

Special Education

MAJOR



Program Highlights

- Teacher candidates will explore the significance of **lifelong learning** and participation in **professional activities** and **learning communities**.
- Developing teachers will learn about the importance of true collaboration and building **supportive** and **engaging environments** by creating **respectful, reciprocal relationships**.
- Candidates will complete Virginia licensing requirements for both **adapted curriculum** and **general curriculum** special education.
- Instructors work hand-in-hand with teacher candidates to provide **scaffolded support** during our are uniquely designed teaching opportunities.
- Students will learn how **systems of supports** are critical for individuals with exceptionalities and important factors in **lifelong success** is an underpinning of the program.
- Teacher candidates will gain access to general and specialized curricula to **individualize learning** for individuals with exceptionalities.



"With inclusivity and diversity at the forefront of our program, the JMU's Special Education program guarantees their teacher candidates rich classroom experiences, supported community engagement, and strong professional development. The cohort model and small class sizes allows every teacher candidate to experience meaningful expert guidance, direct instruction on evidenced-based teaching practices, and a practical introduction to a wide range of educational settings. This dual-licensure program prepares its teacher candidates to thrive within many educational settings by giving students the tools necessary to be successful in providing comprehensive instruction that is relevant, individualized and appropriately scaffolded to ensure their students' success." - Sharon L. Blatz, Ph.D.

Field Experience

All teacher candidates can expect rich experiences in diverse settings to support their success in working with all students. Candidates are placed in multiple classrooms and educational settings throughout their professional education program that reflect the demographics of our communities and beyond. All placements are designed based on characteristics that reflect diversity, including socio-economic status, rural/urban settings, and culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Every attempt is made to provide opportunities for each candidate to experience a broad spectrum of experiences.

Practicum experiences take place with our local school partners:

- Augusta County Public Schools
- Harrisonburg City Public Schools
- Page County Public Schools
- Rockingham County Public Schools
- Shenandoah County Public Schools
- Staunton City Public Schools
- Waynesboro City Public Schools

Student teaching placements may be available with school partners across Virginia, including Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Tidewater regions.



Study Abroad Opportunities

Increase your self-confidence and discover yourself in a whole new way while gaining meaningful insights and valuable perspectives. You will build new friendships and increase your ability to interact effectively with people of other nationalities. The benefits of study abroad programs are as endless as the opportunities James Madison University offers.

Students can travel abroad for semester-long programs, short-term study away experiences, and practicum and student teaching opportunities. Some of the locations our students regularly travel to include:

■ Costa Rica

Join us for an unforgettable experience in Costa Rica where you will immerse yourself in a beautiful foreign country in order to practice applying knowledge and skills of teaching English as a foreign language to Spanish-speaking students in a bilingual English-Spanish school.

■ Ireland and Northern Ireland

Each student will be placed in a public school and will collaborate with host classroom teachers and students within one-on-one, small group, and/or large group settings.

■ Kenya

The immersive experiences will be focused on educational justice through girls' education at Nasaruni Schools—primary and secondary, a campus of about 150 Maasai girls who overcome barriers to their education.

Major Overview

This undergraduate program is designed to prepare resilient, culturally responsive educators who are advocates for children and youth with disabilities that are not only qualified for the complexity of their professional roles but who are also reflective problem-solvers.

Academic experiences in the major will enable teacher candidates to become knowledgeable about the characteristics, diagnosis, instruction and remediation of needs of children with exceptionalities. Students completing the four-year licensure program are prepared to serve as special education teachers of all students with exceptionalities in kindergarten through twelfth grade (adapted curriculum and accessing the general curriculum).



For more information go to: <https://www.jmu.edu/coe/efex/sped-4-yr-major-overview.shtml>

■ **JMU Programs are Accredited** by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). JMU has been awarded the Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement by CAEP.

■ Upon completing the education program, **candidates are eligible for licensure**, and the Education Support Center will help guide students through the application process.

■ **Multiple graduate programs** are available for students seeking an advanced degree to expand their knowledge and skills in the classroom, school, community, and beyond.

■ **NASDTEC Interstate Agreement** allows JMU students to obtain licensure in almost all of the U.S. states and territories.