



TEACHER EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Needs Education: Research and Practice

*Specialpedagogik som forsknings- och
verksamhetsområde*

Course code: LPAGS1

Credits: 15.0

Education level: Second cycle

*Progressive specialisation: Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s
as entry requirements (A1N)*

Main field of study: SQA (Special Education)

Approved by

Teacher Education Board, 09 March 2026

Effective from

Autumn semester 2026

Entry requirements

Admitted to the Programme in Special Needs Training: Intellectual
Disability.

Learning outcomes

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to, and a critical exploration of, the professional role, duties and areas of expertise of the special needs teacher at different levels of the school system. The foundational perspectives underpinning the development of the field of special education are discussed and related to current research, theoretical approaches and proven experience.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. critically examine and analyse different theoretical perspectives on children and pupils requiring support within the field of special education research and practice
2. give an account of and critically evaluate key concepts and definitions used to describe the diverse needs of children and pupils, with a particular focus on disabilities, including neurodevelopmental difficulties
3. give an account of and discuss the various areas of expertise of the special needs teacher, drawing on current research
4. examine and reflect on the professional role of the special needs teacher in relation to other professional groups
5. analyse and explain the relationship between research-based knowledge and proven experience, and
6. discuss approaches within special education from scientific, societal and ethical perspectives, with particular emphasis on human rights.

Content

The course covers:

- key concepts, definitions and perspectives within the field of special educational needs
- the development of special education as a field of research and practice from historical, national and international perspectives
- the diverse circumstances of children and pupils and their support needs
- different ways of describing and defining disabilities, including neurodevelopmental difficulties
- national and international regulatory and policy documents
- the areas of expertise of the special needs teacher
- research and theory on the professional role of the special needs teacher in relation to other professions, and
- interviews as a research method.

The course includes on-campus meetings at Karlstad University, as well as field studies.

Reading list

See separate document.

Examination

Learning outcomes 1, 2 and 5 are assessed through an individual written assignment, based on field studies.

Learning outcomes 3, 4 and 6 are assessed through an individual written assignment and an oral presentation, based on field studies.

If a student has been granted study support by Karlstad University due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to offer an adapted examination or allow the student to complete the examination through alternative means.

Grades

One of the grades Pass with distinction (VG), Pass (G) or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

Students are required to have access to an educational setting relevant to the special needs teacher's field of expertise in order to complete the course assignments.

On-campus meetings include mandatory examinations.

The course is included in the Programme in Special Needs Training: Intellectual Disability.

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor's and Master's levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.