

Special Education Teacher Pathway



Río 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**.

How long will it take to become a special education teacher?

There are two different pathways at this time:

TRADITIONAL PATHWAY

INTEGRATED PATHWAY

Río Hondo College

- Two years as a full-time Río Hondo 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 education plan)
- Apply for Transfer! (please connect with a counselor to confirm your transfer date):
 - Fall Transfer – Apply one year before, in the fall
 - Spring Transfer – Apply the summer before, in July/August

Transfer to four-year university to obtain your bachelor's degree

- Two years as a full-time student—however, this may vary by student
- Apply for a teacher preparation program one year before your last semester

Attend and complete an Education Specialist Credential Program

- Programs typically take one to two years to complete

Transfer to a university to obtain your combined bachelor's degree + credential through an Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Credentialing Program

- Two to three years as a full-time student; timing may vary by student
- Once you complete your program, you will graduate with **BOTH** your bachelor's degree and education specialist instruction credential

What major should I choose if I want to become a special education teacher?

Your major depends on the grade level and subject you plan to teach. You may major in any field—no specific bachelor's degree is required.

For students who want to teach **elementary school students** we recommend the [Elementary Teacher Education AA-T](#), [Early Childhood Education AS-T](#) or [Child Development](#). For transfer, we recommend a Liberal Studies bachelor's program as this degree can help you fulfill a credential requirement. Another great major would be Child Development.

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 bachelor's degree in one of the [statutory subjects for a Single Subject Credential](#) will help you fulfill a credential requirement.

[Click here](#) to see all of degree programs offered at Río 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 and Emily Ramazzini

Click or scan the QR code to view the clickable handout online on our Teacher Preparation Pathways website:
gorio.page/teacher-pathways



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 Special Education Teaching teacher preparation program in California.

CBEST

As of June 2024, the Basic Skills Requirement for the Education Specialist Instruction 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 satisfied by any of the following per the California 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 Río Hondo College ahead of time and it also counts as a General Education (GE) course (POLS C1000/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.

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