

# Special Education, BS, BA

**Emphases:** Birth to Age 5 Special Education; Mild/Moderate Disabilities; Severe Disabilities

**Department:** Special Education and Rehabilitation Department

**College:** Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services

## Overview

### About This Degree

Utah State's Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation is consistently ranked among the top 20 education programs in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*. Students graduating from USU with a degree in special education are highly sought after by school districts across Utah and the United States. Utah State has a 100% job placement rate for special education graduates, with many students getting hired before they even graduate.

The department offers a number of unique educational and training opportunities for those interested in working with children and youth with disabilities. The program prepares students to work with individuals who have mild, moderate, and severe disabilities, as well as young children with disabilities. Students are given the opportunity to gain hands-on experience working with local school districts or on-campus programs.

The special education major is a popular choice for a dual major (meaning students graduate with two separate degrees) for students preparing to become secondary school teachers. Students in teaching majors are often required to choose a minor in a licensable area. Rather than choosing a minor, students can dual major in special education and their teaching major. If students choose this option, they must choose either the mild/moderate disabilities or the severe disabilities emphasis.

Students receive a **BS** by completing all required courses in the major. To receive a **BA**, students must also gain proficiency in one or more foreign languages.

### Distance Education

The BS in special education with an emphasis in mild/moderate disabilities is available through USU's Regional Campuses.

## Career Options

With a degree in special education, students may pursue the following careers:

- Public or private school educator
- Adult service provider
- Recreation specialist
- Behavior specialist
- Developmental specialist
- Early intervention provider

[Career Services](#) provides counseling and information on hundreds of job and internship opportunities and even helps students apply and interview.

## What it takes

### Admissions Requirements

In addition to Utah State University's [admissions requirements](#), the special education program has additional requirements:

- **Freshmen:** New freshmen admitted to USU in good standing qualify for admission to the department as pre-majors.
- **Transfer Students:** Transfer students from other institutions or from other USU majors will be admitted as pre-majors in good standing, with a GPA of at least 2.75.
- In order to become a special education major, students must be accepted into the program, which includes

the following:

- Completion of at least 40 semester credits, including the ones you're currently taking, with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher
- Complete certain core courses (see department for more information)
- Complete a speech and hearing test
- Pass the Teacher Education Writing Exam
- Pass a criminal background check (this should be done one semester before applying)
- Passing score on the Special Education Math exam

International students have [additional admissions requirements](#).

## Major Requirements

[Click here](#) to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Science**.

[Click here](#) to see course requirements for the **Bachelor of Arts**.

## Contact

### Advising

All new USU students participate in a [New Student Orientation](#) program, where they receive detailed information about major requirements, registering for classes, and other important advising information.

#### Darcie Peterson

Advisor

**Office:** EDUC 371

**Phone:** (435) 797-3252

**Email:** [darcie.peterson@usu.edu](mailto:darcie.peterson@usu.edu)

## Get Involved

### Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

**Council for Exceptional Children:** The Council for 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 exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice.

**Best Buddies:** Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for friendships and integrates employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Club members can become a “buddy” with a local person with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

**Special Olympics:** Special Olympics is an international organization where athletes with intellectual disabilities celebrate and are celebrated for their accomplishments. It is often the first time that athletes have truly taken center stage and receive recognition as individuals. The organization has helped prepare and sponsor two athletes from Cache Valley to compete in the Special Olympics World Games.

**Utah Association for the Education of Young Children:** UAEYC is a national organization that improves the quality of early childhood education for young children and their families through activities and experiences. The organization helps improve professional practice in early childhood education, build public understanding and support, and build and maintain a strong, diverse, and inclusive national organization.

### Labs, Centers, Research

With the second oldest [undergraduate research](#) program in the nation, USU offers students a wide range of opportunities to gain hands-on research experience. The [Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities](#) program allows students to apply for grants and receive funding. USU's [Honors Program](#) prepares students for excellent graduate programs by helping them build relationships with professors, participate in research projects,

take smaller, more intensive classes, and develop leadership skills.

**Assistive Technology Laboratory:** The lab is a facility for the Utah Assistive Technology Program, which serves individuals with disabilities of all ages in Utah and the intermountain region. It provides assistive technology (AT) devices and services and trains university students, parents, children with disabilities, and professional service providers about AT. The program coordinates its services with community organizations and others who provide independence-related support to individuals with disabilities.

**Autism Support Services - Education, Research, and Training:** ASSERT is a classroom at the Center for Persons with Disabilities that offers training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, while providing intensive, individualized instruction to preschool children with autism spectrum disorder. USU students can apply to work in the program and earn either university credit or compensation while learning how to effectively teach students with autism spectrum disorder.

**Bear River Activity and Skills Center:** This center is designed to support adults with disabilities by teaching them the skills necessary for independence. In addition, BRASC focuses on providing consumers with activities that encourage community inclusion.

**Center for Persons with Disabilities:** The CPD is a nationally recognized research center that joins the expertise of researchers and faculty with community partners to address the most difficult challenges facing persons with disabilities and their families. Research addresses issues that cross fields ranging from biomedicine to education. In clinical experiences, learners join teams of professionals, family members, and individuals with disabilities to deliver services and supports.

**Edith Bowen Laboratory School:** EBLS is one of Utah's charter schools, offering services to more than 300 students grades K-5. The school, in cooperation with Utah State University, trains more than 200 pre-service teachers preparing to become professional educators, as well as supporting several other departments/colleges on campus, including special education, physical education, music, psychology, and business. Because the school is funded through state funds and donations, no tuition is charged to students.

**EmployAbility Clinic:** The EmployAbility clinic provides direct services to individuals with disabilities living in the Cache Valley community, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other individuals with severe disabilities. In addition, the clinic provides opportunities for advanced instruction for graduate students in the rehabilitation counseling program, and opportunities for conducting research in the area of employment for individuals with disabilities. Clinic staff also work extensively with employers in the development of natural supports within the work environment to ensure continued success following the withdrawal of direct employment support services.

**Project PEER (Postsecondary Education, Employment, and Research):** Project PEER is a program for young adults with developmental disabilities aged 18-21 who participate in special education services on the USU campus. Young adults participate in social, recreational, and employment opportunities with their college-age peers. The program emphasizes development of employment, functional, and social skills facilitated by participation with peers in the campus student community, establishment of job shadowing and job training leading to employment upon post-high school graduation, and education based on students' Individual Educational Plan.

**Research and Evaluation Division for the Center for Person with Disabilities:** This is an interdisciplinary organization committed to investigating and improving policies and practices that support the wellbeing of children with disabilities and delays, as well as young children in general. The institute conducts research and provides training and technical assistance at community, state, national, and international levels.

**Sound Beginnings of Cache Valley:** Sound Beginnings is an early intervention and preschool program located on the USU campus, providing services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. The focus of this program is for children with hearing loss to receive early intervention services that emphasize the development of spoken language. Sound Beginnings serves children from birth through age six through a variety of program options that are designed to increase auditory awareness and speech, language, and academic development.

