

Plan of Study: Master of Arts in Special Education with Graduate Certificate in Autism and Neurodiverse Learners

Name					
Address		Street	City	State	Zip Code
Primary Phone		E-mail Address			

Goals and Focus of the Program:

The Master of Arts in Special Education with Graduate Certificate in Autism and Neurodiverse Learners at the University of Saint Joseph is designed for educators and related professionals seeking to advance their skills in supporting students with autism and neurodivergent learning profiles across inclusive K–12 settings. Grounded in the latest research and best practices in special education, this program emphasizes strength-based, inclusive instruction and responsive support for learners with diverse cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social needs. Throughout the program, students learn to function as active members of interdisciplinary teams, using collaboration and communication to improve outcomes for children and adolescents with autism and other neurodiverse learning profiles.

Program Design:

Built for working educators, this fully online program combines live, interactive weekly class sessions with the convenience of asynchronous time for reading, reflection, and project development. The program follows a cohort model for real-time collaboration and peer support. Courses are offered in eight-week blocks, one at a time, and class sessions meet online the same evening each week from 4:45-8:45. The 30-credit program can be completed in approximately two years.

Prerequisites:

To apply, students must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution (minimum GPA of 2.5) and have access to a classroom and students or educational setting throughout the program to support field study and application of course content. Parents and related service professionals are invited to participate in the program.

Degree Requirements and Career Outcome:

To earn the Master of Arts in Special Education and Graduate Certificate in Autism and Neurodiverse Learners from the University of Saint Joseph, students must successfully complete all required coursework and a course-embedded capstone project. **Please note: This program does not lead to initial teacher certification, licensure, or endorsement.**, but it offers a valuable credential for educators and professionals who support neurodiverse populations.

Course	Course Title	Start Week	End Week	Credits
SPEC 560	Introduction to Autism and Neurodiverse Learners	Mar. 2, 2026	Apr. 27, 2026	3
SPEC 561	Behavioral Interventions	May 4, 2026	Jun. 22, 2026	3
SPEC 562	Communication and Technology for Neurodiverse Learners	Aug. 24, 2026	Oct. 12, 2026	3
SPEC 565	Supporting Mental Health Needs of Neurodiverse Learners	Oct. 19, 2026	Dec. 7, 2026	3
SPEC 564	Application of Instructional Strategies for Neurodiverse Learners	Jan. 4, 2027	Feb. 22, 2027	3
SPEC 541	Creating Effective Systems of Support	Mar. 1, 2027	Apr. 26, 2027	3
SPEC 544	The Science of Social-Emotional Learning	May 3, 2027	Jun. 21, 2027	3
SPEC 590	Special Topics	Aug. 30, 2027	Oct. 18, 2027	3
SPEC 530	Research in Special Education*	Oct. 25, 2027	Dec. 13, 2027	3
SPEC 596	Practicum	Jan. 10, 2028	Feb. 28, 2028	3
*MASTER'S CAPSTONE PROJECT INCLUDED			Total Credit Hours	30

PLAN OF STUDY AGREEMENT: (Initial each line, then sign and date)

- ☐ I have read and understand all information in the Student Information Packet, including important information regarding admissions, transferring credits, refunds, enrollment, and tuition and fees.
- ☐ I understand that this program will be delivered in a fully online format through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.
- ☐ I understand the Online Masters for Teachers cohort requires all students to complete their coursework with grades of C or better.
- ☐ I understand that I can only re-take two courses, one time each.
- ☐ I understand that I am expected to submit a course evaluation at the conclusion of each course.
- ☐ I have read and understand this Plan of Study and agree to this Plan of Study Agreement.

Student Signature **Date**

Program Director Signature **Date**

The courses for this program may be offered in a different order. This list should not be considered the finalized course sequence.