



MSUSM
DENVER

SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION

Graduate Programs Handbook

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I. Introduction

The School of Education (SOE) is located within the Metropolitan State University of Denver's School of Education, located in the West Classroom Building of the Auraria Campus in downtown Denver, Colorado. The School of Education main phone number is 303-615-1555 and the fax number is (720) 778-5690. The email address for general inquiries is education@msudenver.edu. The School of Education Graduate Programs website is: <https://www.msudenver.edu/teachergrad/>.

The School of Education offers a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with concentrations (all leading to teacher licensure) in Elementary Education, Special Education, Elementary Education with Alternative Licensure, and Special Education with Alternative Licensure, a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction with concentrations in Trauma-Informed Practices and Inclusive Practices, and a graduate-level Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate (ASSNC) program. The MAT program began in 2010 with the first group of master's degrees offered at MSU Denver. The MAT program is designed for candidates with a bachelor's degree in a field other than education who wish to obtain a master's degree and become a licensed teacher in either Elementary Education or Special Education. Both areas provide a comprehensive background in education with all the required coursework and clinical experience for licensure in the state of Colorado. The M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction program begins in Summer 2022 and is designed to prepare teams of teachers, administrators, school counselors, and others to build and lead school environments that meet the needs of all students. The M.Ed. is not a licensure program. The ASSNC began in 2017 and is available to graduate candidates in any licensure area and/or candidates not seeking licensure. The ASSNC is not a degree or licensure program.

The SOE graduate programs prepare candidates for successful careers in education through high quality and accessible education. These programs align with MSU Denver's mission and vision as they are innovative, comprehensive, and strive to prepare teachers to make effective decisions in diverse classrooms. To accomplish this goal, emphasis is placed on producing master teachers who are self-reflective, life-long learners, and who have an understanding of child development, content, and pedagogy. SOE graduate candidates use theory, research, classroom experience, and professional judgment to lead others in collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation of effective instruction for students.

The purpose of this School of Education Graduate Programs Handbook is to provide information about policies and procedures specific to the Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, and Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate programs. Please note that the procedures for the Alternative Licensure Program graduate candidates may differ from those included in this handbook. Alternative Licensure Program (ALP) candidates should contact the ALP program director or ALP program coordinator directly (alp@msudenver.edu).

We appreciate you taking the time to learn more about our programs, and please feel free to contact the School of Education Director of Graduate Programs (soegradprograms@msudenver.edu) if you have any questions.

II. Getting Started

Candidates interested in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate (ASSNC) programs do not need prior experience working in an educational setting. Throughout the MAT program, students will obtain all the course work and clinical experiences needed to be eligible for Colorado teacher licensure in their area of study as well as for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree from MSU Denver. Teacher candidates must pass the Praxis exams required for their licensure area before being able to apply for their license to the Colorado Department of Education. Students should speak with their faculty advisor about the Praxis exams required for their area of licensure.

The Master of Arts in Teaching: Elementary Education concentration includes the coursework and licensure requirements for Colorado K-6 licensure. The coursework includes field experiences and student teaching that focuses on the K-6 classroom and encourages the teacher candidate to examine K-6 teaching and learning with an innovative and culturally relevant lens.

The Master of Arts in Teaching: Special Education concentration includes the coursework and licensure requirements for Colorado Special Education (K-12) licensure. The coursework includes field experiences and student teaching that focuses on the special education classroom and encourages the teacher candidate to examine special education teaching and learning with an innovative and culturally relevant lens.

The Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction program is designed as a practitioner degree for professionals who wish to learn innovative and new methods of teaching and leadership, and wish to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience to work more effectively in the field of education. This program is designed for working educational professionals on the assumption that they will have ongoing access to an educational context (i.e., school, district, homeschool, museum etc.) in which to apply their learning. Candidates interested in the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction will select a concentration area in Trauma-Informed Practices or Inclusive Education.

The Trauma-Informed Practices Concentration focuses on equity in education as it relates to recognizing and addressing the learning and behavioral needs of children who have experienced trauma. Coursework presents an opportunity to change current school systems so students do not become overwhelmed or lost in the academic setting, but instead have opportunities to grow, succeed and build resilience. Trauma-Informed Practices can be applied to all students but are especially important for students who have experienced trauma. There is a focus on

the science of trauma; interpersonal, insidious, and racial traumas; and mitigating stress and secondary trauma in educators.

The Inclusive Practices Concentration focuses on equity in education as it relates to access and inclusion for all students. Coursework presents opportunities to change current systems to strength-based systems that support all differences in a student's social and academic abilities. Coursework can be applied to any student but especially to students facing the greatest barriers to receiving instruction in the general education classroom. There is a focus on engaging students with the most significant support needs, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and behavioral differences.

The M.Ed. will provide an advanced degree for licensed professionals in early childhood, elementary and secondary education to become leaders and change agents needed in educational settings. The program teaches evidence-based assessment and instruction required to meet the unique needs of every learner.

Student Orientation

The Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate programs require that all new students attend the School of Education New Graduate Student Orientation. These orientations are held in August (for students admitted in the Summer or Fall Semesters) and in January (for students admitted in the Spring Semester) and last one and one-half hour.

English Placement Test for Non-native Speakers

Please refer to the section in the University Graduate Catalog that addresses TOEFL or IELTS.

Student Hub

MSU Denver's Student Hub (<https://www.msudenver.edu/studenthub/>) is a personalized, secure university information online resource that provides accessibility to confidential student information. You can register for classes and access your class schedule, order textbooks, view your university bill and financial aid information, obtain a degree progress report, update your student information including address changes, etc. You can login to the Student Hub using your single sign in username and password.

Roadrunner Student ID Card

Your Roadrunner card (www.ahec.edu/id-center) is used for identification on campus and is required to get a parking permit, prove campus affiliation when accessing the Health Center at Auraria, provides access to campus recreations, provides you with borrowing privileges at the Auraria Library, is necessary to participate in the "buyback" program for textbooks and is required to collect your RTD College Pass.

MSU Denver Email Account

Your MSU Denver email address consists of your username followed by @msudenver.edu. To access your email online go to the Student Hub (<https://www.msudenver.edu/studenthub/>) and select the Email (Office 365) link. Log in using your username and password.

School of Education Graduate Course Registration

School of Education graduate students should register for their coursework through the Student Hub. Information on registration schedules can be found at the Registrar's Office website (<https://www.msudenver.edu/registrar/>).

Learning Management System

MSU Denver uses the learning management system Canvas. You can access Canvas through the Student Hub. Course sites on Canvas are generally made available to students on the first day of the semester.

Textbooks

Textbooks and/or other course reading materials are selected by the instructor and are listed in course syllabi.

Academic Advising

Once you are enrolled in your first semester, you should meet with a faculty advisor in your program area (e.g., Elementary Education, Special Education, Alternative Licensure Program, Trauma-Informed Practices, Inclusive Practices). Advising appointments can be made by calling 303-615-1555 Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm or by completing the online advising request form found [here](#). Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education and Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate students should meet with a faculty advisor every semester to discuss their program plan. Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate candidates should meet with a faculty member in Special Education.

School of Education Graduate Student Newsletter

School of Education Graduate Students will receive a monthly newsletter to their MSU Denver email account via the School of Education graduate student listservs. This newsletter contains important information and deadlines, and therefore all School of Education Graduate Students should read this newsletter carefully and thoroughly.

III. Academic Matters

School of Education Graduate Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts in Teaching program requires a minimum of 49 credit hours consisting of three required core courses and a variety of concentration courses for the licensure area. Subjects covered in the core courses include educational research, foundations of education of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and exceptional learners in the classroom. Master of Arts in Teaching program concentrations are offered in Elementary Education, Special Education, Elementary Education with Alternative Licensure, and Special Education with Alternative Licensure. Each concentration may require a unique number of credit hours and clinical experiences consisting of approved coursework within the focus area.

The Master of Arts in Teaching curriculum is taught in a sequential series of pedagogical building blocks forming a solid foundation of educational knowledge and skills. Most Master of Arts in Teaching courses meet for 15 weeks if offered in the Fall and Spring Semester and for 8 weeks if offered in the Summer Semester. Class sessions are usually 2 hours and 50 minutes long. Course formats include face-to-face, hybrid online/face-to-face, or fully online.

The Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction program requires a minimum of 30 credit hours consisting of four required core courses and six concentration courses in the area of Trauma-Informed Practices or Inclusive Practices. Subjects covered in the core courses include educational equity, educational leadership, responsive pedagogy, and action research.

Most Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction courses meet for 15 weeks if offered in the Fall and Spring Semester and for 8 weeks if offered in the Summer Semester. Class sessions are usually 2 hours and 50 minutes long. Course formats include face-to-face, hybrid online/face-to-face, or fully online. Courses may meet in non-traditional formats to support accessibility (e.g., intensive weekend format).

Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction students may also add endorsements or the Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate to their study plan. Please see “Endorsements and Certificates” section below for more details.

Waiver or accepted transfer in of graduate program core courses is rare and requires special permission from the course instructor and departmental faculty, program director, and/or department chair. A waived course requires a replacement elective with the equivalent credit hours.

Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate Requirements

The School of Education offers a Graduate Certificate in Autism and Significant Support Needs (ASSNC, scroll down and click “+” to see ASSNC program details). The ASSNC requires 15 credits of which 6 can be applied to Master of Arts in Teaching (Special Education concentrations only) degree. A 1-credit elective field experience course is offered (see “Elective Courses” section below for more details).

Elective Courses

School of Education graduate programs do not include elective courses, rather, the Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction programs include concentrations that contain required coursework for each unique concentration. The Master of Arts in Teaching programs consist of courses required for Colorado Department of Education teaching licensure and courses to support the masters culminating Capstone Project. The Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction contains the core courses and the concentration courses. The Capstone course is part of the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction core. The Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate program offers a 1-credit elective field experience.

Alternative Licensure Program

The Alternative Licensure Program contains two concentrations within the Master of Arts in Teaching Program: Elementary Education with Alternative Licensure and Special Education with Alternative Licensure. The Alternative Licensure Program requirements may differ from the “traditional” pathway concentrations (Elementary Education and Special Education) and therefore all Alternative Licensure Program students must work directly with the director and coordinator of that program. For more information, please see the Alternative Licensure Program website for details (<https://www.msudenver.edu/alp/>).

Clinical Experiences

The Master of Arts in Teaching program includes early clinical experiences as well as a student teaching experience. These experiences are designed to support a connection between theory and practice. Please refer to the Office of Clinical Experiences and Partnerships website (<https://www.msudenver.edu/ocep>) for information on clinical experiences and for access to the Student Teaching Handbook.

Grade Reports

Semester grades typically become available one week following the end of each term. Students can obtain final grades on the Student Hub.

Transfer Credits

Acceptance of transfer of School of Education graduate courses from other academic institutions to MSU Denver is limited and requires approval to be included in a student's study plan. The university must have Colorado Department of Education accreditation for transfer credit to be considered. The length of time since the request transfer courses were taken is also a factor.

A final course grade of "B" or higher must be received on all transfer coursework. An official graduate transcript from the institution from which the transfer credit has been approved must be submitted to the School of Education Director of Graduate Programs. The School of Education Director of Graduate Programs may have faculty within the focus area of the course review transcripts, course descriptions, and/or course syllabi for possible transfer equivalency.

Endorsements and Certificates

School of Education graduate students may pursue added endorsements or certificates. Endorsements and certificates may include undergraduate coursework. Please note that added endorsements are additions to an existing teacher's license. Students should request an advising appointment with a faculty member who specializes in the endorsement or certificate area for information about the program and application. If you are unsure about with whom to request an appointment, you can contact the advising appointment request line and indicate the program in which you are interested. Please note that you should seek advice from the Office of Financial Aid regarding any impact adding these options may have on your program and subsequent aid. The School of Education currently offers the following added endorsements and certificates.

- Autism and Significant Support Needs Certificate
- Bilingual Education Specialist: School Educator Certificate (Undergraduate)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education K-12: Added Endorsement
- Instructional Technology Certificate (Post-Baccalaureate, Fully Online, & Outstanding Z Program, Governor's ZTC Awards 2020)
- Special Education K-12 Generalist: Added Endorsement

IV. Progressing Through the Master of Arts in Teaching Program

Academic Progress

School of Education graduate students are expected to make satisfactory academic progress during their graduate Education studies. Students are placed on academic probation if their cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.0, and a hold is placed on future class registrations. School of Education graduate students on academic probation must consult with their faculty advisor to

develop a plan for academic improvement and receive permission for continued enrollment in the program.

School of Education graduate students must complete all courses listed on their program of study with at least a C grade in each course and have achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in order to graduate.

Culminating Masters “Capstone” Project

The Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction programs include a culminating master’s Capstone project. This project should be completed in a professional and thoughtful manner, as it reflects the candidate’s progress in working toward the graduate degree.

Curriculum Project

A curriculum project is an opportunity for you to develop a unit of study that showcases your pedagogical content knowledge for your future teaching. Choosing a curriculum project as your capstone allows you to develop your practical knowledge with regard to your teaching philosophy, instructional interests, and target teaching population for your future teaching. This curriculum project is not bound by the confines of your student teaching, and the curriculum project is a unit that distinguishes you as a future educator—both in being able to speak about curriculum design in job interviews and when implementing the unit in your first teaching position. As a unit of study, your curriculum project includes a literature review of at least 10 reviewed journal articles as well as various lessons that strategically build towards a larger instructional focus. With input from your faculty sponsor, you identify your instructional focus. Your final product is a cohesive instructional unit with a series of lessons (detailed plans, materials, and a projected implementation timeline) in which you demonstrate your professional knowledge of standards (whether a focus on content and/or learning standards), learning theory (such as universal design of learning), instructional methods (including best practices), and assessment (both formative and summative). The “length” of your unit is shaped by the context you define for its possible implementation as well as the nature of what you want your future students to learn. For example, an interdisciplinary unit might focus more intensely across two weeks with lessons occurring in various content areas, a strategy-based unit might include daily modeling and application that builds over a month, and an inquiry-focused unit (such as in the sciences) might be structured for long-term learning across a semester although with fewer lessons per week.

Creative Project

A creative project includes a literature review of at least 10 peer reviewed articles on the topic of interest, a written summary of the initial conceptualization of the project, and a final project that includes specific elements determined collaboratively by you and your capstone supervisor.

The creative project can be a new program that you will implement with students such as an after-school chess club or an aesthetic representation of what has been learned such as a book, play, or visual art piece. If implementing a program, you would have a summary of your program, a statement of understanding signed by you and your principal, and a parent permission form (to be signed before a student participates). The final project then might be the curriculum designed for the program and a timeline (for example in a chess club what particular moves you would teach and when and how you would run the chess games) and a poster presentation of your program. If you are creating an aesthetic representation of what you have learned from either a specific activity involving your students or the student teaching experience as a whole then as well as your creative representation you might write a reflective journal on how it was conceptualized and what the process was like or create a power point presentation that could be used to inform others and/or be presented at a conference.

Literature Review

A literature review is an opportunity for you to refine your understanding of a topic or issue that is of particular interest to you for your future teaching. With input from your faculty sponsor, you will define a “research question.” However, instead of conducting your own research you are asking: What does current, research-based literature tell me about _____? To answer your question, you will be locating, reading, critiquing, and synthesizing a minimum of 25 research-based articles that are published in peer-reviewed journals that are relevant to your discipline (special education or elementary education). Your literature review begins by introducing your research question and developing a persuasive rationale for why your topic is relevant not only for you but for other educators. Typically, you then define key concepts related to your research question. Your synthesis of the 25+ articles is organized by themes and patterns that you notice across the studies. You conclude your literature review by discussing the implications and limitations of these studies (in essence, you answer “so what”—that is, what does this all mean for teaching and what should be considered next?). This capstone project allows you to clarify your knowledge of a particular subject and develop your knowledge of research-based teaching. In an era of research-based educational mandates, this project allows you to refine your knowledge of and ability to critique research. This can serve to distinguish you in how you answer particular questions in your future job interviews and your instructional choices and peer collaborations in your future teaching.

Research Project

In a research project, you situate yourself as an educator who learns from and in a specific educational context with a specific population. Most likely, the context will be related to your student teaching, whether in the classroom where you student teach or perhaps through involvement in

some afterschool venue. With input from your faculty sponsor, you define a research question that is focused on some aspect of teaching and/or learning and which can be explored within the timeframe of one semester. You answer this question by systematically collecting appropriate data (field notes, interviews, surveys, think aloud protocols, student artifacts, etc.). This capstone project requires that you obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval—a process that you should initiate before you begin your student teaching, as you must await IRB committee approval.* Your IRB proposal is the first of two products that you submit for this capstone. The second is a 10-15 page paper in which you summarize your research. This includes introducing your research question, a persuasive rationale, a literature review in which you highlight at least 10 research-based articles or other scholarly work that informed your study, a summary of your research methods, presentation of your results, and a discussion of your study's implications and limitations. This capstone project allows you to identify as a critically reflective educator who systematically considers the impact of pedagogical choices. Note: If conducted in your student teaching placement, there may be slight overlap between your research project and your Artifact Collection and Reflection, most likely as you describe your research population and context. However, the unit that you implement for your Artifact Collection and Reflection will not serve the purpose of this research project.

** Students who wish to complete a research project are strongly encouraged to submit the IRB proposal one semester prior to the capstone semester. The review process can be lengthy. Please use the following link to access IRB information for MSU Denver:*

<https://www.msudenver.edu/irb/>

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction Capstone Project

The Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction Capstone experience includes designing an action-oriented project relevant to the candidate's professional context that aligns with elements of program coursework. Candidates will construct a compelling inquiry question that addresses a meaningful problem, topic, or issue within their professional context, evaluate the quality, credibility, and value of scholarly research, and evaluate appropriate methods of research design that can be utilized for data collection to evaluate project implementation and effectiveness.

The Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction capstone project provides opportunities for students to demonstrate originality and expertise, the ability to plan and organize a project over a period of time, and to put into practice what they have learned in the Masters of Curriculum and Instruction degree program.

Degree Completion

School of Education graduate students are expected to complete their programs in a timely manner. Students enrolled in the full-time Master of Arts in Teaching or the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction programs are expected to complete the program requirements in 6 years.

Graduation Procedures

An application for Graduation is due by the end of the first week of the semester you plan to graduate. The graduation application can be found under the “register” tab of the Student Hub. School of Education graduate students enrolled in their final semester may be asked to complete a survey late in the semester.

Commencement

Graduation is a time of celebration for academic accomplishments so participation in commencement ceremonies, including the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction Hooding Ceremony, is highly encouraged.

A University ceremony takes place at the end of the fall and spring semesters. MSU Denver does not hold commencement ceremonies in the summer. Summer graduates may participate in either the previous spring or following fall university commencements. However, their name and degree awarded will only appear in the fall commencement materials.

Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction program graduates must make their own arrangements for the purchase or rental of the appropriate graduation regalia well in advance of university commencement. Information will be provided to graduates by the University in a timely manner.

Diplomas are mailed approximately three weeks after graduation to the mailing address information through your Student Hub account.

V. Student Life

Full-time School of Education graduate students are expected to be fully immersed in the Master of Arts in Teaching experience within and outside the classroom. School of Education graduate programs offer opportunities for candidates to grow both personally and professionally during the program.

3MT

All Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction students are encouraged to participate in the university level Three Minute Talk (3MT) Competition. Participants create one PowerPoint slide and have three minutes to describe their research. Participants will compete with graduate students from across the University and have an opportunity to win cash prizes.

VI. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Class Attendance and Punctuality

School of Education graduate students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings and to arrive for a class in a timely manner. Each faculty member sets their policy with respect to class attendance, and excused absences are handled between the instructor and you. An excused absence should be arranged prior to the expected missed class, if possible. If an emergency situation or illness arises which prevents prior notification, inform the faculty member of the reason for the missed class as soon as it becomes feasible. In all cases, communication with the faculty is essential.

Smartphones, Laptops and other Electronic Devices

Laptops, smart phones and tablets are permitted in class for note-taking only. Other activities such as checking personal email or browsing the internet are prohibited. Smartphones and other electronic devices must be turned off (or on vibrate) during class time.

Teamwork

Teamwork is an integral part of the School of Education graduate experience. As a prospective teacher, you will be asked to complete assignments in and outside of class time with your peers. This teamwork may be similar to the work that you will conduct with your grade-level team and/or co-teachers, and is a vital part of your professional development.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity must be defined, quite simply, as doing one's own academic work without unauthorized assistance from other persons or resources. More specifically, academic integrity means that student take their coursework seriously and place significant value on learning and engagement in the classroom and while completing assignments and projects.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is making use of other people's ideas, words, creative works and expressions without giving credit or otherwise listing the source of information. This includes closely imitating the language and thoughts of another. Simply put, plagiarism is stealing. Plagiarism is also misrepresentation, and includes handing in someone else's work, ideas, or answers as your own. Regardless of whether it happens inadvertently through sloppy research or on purpose through unethical behavior, it is plagiarism just the same and the person plagiarizing will be held liable via university sanctions.

Professionalism

School of Education graduate students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds high standards of professionalism. These standards must provide a foundation for your actions inside and outside the classroom. Your program will include clinical experiences in schools, and we expect that you interact professionally with all school district faculty and staff. For more information on clinical experiences, please see the website of the Office of Clinical Experiences and Partnerships (<https://www.msudenver.edu/ocep>).

VII. Administrative and Contact information

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