



Special Education Teacher Pathway



Information

Rio Hondo College students who are interested in becoming a Special Education Teacher in California must obtain a bachelor's degree and an [Education Specialist Instruction Credential](#).

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How long will it take to become a Special Education Teacher?

There are 2 different pathways at this time.

TRADITIONAL PATHWAY

Rio Hondo College

- 2 years as a full-time student - however this may vary from student to student
- Work on general education, major, and transfer requirements (please connect with a counselor to create a student ed plan)
- Apply for Transfer! (please connect with a counselor to confirm your transfer date)
 - Fall Transfer: Apply 1 year before in the Fall
 - Spring Transfer: Apply the Summer before in July/August



Transfer to 4-Year University to obtain your Bachelor's Degree

- 2 years as a full-time student - however this may vary from student to student
- Apply for a teacher preparation program 1 year before your last semester



Attend and complete an Education Specialist Credential Program

- Programs can be 1-2 years

INTEGRATED PATHWAY

Rio Hondo College

- 2 years as a full-time student - however this may vary from student to student
- Work on general education, major, and transfer requirements (please connect with a counselor to create a student ed plan)
- Apply for Transfer! (please connect with a counselor to confirm your transfer date)
 - Fall Transfer: Apply 1 year before in the Fall
 - Spring Transfer: Apply the Summer before in July/August



Transfer to a 4-Year University to obtain your combined Bachelor's Degree + Credential through an Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Credentialing Program

- 2-3 years as a full-time student - however this may vary from student to student
- Once done with your program, you will graduate with BOTH your bachelor's degree & education specialist instruction credential

What major should I choose if I want to become a Special Education Teacher?

The major you select will depend on the grade level you plan to teach in and what subject area. BUT - you can major in anything you want - no specific bachelor's degree is required.

For students who want to teach elementary school students we recommend [Elementary Teacher Education AA-T](#), [Early Childhood Education AS-T](#), or [Child Development](#). For transfer, we recommend a Liberal Studies bachelors program as this degree can help you fulfill a credential requirement! Another great major would be Child Development.

(Please connect with a counselor to identify the best major for your career goals)

For students who want to teach middle school or high school students, we recommend you choose a major aligned with the subject you wish to teach. Getting a bachelors degree in one of the [statutory subjects for a Single Subject Credential](#) will help you fulfill a credential requirement! ★

[CLICK HERE](#) to see all the degree programs we have to offer at Rio Hondo College.

Meet with a Counselor !!

It is very important that you meet with a counselor so we can best assist you in major selection and transfer exploration for a Bachelor's Degree program and/or Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Credentialing Program.

Education Counselors: Angelica Martinez, Irene Vu, & Emily Ramazzini

Education Specialist Instruction Credential Information (Specific to California)

The Education Specialist Instruction Credential authorizes the holder to teach students with disabilities in various settings, such as elementary, junior high, and high schools, based on their area of specialization.

Specialty Areas: Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN), Extensive Support Needs (ESN), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH), and Visual Impairments (VI).

Can I teach students who have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)?

- YES! As long as you go through an approved Education Specialist Instruction Teaching Credential program in California.

Can I teach English Learners (ESL)?

- YES! As long as you go through an approved Single Subject Preliminary Teacher Preparation Program in California.

CBEST

- As of June 2024, the Basic Skills Requirement for the Single Subject Credential will be met by completion of a bachelor's degree.

Education Specialist Instruction Credential Requirements (Specific to California)

1. **A bachelor's degree or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.**
2. **Verify Subject Matter Competency (This can be can satisfied by any of the following per the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC):**
 - a. Complete a [bachelor's degree in a discipline](#) aligned with the credential. *For Education Specialist, degree major will be dependent on interest in teaching in a multiple subject or single subject setting.*
 - b. Completion of an undergraduate Subject Matter Program (SMPP) approved by the commission. To search for Commission-Approved Subject Matter Preparation Program, go [here](#).
 - c. Pass the appropriate California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET) to establish subject matter competency.
 - i. Those interested in teaching in a [multiple subject setting](#) must pass the [CSET: Multiple Subjects](#)
 - ii. Those interested in teaching in a [single subject setting](#) must pass the appropriate CSET
 - iii. The cost of the CSET varies by examination. For more information, visit www.ctcexams.nesinc.com
 - d. Completion of coursework at one or more regionally accredited institutions of higher education that aligns with each domain of the specific subject matter requirements.
 - e. *Note: Students can do a combination of the methods described in sections (c) and (d) in whole or to meet the subject matter requirements.*
3. **Complete a U.S. Constitution course:** You can complete this at Rio Hondo College ahead of time and it also counts as a General Education (GE) course! *POLS 110 - Government of the United States*
4. **Complete a Teacher Preparation Program.** Complete an approved single subject teacher preparation program by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).
5. Obtain a **formal recommendation for the credential** by the program.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on the Education Specialist Instruction Credential requirements.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on Subject Matter Requirements.

Bilingual Authorization

The [Bilingual Authorization](#) allows teachers to support and teach students who do not speak English as their first language. This means you would be able to teach in the following approved languages as long as you obtain the Bilingual Authorization for that specific language: Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese, Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Hmong, Khmer, Punjabi, or Russian.

There are many programs out there and usually you can just add the Bilingual Authorization program/courses to the credential program you are completing if your university offers it in the language you are seeking.

Local Bachelor Degree Programs & Education Specialist Instruction Credential Programs

To see local Bachelor & Education Specialist Credential Programs, please go to our [Teacher Preparation Pathways website](#) and click on the Special Education Teacher box. However, please connect with a counselor to help you on your future teacher journey!