PhD in Special Education

The Doctorate of Philosophy in Special Education is offered with emphasis options in Behavior Disorders, Early Childhood Special Education, and Learning Disabilities.

Degree Requirements

The PhD program requires 72 hours beyond the requirements of the master's degree. Candidates will develop a program to meet their learning and research goals in the chosen emphasis area.

- Students meeting entrance criteria will be conditionally admitted to the program, assigned an advisor, and expected to enroll in designated requisite coursework.
- After completion of 9 credit hours, including 3 credits of quantitative methods plus 6 credits of special education doctoral core coursework, students must pass a qualifying examination to be fully admitted into the department.
- Upon successful completion of the qualifying examination, students form a program committee and develop a program plan. The committee shall consist of four or more graduate faculty members (at least three from within the department and at least one from outside the department). The program plan will delineate coursework and competency activities to meet department requirements.
- Once the majority of course-work and competencies are completed (80-90%), students will be required to pass a comprehensive examination to advance to candidacy.
- Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, students will form a dissertation committee and develop a research proposal. The dissertation committee may be the same as the program committee or may change based on the need to include faculty members with specific areas of expertise. Once all committee members approve the proposal, students can begin implementation of the dissertation study.
- Upon completion of the study, students must submit a written draft to the dissertation committee and orally defend their work.
- Students will graduate only after all dissertation committee members approve the written dissertation and oral defense.
- Students must also comply with all College of Education and Graduate School guidelines.

Qualifying Exam

Doctoral students must successfully pass a qualifying exam. This is given to assess the student's current knowledge of the field, their ability to synthesize professional literature, engage in professional writing practices, and orally present/discuss key issues within the field. This process is conducted by three faculty members and may be used to help define the student's plan of study.

Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation

Admission Criteria

Fall deadline: January 15
Spring deadline: August 15

Faculty selection committees review applications for admission into the various graduate programs. Factors considered in the graduate student review process include previous academic course work and performance, GRE scores, letters of recommendation from professors or professional supervisors and relevant professional work experiences. The letter of intent is evaluated for advising purposes and is an indication of the applicant's motivation, professionalism and writing competencies. Interviews with faculty are often arranged as part of the admissions review process.

Required Application Materials

- Unofficial transcripts of all prior coursework
- Minimum GPA: 3.0/4.0
- Statement of Purpose
- Letters of recommendation (minimum 3 letters; confidential and sent through the online application system)
- Personal Data Sheet
- Official GRE scores (https://gradschool.missouri.edu/degreecategory/special-education/): **minimum scores 297+ (V153, Q144)/ AW: 4.0+**
- Official English Proficiency scores (if applicable) (https://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/eligibility-process/international-applicants/#language)

Confirmation Materials (required to finalize admission upon acceptance, sent to the Graduate School):

- Official transcripts
- Any additional required documentation

The Special Education graduate program cannot assure admission to all applicants who meet minimum standards specified for the degree program. Resource constraints do not permit the admission of all qualified applicants.
A committee of faculty reviews the credentials of each applicant. It is the responsibility of this committee to exercise professional judgment related to the criteria that applicants must meet in order to be considered for admission to the program. An interview may be required by the admissions committee. Please feel free to submit any other materials that you feel would give a clearer picture of your qualifications.

Conditional acceptance

Conditional acceptance into the program is not provided for those students who wish to pursue English language training in the U.S. prior to starting their graduate studies. Applications submitted will be reviewed for admission into the program as per the criteria noted above.

Financial Aid from the Program

Some programs require an extra form or statement from those who wish to be considered for internal assistantships, fellowships or other funding packages. Check the program website or ask the program contact for details.

Satisfactory Progress

For information on general progress guidelines and the dismissal policy, see the Special Education website.

Program Contact

https://education.missouri.edu/special-education/contact/