



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

College of Education

*Department of Communication Sciences and  
Special Education*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) About Graduate School**

1. *What are the minimum GPA and GRE scores necessary to be accepted to the Special Education program?*

A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 is required to apply. We also require minimum GRE results of 146 verbal and 146 quantitative.

Foreign applicants will also need to score a minimum of 20 points each on the Speaking and Writing sections of the TOEFL with an overall minimum score of 80. Test scores must be within 5 years from the date of application.

2. *Do I have to take the GRE, or can I submit MAT test scores?*

Applicants may choose to take the Miller Analogies Test in lieu of the GRE. We require a minimum score of 402 for the Miller Analogies Test. Some students find that the MAT is a more economical option, and prefer it because it is a shorter test than the GRE. Note that GRE scores are like SAT scores: take it once and you are done. If you think you will be furthering your education beyond our master's options, it is probably in your best interest to go ahead and take the GRE. PhD students are required to submit a GRE score.

3. *What are your areas of emphasis, and what are the differences between them?*

We have three areas of emphases: General Curriculum, Adapted Curriculum & Autism, and Birth Through Kindergarten/Preschool Special Education. We also offer a MS in Applied Behavioral Analysis, a rigorous 1-year (3 semester) program.

An emphasis in **General Curriculum** is for those interested in teaching students with mild disabilities who are primarily following the general curriculum. This area of study prepares teachers to work in collaboration, inclusion, or resource models. General Curriculum teachers have ample opportunities for employment upon graduation.

An emphasis in **Adapted Curriculum and Autism** is more specialized than General Curriculum. In our Adapted Curriculum program, you will learn to teach students with moderate to severe autism and developmental disabilities: students who will not follow general curriculum implemented in most classrooms.

An emphasis in **Birth Through Kindergarten/Preschool Special Education** will prepare you to work with children with and without disabilities. This program promotes developmentally appropriate inclusive and collaborative teaching practices. Training in this program prepares pre-service teachers to teach in inclusive early learning, preschool, prekindergarten, and kindergarten programs, along with early intervention (0-3) and preschool intervention (3-5) programs.

Our [Applied Behavioral Analysis](#) program provides students with didactic instruction and applied experiences so they are able to successfully accomplish the following: (a) assess the environmental causes of individuals' behavioral excesses and deficits, (b) develop interventions that are functionally related to clients' behavioral challenges, and (c) use single case design methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the behavioral interventions.

4. *How long will it take me to finish the master's program?*

How long it takes you to finish will depend on whether you are attending classes full-time or part-time. Most students finish within two years.

5. *Can I complete my degree online, or do I have to come to campus for class?*  
Although you may be able to take a few courses online, you will need to attend classes on campus to complete your coursework. There is currently no way to complete these programs via online courses only.
6. What is the difference between the MAT, MED, and MA degrees?  
The **MAT** in SPED is for students who have an undergraduate degree in other fields and do not hold a teaching certificate. The MAT will allow you to get initial certification to teach.  
  
The **MEd** in SPED is for students who have completed undergraduate training in a teacher education field and have a teaching certificate.  
  
The **MA** degree is generally pursued by those who want to pursue an EdS or PhD. This is the only one of our master's level degrees that requires a thesis. This program of study is focused on applied research and evidence-based instruction.
7. *Can I work and complete my Master's?*  
Yes, you can work and complete your masters. Our courses are offered at night from 5-7:45pm one night a week. It is common practice for students to work while completing our program.
8. *I have an undergraduate degree in something other than SPED and do not have teaching certification. May I apply to the UGA master's program?*  
Yes, you can. If you have an undergraduate degree in something other than the field and do not hold a teaching certificate, the MAT was designed for students like yourself.
9. What is a Pre-Service Certificate? Does it apply to me?  
If you are a MAT student, you will need to apply for the Pre-Service Certificate *after* acceptance to the program. The purpose of the Pre-Service Certificate is to provide statewide structure to organize procedures related to pre-service candidates once admitted to preparation programs. The Pre-Service Certificate is designed to: (1) assure safety of school children, (2) provide opportunities for pre-service candidates to practice/demonstrate knowledge and skills, (3) standardize criminal history background check process across the state, (4) assist pre-service candidates in understanding the GA code of Ethics for Educators and holding them accountable under Code, and (5) require attainment of the Pre-Service Certificate for anyone participating in field experiences and student teaching in Georgia schools. Directions for applying for the Certificate can be found on the [COE webpage](#).
10. I already have a master's and want to pursue a higher degree. What is the difference between an EdS and a PhD in Special Education?  
The [EdS program](#) is designed for candidates who already hold a master's degree and want to prepare for leadership roles by expanding studies beyond the master's level. This degree requires an applied research project in lieu of a dissertation.  
  
The PhD program is designed for more research-centric students. This program prepares academics for a variety of leadership roles at colleges, research settings, and human service agencies. A dissertation is required to complete this degree. Students will pursue a combination of coursework, research, college teaching, and service opportunities to earn your degree.
11. *How do I apply to the program?*  
To apply for admissions to one of our programs, you will need to apply to the [University of Georgia Graduate School](#). Requirements include an online application, submission of test scores, unofficial transcripts, and three letters of recommendation. The department may request additional materials from applicants. You will be able to attach the following documents to your graduate school application: curriculum cv or resume, statement of purpose, and official transcripts. Please [visit our website](#) if you need further instructions.

12. *How much will the program cost?*

The cost of your tuition will depend on how many hours you take. In-State tuition for 2017 is \$410 per credit hour; Out-of-state tuition is \$1061 per credit hour; Student Fees (Athens Campus) are \$1133 per semester. The Bursar's Office [keeps up-to-date rates](#) on their webpage if you would like further information.

13. *Do you have assistantships available?*

Yes, we do have some assistantships available. Their availability varies year to year depending on grants and budgetary restrictions. Assistantships are offered by our faculty to students based on academic/scholarly criteria, including grades, GRE scores, and demonstrated interest. Be sure to include your area of interest in your statement of purpose so that you will be matched up with an appropriate faculty member.

The University offers other financial aid opportunities at large. For more information regarding financial aid, contact the UGA Office of Student Financial Aid. <https://osfa.uga.edu/index.html>

14. *How many students enroll each year?*

We generally have 20-30 students enroll each academic year across degree programs.

15. *What can I do with this degree?*

Obviously the first thing you can do with a degree in Special Education is teach. However, if you decide that teaching is not for you, you can also work in many disability-related fields. Group homes, daycare centers, hospitals, and many other educational and clinical settings are looking for qualified professionals with experience in special education.

16. *What are the employment rates?*

We have a 100% employment rate for students seeking jobs within the school system. In fact, Special Education teachers are in high-demand in the state of Georgia. Frequently we provide a smaller number of graduates than the market demands.

17. *What makes the UGA Special Education programs special?*

The UGA Special Education program is special because of its rigorous coursework, and the investment of our faculty into each student. From the moment you are accepted, we provide students with a faculty advisor who will work one-on-one with them during their time in the program. This mentorship provides our students with an exemplary resource for feedback and guidance.

18. *What kind of practicum or internship requirements are associated with this program?*

Graduate students develop research-based knowledge and clinical skills in their discipline while spending a majority of course hours working with individuals with developmental disabilities in clinical, educational, and community settings. Practicum and internship requirements vary according to student interest and area of specialization.

19. *Do I have to find my own placements?*

No, you do not. Our Student Affairs office will find placements for you during your program of study.