

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

*Empowering future teachers and school professionals with the tools  
and experience to unlock every student's potential for learning.*



**GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**ASSUMPTION COLLEGE**

Light the way.



“Assumption provided me the opportunity to participate in small classes and develop a strong relationship with my professors who were beyond helpful and provided me with multiple opportunities to work with students with various needs. I took classes that taught me how to assess students for learning disabilities, develop detailed and well-written IEPs, effectively co-teach, and differentiate lessons for various levels of need. This graduate program set me up for success and I am forever grateful for the education I received at Assumption.”

– **KEVIN BJORKLUND, M.A. '16**  
 8TH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
 WEST BOYLSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### ASSUMPTION COLLEGE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

- Recognized as one of the best colleges in the U.S. according to *The Princeton Review* in its annual “Best 380 Colleges” listing.
- Ranked in the top tier of *U.S. News & World Report’s* “2019 Best Colleges” ratings of approximately 200 universities in the North that offer bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

## Set High Standards as You Launch Your Career in Special Education.

### MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

### CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED GRADUATE STUDY (C.A.G.S.) IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS (PBS)

The graduate Special Education program at Assumption College is dedicated to improving the education of pupils with special needs by preparing knowledgeable, reflective, competent special educators who advocate for their students. We are committed to training educators who engage in ethical and professional practices and promote inclusive education.

By the completion of their studies, Special Education graduate students will:

- **Demonstrate conceptually sound lesson planning derived from research-based methods.**
- **Employ effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of all pupils.**
- **Effectively communicate subject matter knowledge.**



### Assumption Advantages That Help Advance Your Career:

- **Learn practical, evidence-based strategies** from instructors who are expert teachers, administrators, and counselors in local school systems.
- **Enjoy small classes, personal attention, and accessible faculty.**
- **Establish your foundation for success** with a rigorous, comprehensive program modeled on Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines.
- **Learn with students who are consistent achievers** on the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL).
- **Receive mentoring throughout the program** with systematic monitoring of your progress by faculty and practicum supervisors.
- **Follow in the footsteps of successful graduates who are teachers and administrators** in urban and suburban communities, public and private schools. A number of recent graduates have quickly risen to supervisory roles as a result of the expertise they gained at Assumption College.

The program bridges the gap between theory and practice by providing graduate students with knowledge that is proven to be effective in the classroom. Our goal is to help beginning special educators to achieve success, and to provide experienced teachers with an opportunity to extend and refine their knowledge and skills. We recognize the importance of using technology and illustrate practical ways to harness it to improve teaching and learning for children and adolescents with diverse special needs.

As a graduate of our program, you will be fully prepared to become a leader in helping students with special needs maximize their potential in school and in life.

*Nanho Vander Hart*

**NANHO VANDER HART, PH.D.**  
 DIRECTOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM  
 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SPECIAL EDUCATION

# You'll Learn Exactly How to Maximize the Development of Each Student in a Variety of Settings

Emphasis is on the *authentic practice* of being a special educator.

The graduate Special Education program primarily prepares students for a career as a teacher of children and adolescents with mild to moderate disabilities. The competency-based program is founded upon the principles of effective instruction and the philosophy of inclusive education. The instruction strives to educate its graduate students to exemplify good character and integrity in all aspects of their professional lives.

The courses that comprise the program emphasize connections among theory, research, and practice to build students' awareness of how to maximize the development of each pupil in a variety of settings. Accordingly, the students in our program develop a repertoire of instructional, diagnostic, consultative, and collaborative skills and evidence-based strategies critical to the role. They also develop an understanding of the full continuum of services available to individuals with exceptionalities.

At Assumption, the goal of educational assessment is to constantly refine the lens through which we examine a child's ability to learn. Special educators are aided in achieving this goal by an understanding of the brain's functioning and what it's capable of receiving during a child's critical growth periods. Our graduate students are exposed to a broad range of current educational assessments and interventions, including neuropsychological or "brain-based methods." Special educators can put this learning into practice immediately in their work, making more effective interventions that heighten the learning of their pupils.

—JOE VANDERGRIFT, PH.D.,  
LECTURER

For qualified students who seek an *Initial* or *Professional* licensure as Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities at grade levels PreK-8 or 5-12, a field-based pre-practicum and practicum or performance assessment complements their progress through the program, providing the means by which they establish their competence as special educators in accordance with state licensure regulations.

## Applying to the Master of Arts Program

The admissions committee considers a holistic approach of each candidate's application in assessing their potential to successfully complete the graduate Special Education program. Factors considered include a minimum undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.

### Your application file will consist of the following:

- **Graduate Application**
- **Application Fee** – waived for Assumption students and alumni
- **Official College Transcripts**, undergraduate and graduate
- **Three Letters of Recommendation** – academic and/or professional
- **Current Resume**
- **A Copy of educator licensure documents** if the candidate already holds a license in Massachusetts or another state license
- **A Personal Essay** describing the academic preparation, work experiences, and skills that the candidate brings to this graduate program, what he or she hopes to accomplish academically, and his or her professional goal
- **NOTE:** The GRE is **not** required.

For application deadlines and admissions information, please visit:  
<http://graduate.assumption.edu/special-ed>

# The M.A. in Special Education—*Initial* License

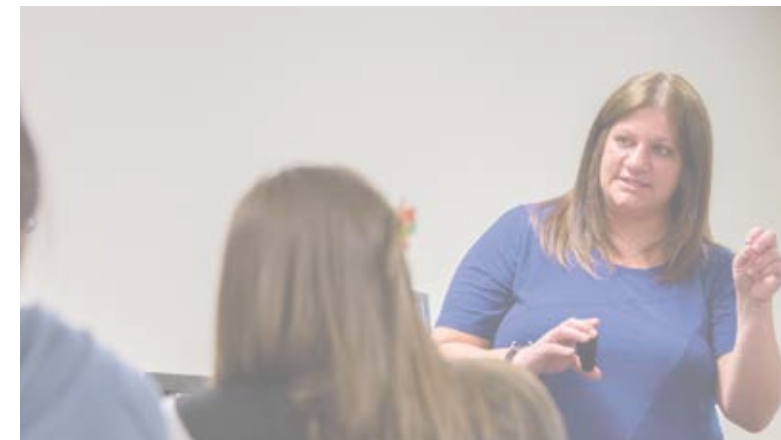
**Course Requirements –**  
Candidates for *Initial* License

## Master of Arts in Special Education: *Initial* License for Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12)

Candidates for the degree of Master of Arts in Special Education are required to complete a rigorous 12-course, 36-credit program to develop systematically the knowledge and skills essential to demonstrate competence as a teacher of students with mild or moderate disabilities. Some flexibility is afforded those students not seeking Massachusetts educator licensure. For those seeking teaching licensure, institutional endorsement for the Massachusetts *Initial* License for Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12) requires, at a minimum, successful completion of all 12 listed courses or their equivalents. Students who have not had prerequisite courses may also need to take additional courses. Whether or not students have had equivalent courses is determined in transcript review. Enrollment in some courses, including the practicum, may require the prior approval of the Special Education Program Director and/or the completion of prerequisite course(s) beyond the 12 required courses listed.

### Oral Examination or Case Study

All students in the Master of Arts in Special Education program are required either to pass an oral examination or present a case study to complete requirements for the degree.



## COURSE OF STUDY: *INITIAL* LICENSE FOR TEACHER OF STUDENTS WITH MODERATE DISABILITIES (PreK-8 or 5-12)

### REQUIRED:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>SED 502</b>     | Teaching English Language Learners with and without Special Needs               |
| <b>OR</b>          |   |
| <b>EDU 515</b>     | Diversity in Schooling  |
| <b>EDU 512</b>     | Introduction to Research in Education   |
| <b>SED 560</b>     | Foundations of Special Education  |
| <b>SED 561</b>     | Individualized Education Planning: A Collaborative Approach                     |
| <b>SED/PSY 566</b> | Assessment of Special Learning Needs of Children and Adolescents                |
| <b>SED/PSY 568</b> | Behavioral Assessment and Interventions   |
| <b>SED 570</b>     | Inclusion: Theory and Classroom Practice  |
| <b>EDU 552</b>     | Foundations of Teaching Reading   |
| <b>OR</b>          |   |
| <b>EDU 572</b>     | Teaching Reading to Diverse Learners  |
| <b>EDU 574</b>     | Teaching Mathematics to Diverse Learners  |
| <b>SED 555</b>     | Pre-practicum I: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)  |
| <b>SED 565</b>     | Pre-practicum II: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12) |
| <b>SED 590*</b>    | Practicum and Seminar: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities           |

\* Pre-practicum hours must be completed and approved prior to enrolling in the practicum. Degree candidates who do not seek Massachusetts teacher licensure must substitute approved electives for the practicum; they may not enroll in the practicum.

## Admissions Requirements – Candidates for *Initial* License

Enrollment in the Special Education program is open to any qualified individual who meets the admissions standards.

### All candidates for *Initial* Licensure must meet the following criteria:

1. Possess a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree; and
2. Have a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.

Candidates for the Massachusetts *Initial* License for Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12) are not required to have passed the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) prior to applying to the program. However, in order to be eligible to enroll in the practicum, students must submit evidence of passing scores on all MTEL required for licensure.

### Candidates seeking a license for PreK-8 must pass the following tests:

1. Communication and Literacy Skills;
2. Foundations of Reading OR Reading Specialists; and
3. General Curriculum, including two subtests (i.e., multi-subject and mathematics\* subtests).

### Candidates seeking licensure for 5-12 must pass the following tests:

1. Communication and Literacy Skills;
2. Foundations of Reading OR Reading Specialists; and
3. General Curriculum, including two subtests (i.e., multi-subject and mathematics\* subtests) OR one of the following MTEL subject matter tests at the 5-8 or 8-12 grade level: English, History, Middle School Humanities (English/History) (50), Middle School Math/Science (51), Mathematics (47 or 09 only), science (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, General Science, Physics), or Political Science/Political Philosophy. (Elementary Math (53), Middle School Math (47), or Mathematics (09) will also meet the math subtest requirement.)

Candidates for the *Initial* License who do not already hold a Massachusetts teacher license may be required to take additional coursework in the content areas and/or curriculum and methods of teaching prior to enrollment in the practicum.

It will be determined based on a comprehensive moderate disabilities subject matter knowledge transcript review.

**Licensure Reciprocity:** Individuals who complete approved programs are eligible for licensure reciprocity with the approximately 45 other states that are parties to the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement.

**NOTE:** Assumption College responds to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in matters of educator licensure. The College reserves the right to modify the Special Education program accordingly. All Assumption students are alerted to changes in the program as is appropriate.

### Practicum for Massachusetts *Initial* License

In most cases, students are considered eligible for the practicum once they have successfully completed all prerequisite courses or when they take such courses concurrently. A candidate's eligibility for and enrollment in the practicum will be approved by the Special Education Program Director based upon:

1. a review of the student's transcript, existing teacher licensure, and professional experience;
2. successful performance in required graduate courses;
3. evidence of completion of required pre-practicum hours and field tasks; and
4. evidence of passing scores on all of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) for Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities.

The practicum is a semester-long (i.e., 14-week, 400 hours) commitment governed by criteria outlined in the Massachusetts Regulations for Educator Licensure. Accordingly, teacher candidates must complete at least 75 hours (PreK-8) OR at least 150 hours (5-12), if not all of the practicum, in an inclusive classroom setting. Teacher candidates must be prepared to spend full days at the practicum site(s) during the practicum semester.

*For information concerning Commonwealth of Massachusetts educator licensure, contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:*

Office of Educator Licensure  
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 338-3000, [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

## Applicants Who Do Not Seek Massachusetts Educator Licensure (non-licensure students)

Prospective students for the M.A. program only must meet the following criteria:

1. Possess a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree; and
2. Have a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.

For those students interested in earning a Master of Arts in Special Education only, they are not required to hold a Massachusetts license nor are they required to pass any of the Massachusetts tests for educator licensure while they are in the program. Such students may enroll in any Special Education course except for the practicum course or the performance assessment course required for Massachusetts *Initial* or *Professional* licensure. Students are required to pass an oral examination or present a case study to complete requirements for the degree.

Applicants who do not seek Massachusetts Educator Licensure are to follow the same application procedure outlined for *Initial* License applicants.

## Fifth Year Option for the Master of Arts in Special Education – *Initial* License

The Special Education program offers a special five-year program that enables an Assumption College student to complete requirements for both the Bachelor of Arts degree in an area of the liberal arts and sciences and the Master of Arts in Special Education degree leading to eligibility for the Massachusetts *Initial* License for Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12). Students enrolled in this program will be eligible for Massachusetts licensure as elementary, middle, or secondary teacher and teacher of students with moderate disabilities. Undergraduate students who are admitted to the graduate program on early decision must be eligible for an *Initial* License as elementary, middle, or secondary teacher. If admitted to the program, they may begin taking graduate courses during the senior year and complete the master's degree requirements in a fifth year of study at the College.

Assumption undergraduate students who are considering early admission for the fifth-year master's program should consult with the Director of the Special Education program

during the junior year to discuss eligibility and application procedures, and to plan a course of study.

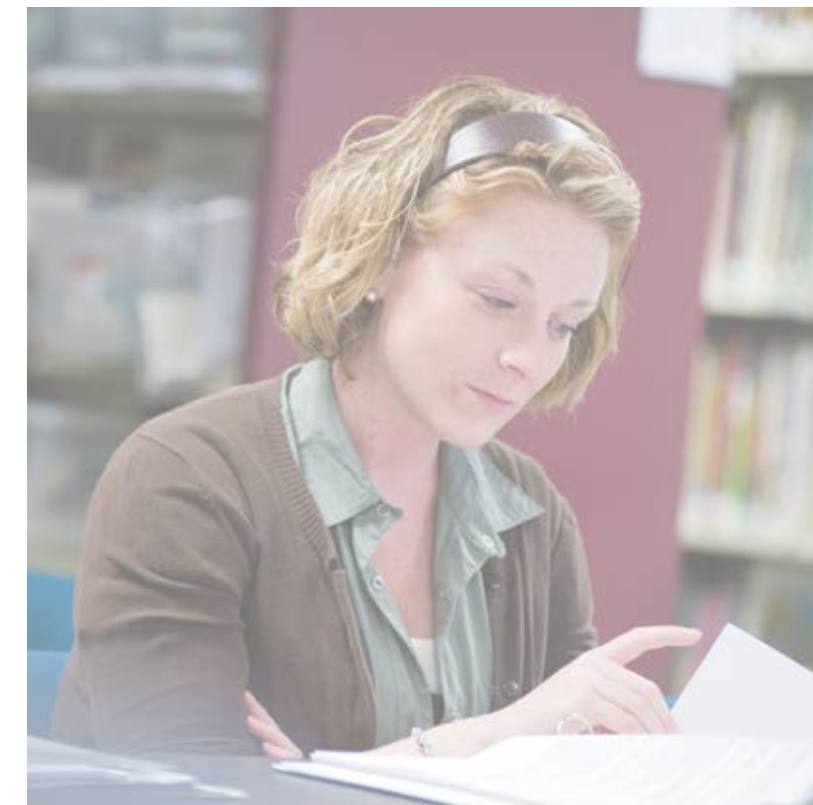
## Fifth Year Option – Admission Requirements

Assumption College undergraduates who seek early admission to the Master of Arts in Special Education program must meet the following standards:

1. Have at least a 3.3 cumulative GPA and a 3.0 GPA in their major field of study;
2. Have a major in Elementary or Secondary Education.

To apply for early admission to the fifth-year program, candidates must submit a complete application to the Office of Graduate Studies, ordinarily by the last day of the spring semester of the junior year. Application requirements can be found under “Applying to the Program – *Initial* License” on page 3.

Prior to enrollment in the practicum, Assumption students who seek Massachusetts *Initial* Licensure as elementary, middle, or secondary teacher and teacher of students with moderate disabilities must pass all of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) required for licensure in their specific field(s).



# The M.A. in Special Education Professional License

## Admissions Requirements – Candidates for Professional License

Enrollment in the Special Education program is open to any qualified individual who meets the admissions standards.

### All candidates for Professional Licensure must meet the following criteria:

1. Possess a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree;
2. Have a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0;
3. Possess an *Initial* license as a Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12) or Elementary Education from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
4. Have at least one year of full-time employment in an educational setting.

For information concerning Commonwealth of Massachusetts teacher licensure, contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

Office of Educator Licensure  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 338-3000  
www.doe.mass.edu

**NOTE:** The following is required for a *Professional* License.

- Three years of employment under an *Initial* License
- Completion of a teacher induction program

For more information, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/academic-prek12/teacher/license-types.html>



## COURSES: PROFESSIONAL LICENSE FOR TEACHER OF STUDENTS WITH MODERATE DISABILITIES (PreK-8 or 5-12)

### REQUIRED:

- SED 660** Critical Issues in Special Education  
(prerequisite: SED 560 or equivalent)
- SED 571** Curriculum and Methods for Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)
- SED 591** Performance Assessment and Seminar: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)
- SED 699** Thesis: Guided Evidence-Based Instruction (prerequisite: EDU 512 or 703)

### SEVEN ADDITIONAL COURSES:

(must be approved by the Director of Special Education)

- EDU 512** Introduction to Research in Education
- OR**
- EDU 703** Advanced Research Seminar
- EDU 515** Diversity in Schooling
- EDU 572** Teaching Reading to Diverse Learners
- EDU 575** Seminar: Strategies in Teaching Mathematics to Students with Moderate Disabilities
- SED 567** Seminar: Advanced Assessment of Special Learning Needs
- SED 580** Learning Disabilities
- SED 585** Teaching Students with Behavior Disorders
- SED 586** Students with Severe Disabilities
- SED 600** Special Topics in Special Education
- SED 700** Directed Study

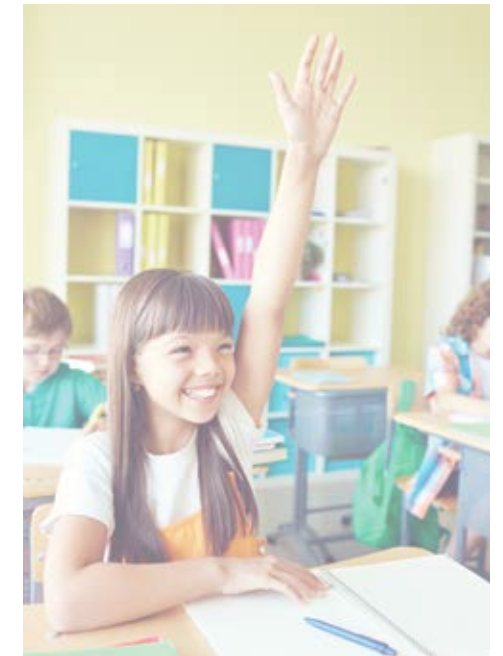
Those degree candidates who do not seek Massachusetts educator licensure must substitute approved electives for the performance assessment; they may not enroll in the performance assessment.

# Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (C.A.G.S.) in Special Education: Positive Behavior Supports

Teachers, administrators and school professionals need to be skilled with a repertoire of behavior strategies. Our 18-credit curriculum in Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) will provide you with specialized skills that afford you more time teaching and less time disciplining—something valuable to all teachers and school professionals. Become an expert and role model in behavior management and gain leadership in the classroom.

The C.A.G.S. program in Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is designed for professional educators who hold a Master's degree and is awarded upon completion of 18 credits beyond the master's degree in Special Education, Education, or other related fields. Those students who have not met prerequisites prior to being admitted to the program may be required to take more than 18 credit hours in order to earn their certificates.

Students who are enrolled in the Initial Licensure program may be able to take C.A.G.S. courses, if eligible, thereby earning their C.A.G.S. in addition to their master's degree. The C.A.G.S. credits may be used toward their Professional Licenses.



## PROGRAMS OF STUDY / C.A.G.S. in Special Education: Positive Behavior Supports

### OPTION 1: PROFESSIONAL LICENSE PROGRAM

### OPTION 2: CERTIFICATE ONLY PROGRAM

#### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA:

- Possess a Master of Arts or Master of Education degree;
- Have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0;
- Possess an *Initial* License as a Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12); and
- Have at least one year of full-time employment in an educational setting.

- Possess a Master of Arts or Master of Education degree;
- Have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0; and
- Have at least one year of full-time employment in an educational setting.

#### REQUIREMENTS: (18-Credit Hours)

- EDU 515** Diversity in Schooling
- SED 585** Teaching Students with Behavior Disorders
- SED 587** Advanced Application of Positive Behavior Supports (prerequisite: PSY/SED 568 or equivalent)
- SED 589** Seminar: Research & Practice in Positive Behavior Supports (prerequisite: EDU 512, SED 587 or equivalent; can be taken concurrently)
- SED 591** Performance Assessment and Seminar: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)

- EDU 515** Diversity in Schooling
- SED 585** Teaching Students with Behavior Disorders
- SED 587** Advanced Application of Positive Behavior Supports (prerequisite: PSY/SED 568 or equivalent)
- SED 589** Seminar: Research & Practice in Positive Behavior Supports (prerequisite: EDU 512, SED 587 or equivalent; can be taken concurrently)

#### ELECTIVES

## Applying to the C.A.G.S. Program

The admissions committee considers a holistic approach of each candidate's application in assessing their potential to successfully complete the graduate Special Education program in Positive Behavior Supports. Factors considered include successful completion of a master's degree in Special Education or related area and a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

### Your application file will consist of the following:

- **Graduate Application**
- **Application Fee** – waived for Assumption students and alumni
- **Official College Transcripts**, undergraduate and graduate
- **Three Letters of Recommendation** – academic and/or professional
- **Current Resume**
- **A personal essay** describing the academic preparation, professional experiences, and skills that the candidate brings to this C.A.G.S. program
- **NOTE:** The GRE is **not** required
- **The admission requirements and process is simplified for alumni** of Assumption College's Master of Arts in Special Education program.

For application deadlines and admissions information, please visit:  
[www.assumption.edu/special-ed](http://www.assumption.edu/special-ed)



"It was always been a dream of mine to become a Special Education Teacher, and Assumption helped that dream come to life. The Assumption community helped mold me into the teacher I am today. The professors' love for the Special Education field is infectious, and I was so lucky to learn from them. In my current position at Wachusett Regional School District I am a kindergarten, fourth and fifth grade Special Education Teacher. I work with a diverse group of students and teachers every day. The classes and projects at Assumption more than prepared me for this field."

– **ELIZABETH DICK, M.A. '18**

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Course Descriptions / 2019-2020

### SED 502 Teaching English Language Learners with and without Special Needs

This course introduces the structural levels of language, theories, principles, and processes of language acquisition. The course also focuses on reading of complex informational and literary texts, responding to text-based questions, writing from sources, and building academic vocabulary and background knowledge through discussion, reading, and writing. Graduate students will explore and examine various effective instructional approaches and pedagogical implications with critical appreciation for a full range of English language learners (PreK-8 and 5-12), including those with special needs. **3 credits**

### EDU 512 Introduction to Research in Education

This course is designed to enable students to become critical readers of research in education. It will also help them to design and conduct research in an educational setting. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be addressed. Students will be expected to analyze research reports and to design potential research projects. **3 credits**

### EDU 515 Diversity in Schooling

This course examines the concept of diversity and its implications for teachers, students, and schools. The course draws from leading scholars and writers in the fields of education and related disciplines to highlight the various perspectives on diversity. It also will emphasize the impact of culture on the curriculum, teacher-student relationships and pedagogy in schools. Through course readings, discussion and collaborative learning, and independent research, students will gain a greater understanding of the concept of diversity in its various permutations and will learn how to identify, select, and design teaching strategies that support expressed goals for diversity in schools. **3 credits**

### EDU 552 Foundations of Teaching Reading

This course introduces students to the theoretical and philosophical bases underlying reading development. Using the stages of reading development as a frame, students explore the role of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension at stages from emergent literacy to mature reading. Students also investigate the relationship of reading to writing, language and cultural influences on reading development, instructional models of reading, methods and materials for reading instruction, and the assessment and evaluation of reading development. There is a focus throughout the course on connecting theory and research to current practice and policy, with specific focus on the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. **3 credits**

### SED 555 Pre-practicum I: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)

This supervised pre-practicum experience I is conducted in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Guidelines for Pre-Practicum for Teachers. "The purpose of the pre-practicum is to provide candidates with multiple opportunities to apply learning from coursework into practice through increasingly authentic teaching experiences in preparation to successfully demonstrate readiness during the capstone preparation experience known as the practicum." It provides teacher candidates with opportunities to practice and gain first-hand experiences through guided observations, teaching demos, and direct engagement with students with moderate disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12). Seminars are held as assigned by program supervisor. Seminar topics include professional standards for teachers, evidence-based practices in special education, and individual issues related to pre-practicum placements. Teacher candidates will be observed by program supervisor at least once in PreK-8 or 5-12 setting. Pre- and post-observation conferences are required. **3 credits**

### SED 560 Foundations of Special Education

This introductory course focuses on the overview of special education, various categories of disabilities, and educational issues and strategies for teaching and accommodating pupils with special needs. This course serves to familiarize graduate students with the historical, theoretical, and philosophical bases underlying special education including educational terminology for pupils with mild/moderate to severe/profound disabilities, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the current laws, landmark decisions, and educational mandates (e.g., IDEA) that govern the education for all children and adolescents with disabilities. It also encourages proper understanding of critical issues with regard to individuals with disabilities. Services provided by other agencies are also discussed. This course provides an essential foundation for further study in special education. **3 credits**

### SED 561 Individualized Education Planning: A Collaborative Approach

Responding to IDEA 2004, professional standards, theory, and contemporary research, this course frames the special education process as a collaborative, tiered problem solving approach to individualized educational planning. Through evidence-based tools, best practices, application, and interactive discussions, students investigate learning and behavior struggles to construct quality IEPs and documents. The course concludes with formulating a proactive action plan to promote a culture of professional support and cooperation in school settings. *Prerequisite: SED 560.* **3 credits**

# Course Descriptions / 2019-2020

## **SED/PSY 563 Developmental Pathways and Challenges**

This course provides a comprehensive examination of human growth and development of children and adolescents in the physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional domains with an emphasis on both typical and atypical development. This course assists graduate students to better understand the relationships between developmental challenges and their effects on learning, thereby enabling them to examine and implement effective instructional approaches and interventions with critical appreciation for children and adolescents with special needs. **3 credits**

## **SED 565 Pre-practicum II: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)**

This supervised pre-practicum experience II is conducted in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Guidelines for Pre-Practicum for Teachers. "The purpose of the pre-practicum is to provide candidates with multiple opportunities to apply learning from coursework into practice through increasingly authentic teaching experiences in preparation to successfully demonstrate readiness during the capstone preparation experience known as the practicum." It provides teacher candidates with opportunities to practice and gain first-hand experiences through guided observations, teaching demos, and direct engagement with students with moderate disabilities (PreK-8 or 5-12). Seminars are held as assigned by program supervisor. Seminar topics include subject matter knowledge (SMK), professional standards for teachers (PST), evidence-based practices in special education, and individual issues related to pre-practicum placements. Teacher candidates will submit a video/technology streamed lesson (which was delivered in PreK-8 or 5-12 setting) with lesson plan and reflection to program supervise at least once. The pre- and post-observation conferences are required. **0 credit**

## **SED/PSY 566 Assessment of Special Learning Needs of Children and Adolescents**

In this course, students gain knowledge of both formal and informal assessment of students with special learning needs using a systematic and comprehensive approach. They examine frequently used diagnostic assessment tools in areas of physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development. Emphasis is placed on those assessment strategies that yield objective data regarding individual skill repertoires and learning characteristics, thereby providing a basis for educational decision making and the preparation and evaluation of IEPs. Topics such as portfolio assessment, alternative assessment, interpretation of results of assessment, report writing, IEP preparation, and communication with families and other professionals are also included. **3 credits**

## **SED 567 Seminar: Advanced Assessment of Special Learning Needs**

This advanced studies graduate seminar focuses on promoting the advanced graduate students' knowledge of and mastery in administering educational diagnostic assessments for students with diverse moderate learning needs. Seminar participants learn advanced principles of accurate assessment of children and adolescents' learning needs, to aid decision making and instructional planning for these students. Select representative diagnostic tools, which are frequently used in PreK-12 schools, are discussed, demonstrated, practiced and administered to develop skill proficiency. Seminar participants are expected to engage in independent research, including, but not limited to, current best practices. *Prerequisite: SED/PSY 566 or equivalent.* **3 credits**

## **SED/PSY 568 Behavioral Assessment and Interventions**

Students in this course will learn the effective use of behavioral assessment and intervention in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner in inclusive and special education classrooms. Students will learn to administer and interpret the results of a functional behavioral assess-

ment. They will also learn to use these results to identify, design, implement, and evaluate interventions (i.e. behavior support plans), including monitoring progress and ensuring maintenance and generalization across settings. Emphasis will be placed on individualized behavior support systems and the use of behavior management principles through the frameworks of applied behavior analysis (ABA), positive behavior supports (PBS), and practices with an evidence-base from peer-reviewed research. Additionally, students will understand the supporting roles of other disciplines and professionals, including the importance of collaboration with parents to meet the unique needs of the student in the least restrictive environment. **3 credits**

## **SED 570 Inclusion: Theory and Classroom Practice**

This course is designed to enable students to practice inclusive education for children and adolescents with special learning needs. Students will learn ways to design and modify curriculum, instructional materials, and teaching strategies for children and adolescents with moderate disabilities in general education settings. Emphasis is placed on the teacher's role in the preparation, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), consultation and collaboration skills, and on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks that govern content and instruction in the state's public schools. *Prerequisite: SED 560 or equivalent; may be taken concurrently.* **3 credits**

## **SED 571 Curriculum and Methods for Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)**

This course is designed to enable teachers to provide high-quality education for their elementary, middle and high school (PreK-8; 5-12) students with disabilities. This course focuses on appropriate teaching strategies, tactics, and suggestions for students with various disabilities. It also emphasize the implementation of research-based instruction that ensures effective teaching and learning of students with diverse learning needs. In addition,

comprehensive transition planning and implementation from school to young adulthood life for secondary school students with special needs are addressed. It therefore helps beginning teachers to achieve initial classroom success and to provide experienced teachers with an opportunity to extend and refine their knowledge and skills. **3 credits**

## **EDU 572 Teaching Reading to Diverse Learners**

Drawing from seminal research and reading disabilities, students explore the theoretical and philosophical bases underlying reading development, including the relationship between reading and writing. They will investigate etiology of reading difficulties, principles and tools of assessment, models of reading and instructional strategies that have proved successful with learners who have reading problems. Issues such as cultural and linguistic diversity, the influence of legislation regarding children with reading/learning disabilities, prevention vs. intervention vs. remediation of reading difficulties, implementation of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, and the critical role of the teacher are also considered. *Prerequisites: EDU 552 or equivalent OR evidence of passing score on the Foundations of Reading Test of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL).* **3 credits**

## **EDU 574 Teaching Mathematics to Diverse Learners**

This course serves to familiarize students with the theoretical and philosophical bases underlying acquisition of numeracy, with particular emphasis on the identification and prevention of children's difficulty in mathematics. Drawing from seminal research in mathematics instruction and mathematics disabilities, students will explore the acquisition of mathematics concepts and skills, etiology of difficulties in mathematics, principles of assessment, and instructional strategies that have proved successful with learners who have problems in mathematics. Issues such as cultural and linguistic diversity, the influence of legislation concerning children with learning disabilities, prevention vs.

intervention vs. remediation of problems in mathematics, implementation of the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework, and the critical role of the teacher are also considered. **3 credits**

## **EDU 575 Seminar: Strategies in Teaching Mathematics to Students with Moderate Disabilities**

This advanced studies graduate seminar focuses on best practice in designing and teaching mathematics instruction to meet the unique needs of elementary and middle/secondary students with moderate disabilities based on Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The continuum from PreK through Secondary is presented so that teachers at all levels identify what knowledge to expect students to possess from previous courses, as well as what students need to retain for later courses. In this course, graduate participants explore, learn, and research how to teach children and adolescents critical mathematical concepts and functional math that apply to their everyday lives and future careers. Current theory and frequently used accommodations for these students for statewide, district-wide, and/or alternative math assessment are also examined. In addition, participants learn to use diagnostic tools to assess dyscalculia. Case studies from current research and participants' own teaching experiences are integrated to illustrate effective teaching of children with various mathematical difficulties. Furthermore, this course advances the mastery and progress of graduate-level participants in the field of teaching mathematics with diverse learning needs. Seminar participants are expected to engage in independent research, including, but not limited to, current best practices. *Prerequisites: EDU 574 or equivalent and permission of Program Director.* **3 credits**

## **SED 580 Learning Disabilities**

This advanced course serves to deepen students' understanding of developmental variation and learning disabilities. Students examine basic neurodevelopmental functions that affect how children and adolescents learn and the disorders that cause or contribute to academic difficulties. Focus is

placed upon receptive and expressive oral language, reading, written language, mathematics, and social and emotional behavior. Students review the federal and state definitions of specific learning disabilities, eligibility criteria for support services, the regulations that govern such service, and the instructional responsibilities of the teacher of students with mild to moderate learning disorders. Current issues such as cultural and linguistic diversity of students, inclusion, and the standards-based education reform movement are broadly addressed. Case studies serve to assist the student to bridge theory to practice, as well as to develop problem solving skills within the context of assessment and instructional planning for students with particular profiles. *Prerequisite: SED 560 or equivalent.* **3 credits**

## **SED 585 Teaching Students with Behavior Disorders**

This course provides students with an in-depth understanding of available evidence-based interventions for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Students will be able to design effective classroom management systems that maximize social success for all students, including those with challenging behavior. In addition, the course will address the behavioral assessment and evaluation options available to special education practitioners. **3 credits**

## **SED 586 Students with Severe Disabilities**

This course focuses on principles and foundations of teaching students with severe disabilities. Concepts related to history, definitions, identification, etiology, and assessment of students with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities are addressed. Other focus areas include education issues and evidence-based instructional strategies, adaptations, and multidisciplinary teaming for students with severe disabilities. Graduate students learn ways to provide individualized interventions and to include students with severe disabilities in least restrictive environments and/or general education settings. *Prerequisite: SED 560 or equivalent (can be taken concurrently).* **3 credits**

# Course Descriptions / 2019-2020

## SED 587 Advanced Application of Positive Behavior Supports

This course focuses on school application of positive behavior supports (PBS), beginning with the logic and research supporting the three-tiered school-wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) model. Students will learn about the training process for schools implementing SWPBS, including the development, teaching, and reinforcing of school-wide expectations (i.e., primary level supports). Students will also learn about implementing secondary-level, targeted behavior supports at the school-wide level. In addition, students will know how planning individualized (i.e., tertiary level) interventions fit into the SWPBS model. This course also focuses on working in teams to promote behavior support, on training staff to implement behavior supports with fidelity, and in school-wide data collection systems. *Prerequisite: SED/PSY 568 or equivalent; may be taken concurrently* **3 credits**

## SED 589 Seminar: Research and Practice in Positive Behavior Supports

As part of this course, students will work in a school setting that utilizes the multi-tiered school-wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) model. Depending on the schools' needs and the students' interest, students may be (a) working with individual students, conducting functional behavioral assessments and designing behavior intervention plans, or (b) working with a school's behavior support team to plan and assist with SWPBS implementation at the primary and/or secondary-level(s). In addition, the student may complete on-site evaluations of SWPBS and conduct training sessions with staff. Weekly seminars will focus on the successful implementation of evidence-based practices in behavior support, problem-solving techniques, and evaluation and modification of existing behavior supports. *Prerequisites: SED 587 and EDU 512 or equivalent; may be taken concurrently.* **3 credits**

## SED 590 Practicum and Seminar: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities

This practicum is conducted in accordance with Massachusetts educator licensure regulations. It will provide opportunities for teacher candidates to practice knowledge in the classroom setting under the direction of a supervising practitioner and a program supervisor. In coordination with field placement, weekly seminars are held during which teacher candidates will learn about and discuss the role of the special education teacher, service delivery models, evidence-based practices in special education, consultation, and individual issues related to field placements. Practicum experience and weekly seminars will give teacher candidates an opportunity to systematically integrate theory and practice in all facets of the role of the teacher of students with moderate disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12). At least 75 hours for the PreK-8 license or 150 hours for the 5-12 license, if not all, of the practicum is completed in an inclusive classroom setting. Permission required; enrollment limited to qualified, matriculated graduate students. **6 credits**

## SED 591 Performance Assessment and Seminar: Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8; 5-12)

The performance assessment provides the opportunity for the student seeking *Professional* License to integrate content area knowledge, pedagogical theory, and practical experience. The duration of the clinical experience will be no less than 400 clock hours. The college program supervisor will evaluate the candidate in Massachusetts educator license regulations. **6 credits**

## SED 600 Special Topics in Education/ Special Education

This course is designed to address contemporary topics and issues in education/special education. Topics will be chosen based on timelines, interest, and relevance to current educational practices. The course will allow students the opportunity to examine current issues in greater detail than would be possible in other course offerings. **3 credits**

## SED 660 Critical Issues in Special Education

This course introduces the context for special education and examines current and controversial issues such as inclusion, special education law, educational reform, and accountability. Graduate students are provided with opportunities to explore, to research and to debate these issues from multiple perspectives. In addition, this course emphasizes current and critical issues that affect educators and their students. *Prerequisite: SED 560 or equivalent (can be taken concurrently).* **3 credits**

## SED 699 Thesis: Guided Evidence-Based Instruction

This thesis is an independent study in using a recognized research method. The thesis should examine the effectiveness of evidence-based practice. The student may develop an instructional strategy or choose a research-based instructional strategy for (a) student(s) with special needs, conduct a relevant literature review, implement strategy, and investigate its effectiveness. The subject of the study should be from PreK-12. The thesis may be used for the final exit examination of Master's degree program. *Prerequisite: EDU 512 or equivalent.* **3 credits**

## SED 700 Directed Study

The student, in conjunction with a faculty advisor, designs and conducts a critical study of a topic of interest, a curriculum-based project, a research study, a field experience, a practicum, or an internship. **3 credits**

## EDU 703 Advanced Research Seminar

The course content focuses on developing and understanding the issues necessary to read critically and evaluate research literature. Students are expected to prepare an extensive review of the research literature, develop research questions, and employ methodology relevant to special education. The paper must demonstrate an evident understanding of the clinical area of focus and the research methodology. **3 credits**

## Meet the Special Education Faculty and Lecturers



### Nanho S. Vander Hart, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Special Education (1999)

Director of the Special Education Program

B.A., Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea

M.A., University of Northern Colorado

Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1998

Dr. Vander Hart has been a member of the education faculty since 1999. She is interested in inclusive education, class-wide peer tutoring, handwriting, and educator preparation. She teaches courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She also supervises teacher candidates.



### Jessica de la Cruz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Education

B.A., Union College

M.S., Ph.D., University of Virginia, 2008

Dr. de la Cruz's Ph.D. and specialty is in mathematics education. Her dissertation was titled "Teachers' Instruction Related to Proportional Reasoning: A Cognitively Guided Perspective". She is interested in student-centered and cognitively guided mathematics instruction, as well as developing understandings of mathematics concepts not simply procedural knowledge. Dr. de la Cruz teaches the course, Teaching Mathematics to Diverse Learners at the graduate level.



### Samantha Goldman, Ph.D., BCBA

Assistant Professor of Special Education

B.A., Williams College

M.Ed. Vanderbilt University,

Peabody College

Ph.D., Vanderbilt University,

Peabody College, 2016

Dr. Goldman earned her Ph.D. in Special Education - Severe Disabilities, with a minor in Applied Behavior Analysis. Her areas of interest include autism spectrum disorder, family-school partnership, special education advocacy, and families of individuals with disabilities from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds.

## Lecturers:

### Donald Briere, Ph.D.

Lecturer in Special Education (2014)

B.S., University of Connecticut; M.A., University of Connecticut; Ph.D., University of Connecticut Storrs, 2012

### Anita C. Danker

Lecturer in Special Education (2008)

B.S., State College at Boston, Boston; M.Ed., Framingham State College; M.A., University of Massachusetts, Boston; Ed.D., Boston University (1998)

### Kathleen Dion

Lecturer in Special Education (2008)

B.S., M.A., Worcester State College; M.A., Fitchburg State College, 1989

### Jean Lindquist Grady

Lecturer in Special Education

B.A., Springfield College; M.A., Pepperdine University; Psy.D., Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (2001)

### Calvin R. Hill, Ph.D.

Lecturer in Special Education (2005)

B.A., Bethany College; M.S., Emporia State University; Ph.D., Howard University, 2004

### Paula Lea

Lecturer in Special Education (2010)

B.S., Fitchburg State College; M.Ed. Boston College, 1987

### Amy Maynard, Ed.D.

Lecturer in Special Education (2006)

B.A., University of Vermont, M.A., University of Southern Maine, 1995, Ed.D., University of Massachusetts Lowell, 2011

### Maria Nemerowicz, Ph.D.

Lecturer in Special Education (2009)

B.A., Kean University; M.A., Assumption College; Ph.D., University of Massachusetts Lowell, 2009

### Joseph M. Vandergrift, Ph.D., ABSNP

Lecturer in Special Education (1999)

B.A., Rockhurst College; M.A., C.A.G.S., Ph.D., Duquesne University, 1999, Board Certification in School Neuropsychology, 2004, Post doctorate in Clinical Neuropsychology, Fielding University, 2007

### Cinzia Pica-Smith, Ed.D.

Associate Professor of Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies

B.A., The College of Saint Rose; M.S.Ed., The College of Saint Rose; Ed.M., Harvard University; Ed.D., University of Massachusetts Amherst





**“I USE WHAT I LEARNED IN THIS  
C.A.G.S. PROGRAM EVERY SINGLE  
DAY IN MY CLASSROOM.”**

**SARAH WILKINSON,**

**PH.D. IN SPECIAL EDUCATION  
CANDIDATE, UCONN**

“This is a unique program. Rather than focusing on learning disabilities, it focuses specifically on how to bring out the best in students with emotional/behavior challenges. I loved it. I enjoyed these PBIS courses more than any other graduate courses I had taken, and I attribute my ability to land a new job largely to the behavior management expertise I developed at Assumption. I use what I learned in this C.A.G.S. program every single day in my classroom. My classes are structured, my lessons are planned, and my interactions with students are very deliberate as a result of the expertise I developed. I’m now assisting in implementing a school-wide system of positive behavior supports.”

## **COLLEGE ACCREDITATION**

*Accredited by:*

**New England Association of Schools  
and Colleges, Inc.**

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department  
of Elementary & Secondary Education**

**Council on Rehabilitation Education**

## **COLLEGE'S MISSION**

Assumption College, rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, strives to form graduates known for critical intelligence, thoughtful citizenship and compassionate service. We pursue these ambitious goals through a curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and extending to the domain of professional studies. Enlivened by the Catholic affirmation of the harmony of faith and reason, we aim, by the pursuit of the truth, to transform the minds and hearts of students. Assumption favors diversity and ecumenically welcomes all who share its goals.

## **ASSUMPTIONIST SPONSORSHIP**

The order of the Augustinians of the Assumption, founders of Assumption College, was begun by an educator whose most cherished project was the establishment of a Catholic university. Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon envisioned an institution committed to academic excellence. Father d'Alzon was also devoted to helping people learn, adapt, grow and change in various ways.



**GRADUATE STUDIES  
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE**

**Light the way.**

Graduate Studies Office  
Assumption College

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p 508.767.7387 f 508.799.4412 e-mail: [graduate@assumption.edu](mailto:graduate@assumption.edu)

[www.assumption.edu/graduate](http://www.assumption.edu/graduate)

NOTE: The College reserves the right to withdraw or modify any of the courses or programs listed in this viewbook, or to cancel any course or program for which it deems the registration insufficient, or to make any course or regulation change it considers necessary. The College further reserves the right to suspend the acceptance of applications in particular programs.