

Bachelor of Arts in Special Education Frequently Asked Questions

1. **If I have a bachelor degree already and want to become a special education teacher do I need to get another bachelor's degree?** NO, you do not need another Bachelor's degree. You may apply to the graduate program. If you don't have a teaching license you will have to take the classes that are needed by all education majors. Check with the graduate school for more information.
2. **How do I become a special education major?** You may declare special education as your major when applying to UNC. Your GPA must be 2.75 at the end of 30 credit hours to remain active in the program. If you are changing your major from another area to special education, the only requirement is a 2.75 GPA. Students must have a 3.0 GPA in order to student teach.
3. **How long will it take to complete the special education program?** It takes four years to complete the Bachelor of Arts in special education program if you enter as a freshman; the program is a total of 126 credits. Transfer students' time varies and is dependent on the classes previously taken.
4. **Who will be my advisor?** When you are admitted to the special education program, you will receive a letter from the special education office with your advisor's name and contact information. You will be required to meet with your advisor each semester before registering. This will ensure you are registering for the correct classes and are on-track for graduation
5. **How will I know it's time to see my advisor?** There is a special education LISTSERVE that all special education majors are required to join. During the semester, you will receive notices when it is time for you to make an appointment to see your advisor.
6. **What is PTEP and how do I get accepted?** PTEP is the Professional Teacher Education Program. EDFE 270 is the class you will take to apply to PTEP. To take EDFE 270 you must have and maintain at least a 2.75 GPA; to be fully admitted to PTEP students must also pass the PLACE or PRAXIS II elementary content assessment.
7. **Will my GPA transfer from my community college (or any other college)?** No, up to 90 credits can be transferred into UNC but your GPA starts over when enrolling at UNC.
8. **I'm taking classes at a community college now. Do I need to get an AA degree before transferring to UNC?** It is not necessary to get an AA degree from a community college before transferring. You may take many of your

courses at the community college then transfer when you are ready. You may stay until you complete an AA degree if you wish.

9. **If I have an AA degree from a community college, will I need to take any additional general education courses?** You may need additional Liberal Arts Core classes depending on the courses you took at the community college. Required Liberal Arts Core classes include the following: American History, 2 math classes for Elementary Teachers, a class in either geography, economics, or political science, and a human growth and development.
10. **What is a learning community and is there one for special education majors?** A learning community is for incoming freshmen. It is a series of three classes plus an advising class. Only special education majors register for this block of classes and the same students take the same three classes together. You will get to know other special education majors while working on Liberal Arts core classes and begin to build friendships with others who have the same major. The second semester the learning community continues with another three class block.
11. **When will I start taking special education classes?** Generally, students complete most of their Liberal Arts Core classes the first year and then begin taking the special education classes their second year. An individual 4-year plan is developed with each student so that each student knows what to take each semester at UNC.
12. **Is there a club or organization I can join with other special education majors?** We have a chapter of the Student Council for Exceptional Children at UNC. This active organization meets frequently and completes activities such as an annual art contest, attending a state conference for special educators, volunteering to assist children or adults with disabilities.
13. **What students (grades and abilities) will I be able to teach with this degree?** You can teach students kindergarten-12th grade who are receiving special education services. The license is a “Generalist” special education teacher that allows you to work with students with learning disabilities, students with behavioral needs, students with cognitive delays, or students with severe/profound disabilities. If you are interested in teaching early childhood special education, students with vision disabilities, or students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing you may get a Master’s degree in any of these areas after completing your Bachelor of Arts degree.
14. **Do I have to have a master’s degree to teach special education in Colorado?** No, that law was changed several years ago to allow to special education teachers to have a bachelor degree to teach in special education.

15. **Will I be able to do a “semester abroad” or “university exchange” program at another university when working on a special education degree?** Yes, we work closely with our students to make sure your classes will advance you toward your degree.
16. **Can I get a minor in an area outside special education?** Yes, but in special education you are not required to have a minor. We have no electives in the special education program, so your minor hours will be additional credits, usually 18 credit hours.
17. **Can I get a minor in special education?** Yes, the requirement is 18 credit hours.
18. **Can I teach with a minor in special education?** No, this minor provides information about working students with special needs but does not include the methods courses that are required for the special education license.
19. **Can I work full-time and still major in special education?** Most students will work part-time during their program but during the last 3 semesters field experience is required. This makes it difficult to work full-time while completing the program. Most of the courses and field experiences are offered during the day making it difficult to schedule full-time work during the day around the required classes and field hours.
20. **I work as a paraprofessional now. Can I get “work experience” credit?** The only credit allowed for work experience is for the first Field Experience course, EDFE 270. You may be waived from completing the first field hours (around 35 hours) for your work experience. There is a formal approval process that your advisor can explain.
21. **What is field experience?** Field experience is when students go into a classroom for a semester to “practice” what they have learned in their university classes. If you are working as a paraprofessional, you may be able to do one field experience in your class but NOT while working as a paraprofessional. Since job responsibilities are different, we encourage students not to complete field experiences at a school where they are currently working as a paraprofessional. One field experience is completed at the elementary level and one is completed at the secondary level.
22. **What is student teaching?** Student teaching is when the student spends an entire semester working with one special education teacher in a school. You will gradually assume the responsibilities of the special education teacher and learn to work independently while receiving guidance from a cooperating teacher and a university consultant.

23. **What are the requirements to enroll in student teaching?** You must have all your courses completed before student teaching. You must also have passed the PLACE Generalist Assessment and have a 3.0 GPA.
24. **Where can I do my student teaching?** You can complete student teaching in any U.S. state. Students can request a specific district or even a specific school. We attempt to honor requests but also must obtain approval from the district and special education director. Due to laws that are specific to the US, Student Teaching outside of the United States is allowed only at Department of Defense Educational Activity schools.
25. **When I complete my program, what states will I be licensed to teach in?** You will apply for a Colorado teaching license at the completion of your program. If you plan to move to another state it's best to obtain a Colorado license first and then apply to the state where you intend to teach.