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Education Programs

Master of Education in Special Education

Location Offered:

Nanaimo, Online

Credential:

Master Degree

Program Length:

2 Years

The Program

Part-Time Option

This program incorporates a blended online and on campus model. Generally classes meet on campus in Nanaimo during July and online during the Fall and Spring semesters.

Full-Time Option

This cohort-based model is designed for students wishing to study full-time on the VIU campus. All formal coursework is completed over two semesters. The Field Inquiry and Major Project components are completed during the second year over two semesters. Students may complete these components with online support and can complete up to one semester early.

VIU's M.Ed. in Special Education embodies an innovative approach to the field of Special Education. Grounded in current research and evidence-based practices, our program challenges each educator to critically examine historical and contemporary Special Education policies and approaches to formulate a best practice specific to her/his own context. Faculty bring their expert knowledge and extensive experiences to guide, support and maximize student learning in each part of the program.

The 40-credit program is nested in four frames of reference:

1. **Context for Development and Learning:** Students consider the context for development and learning including characteristics of the individual with special needs; issues such as social context, cultural perspectives, poverty, and mental and social health; and implications of research.
2. **Informative Assessment:** Students focus on the purposes, processes, and implications of assessment information.
3. **Responsive Teaching:** Students demonstrate the ability to develop, implement, and evaluate an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in consultation with classroom teacher(s), parents, students, and district and community resource personnel for students with a variety of special needs.
4. **Re-imagining Special Education:** Students think beyond current practices and

examine critical issues in the field of Special Education that impact children with special needs and their families in order to re-imagine the field of Special Education.

Graduates of the program will command content knowledge, develop skill-specific competencies and acquire relevant experiences prescribed by the BC Ministry of Education for Special Education specialist teachers, as well as, have the capacity to offer leadership in Special Education areas.

The M.Ed. program is offered as a cohort-based model for practicing teachers.

Laddering Option

Graduates of VIU's Inclusive Education Graduate Diploma are eligible to apply to ladder into the Master of Education in Special Education Degree. To complete the Master of Education in Special Education (laddering option) students need to complete 3 courses (15 credits) in support of thesis or project work. The Master of Education in Special Education (laddering option) is a cohort-based program which starts in Spring semester and where these courses are completed over two years. The program is offered online.

Program Outline

Program Outline (Part-Time Option)

Year 1	Credits
Intersession	
MEDS 510 - (Foundations of Special Education) (VIU Nanaimo)	5
MEDS 530 - (Critical Issues in Special Education) (Online)	5
Fall Semester (Online)	
MEDS 520 - (Development and Exceptionality in Human Learning)	5
Spring Semester (Online)	
MEDS 540 - (Teacher as Researcher in Special Education)	5
Total Credits	20

Year 2	Credits
Intersession	
MEDS 610 - (Individual Assessment & Intervention Planning) (VIU Nanaimo)	5
MEDS 620 - (Translating Special Education Research to Practice) (Online)	5
Fall Semester (Online)	
MEDS 630 - (Field Inquiry)	5
Spring Semester (Online)	
MEDS 640 - (Major Project)	5
Total Credits	20
Total Program Credits	40

Program Outline (Full-Time Option)

Year 1	Credits
Fall Semester	
MEDS 510 - (Foundations of Special Education)	5
MEDS 520 - (Development and Exceptionality in Human Learning)	5
MEDS 530 - (Critical Issues in Special Education)	5
Spring Semester	
MEDS 540 - (Teacher as Researcher in Special Education)	5
MEDS 610 - (Individual Assessment & Intervention Planning)	5
MEDS 620 - (Translating Special Education Research to Practice)	5
Total Credits	30

Year 2 (September-April)	Credits
Fall and Spring Semesters	
MEDS 630 - (Field Inquiry)*	5
MEDS 640 - (Major Project)*	5
Year 2 Total	10
Total Program Credits	40

* These courses may be completed on-campus or online.

Program Outline (Laddering Option)

Year 1	Credits
Spring Semester (Online)	
MEDS 540 - (Teacher as Researcher in Special Education)	5
Year 1 Total Credits	5

Year 2	Credits
Fall Semester (Online)	
MEDS 630 - (Field Inquiry)	5
Spring Semester (Online)	
MEDS 640 - (Major Project)	5
Year 2 Total Credits	10
Total Program Credits	15

Program Progression Requirements

- Students must maintain a minimum average of 'B' (3.0) in each semester of the program
- Students must receive a 'CR' grade in each course (where applicable)
- Any student that receives a grade below a 'C+' in an individual course is required to meet with the Program Coordinator and/or the Program Chair to create an action plan to improve academic performance.
- Should students receive a failing grade, they may retake up to 2 individual courses. If they are unsuccessful in a third course, or in a second attempt of the same course, they will be required to leave the program.
- To be eligible to progress into MEDS 630 and 640, the following requirements must be met:
 - a minimum grade of 'B' (3.0) or 'CR' in MEDS 540
 - an approved proposal
- Students are permitted one attempt at MEDS 640.
- Students who find it necessary to interrupt their program may request a leave of absence and are advised to meet with their Program Coordinator and/or the

Program Chair in support of completing the Graduate Studies Leave of Absence process.

- Students returning to the program after an absence of five years or longer will have their course work reassessed for relevancy and may be required to retake courses and resubmit a proposal (if applicable).

Program Completion Requirements

- Graduation requires the successful completion of all required courses and M.Ed. graduate work (i.e. Thesis, Major Project, etc.) as agreed upon in an approved proposal.
- Students requiring extra time to complete MEDS 630 and/or MEDS 640, must maintain continuous enrollment in EXTN 500 at an additional cost for up to three (3) additional consecutive terms.

Admission Requirements

To be admitted into the program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Completion of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from a recognized university and acceptable in content by the Faculty of Education with either:
 - a cumulative grade point average of "B" in the final two years and/or
 - demonstration of academic excellence
- Applicants whose previous degree was obtained in a country where English is not the primary/official language and from a university where English was not the language of instruction must meet one of VIU's English Language requirements for Graduate Programs.
- Acceptance and satisfactory review of the following items by the Admissions Committee:
 - A résumé outlining teaching experience (two years preferred).
 - A letter of intent explaining why the applicant wishes to pursue graduate work in this area.
 - Two current, confidential assessment reports (reference letters are not acceptable in lieu of the confidential assessment reports).

For Laddering Option applicants:

- In addition to the above, applicants must have completed the Inclusive Education Graduate Diploma (IEGD) program and have taken GDSE 590 (Conference Related Special Project) as one of their electives.
- Conditional acceptance may be offered to students who are enrolled in IEGD courses at the time of application.
- Successful completion of all IEGD coursework is required before students can be registered in the Master of Education in Special Education.

Flexible Admission

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant may be admitted with lower formal qualifications when there is significant professional experience relevant to the proposed area of scholarship. The objective of flexible admission is to recognize prior learning accomplishments and to ensure a high probability of successful program completion. Applicants must show evidence of having sufficient knowledge, skills and attitudes to complete a demanding academic course of study. Applicants seeking Flexible Admission will be required to:

- Provide a letter of intent explaining why they wish to pursue graduate work in this area;
- Provide a detailed résumé, including evidence of applicable learning;
- Provide two current, confidential assessment reports;
- Provide two or more letters of reference;
- Provide official transcripts of all post-secondary coursework

In limited cases, applicants may also be required to:

- Provide a portfolio containing evidence of applicable prior learning;
- Appear for an interview;
- Take one or more qualifying courses; and/or
- Provide additional documentation as may be required to adjudicate the application.

Notes on Admission

- Enrolment in this program is limited. Students who meet or exceed the minimum admission requirements may not necessarily be admitted to the program.
- For application review, applicants must submit all admission documents, including official transcripts for all post-secondary coursework/studies within two weeks of the admissions deadline. Applicants are advised to submit documents as early as possible.
- Students who have completed the former Special Education Teaching Specialty Post Degree Diploma Program (SETS) should contact Graduate Programs in the Faculty of Education to determine their eligibility for the Master of Education in Special Education (laddering option).

Transfer from other Institutions

Applicants may apply to the Program Coordinator/Program Chair for possible transfer credits from other accredited Master's programs.

Career Opportunities

Domestic graduates of this program will be well-poised to assume Special Education positions at the school and district level. School districts in British Columbia report great difficulty in recruiting qualified Special Education teachers.

Start Date and Application Deadline

The Part-Time option typically starts in July. Applications are accepted between the first business day in October and February 28. All supporting documents are due by March 15.

The Full-Time option typically starts in September. Applications are accepted and assessed on a continuous basis until the application closing date. Seats are allocated on merit and a first come first served basis. Occasionally this program option may fill and cease accepting applications prior to the posted closing date.

The Laddering option typically starts in January. Applications are accepted between July 1 and November 15. All supporting documents are due by November 30.

Late applications for all program options will only be processed/considered as space permits.

For specific program contact information and further application details for each program option, please see below.

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