

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS, ENDORSEMENT

Program Description

This is a unique 12-credit program for certified teachers who are interested in learning and gaining additional experience in autism spectrum disorders. It provides them with multi-disciplinary perspectives and approaches to working with children with ASD and their families. Master's degree candidates interested in specializing in autism can apply these courses as electives to the program. Students may also choose to complete the endorsement coursework as post-baccalaureate credits, Act 48, or professional development.

The Autism Concentration program is one component of a university-wide initiative to bring attention to the need for coordinated sharing of knowledge, perspectives and advances in the support and education of individuals with autism and their families. As a center for educational, health, psychological, and social service studies in this area, La Salle is prepared to help address the many aspects of life touched by autism. Collaborating with other interested groups beyond the university community, La Salle hopes to provide an incubator for the development of advanced skills and accelerated sharing of emerging best practices in school and home for supporting these children and optimizing their human potential.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education defines program endorsements as certifications in new or emerging areas of knowledge where formal certification does not exist. The Program Endorsement is intended to improve a teacher's skills in dealing with complex classroom settings. These endorsements are added to existing Level I or Level II Certificates.

In addition to the standard admission requirements for Graduate Education, applicants should hold a valid teaching certificate or provide evidence of a completed certification program, including passing scores on all PRAXIS exams.

Students can earn either a Master of Arts in Education with a Concentration in Autism Spectrum Disorders (30 credits) or a Program Endorsement Certification only in Autism Spectrum Disorders (12 credits).

Required for Program Completion

12 Credits

EDC 655 Dimensions of Autism

EDC 657 Systems Approach with Families and Educators

EDC 665 Communication Strategies for Teachers of ASD Children and Youth

EDC 667 Implementing the IEP in the Inclusive Classroom

Course Sequence

Eight-Week Sessions

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
First Semester		
EDC 655	Dimensions of Autism	3

EDC 657	Systems Approach With Families and Educators	3
Credits		6
Second Semester		
EDC 665	Communication Strategies for Teachers of Students Spanning the Special Needs Spectrum	3
EDC 667	Implementing the IEP in the Inclusive Classroom	3
Credits		6
Total Credits		12

Course Descriptions

Education

EDC 655 Dimensions of Autism

This course provides an overview of the historical and legislative antecedents of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Students will learn about the characteristics of students who fall within the Autistic Spectrum (Asperger's syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder, Rett's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and hyperlexia) in preparation for teaching students with autism in inclusive and self-contained settings. Students will be introduced to a continuum of interventions for students with ASD.

EDC 665 Communication Strategies for Teachers of Students Spanning the Special Needs Spectrum

This course will provide educators with new insights into the communications-related needs of students, enable participants to work more effectively with related services in the delivery of special programming and, teach class members to apply new technologies and strategies to best meet the needs of special needs students including those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). In collaboration with speech- language pathologists, current practices in monitoring, data-gathering and assessment of students holding communications-related IEPs will be introduced, practiced and applied to the classroom setting in a practicum experience. Prerequisite(s): EDC 655

EDC 657 Systems Approach With Families and Educators

This course is designed to provide the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Graduate Student, and the Education Graduate Student with an understanding of how family systems, the education system and the community mental health system operate independently and collectively, and the influence each has on the other with regard to the special needs child and family. The goal of the course is to enhance the understanding of the delivery of service, and its impact on the well being of the child and the family. A comprehensive overview of systems approach to family therapy, the educator's role within the education system, and access and understanding of the community mental health system will be examined and explored. Additionally examined will be cultural issues and realities, the ethical considerations in treating a special needs child and family, and how all systems within the child's life can collaborate within the treatment model developed for that child. Prerequisite(s): EDC 655

EDC 667 Implementing the IEP in the Inclusive Classroom

This hybrid course will enhance graduate students' understanding of how to interpret a Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER) and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in order to meet the academic, social, and/or behavioral goals of students with disabilities within the context of the general education curriculum. In addition, special consideration of the needs of English language learners and gifted and talented students will be addressed in the course. Application of universal design, differentiated instruction, and specific accommodations and strategies for students with disabilities will be stressed. Prerequisite(s): For the special education certification program: EDC 510, EDC 644, EDC 643, EDC 645, EDC 661; For the ASD program: EDC 655; EDC 665