

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

B.S. DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES – TEACHER PREPARATION

WITH LICENSURE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, GENERAL CURRICULUM K-12, WITH HIGHLY QUALIFIED DESIGNATION IN  
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

OR

WITH LICENSURE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, GENERAL CURRICULUM K-12. WITH HIGHLY QUALIFIED DESIGNATION IN  
ENGLISH SECONDARY EDUCATION AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

**1. What does Licensure in Special Education General Curriculum K – 12 mean and if I choose this program what will I be licensed to teach?**

The Special Education, General Curriculum, K-12 License is specifically to teach students with mild disabilities who are accessing the general curriculum. Typically, a teacher with this license would be the special education support instructor for the general education teacher. In the majority of schools, you would be working with special education students in an inclusion setting rather than teaching a self-contained classroom with students with mild disabilities. In a few schools, you may be assigned to teach an entire secondary English class or an entire elementary education class with all Special Education students. Additionally, in a few secondary schools you may be assigned to teach a resource class with all special education students needing additional support in secondary English. However, most school systems are following the inclusion model described above.

**2. Will I be able to teach an elementary general education classroom or a secondary English classroom as the lead instructor if I receive this license?**

No. You will be highly qualified to teach in one or both of these areas, depending on your emphasis area, but you will not be licensed to teach in these areas.

**3. What are the benefits of the highly qualified designation?**

Pursuant to governmental regulations, in order to be licensed to teach Special Education, you also must be highly qualified in the content that will be taught in the general education classroom. School divisions are directing their hiring efforts at teachers who meet this requirement.

**4. What must I do if I want to teach students with moderate to severe disabilities?**

In order to teach students with moderate or severe disabilities you will need to seek a separate license. You will want to pursue the Special Education Adapted Curriculum K – 12 License. This will require additional courses that are generally at the graduate level. For more information about this license, you should contact Dr. Cheryl S. Baker at [csbaker@odu.edu](mailto:csbaker@odu.edu).

**5. Do I still need to take PRAXIS I?**

Yes. You will need to obtain at least a 532 composite score on PRAXIS I prior to admission to Teacher Education Services. According to IDS-TP program requirements, passing scores on PRAXIS I are required by your 60<sup>th</sup> credit hour or by the end of your second semester at ODU if you are transferring to the university with 60 or more credits.

**6. What other Licensure assessments are required by the Commonwealth of Virginia?**

You should also take and pass the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) with a composite score of 470 as soon as you have completed your English composition, literature, and grammar/linguistics courses (i.e., ENGL 110C; 111C; 112L or 144L; 327W; 350 or 370; and 336, 463, 465, or 405W). You should take and pass the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA) with a score of 235 upon completion of ECI 468 and 408. Finally, you should take PRAXIS II after you finish the major content courses in your emphasis area. All Licensure Assessments must be completed prior to student teaching. A new course, ESSE 483, has been developed and teacher candidates must demonstrate successful passage of these Licensure Assessments before they can pass this course.

**7. What early field experiences will I have prior to student teaching?**

Teacher candidates will participate in a 45 hour practicum in ESSE 415 and another 45 hour practicum in ESSE 403. Registration for placement in a school is available on-line at the Teacher Education Services website at <http://education.odu.edu/tes>.

**8. How do I apply for student teaching?**

The applications for student teaching are available on the Teacher Education Services website. Pay specific attention to the deadlines for the submission of these applications. Generally, they are due September 15 for spring student teaching and March 15 for fall student teaching, but several school divisions (e.g., Northern Virginia) require them to be submitted at least a month earlier. If you miss the specific deadline set by TES you will have to wait an entire semester to student teach.

**9. What are the specific curriculum requirements and may I substitute courses?**

Program curriculum sheets for each catalog are available on the IDS-TP website at <http://al.odu.edu/ids/tprep/>. Any substitutions must be approved by the Director of IDS-TP who can be reached at [eesinhar@odu.edu](mailto:eesinhar@odu.edu). Substitution requests rarely will be granted since teacher candidates must meet state competency requirements and the program curriculum specifically has been developed to meet such requirements.

**10. What other endorsements are available in addition to General Curriculum K-12?**

A visual impairment license is offered in consortium with George Mason University and an early childhood special education license is also offered upon completion of additional coursework. For more information, contact Dr. Cheryl Baker at [csbaker@odu.edu](mailto:csbaker@odu.edu).

**11. How do I become certified to teach children with autism?**

After you receive a License with an endorsement in Special Education, General Curriculum, K-12, you are eligible to add an autism certificate upon completion of a four course certificate program offered at the graduate level in the Darden College of Education.

**12. What are the advantages of this revised program over the former 4+1 BS/MS program for the IDS-TP Special Education emphasis area?**

Many states, including Virginia, struggle with teacher supply and demand, particularly with regards to special education teachers. Combine the fact that teacher preparation programs graduate only half the number of teachers needed to fulfill the needs of the K-12 system with research that suggests approximately 30 percent of new teachers will leave the profession within five years of entry, it is no surprise that special education classrooms are sometimes filled with under-qualified teachers. The Virginia Department of Education recently reported that over 200 K-12 positions went unfilled. Of the 132 school divisions surveyed by the state, less than 30 percent projected an adequate number of special educators through 2011-12 school year while an average of almost 40 percent anticipated a severe shortage for special education teaching and administrative positions for their school division in Virginia. At times, teacher candidates with only one special education course (ESSE 400) were being offered a Provisional License to teach Special Education upon graduation. Therefore, the College of Arts and Letters, in cooperation with the Darden College of Education modified its IDS-TP Special Education emphasis area to help the Commonwealth of Virginia meet this immediate need for well-trained special education teachers who also are highly qualified to teach content areas. By providing prospective special education teachers with an opportunity to receive licensure to teach Special Education, General Curriculum, K-12, in four years upon receipt of their Bachelor of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, this program will provide an increased pool of well-qualified special education teachers who will understand and have experience with the theories and instructional strategies to effectively teach special education students. It also will result in lower attrition rates for new teachers since they will have received the instruction and practical experience to be more effective as teachers.