

Undergraduate Teaching Program: Special Education Major

Experience Guidelines

The Special Education program requires verification of a minimum of 50 hours of experience with students with disabilities. At least 20 of these 50 hours must be completed post high school. The experiences may include time in community work, social services, and/or schools. For students enrolled in the College of Education, the form is due by [Gateway 1](#). For intercollegiate transfers and off campus transfer students, the form is due by the time of application.

An hours verification form should be completed for each experience and signed by a person who has directly supervised the experience. Relatives of the applicant may not supervise the experience. Applicants are encouraged to select experiences that reflect the following:

Sustained interaction. A goal of this experience is to assist applicants in developing insight into the impact of disability on the lives of individuals. As such, sustained, long-term interactions are needed and are preferred over short-term or single day opportunities of the same amount of clock time.

Settings. Gaining an initial idea of the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers in American schools is also a purpose of this experience. However, we believe it is also valuable for applicants to have a broader understanding of the many different settings in and outside of school in which special educators might provide service. While we encourage applicants to seek school-based experiences, we will consider equally experiences gained in other activities (e.g., community-based recreation, respite care, day camp programs)

Variety. While it is not strictly required, applicants may find it beneficial to seek experiences with individuals of different ages and different disabilities. The LBS I teacher certification entitles special educators to teach students from kindergarten through age 21 who have almost any type of disability (this certificate does not qualify teachers in the areas of Blind/ Visually Impaired or Deaf/Hard of Hearing as primary disabilities). Clearly, any single experience would not provide exposure to this range. We encourage applicants to share in their application essays information about experiences beyond those required in the application materials.

Examples

Type of Experience	Preferred	Less Desirable
Recreation	Ongoing recreation support with one or more individuals for a few hours each week across several months (e.g., coaching a team, providing individual supports for participation in community activity)	Same number or more clock hours accrued through “one time” only events sponsored by a park district (e.g., volunteer at holiday parties, Special Olympics meets)
Tutoring	Tutoring, respite care, or babysitting with one individual or family for an extended period of time --child care full time during summers &/or for multiple years, targeted tutoring with one individual in a few subject areas that continues throughout a school year --development of individual relationship is key	Child care or tutoring provided on a less regular or intensive basis. Examples --tutoring in a study lab and helping whoever shows up, working with a volunteer agency to provide child care for special events or parent meetings
Best Buddies	“Best Buddies” as a College Buddy, communicating with the individual and his or her family weekly and spending time together twice per month for several months	“Best Buddies” Associate Member who logs same number of hours through attending meetings and participating in fundraising and special events
Special Education Classroom	Volunteering once a week over the course of a semester in a special education classroom to provide tutoring in a resource classroom	Same number of clock hours spent visiting the special education classroom of a family friend or relative for 2 days over winter break.

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Hours Verification Form

As part of the admission process for the University of Illinois College of Education teacher education programs, verification of a minimum of 50 hours of work with students is required. At least 20 of these 50 hours must be completed post high school. This experience should be in one but no more than two settings which parallels the program goals of the Special Education major. The experiences may include time in community work, social services, and/or schools. Supervision of your experience must be completed by a certified educator or a professional administrator. We hope this experience allows applicants to sample the possibilities in the profession and gain personal insight to confirm their career choice.

Applicant Name: _____ UIN*: _____

School or Agency: _____

School or Agency Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip*: _____

School or Agency Phone Number*: _____

Briefly describe the individuals with whom you worked including their age and disability.

Please indicate date range in which the experiences were completed: _____

Additional information and signature required on the reverse side of this form

Please Type All Information:

Briefly describe the setting (e.g., Who attended? What were the purposes?) and tell why you selected this site.

Briefly reflect on what you have learned from this experience.

This section to be completed by supervisor

Briefly assess this student's performance under your supervision:

I verify that _____ hours were completed satisfactorily and that the student's description accurately represents his/her experience

Signature of Supervisor

Title

Please Print Name

Date