



Acacia
University
ARIZONA



MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

www.acacia.edu > >



PROGRAM
DURATION

18 to 24
Months

PROGRAM
CREDITS

36 Credit
Hours



About **Acacia University**

Acacia University, Arizona, US, stands as a symbol of regeneration, perseverance, and integrity and is on a mission to make learning a long-lasting, invigorating experience.

Acacia's origin dates back to 2003 when Educational Cyberconnections, Inc. began a partnership with the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) to provide onsite training to CITA schools in Egypt, Pakistan, United Emirates, and China. This training created a demand for additional and continuing training that resulted in establishing an onsite and online program under the title of CITA Teacher Certification Program. Then in 2005, Power-Ed and CITA developed and delivered a web-based curriculum (24 credits) that could be delivered via the Internet throughout the world. The school became the American Graduate School of Education and the name change to Acacia University was approved by the State Board for Private Postsecondary Education - State of Arizona on May 11, 2012, effective June 1, 2011.

Acacia University provides accessible, quality education to a multi-cultural, global learning community through online/distance learning. As technology advances and students look for greater flexibility and accessibility with education, Acacia utilizes the capabilities of digital pedagogies to create new experiences and services.

Acacia offers academic programs at the master's level in elementary education, secondary education, English as a second language, and educational administration as well as a doctorate in educational leadership. It also features non-degree studies to provide focused training in specialized areas for adult learners.

Designed by educators to envisage the possibilities of the learner's career, the educational programs offered by Acacia are affordable, convenient, supportive, and relevant.

Acacia University envisions a change by empowering learners to expand their abilities, revive their passion in their respective fields, and develop their capacities for new roles. Acacia commits to provide unparalleled learning standards by delivering the highest quality educational programs through smart, innovative forms of learning.

Acacia redefines education and helps learners realize their full potential, propelling them into excellence by delivering education through innovative forms of online learning.

Why Acacia University?

Acacia University, a pioneer in distance learning since its founding in 2003, consistently meets the needs of professionals whose geographic, professional, or personal time constraints may potentially limit success at traditional brick-and-mortar schools. Acacia University provides quality educational opportunities for learners:

- Affordability
- Convenience
- Practicality
- Qualified Professors
- Cohorts and Learning Communities
- Applicability
- Accredited: Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) ensures that the institution meets a recognized set of standards in distance education

Program Prerequisites and Requirements

1. Successful completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university – The degree must be verified on official transcripts sent by the awarding institution directly to Acacia University. Mail or secure electronic delivery is accepted.
International applicants: Applicants submitting transcripts from non-US institutions must have their transcript evaluated by a [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) (NACES) member agency. This requirement does not apply to international applicants who received a degree from a US college or university.
2. English language competency – Applicants whose first language is not English and do not have a bachelor's degree from a university in which instruction is conducted in English must provide evidence of English proficiency. The following are accepted exams and minimum scores required for admission:
 - 60 on the paper-delivered Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL PBT), or 71 on the Internet Based Test (iBT)
 - 6.5 on the International English Language Test (IELTS)
 - 50 on the Pearson Test of English Academic Score Report
 - 100 on the Duolingo English Test
 - 55 on the 4-skill Michigan English Test (MET)
 - 650/LP on the Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English (ECCE)
 - 650/LP on the Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE)
 - A minimum score on the College Board Accuplacer ESL Exam Series as follows:
 - ESL Language Use: Score of 85
 - ESL Listening: Score of 80
 - ESL Reading: Score of 85
 - ESL Sentence Meaning: Score of 90
 - ESL Writeplacer: Score of 4
 - Comprehensive Score for all exams of 350

- ▶ A minimum grade of Pre-1 on the Eiken English Proficiency Exam;
 - ▶ A minimum B-2 English proficiency level identified with in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards and assessed through various ESOL examinations, including the University of Cambridge
3. Verification of a teaching position or access to classrooms – confirmation of classroom and connectivity attestation through either a signed form <https://www.acacia.edu/required-classroom-and-connectivity-attestation.pdf> or declared via the Classroom and Connectivity Access Attestation section in the website admission form.
- ▶ The Master of Arts in Elementary Education requires access to elementary classrooms.
 - ▶ The Master of Arts in Secondary Education requires access to secondary classrooms.
 - ▶ The Master of Education in Educational Administration requires a minimum of 2 years of prior successful teaching experience and access to classrooms.
 - ▶ The Master of Education in Special Education requires access to Special Education classrooms for implementation of strategies and assignments.
 - ▶ The Master of Education in English as a Second Language requires access to classrooms with ESL students.
4. Ongoing access to computer technology – All Acacia University courses are presented online so each applicant must have a computer and internet access to participate.

Mission

Acacia University's name reflects our belief in life-long learning. The symbol and name of the acacia as the "tree of knowledge", as it is known in many cultures, embodies our ongoing commitment to providing unparalleled standards and vehicles for learning. Acacia is committed to delivering educational programs of the highest quality through innovative forms of distance learning. To this end, Acacia University offers outstanding distance education programs that extend extraordinary and interactive opportunities for students to reach personal and career goals.

Vision

Acacia University believes that innovative, relevant, and rigorous educational programs offered in a responsible distance learning format throughout the world will not only enhance individual personal and career goals but will contribute to the business, social, economic, and educational needs of our society. Acacia University will be recognized as a premier program for those who desire to earn a certificate or degree while expanding and deepening their understanding of a profession and/or applying their skills in the workforce.

Vision

The vision of Acacia University is to ignite a passion for lifelong learning among the students and enable them to innovate and excel in their respective fields. We impart education not only to offer accredited degrees but to deliver lessons that will improve our students' work experience.

Core Values



Excellence in teaching/learning by offering a high-quality and student-focused education



Organizational integrity by operating with the highest ethical standards



Diversity and civility by supporting multicultural understanding and maintaining respect for all learners and staff

Master of Education in Special Education

- Program offers a rich combination of online learning, classroom practice, learning community sharing, research and analysis, and assessment to produce teachers capable of making a difference in student learning and achievement.
- Online examples in each lesson are provided to help primary, intermediate, junior, and senior high school special education teachers in any subject or lesson.
- The program is entirely customized using examples, strategies, and assignments for any teacher to gain and sharpen instructional skills for special education students.
- Designed to prepare and strengthen the teacher by providing the most current research-based and proven educational strategies and knowledge for meeting special education needs.
- Curriculum encompasses learning theory, educational foundations, brain theory, best practices, curriculum development, standards, and assessment.
- Courses in child and adolescent development, special needs, and classroom management provide a framework for how teachers can provide appropriate strategies and environments for all students.
- The study of school systems and decision-making assists the student in the governance of the school.
- Mentored practicum and action research project enable the student to synthesize the knowledge and skills of the program into his/her personal understanding of an effective resource classroom for special education students.

- Two capstone courses complete the requirements for this degree:
 - The internship includes a 270 clock-hour practicum in which the student works with a certified special education teacher to learn and apply instructional skills and strategies with special education students.
 - Arrangements for this internship are made by Acacia University directly with the participating school and teacher.
- The Research Methods and Action Research courses combine research methods with an action research project that demonstrates understanding and research skills in an area of interest in special education.



- * Acacia University offers graduate degrees for educators to achieve their professional goals. Completion of a degree program in itself does not constitute having a professional credential. Professional certifications and licenses are governed by boards empowered via State laws and/or professional organizations and commissions. Therefore, Acacia programs are NOT a pathway to teacher licensures in the US.
- * This information is provided per U.S. Federal Regulations, 34 CFR § 668.50 (2016 Rules), 34 CFR § 668.43 (2019 Rules), and in compliance with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Manual version 19.2.
- * Acacia University is an approved institution of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) which allows the university to provide distance learning programs and coursework to students located in states other than Arizona. NC-SARA approval does not grant reciprocity or exemption from state professional licensing requirements.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this program, students will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Create special education instruction informed by research-based strategies integrated with the Power Strategies
- ▶ Design developmentally appropriate individualized education plans (IEPs), curriculum, resources, and assessments to create a positive learning environment that supports and increases student achievement and develops skills in students according to their individual needs by making meaningful accommodations to promote accessibility for special education students
- ▶ Analyze educational research, current trends, requirements, standards, and practices required to design instructional strategies in special education that enable students to meet learning goals and standards
- ▶ Develop instructional and classroom strategies that promote global citizenship, acceptance of others, and lifelong learning
- ▶ Communicate, verbally and in writing, effectively with parents and other caregivers of special education learners about the students' successes, needs, and areas of improvement

COURSES

- › EDC501 Instructional Strategies for Students with Special Needs
- › EDC511 Classroom Assessment in Special Education
- › EDC521 Strategies for Improving Comprehension for Students with Special Needs
- › EDC541 Classroom Management for Students with Diverse Needs
- › EDC551 Child and Adolescent Development
- › EDC561 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Methods in Special Education
- › EDC571 Special Needs Students
- › EDC578 English Language Learners with Special Needs
- › EDC581 Diagnosis and Assessment in Special Education
- › EDC611-1 Research Methods
- › EDC611-2 Action Research
- › EDC621 Special Education Internship (US students)
- › EDC620 Mentored Practicum (International students)



Program Structure

EDC501 Instructional Strategies for Students with Special Needs

Prerequisite/s none Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course features current methods of teaching and learning through various types of visuals, specifically, graphic organizers, word walls, and partnering. Using visual representations in all subjects and grade levels helps special needs students organize and express ideas and thoughts, improve comprehension, and remember information. Strategies are provided for teachers to use word walls in classrooms so that students build vocabulary and their understanding of major concepts. Graphic organizers, word walls, and partnering are effective for all students, including special education students and English language learners. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

EDC511 Classroom Assessment in Special Education

Prerequisite/s EDC501 Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course features current and relevant methods of teaching and learning through rubrics and editing. Teachers learn to use rubrics in all subject areas to set learning expectations for students with a wide range of abilities. Active learning is promoted so that special needs students become involved in their own learning. Teachers practice strategies for editing that provide specific feedback based on the use of rubrics for analysis. They also learn strategies that develop the students' self-editing skills. The concept of editing is expanded to include visual products, performances, and processes as well as written products. These assessment skills are essential to all students including special education and English language learners. The rubrics set expectations for quality that provide for differentiated instruction for diverse populations. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

EDC521 Strategies for Improving Comprehension for Students with Special Needs

Prerequisite/s EDC511 Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course features multiple ways to use the strategies of reflection, note taking, and summarizing to increase learning. Teachers learn to design frequent opportunities for special needs students to reflect about the important concepts in the subjects they teach. Based on brain research, reflection means "thinking about learning". It is effective for use in all grades, subject areas, and for all students, with differing ability levels, to enhance knowledge, clarify concepts, and relate new ideas to prior knowledge. Teachers learn to use and teach note-taking, use summaries and summary frames to assist the students in organizing reflections, summarizing notes, and summarizing various types of written material. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

EDC541 Classroom Management for Students with Diverse Needs

Prerequisite/s

None

Credits

3

Course Length

8 weeks

This course assists teachers in organizing the classroom environment; working with all students to design rules and routines; and using strategies to create and maintain an effective learning environment/community. Specific strategies are suggested to limit or decrease behaviors that interfere with learning. Teachers learn recording techniques for observing and analyzing student behavior in the classroom. They examine strategies to promote effective parental and community resources that will maximize learning in diverse classrooms. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

EDC551 Child and Adolescent Development

Prerequisite/s

EDC501, EDC541

Credits

3

Course Length

8 weeks

This course focuses on effective implementation of developmentally appropriate strategies in the classroom. Participants explore various domains and stages of development within age ranges from birth to 18. They learn the role of culture in the learning process and how collaboration among the many stakeholders in the school and community affects development. The stages relate to cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development and how teachers can facilitate student growth in these areas. The strategies focus on all aspects of the classroom from the decision-making to the way instruction is delivered. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in understanding these stages and using effective strategies in the classroom.

EDC561 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Methods in Special Education

Prerequisite/s

EDC511

Credits

3

Course Length

8 weeks

This course builds teacher understanding about academic curriculum content and assessments for diverse learners. Understanding and using national, state, and local standards in planning, instruction, and assessment are highlighted. Types of assessments are explored and strategies for developing content assessments that align to the curriculum are presented. Teachers learn how to relate the curriculum and assessments to state, provincial, or country standards and adjust for diverse populations. Those populations include students who are English learners and those diagnosed as special education learners. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations in order to assist the teacher in learning and implementing effective curriculum and assessment strategies in the classroom.

EDC571 Special Needs Students

Prerequisite/s EDC511, EDC551 Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course focuses on the special instructional needs related to special education students, gifted students, and English language learners. Teachers learn how to use learning styles, differentiated learning, and effective strategies that engage learners and provide for individual needs. Specific strategies are suggested for the various populations. Strategies for adapting a “regular” classroom to provide an appropriate learning environment for all children, including those outside the normal range, are provided and discussed. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing effective strategies in the classroom.

EDC578 English Language Learners with Special Needs

Prerequisite/s EDC551 Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course features an emphasis on understanding English language learners (ELL) in the mainstream or cross-categorical classroom. Students will study the development of language, culture, theory, programs, methods, and strategies for teaching the English language learner in all grades and subject areas. Students will learn to implement effective programs and strategies that focus on oral and written language development and the teaching of reading, as well as the implementation of ELL strategies in all subject areas with diverse abilities and needs. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels to assist the student in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

EDC581 Diagnosis and Assessment in Special Education

Prerequisite/s EDC571 Credits 3 Course Length 8 weeks

This course focuses on the variety of assessments used in identifying, diagnosing, and placing special education students. Teachers will have opportunities to practice using assessments, interpreting results, making recommendations, and writing a report. This assessment information is used help determine eligibility, design programs, and make placement decisions for special education services according to IDEA.

EDC611-1 Research Methods

Prerequisite/s 24 credits Credits 2 Course Length 8 weeks

Required Textbook: A Short Guide to Action Research, 4e

This capstone course focuses on the methods used in quantitative and qualitative research with an emphasis on action research in the classroom. Each student will conduct an action research project that applies some aspect of the previous courses. Electronic portfolios are used to store and organize all the materials for the project such as logs, reflections, and summaries, assessments, examples of curriculum and assessment development, case studies, charts, graphs, and video clips.

EDC611-2 Action Research

Prerequisite/s

EDC611-1

Credits

3

Course Length

16 weeks

Required Textbook: A Short Guide to Action Research, 4e

This capstone course is the final course of the master's degree program and demonstrates proficiency of learning and applying skills learned and practiced throughout the program. A formal presentation of the action research may be made to an audience such as the principal and staff or attendees at a conference, workshop, or seminar.

EDC621 Special Education Internship (US students)

Prerequisite/s

24 credits

Credits

4

Course Length

21 weeks

The internship involves an onsite special education internship of 21 weeks. The internship is arranged by Acacia University in cooperation with a school administrator where the internship will occur. It begins on the first Sunday of either August or January and ends on the last Saturday of either December or May. It focuses on two individualized applied projects determined by the graduate student, the cooperating teacher, and the online professor. The total internship includes a full semester of onsite field experience at a school for 270 hours. Each project experience will encompass classroom observations, demonstrations, modeling, feedback, and practice applying prior learned skills. Application of the overall Acacia Special Education Teaching Standards for Mild/Moderate Students is required. The experience also includes research, analysis, surveys, interviews, discussions with others, and the maintenance of a log and journal with weekly notes. The onsite experience will involve school and/or classroom-related activities and tasks planned jointly with the cooperating teacher and the online professor. Regularly scheduled online video conferences with the professor and/or Learning Coach will be scheduled at mutually agreed upon times. Experience gained in the onsite internship, as recorded in the internship log and journal, evaluation forms, and other relevant activities will be summarized and presented in a final report.

EDC620 Mentored Practicum (International students)

Prerequisite/s

24 credits

Credits

4

Course Length

16 weeks

Required Textbooks: Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, 6e; A Short Guide to Action Research, 4e

The mentored practicum is an individualized application project determined by the student, the school leader where he/she is employed, the assigned mentee at the school, and the online instructor. The course provides students with research-based and evidence-based strategies to establish and maintain mentoring relationships. Students examine various mentoring models and learn about essential characteristics of effective mentoring. Students apply critical thinking skills to design, implement, and assess workbased mentoring experiences while reflecting on their practices and how they influence mentoring outcomes.

Accreditation and Licensure



Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)



Acacia University is accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). The U.S. Department of Education lists the Distance Education Accrediting Commission as a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Additionally, Acacia University is licensed by the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education. The Board licenses and regulates over 200 private postsecondary educational institutions operating vocational and degree programs. These private universities, colleges, and vocational schools serve approximately 265,544 students annually. Arizona schools provide education and training to students in Arizona, across the nation and around the world. The Board has two primary programs: Licensing and Regulation and the Student Tuition Recovery Fund. It also acts on license applications, determines compliance, investigates complaints and violations, and takes disciplinary action. The Board has developed partnerships with other City, State, and Federal agencies to facilitate the dissemination of information.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories establishing comparable national standards for the interstate offering postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA membership makes it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state.

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CAEL Membership



Acacia University is a proud member of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), which was founded in 1974 to help organizations succeed by providing expertise, resources, and solutions that effectively support adult learners as they navigate on an off-ramp between education and employment. To complement its pioneering work to support adult learners and learning recognition, in the 1990s, CAEL expanded its mission to include workforce development and the mutually beneficial links between curricula and careers that are so vital to the success of learners and communities they live and work in. Through collaboration with educators, employers, and community leaders, CAEL's nonprofit mission has become a national movement to ensure that every adult can navigate lifelong learning and career pathways that fuel social mobility and equitable prosperity. Today, CAEL supports adult learner success at more than 300 postsecondary institutions, employers, and government agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

ACE Membership



Acacia is now a proud member of the American Council on Education (ACE). The American Council on Education (ACE) is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. As the major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities, their strength lies in the diverse membership of more than 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations in America and abroad. ACE is the only major higher education association to represent all types of U.S. accredited, degree-granting institutions: two-year and four-year, public and private. ACE members educate two out of every three students in all accredited, degree-granting U.S. institutions. Since its founding in 1918, ACE has spearheaded programs, advocated for legislation, and led initiatives that have shaped the nation's postsecondary landscape.

CONIES Membership



Acacia University has been granted membership in the Council on International Higher Education Supervision (CONIES). CONIES-ICHE Board of Accreditation is recognized by the founding member universities of CONIES Confederación Internacional de Educación Superior, accredited by the BQS Board of Quality Standards (INQAAHE member) as Management System Certification Body (ISO 17021). CONIES is a member of INQAAHE and APQN. The Board is acting in full independence from the founding member universities, and the autonomy is reflected in the development of its assessment functions.

CONIES has emerged as the COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SUPERVISION, offering two types of quality assurance certifications and accreditations to member universities: Quality Management System certification and Programme Accreditation.

Registered under WES



Acacia University is officially registered with World Education Services (WES) and assigned a designated ID number (4671). This number is a unique identifier that allows WES to easily verify and evaluate the credentials of students who have attended or graduated from Acacia University.

Founded in 1974, WES, based in New York, is a renowned nonprofit organization that provides credential evaluations to students. Its mission is to help international students and professionals achieve academic and professional goals by providing accurate and reliable credential evaluations. WES evaluates academic transcripts, degrees, and other qualifications from institutions worldwide to ensure that they meet the standards of U.S. educational institutions and employers.



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