

Special Education Endorsement Options

To be certified as a special education teacher at GVSU students must complete **two** endorsements. Upon successful completion of the program and specified certification tests, certification is awarded in: K-5 general education, K-8 self-contained, and K-12 special education.

The following endorsements are available:

At the undergraduate level:

EI – Emotional Impairment

CI – Cognitive Impairment

At the graduate level:

ZS – Early Childhood (General and Special Education)

LD – Learning Disabilities

Undergraduate students therefore can choose any one of the following endorsement combinations:

EI/CI

EI/ZS

EI/LD

CI/ZS

CI/LD

Note that at least one undergraduate endorsement must be chosen.

EI/CI:

If students choose EI/CI – they must take both PSY 310 and PSY 326 in the professional requirements before starting in the COE. The COE program will take two years, full-time, with the summers off. Students take courses related to their endorsement areas across the semesters and are also involved in teaching experiences:

1st Fall – student assisting

1st Winter – Student teaching in one of the chosen endorsement areas

2nd Fall – Student teaching in a general education classroom

2nd Winter – Student teaching in the remaining endorsement area

Working during the COE is not realistic.

EI/ZS, EI/LD, CI/ZS, or CI/LD:

ZS:

If ZS is chosen as the second endorsement, the COE program will take two years plus a final spring and summer session. Students are placed in a K, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade classroom for their General Education student teaching. The final Winter and Sp/Su semesters in the COE are taken at the graduate level. The graduate courses are offered at night or on weekends, so students can work during the day at this time. When the endorsement is completed, currently students will only be 2 courses plus a thesis away from a master's degree.

LD:

If LD is chosen as the second endorsement, the COE program will take 3 years before the student is eligible for special education certification. From the 2nd Winter semester on in the COE, they will take graduate classes. However, the last Fall and Winter semesters constitute a paid internship in an LD classroom, so they are essentially functioning as a special education teacher at that time. When the endorsement is completed, currently students will only be 2 courses and a thesis away from a master's degree.