student may not carry a combination of more than three “I” or “L” grades in all enrolled degree programs without the permission of the graduate program coordinator and the Graduate School.
- A contingency contract will be created with the student. The contract will outline the work to be completed and the due date(s) and will be signed by the student and instructor. The contract will be shared with the student’s advisor.

Program Expectations for Faculty

CEC Advanced Preparation Advanced Standards

All coursework is aligned to the [Advanced Teacher Preparation Standards](#) for special education roles. For a copy of these standards, [click here](#).

Program Expectations for Faculty

In our efforts to support your education, we commit to the following:

- We commit to responding to you in a timely manner.
- We will provide meaningful and respectful feedback that is intended to help you develop your scholarly thinking and expression. We will remain up to date in our specialty areas within the field, and we will be able to guide you to resources (including texts and people) within the larger field. As we cannot know everything, we will welcome your bringing new resources to our attention that are particularly helpful to you so that we may share them with other students.
- We will respect the knowledge and experience that students bring to enrich the classroom setting.
- We will work to remain current with technologies for teaching and learning to accommodate different learning needs and mechanisms of access and appreciate student suggestions and support in this exploration.

- We will attempt to model what we teach: collaboration, ethics, respect for others, rigorous thinking, commitment to a linkage between theory and practice, and responsible communication.
- We will work to achieve our commitment to inclusive classrooms.

Adult Learning Principles

Student Engagement

Because we are an online program and do not get to see our students in a physical classroom, it is important to create an online environment that promotes student engagement. While student engagement may look slightly different class to class, it is still an integral part of the program and each course.

Student engagement refers to “the student’s psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote” (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 12). Faculty must purposefully seek to integrate instructional elements into the online environment to promote students’ learning, satisfaction and value of the course, and desire to complete the course.

Student engagement is possible in online environments just as it is in traditional face-to-face courses. Engagement can be promoted through a variety of strategies like having collaborative group work, opportunities for students to lead discussions, opportunities for students to share information with their classmates, providing feedback in a timely manner with clear guidelines, Zoom meetings, and videos for a variety of purposes for both the faculty member (e.g., introducing the week, demonstrating a concept) and student (e.g., submitting assignments by creating a video, video group meetings over Zoom).

A variety of strategies exist for online learning, here are some good resources:

- [7 tips for increasing student engagement in online courses](#) from Desire2Learn (company that hosts BrightSpace)
- [Effective online teaching](#) from Insidehighered.com
- [3 strategies to engage students in online learning](#) from TechSmith (this article gives ideas about specific ways to use videos)
- [How to be a better online teacher](#) from the Chronicle of Higher Education (not specific to engagement, includes 10 practices to consider and common misperceptions of online learning)

Applied Assignments

An important aspect of the special education online graduate program is practical, applied coursework. For instance, instead of students taking a quiz over how to collect data as the only measure of student’s understanding of the content, they might actually practice this by taking behavioral data on a child with a disability. Such assignments also support adult learning principles and student engagement by allowing a student to practice a skill and see how it is applicable to their current or future employment.

Required and Recommended CITL Workshops

CITL (Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning) offers a variety of workshops each semester ranging from “how to” use something to various teaching strategies. [Click here for a list of all events and programs at CITL](#); select “Calender of all Teaching & Learning Events” to see specific trainings.

Attend (virtually) the following CITL workshops:

- Using Zoom in your classroom
- An introduction to Kaltura and using video in teaching
- Workshops on BrightSpace (specific trainings TBA)

Recommended:

- CITL typically offers workshops specific to different function in each of the above tools, such as using the gradebook.

Syllabus Information

A syllabus for the SED courses can be found by [clicking this link](#).

Special Education Policy on Incompletes in Graduate Classes

Please ensure that the below statement is included in your syllabi. It is in the syllabus link posted above.

I, for “Incomplete:” This grade means that, in consultation with the student, the instructor has postponed the assignment of a final grade to allow the student to complete specific work not turned in before the end of the semester. Instructors assign the “I” grade only when they are persuaded that events beyond the student’s control prevented the completion of assigned work on time and when the student has successfully participated in more than 50% of the class, with a grade of B or above. A contingency contract will be created by the instructor outlining the work to be completed and the due dates. The student, advisor and/or program coordinator, and instructor will sign this contract. If the incomplete work is not submitted within the time allotted by the faculty member, the incomplete work will earn a grade of “0” and the overall grade for the course will be recorded as the final grade. A student may not carry a combination of more than three “I” or “L” grades in all enrolled degree programs without the permission of the graduate program coordinator and the Graduate School.

General Information

- Do not change a course without program review
- Do not hesitate to contact us if questions about a course

- Do not hesitate to contact us if questions or concerns about a student

If a student requires an incomplete in your class, first contact the program chair. You will then create a contingency contract with the student. The contract will outline the work to be completed and the due date(s) and will be signed by the student and instructor. The contract will be shared with the student's advisor.

Ethical Standards for Special Educators

We expect all of our students to adhere to the Council of Exceptional Students Standards professional standards.

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Professional special educators are guided by the CEC professional ethical principles, practice standards, and professional policies in ways that respect the diverse characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families. They are committed to upholding and advancing the following principles:

1. Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with exceptionalities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background.
2. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
3. Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities.
4. Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptionalities.
5. Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with exceptionalities in educational decision making.
6. Using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice.
7. Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities.
8. Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities.
9. Practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in the laws, regulations, and policies.
10. Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities.
11. Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in professional organizations.
12. Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills.

CEC, 2015.

Internship Guidelines and Requirements

Purpose

The internship in Special Education Teaching is a supervised student teaching experience in special education for M.Ed. candidates who are seeking certification as a special education teacher (282 or 286). Enrollment in the internship is restricted to M.Ed. candidates in special education, **with a concentration in high incidence or low incidence disabilities.**

The internship is designed to support preservice teachers in the development and documentation of knowledge, dispositions, and skills identified in the Maine Common Core (comprised of the InTASC Standards & the ISTE Standards) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards for beginning special educators (see Appendix). As a complement to other courses taken as part of the graduate degree, the internship focuses on skills and dispositions more than the knowledge base. The internship is designed to meet the Maine state student teaching requirement for certification in Special Education (282 or 286). As part of the internship, performance on professional standards will be evaluated by school-based personnel and the university supervisor.

Procedures

Placements

Internships require placement in a school setting under the joint supervision of university-based personnel (either a faculty member or other designated university supervisor) and a school-based supervisor (i.e., cooperating teacher). Cooperating teachers must be fully certified as special education teachers and they must have a graduate degree in special education or a closely related field. Exceptions to the latter policy may be made for individuals who do not have a master's degree in special education but who have participated in a combination of professional development and some graduate study and who have been identified as exemplary practitioners.

Placements are made by special education faculty in collaboration with the College's field placements office. Requests for placement in a particular school or district will be considered if the setting provides sufficient opportunities for students to meet internship requirements, and the supervision plan meets requirements described above.

In general, internships are unpaid experiences; that is, students are not current employees of the school in which they are placed. At the request of a school, however, individuals working in a

school may request an on-the-job-internship (see special requirements for on-the-job internships below).

Requirements

Internships may be completed full-time in a single semester (6 credits) or half-time over two semesters (3 credits per semester). An internship that meets the state's student teaching requirement must provide a minimum of 450 hours of direct student contact. A half-time internship requires a time commitment of approximately 225 contact hours (e.g., 15 hours per week for 15 weeks or 20 hours a week for 11 weeks). A six-credit internship (full-time) requires 450 contact hours (30 hours a week for 15 weeks). The benefit of completing over two semesters is that it may be possible to work in two different settings.

1. As part of the internship, each student will develop a portfolio to document his/her competencies with respect to Maine Core and CEC standards. If the internship will be completed over two semesters, the portfolio will usually be completed in the second semester, but planning can begin in the fall. Portfolio requirements are described in a separate document.
2. During the first three weeks of the semester, interns should complete a self-evaluation on proficiencies identified in the CEC standards for beginning special educators, cross-referenced to Maine Core standards.
3. By the end of the third week in the internship setting, interns should develop a plan that details the school or clinic-based activities and experiences that will be completed during the semester. If the internship will be completed over two semesters, a separate plan should be developed for each semester. Activities and experiences should be selected to develop proficiencies most in need of development based on self-evaluation and conference with the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. In structuring the plan, activities and experiences should be organized by proficiency with cross-references to CEC and Maine Core standards. Once the plan is made, modifications may be made, but an amended plan should be submitted if there are significant changes. The plan should be signed both by the cooperating teacher and by a school administrator. The completed plan should then be submitted to the university supervisor for final review and signature.
4. Interns should maintain a personal journal, detailing daily activities, experiences, and responsibilities in the practicum setting, and reflecting on progress in developing teaching proficiencies. The journal should be updated weekly and sent to the university supervisor via email, numbering entries by week and individual dates for each entry within the week. Entries should also note the proficiencies that were addressed.
5. Formal lesson plans should be completed for every lesson that interns are asked to plan. Plans should be attached to weekly journal entries. If during the beginning weeks of an

internship interns are not asked to plan lessons, they should create a written plan for lessons that the mentor/cooperating teacher planned and that the intern observed, implemented, or assisted in implementation. Plans should include an evaluative reflection or commentary at the end and should make clear your role in developing and/or implementing the lesson. Interns should submit at least one written lesson plan per day of attendance at the internship. Selected samples of lesson plans will become part of the final portfolio, demonstrating the intern's skill in using a variety of instructional and behavioral strategies.

6. Interns may work at times in a supporting rather than direct instructional role (e.g., monitoring student work on a variety of tasks assigned by other teachers on an as needed basis) or observing the activities of other teachers/specialists. This may be the case particularly during the first few weeks of the internship. Activities that cannot be documented via a lesson plan should still be clearly documented in the journal.
7. Interns should maintain a regular schedule of attendance at the school site. If due to unforeseen circumstances, an intern must be absent on a particular day, he/she should notify the cooperating teacher as promptly as possible. If the intern has responsibility for planning and delivering instruction, he/she should leave plans that could be followed by the cooperating teacher or by an instructional aide. Interns should also inform the university supervisor as soon as possible regarding an absence (via email).
8. Interns will be observed periodically (approximately every 2-3 weeks) once a schedule of activities and experiences has been developed. Interns will need to submit formal lesson plans for all lessons that the university supervisor will observe at the beginning of the observation period.
9. Interns are expected to demonstrate exemplary professional conduct and dispositions at all times during the internship, including adherence to the CEC code of ethics for special educators (attached). If there is any evidence of ethical violations or inappropriate conduct or dispositions, at any time during the internship, the internship may be terminated and the course grade will be F. Interns whose placements have been terminated due to poor conduct or ethical violations will NOT be placed in any additional internship experiences under university supervision.
10. Regular meetings with the university supervisor will be scheduled periodically on campus or through distance education technology, depending on the number of interns completing in a given semester, and their location. School-based cooperating teachers are invited, although not required, to attend. The purpose of these meetings is to share and reflect on experiences, and to work on portfolio development.

Special Requirements for On-the-Job internships

On the job special education internships are those in which a graduate student who has not yet met the state student teaching requirement for certification completes the Internship in Special Education Teaching, while employed full-time in a school setting.

On the job internships are sometimes requested by candidates who are employed as general education teachers or by educational technicians who are working full-time with students with disabilities.

On-the-job internships must be approved in writing both by university faculty and by school personnel who work in a supervisory role to the graduate student, including the school principal and the Special Education director. On the job internships are granted only at the request of a school district. Candidates interested in an on the job placement will need to submit a letter signed by the school principal and special education director requesting approval and indicating how requirements specified below will be met.

A fully qualified special educator must agree in advance to serve as a mentor for the intern. This individual must hold professional certification in Special Education, and have a graduate degree in Special Education or a closely related field.

In addition, a school-based supervisor (either the fully qualified special educator, principal, or Special Education director) must agree to complete an evaluation of the intern at the end of the internship.

Prior to beginning the internship, the graduate student must document that he/she will have access to a caseload of five or more students with disabilities and that he/she will be able to fulfill the student contact hour requirement of 450 hours.

Contact hours must be time engaged in fulfilling the responsibilities of a teacher of students with disabilities, particularly with respect to instruction, assessment, and/or behavior management of students with disabilities.

The internship may be completed during a single semester, over two semesters, or over an entire year (summer included).

An educational technician who works exclusively on a one-to-one basis with students with disabilities will need to obtain permission from his/her supervisor to work with other students with disabilities in varying group sizes to meet internship requirements.

In addition, he/she must also have opportunities to observe the mentor teacher and be observed by the mentor teacher, as well as to complete observations of related services professionals.

Educational Technicians will also need access to opportunities to plan instruction, complete instructionally relevant assessments, and select and use assistive technology. They will also need permission from district supervisors to attend IEP team meetings for students on their caseloads (with parental permission), and participate in the development of IEPs/IFSPs/ITPs for selected new referrals.

It is the responsibility of the graduate student intern in collaboration with school personnel to ensure, in advance, that these requirements can be met.

On-the-Job interns will need to meet all other requirements listed above for special education teaching internships.

Evaluation

Performance during the internship will be based on a combination of three elements: formal evaluations by the cooperating teacher, evaluations by the university supervisor based on observations and journal entries, and work submitted within the portfolio. Further information about evaluation procedures will be included on the syllabus for the internship course.

Expectations of Cooperating Teachers

During the first 2-3 weeks of the internship, interns typically engage in activities such as observing and job shadowing the cooperating teacher to become familiar with routines and procedures. They may also help out the cooperating teacher as needed in supporting instruction. During this time, the cooperating teacher intern should assist the intern in evaluating CEC standards, cross-referenced with Maine Core standards.

By the end of the third week, the cooperating teacher will assist interns in developing a plan that details the school or clinic-based activities and experiences that will be completed during the semester. The university supervisor will rely heavily on the judgment of the cooperating teacher to identify experiences that would be most valuable and feasible in a particular setting. In structuring the plan, the student should organize activities and experiences by proficiency with cross-references to CEC and Maine Core standards. Once the plan is made, modifications may be made, but the student should submit an amended plan if there are significant changes. The plan should be signed both by the cooperating teacher and by a school administrator to ensure that the plan is feasible and agreeable to all. The university supervisor will also review the plan and sign to indicate approval.

Cooperating teachers should ask students to complete formal lesson plans for every lesson that they are asked to plan. Interns may use any format recommended by the cooperating teacher. During the beginning weeks of an internship students may not be asked to plan lessons so cooperating teachers should encourage them to create written plans for lessons that the cooperating teacher planned, and asked them to observe, implement, or assist in implementation. Plans should include an evaluative reflection or commentary at the end and should make clear the role the intern played in developing and/or implementing the lesson. Under the supervision of the cooperating teacher, interns should develop and receive feedback from the cooperating teacher on at least one written lesson plan per day of attendance at the internship.

Cooperating teachers may ask the student to work in a supporting rather than direct instructional role (e.g., monitoring student work on a variety of tasks assigned by other teachers on an as needed basis) or to observe the activities of other teachers/specialists. This may be the case particularly during the first few weeks of the internship. As the semester progresses, the intern should be asked to take on increasing responsibility for instruction.

The university supervisor will arrange to observe periodically (approximately every 2-3 weeks) once a schedule of activities and experiences has been developed. Observations will be scheduled at a time to ensure time to talk with the cooperating teacher about the student's progress either before or after the observation.

The university supervisor will check in periodically via email to get feedback from the cooperating teacher on how the student is progressing. Cooperating teachers may contact the university supervisor at any time with additional feedback or questions, especially if there are concerns about the intern.

At the end of the semester, cooperating teachers will complete an evaluation of the intern and submit to the university supervisor. The evaluation is organized by proficiency and ratings can be based on overall impressions from working with the intern throughout the semester.

Cooperating teachers are encouraged, although not required, to complete structured observations of the intern during the semester using whatever tools are used in their school to observe teachers. If no formal tools are available, cooperating teachers should nonetheless provide feedback to interns on their skills on a regular basis.

During the semester, the university supervisor will hold regular meetings with interns. The purpose is to reflect on the learning that is occurring during the internship and share ideas gleaned from the diverse settings in which interns are placed. Cooperating teachers will be notified of the schedule and invited, although, not required to attend.

Cooperating teachers who agree to serve as a mentor to an intern will receive an internship contract with a request for information needed to send the stipend.

Sample Forms

The following section includes samples of forms students might have occasion to use in the course of their graduate careers. The most up-to-date versions of these forms may be downloaded from the **Graduate School's webpage:** <https://umaine.edu/graduate/>

Registration link: <https://umaine.edu/graduate/resource/application/>

Graduate Certificate Application: <https://umaine.edu/graduate/resource/certificate-application/>

Exception to Regulation Form (ETR):

<https://umaine.edu/graduate/resource/exception-to-regulation/>

Request for On-Leave Status

<https://umaine.edu/graduate/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2016/09/Onleave.pdf>

You are encouraged to become familiar with the policies and procedures outlined on the UMaine Graduate School website under the Current Students tab.

Good Scholarly Writing

Academic writing considered of high quality advances existing knowledge and exhibits the following content and form characteristics:

Content

- Synthesizes what is already known (i.e., extant literature).
- Evaluates the current base of knowledge as to a) its relevancy to question under study; b) methods used to draw conclusions; c) gaps or unexplored areas; and, d) its significance in advancing theory/practice
- Achieves an appropriate balance of a) description, b) synthesis, and c) analysis or evaluation. Ordinarily, descriptive narratives of literature or another researcher's work should be kept brief and to the point unless there is justifiable reason to go into detail.
- Arguments and conclusions are supported with appropriately cited evidence from the literature. Cited evidence is important in linking the ideas of the writer to the existing base of knowledge. Such a linkage is critical in defining quality research and writing in a field.
- After reading the work, the reader should be clear on its contribution, and why the topic is an important one to study.
- Arguments made are compelling.
- How does this piece of work, or the topic of the work, influence larger contexts? For example, if the topic is an analysis of a particular phenomenon, how might this analysis make a contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon in similar contexts?

Form

- The writer's point of view, and the fact that she has one, should be evident to the reader. If the writer is absent a point of view then it should be made clear in the narrative why such is the case, the dilemma, conflicting evidence, etc.
- Lays out up front the purpose of the piece and how the writer intends to go about conveying it. The question is *What is the expository framework to be used by the writer?* Without such a framework, the piece risks rambling from one subtopic to another with no meaningful connection between them. This confuses readers and makes any argument less compelling.
- Uses headings to guide the reader. Headings can be used also as an expression of the writer's expository framework as set forth in the introduction.
- Adheres to APA style.
- Is edited before submission to catch grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Writing Resources

- APA Style: <http://www.apastyle.org>
- University of Wisconsin Writing Center:
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/index.html>

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- Critical Reading and Writing: <http://www.criticalreading.com/>
- UMaine Writing Center: <http://www.umaine.edu/wcenter/>

Frequently Asked Questions

What about graduate assistantships?

Many Special Education students serve as graduate assistants in various student affairs and administrative offices on the campus. Students may seek further information and apply directly to the office in which the assistantship resides. The Special Education faculty can provide a list of programs in which our students have previously served with contact information for the various offices.

What is the myUMaine Portal?

The UMaine Portal is used to access internal information and forms from departments such as the Office of Human Resources, Office of Student Financial Aid, and information related to university operations and services. The portal has a single sign-on feature — log in once and access MaineStreet, Gmail, BlackBoard and other apps. Logging into the portal requires the use of your MaineStreet account username and password.

What is Mainestreet?

MaineStreet allows you to access and manage your academic records and financial information, all in one easy-to-use site. MaineStreet is used to add and drop courses, view account balances, check course schedules, make payments, peruse student records and more.

What is Adobe?

Adobe Connect web conferencing software service offers immersive online meeting experiences for collaboration, virtual classrooms and large scale webinars.

What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a web-based course management system featuring tools for: posting announcements, faculty and student profiles, course syllabi, instructional materials, assignments, and external Web links; developing and delivering exams, quizzes and surveys, and managing grades; computer conferencing, e-mail, real-time chat, and transferring assignments. Blackboard can be used for online courses or for developing supplementary materials for courses taught in other more traditional formats.

What is Zoom?

Zoom unifies cloud video conferencing, simple online meetings, group messaging, and a software-defined conference room solution into one easy-to-use platform. Account set-up is free and located at: <https://zoom.us>

Additional Student Resources

Visit this website for additional student resources at UMaine, including the academic calendar, the IT help desk, and campus recreation. <https://umaine.edu/current/>

Which Praxis exam(s) do I need to take?

Maine requires teachers seeking certification to show proficiency via the Praxis tests. Praxis Core and Praxis II in Special Education are required. Due to changes in designated test numbers, please check www.ets.org/praxis/me and your state certification office to confirm which test(s) you will need. As of Spring 2017, Praxis II Tests required are #5545 for Low Incidence Disabilities with a passing score of 158, #5691 for Preschool/Early Childhood with a passing score of 159, or #5354 for High Incidence Disabilities with a passing score of 151.

Teaching Exceptional Children or Adapting Instruction for Students with Disabilities is a state requirement for initial certification and a program prerequisite. SED 302, SED 402, and SED 500 are equivalent courses.

Praxis exams are offered within a testing window, so students must complete Praxis Core within first semester. If a student does not pass Core, proof of having completed the exam and proof of the next registration date must be provided to the student's advisor. This will extend the successful completion of Praxis Core requirement to one year. If Praxis Core is not passed prior to Praxis II and capstone, then the student would not be recommended for state teaching certification.

Are there opportunities for students to get involved in local and national associations?

We highly encourage students to get involved in campus, local, and national professional associations. Involvement at the graduate level is a very important part of the preparation for the professional role as well as a great opportunity to network and meet new friends and colleagues. The [Graduate Student Government](#) (GSG) on campus is a great outlet for involvement.

Regionally, [MASAP](#) (Maine Association of Student Affairs Practitioners) is very active and both [NASPA](#) (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) and [ACPA](#) (College Student Educators International) and their local affiliates are also popular choices for involvement. [ASHE](#) (Association for the Study of Special Education), [AERA](#) (American Educational Research Association), and other national organizations are also popular opportunities for involvement.

Check with other professionals in your area to see about other organizations in which you should become involved. [CEC](#) (Council of Exceptional Children) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionailities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice. [ACRES](#) (American Council on Rural Special Education) is a non-profit organization comprised of special educators, general educators, related service providers, administrators, teacher trainers, researchers, and parents who are committed to the enhancement of services to children and adults with exceptionailities living in rural communities. ACRES was founded in 1981 by a group of individuals interested in the unique challenges of rural students and individuals needing special services. ACRES is the only national organization devoted entirely to special education issues that affect rural America. The membership of ACRES is geographically diverse, and is representative of all regions of the country. This fact is especially important since rural issues are not only different from urban issues, but also may vary among specific rural areas.

What other sources of financial aid are available?

You should check out the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)'s website for more information on financial aid including scholarships, work study, grants, loans, and other local sources of funding. Students can also view the [Graduate School's webpage](#) on financial aid and the COEHD page for the [Graduate Affairs Committee](#), which lists some additional funding sources for COEHD students.

Where can I find other information about the program and what is going on?

Please make it a habit to regularly to check the UMaine Graduate School website and to connect with your advisor for up-to-date information about the program, assistantship opportunities, professional development events, and more.