



Special Education Teacher Education Application Guide

For more information about the
program: *Dr. Jaime Zurheide*
Associate Chair of Curriculum
630.617.6498 telephone
jaime.zurheide@elmhurst.edu

For more information about admission:
William L. Slodki
Director of Teacher Education
Admission 630.617.3482 telephone
slodkiw@elmhurst.edu

OVERVIEW OF THE Special Education TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM AT ELMHURST UNIVERSITY

The special education program is designed as a major for juniors and seniors. Courses taken prior to the junior year are included in this document on page 5.

Due to its two-year “block” design (beginning junior year), the program is “transfer-friendly” for students who begin their academic careers at community colleges.

Elmhurst University’s revised Special Education program has many unique features that are similar to the way in which medical professionals are prepared.

- The coursework and the clinical experiences in schools are coordinated and supervised by faculty during every semester.
- Beginning junior year the courses are scheduled and offered together in “blocks” with each block focusing on different grade levels and students.
 - Block 1 focuses on Teaching Students with High Incidence Disabilities (K-12)
 - Block 2 focuses on Teaching Students with Low Incidence Disabilities (K-12).
 - Block 3 focuses on Assessments and Interventions for Students with Disabilities (K-12).
 - Block 4 is one 15-week full-time student teaching clinical experience in a K-12 general education classroom/resource classroom or in a K-12 self-contained special education classroom.
- Each of the four semesters has an Instructional Block Teaching Team of faculty who coordinates courses and fieldwork and supervises students in prearranged school sites.
- Students in the program earn an approval in Teaching English Learners with Disabilities (earning the ESL or Bilingual Special Education Approval). If you are bilingual, please take the Test of language Proficiency by November 15 of the Block 1 term or show proof of the Seal of Biliteracy on your high school transcript.
- Students in the program have the option to earn a Letter of Approval for teaching 3–5-year-olds in Special Education.

OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICATION TO THE Special Education Teacher
EDUCATION PROGRAM AT ELMHURST University

APPLICATION DATES

Cohorts only begin in the fall. The Special Education Teacher Education program admits a maximum of 18 students each fall semester. Applications may be submitted during the sophomore year while required coursework is in progress.

Applications will be accepted for fall admissions beginning February 1st.

All admitted students' transcripts are checked prior to each semester to insure all requirements have been successfully completed for final admission.



A COMPLETED APPLICATION

A formal application must be submitted by the specified dates [see page 4]. The Special Education Teacher Education application is electronic. The form may be downloaded from the Admissions page at: <https://www.elmhurst.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Special-Education-Teacher-Application-2025.pdf>

The application requires the newest version of Adobe Reader™, which is available on the Admissions page. All applications are submitted electronically to spe@elmhurst.edu

Applications should be submitted in advance of the following required documents:

recommendations, Elmhurst University degree audit/transfer institution transcript and criminal background investigation (CBI). Recommendations, degree audit/transcript and the CBI will be added to your application file upon receipt by the Director of Teacher Education Admission. The date of admission is the date on which all materials have been received and admission is approved by the Department of Education.

The application requires that you have:

1. Chosen two professionals to provide recommendations. See the section below on recommendations.
2. Completed a well-written personal statement as part of the application. Personal statements should be written as a maximum 500-word statement and pasted into the application. A personal statement must address the following topics:
 - a. Your primary reason for seeking a Professional Educator License in Special Education (PK-12)
 - b. Your experiences in working with children or young adults with disabilities and their families **in professional settings**. Include references to any recommendation that will be completed by a professional educator who has supervised you in the field;
 - c. Additional goals you have as a future special education teacher.



CREATE AN ELIS ACCOUNT

Individual Educator Identification Number (IEIN). IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, CREATE AN ACCOUNT ON THE EDUCATOR LICENSURE INFORMATION SYSTEM (ELIS) at https://apps.isbe.net/iwasnet/sign_up.aspx The Licensure Officer will add a pre-completion license with endorsements to your ELIS account as required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Per ISBE rules, the candidate is provided the pre-completion license once they achieve 15 credits (60 semester hours). You will be contacted by the Licensure Officer once the pre-completion license is created in your ELIS account.

QUICK TIP: To avoid duplicate accounts and records, use your LEGAL FIRST NAME when creating your ELIS account and when registering for any licensure testing! Be sure to accurately transcribe your social security number when completing this section.



FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Forms for Recommendations are located on the website with the application. Download these forms and fill in your personal information at the top. Print the forms and provide them with self-addressed envelopes to two professional educators.

The recommendations should be requested from college professors or school-based professionals who can best complete the recommendation form and support your decision to become a special education teacher. For example, good choices might be a special education teacher or a mentor teacher who supervised you in fieldwork with students with exceptionalities and their families. Recommendations may not be requested from a family member or personal friend. The names of these recommenders should be referenced in your letter of application.



CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION (CBI)

An Illinois State Police criminal background fingerprint check is required for admission. The CBI must have been completed within one year prior to the date of admission. All students admitted to a teacher education program must follow the **Elmhurst University Teacher Education Criminal Background Policy** provided on the website with the application. No CBI should be submitted if there was an arrest after the date on the CBI, rather a new CBI should be completed and submitted that was at least 30 days after the arrest date. Please submit a copy of your CBI and keep the original.

All CBIs are reviewed by the Director of Teacher Education Admissions and shredded upon admission. If a CBI indicates an applicant may have a criminal record that would make it difficult to secure field placements or may not meet licensure requirements, the Chair of the Department of Education and Director of Special Education Teacher Education will contact the applicant for a meeting.

You will receive a discount if you use Accurate Biometrics. Go to their website listed on the below form for a location nearest you. Please use your name and address for requestor information and keep a copy for your records.

[click here to open Accurate Biometrics background check form](#)

RUBRIC FOR ADMISSION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER EDUCATION (SPE) PROGRAM

2 Formal Recommendations 1 2 3	Considering both recommendations: 3 = All ratings are <u>above average or higher</u> with no more than 2 total unrated categories. 2 = All ratings are <u>average or higher</u> with no more than 4 unrated categories on both forms. 1 = Below average rating on a form, or 6 or more categories unrated
Personal Statement 1 2 3	3 = All questions were explicitly addressed with <u>appropriate</u> and well-supported answers. Writing was <u>well</u> organized and <u>errorless</u> . 2 = All questions were <u>appropriately</u> answered, explicitly or implicitly. Writing was organized with minor or no writing errors. 1 = Questions were <u>partially</u> or <u>inappropriately</u> answered, and/or writing was low quality with numerous errors or poor organization. Rater #1 _____ Rater #2 _____ Rater #3 (if needed) _____
2.75 Minimum Cumulative GPA 1 2 3	3 = 3.500+ 2 = 3.000-3.499 1 = 2.750-2.999 CUM GPA = _____ Education Grade Check: <input type="checkbox"/> All licensure courses "C-" or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Major GPA (9 sh+) meets requirements = _____ (or n/a)
English Composition Course (ENG 106) 1 2 3	3 = Composition course passed with A or higher (maybe AP) 2 = Composition course passed with B or higher 1 = Composition course passed with C or higher
SPE Prerequisite Coursework 1 2 3	3 = All prerequisite courses will be completed at end of term prior to admission 2 = One prerequisite course needed 1 = Two prerequisite courses needed
IC Coursework (General Education) 1 2 3	3 = All IC courses will be completed at end of term prior to admission 2 = One IC course needed (may require summer session to complete) 1 = Two IC courses needed (may require summer session to complete)
_____ Number of credits/semester hours at time of admission	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fingerprint Background Check shows no criminal history. [Applicants with a criminal history must meet with the Associate Chair and Department Chair]	

Total Evaluation Points _____ /18

Potential Candidate: _____

Date Application Completed: _____ Term Applied For: _____

Admission Director's Signature: _____ Date: _____

DIRECTOR: ☐ ADMIT FOR FALL 20____ ☐ DO NOT ADMIT

Associate Chair's Signature: _____

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER EDUCATION

Applicants cannot be admitted to a teacher education program until they are first admitted to Elmhurst University. A Department of Education application will have an application completion date reflecting when all required materials were finally received by the Department of Education. Admission decisions are made monthly. If an applicant meets admission requirements, but space is no longer available in the specific program for the requested term, admission will be offered for the **next fall term**.

The *Director of Teacher Education Admission* will inform applicants in writing of admission decisions.

Applicants with minimal qualifications may be denied admission. There is no appeal for applicants who are denied admission based on the quality of their application. An established appeal procedure is available for applicants who feel that their applications were not properly processed. Students may not reapply to any teacher education program once they have been denied admission.

Applicants admitted to a teacher education program may request a change to another program on a space available basis and with approval of the Associate Chair of Curriculum. Field hours completed for a previous program may not be credited toward the new program. Changing programs could delay program or degree completion.

Admission to a teacher education program does not guarantee admission to student teaching. All teacher candidates must meet specific requirements for remaining in a teacher education program and must apply for student teaching. State examinations also are required prior to admission to student teaching.

Review of teacher candidates is continuous. Candidates who are removed from a teacher education program or not admitted to student teaching have the right to appeal the decision to the University's *Teacher Education Committee*.

Advising Sheet for SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPE) Program

Special Education Major

All courses completed with C- (1.70) or higher, and Major and Cumulative GPAs of 2.750 or higher. Students apply during Sophomore year.

FRESHMEN YEAR

Fall Term-

FYS (1.0)

ENG 105 Composition (1.0)

***2 Elmhurst Integrative Curriculum (IC) requirements (2.0) -
see prerequisites***

TOTAL-4.0

Spring Term, - Begin application to program

ENG 106 Composition (1.0)

EDU 104 (1.0)

2 IC requirements (2.0) - see prerequisites

TOTAL - 4.0

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Fall Term-

EDU 223 (1.0)

MTH 325 or MTH 121 or higher (1.0)

2 IC requirements (2.0) - see prerequisites

TOTAL-4.0

Spring Term -

EDU 311 (1.0)

3 IC requirements (3.0) - see prerequisites

TOTAL-4.0

All IC requirements and the following additional courses must be completed during the **freshman and sophomore** years before beginning BLOCK I (junior year) in the SPE Education

EDU 104 Cultural Foundations of Education in the US

EDU 223 Education of PK-12 Learners with Exceptionalities (sophomore year)
- (D Tag)

EDU 311 Educational Psychology - (W and I Tag)

Mathematics

MTH 325 Math Concepts for Elementary Teachers I

* Admission to Elmhurst University is not admission to a teacher education program.

TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS (TEL) SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL

Teacher candidates will earn the State of Illinois ESL or Bilingual SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL on their Professional Educator License.

Course Sequence. The TEL SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL requires 3 courses with a GPA of 2.750 and C (2.0) or higher in all courses. The courses are scheduled throughout the SPE blocks (TEL 212, TEL 317, TEL 439). TEL 212 can be taken sophomore or junior year, TEL 317 is in Block 2, and TEL 439 is in Block 3. SPE majors who are seeking the SPE bilingual approval should plan to take the Target Language Proficiency exam before Block 2 & TEL 317 (www.il.nesinc.com) or show proof of the Seal of Biliteracy on your high school transcript.

Additional information. Some TEL courses are offered only in the evening. The Bilingual endorsement requires a language proficiency test or with proof of the Seal of Biliteracy on your high school transcript.