Graduate

Our mission is to produce some of the most skilled special education professionals in northwestern Pennsylvania. Whether you want to complete your master's in special education or receive a special education certification to pursue licensure, you'll benefit from the special education curriculum at Mercyhurst.

At Mercyhurst, we continue to shape the field of special education at a national level through our service, publication, and presentation. Join us and develop the critical thinking and analytical skills you need to become a special education leader in your community.

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- Prepare for certification from the Association for Behavior Analysis.
- Learn from expert faculty with decades of experience.
- Explore possible career paths in special education.
- Gain hands-on experience as a graduate student assistant.

Program Overview

Options: Master's (with concentrations), graduate certificates, 4+1 for Mercyhurst undergrads
Location(s): On campus; limited online courses available
Credits: 30 to 39

Duration: Minimum 21 months
Cost: $894 per credit; $27,620 total
Deadline: Rolling admissions
Start term(s): Fall or spring semester

Please note: for those seeking special education certification or ABA certification, during the course of your program it will be necessary for you to undergo the following:

- Criminal background check
- Fingerprinting
- Child abuse clearance
- Drug screening
- Medical verification of TB vaccination

Concentrations

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

This concentration prepares individuals to work as a behavior analyst within the fields of education and developmental disabilities.

The Association for Behavior Analysis International has verified the following courses toward the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Board Certified Behavior Analyst or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst examination. Applicants will need to meet additional requirements before they can be deemed eligible to take the examination.

Courses:

- EDSP 640: Concepts & Principles of ABA I (3 credits)
- EDSP 650: FBA & Behavior Interventions III (3 credits)
- EDSP 660: Concepts & Principles of ABA II (3 credits)

Applied Disability Service in Higher Education

As a growing number of students with disabilities seek to continue their education in postsecondary settings—both traditional four-year college settings as well as one- and two-year certificate/vocational settings—skilled professionals are needed to lead the way in this growing field. This concentration will prepare you to provide disability services in higher education and post-secondary education, with the opportunity to get hands-on experience working with staff and students in Mercyhurst's nationally recognized Learning Differences program and the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst.

Courses:

- EDSP 531: Curriculum and Instruction: High Incidence Disability
- EDSP 532: Supervised Clinical Experience I (25 hours required in LDP or AIM program)
- EDSP 533: Curriculum and Instruction: Low Incidence Disability
- EDSP 534: Supervised Clinical Experience II (25 hours required in OASIS program)
- EDSP 673: Internship (required in LDP, AIM, or OASIS program)
- One EDSP elective

Autism

This concentration is for graduate students who are looking to specialize in providing special education services to students with autism. With associated clinical hours, this concentration also qualifies those who hold any Pennsylvania Department of Education Certification to add an Autism Endorsement to their certificate. This concentration is also available as a graduate certificate.

Courses:

- EDSP 540 Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder
- EDSP 541 Instructional Assessment and Methods: ASD
- EDSP 501 Behavior Management: Intro to ABA and Behavior Change

English Language Learners

This concentration is for graduate students who are looking to specialize in instructing English Language Learners (ELLs). Our education department's creation of the Carpe Diem Academy, in conjunction with the Erie School District, provides new opportunities for our students to interact with ELLs and witness the need for skilled educators with training in English language learning. The program is a mixture of core special education course plus cross-listed ELL courses including:

Courses:

- WL 501 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners
- WL 512 Second Language Acquisition (with 20 hour practicum)
- ELL 514 Introduction to Sociolinguistics
- ELL 515 Supporting Literacy for English Language Learners (with 20 hour practicum)
- ELL 500 Teaching English as a Second Language: Issues in Theory and Practice (with 20 hour practicum)
- ELL 505 Professionalism and Program Development for English Language Learners

After completion of the coursework, students may apply for the PDE ESL/ELD Program Special Certificate.

Graduate Certificates

Applied Behavior Analysis

The graduate certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis is designed to meet the educational requirements for certification by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board. This 7-course sequence and associated practicum focuses on integrating research, basic principles, and specialized coursework with fieldwork in the areas of intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, and behavioral health. Prospective students will have a choice to complete either the certificate alone, or as a concentration while pursuing a graduate degree in Special Education.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS →

PDE Autism Endorsement/Graduate Certificate in Autism

Mercyhurst University knows autism. Whether through unique and specialized coursework, extensive practical experiences, or innovative service delivery in the field, Mercyhurst has forged a track record of expertise in autism. This expertise has allowed us to provide top-level training for the professionals of today and tomorrow. Our program graduates have become some of the most highly regarded educators and behavior analysts in the region and beyond working with students with autism. To solidify our reputation as experts in education for this population, our Education Department has become the first in northwestern Pennsylvania approved to offer an Autism Endorsement from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to any teacher or other education professional who holds a current Level I or Level II certificate.

AUTISM ENDORSEMENT →

Ready to Apply?

Here's what you'll need:

Completed online application
A bachelor’s degree in any discipline from an accredited school with a preferred overall minimum GPA of 3.0
Official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions you’ve attended
Resume
500-750 word personal statement outlining your reasons for enrolling and personal and professional goals
Letter of recommendation from a professional or academic source (such as an employer or professor)

International students may need to complete additional requirements.

→

Why choose Mercyhurst?

The special education curriculum at Mercyhurst will help you become a skilled provider of educational and behavioral services. You’ll refine your critical thinking and analytical skills as well as learn to apply the research competencies necessary to benefit individuals with disabilities and unique learning needs.

You’ll be prepared through our special education programs to:

-Analyze and critique educational research.
-Design single-case research proposals in APA writing style.
-Critically evaluate and apply ethical guidelines according to professional standards .
-Apply dimensions of applied behavior analysis.
-Utilize evidence-based practices and assessments in clinical settings.
-Write measurable objectives, as found in Individual Education Plans (IEP).
-Write procedures for evidence-based practices across different disability groups.

Mercyhurst Special Education Master’s Program
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