

## Faculty of Education

## Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Specific Learning Difficulties)

## Master of Education (Specific Learning Difficulties)

**1 Background**

This proposal is to create a course of study in learning difficulties that reflects contemporary practice in curriculum provision in this area and that draws on subjects from other areas of the Master of Education. The change parallels the change from Postgraduate Diploma programs in the special needs areas to the Master of Education (Special Education, Inclusion and Early Intervention) last year, and the change to the Master of Education (Language Intervention and Hearing Impairment) currently also being proposed.

A key aspect of contemporary educational provision in the area of specific learning difficulties is the advisory consultative role. Contemporary educators in this area are increasingly required to guide other educators and schools to evaluate and modify pedagogic, program and curriculum provision to accommodate the learning characteristics of students who have specific learning difficulties. They achieve this through an understanding of how to lead and guide the professional learning both of teachers and of schools.

The Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne has a strong tradition in preparing teachers of students with specific learning difficulties. Over the past two decades, the nature of the work of professionals in this area has changed. As noted, they are increasingly required to guide other educators and schools to evaluate and modify pedagogic, program and curriculum provision to accommodate the learning characteristics of students who have specific learning difficulties.

This work requires as a foundation an understanding of how to lead and guide the professional learning both of teachers and of schools. They may be expected to guide colleagues to develop personalized learning programs for students, to collect and interpret data, to mentor and coach colleagues to implement pedagogy that is more appropriate to the learning characteristics of students with specific learning difficulties.

The importance of this knowledge is recognized by systemic education providers both in Victoria and more broadly. Graduates who have skills in leading and guiding schools and teaching staff to modify their pedagogic practice and curriculum provision for students who have specific learning difficulties are likely to be valued.

This proposal is for a two –phase course. In the first phase, the postgraduate certificate program, students acquire the knowledge necessary for a conceptual understanding of the education of students who have specific learning difficulties. In the second phase, the students acquire the professional knowledge necessary to implement this conceptual knowledge in school contexts; they acquire the skills both in pedagogic and curriculum provision for these students and for meeting the professional leadership roles. The two phases comprise the Masters program.

**2 Course/Program Objectives**

Students who have completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies will be able to

- critically analyze and evaluate the learning processes (cognitive, affective, conative and socio-cultural) involved in literacy and numeracy learning and developmental trends to acquiring this knowledge, evaluate assumptions, practices and procedures used learning disabilities in terms of current theories of cognitive processing, cognitive development and learning,
- identify the causes of different types specific learning difficulties in these areas

- use and evaluate a range of contemporary procedures for diagnosing and reporting literacy and numeracy difficulties that are supported by current research in learning and educational psychology,
- use an integrated teaching framework that accommodates that learning characteristics of students who have specific literacy and numeracy learning difficulties , develop and implement relevant intervention and instructional procedures that are supported by current research in learning and educational psychology,
- identify the characteristics of successful literacy and numeracy intervention programs, identify and select empirically validated teaching practices for these students
- use an integrated model of classroom pedagogic practice to design and implement targeted clinical intervention programs,
- evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy education programs intended for use with students who have learning difficulties in these areas and modify them to match individual ways of learning
- develop and implement education programmes that are supported by current research.

This course encompasses the following generic skills: students will be able to

- critically analyze contemporary theories of learning and approaches to the assessment of specific learning difficulties.
- develop a problem solving approach to the diagnosis of learning contexts and of specific learning difficulties.
- develop skills in communicating effective learning criteria and the nature of particular cases of learning difficulties to teachers, parents and students.
- use the topics of learning and educational psychology developed in lectures to implement effective intervention and instructional procedures and the models of literacy and numeracy knowledge to plan schedules for implementing support programs.
- work in a team with other professionals working in the area of learning difficulties to analyze instructional and management procedures, assessment and education programmes.
- display positive attitudes to the use of and educational psychology in the diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities.

Students who have completed Master of Education (Specific Learning Difficulties) will be able to

- achieve the outcomes noted above for Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Specific Learning Difficulties),
- plan, develop and implement experientially-validated assessment and diagnostic procedures for students who have specific learning difficulties,
- develop and implement relevant intervention and instructional procedures that are experientially-validated and that accommodates that learning characteristics of students who have specific literacy and numeracy learning difficulties,
- implement and use a range of behavioural management skills and procedures likely to optimize the learning of students who have specific learning difficulties,
- use literacy and numeracy intervention programs selectively and strategically according to the learning characteristics of students who have specific learning difficulties and to integrate these into clinical intervention programs, use effective monitoring and formative assessment procedures
- demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with students who have specific learning difficulties,
- show knowledge of relevant support services and communication systems for students with disabilities and impairments,
- use the model of professional learning to plan pedagogic improvement and school transformation in the area of educational provision for students who have specific learning difficulties,

- develop and implement relevant assessment and diagnostic procedures, intervention and instructional procedures for enhancing professional learning and practice for students who have specific learning difficulties,
- apply the model of professional learning to range of issues confront contemporary schools and educational provision for students who have specific learning difficulties, such as improved literacy and numeracy learning.

Master of Education (Specific Language Difficulties) course encompasses the following generic skills: students will be able to

- critically analyze contemporary assessment and clinical intervention practices in specific learning difficulties on the basis of their professional experiences.
- apply a problem solving approach to the diagnosis specific learning difficulties and the selective and strategic use of clinical intervention procedures.
- develop skills in communicating effective teaching practices, professional learning options and criteria for their evaluation and improvement and learning profiles to teachers, parents and students.
- use the range of professional experiences to plan and implement effective clinical intervention and instructional procedures and schedules for implementing support programs.
- lead a team of professionals working in the area of learning difficulties to analyze instructional and management procedures, assessment and education programmes.
- display positive attitudes to the use of educational psychology in the diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities.
- develop a problem solving approach to fostering professional learning intended to improve pedagogic and curriculum provision in a range of school contexts for students who have learning difficulties,
- implement effective pedagogic improvement and plan a schedule for implementing a clinical intervention improvement program.

### **3 Entry Requirements**

Recommended separately by Academic Board.

### **4 Course/Program Structure**

#### **Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Specific Learning Difficulties)**

472-618 The Psychology of Exceptional Learning	12.5 points
476-889 Learning Disabilities: Literacy	12.5 points
476-890 Learning Disabilities: Numeracy	12.5 points
XXXXX Language and Literacy Intervention 1	12.5 points

#### **Master of Education (Specific Learning Difficulties)**

472-618 The Psychology of Exceptional Learning	12.5 points
XXXXXX Language & Literacy Intervention 1	12.5 points
476-899 Learning Disabilities: Literacy	12.5 points
476-890 Learning Disabilities: Numeracy	12.5 points
460 633 Leading professional learning	25 points
472-619 Professional Practice 1 (SLD)	12.5 points
472-620 Professional Practice 2 (SLD)	12.5 points
	<b>100 points</b>

### **5 Availability of Course**

The course is available full-time and part-time to CSP and Australian and international fee-paying students. The changes will take effect from 2008.