



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Study Plan

Master Programme in Special Education

Reg. no: 2021/1066

Programme Code	SASPP
Programme Title	Master Programme in Special Education Master (60 ECTS credits) Master (120 ECTS credits)
Credits	60/120
Approval	The programme study plan was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 15 December 2021, and is valid from the autumn semester of 2022.
Language of Instruction	Swedish
Degree Level	Master's
Degree Qualifications	General
Prerequisites	Bachelor Degree, Teacher Education Degree, or other professional degree of at least 180 ECTS credits with a major in special education, pedagogy/applied pedagogy, sociology, social work, psychology or speech pathology. Upper secondary school level Swedish 3 or B, Swedish as a Second Language 3 or B, and English 6 or A, or equivalent.

General information

The Master programme in Special Education is designed for students and professional people who are interested in special education activities in and out of school, and in other educational institutions.

The programme offers two possible qualifications: A Master's Degree 60 ECTS credits or a Master's Degree 120 ECTS credits, and two recommended courses of study with specialisation in teaching and school development respectively.

Programme Outcomes

National outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate deepened methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) degree, students shall:

- demonstrate ability to integrate knowledge and to analyse, assess and handle complex phenomena, issues and situations in the field even with limited information,
- demonstrate ability to independently identify and formulate problems and to plan and perform qualified tasks with adequate methods within given time limits,
- demonstrate ability to give a clear account of and discuss their conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which these are based, orally and in writing, in dialogue with various groups, and
- demonstrate the skills required to participate in research and development or to work with other qualified tasks.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (60 credits) degree, students shall:

- demonstrate ability to make assessments informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical aspects and demonstrate awareness of the ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate awareness of the potentials and limitations of science, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate ability to identify their needs for further knowledge and to take responsibility for their own ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)

For a Master's degree (60 credits) students complete an independent project of 15 credits in the main field of study.

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to critically and systematically integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues critically, independently and creatively as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames and so contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as the ability to evaluate this work
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing both nationally and internationally to clearly report and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate ability to make assessments informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical aspects and demonstrate awareness of the ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate awareness of the potentials and limitations of science, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate ability to identify their needs for further knowledge and to take responsibility for their own ongoing learning.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Master (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate deepened methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Independent project (degree project)

For a Master's degree (120 credits) students complete an independent project of 30 credits in the main field of study. The project may be less than 30 credits, but at least 15 credits if students have already completed an independent project of at least 15 credits in the main field of study or equivalent abroad.

Programme Structure

The programme is offered as four years of part-time distance studies via a learning platform and on-campus meetings at Karlstad University.

The programme offers the choice of either of two qualifications: A Master's degree of 60 ECTS credits or a Master's degree of 120 ECTS credits. The latter degree requires an independent project 30 ECTS credits at master level or two 15-credit projects, one for each degree level.

The programme starts with a required course, Special Needs Education: Research and Practice. The course in theory of science and methods with subject specialisation 15 ECTS credits is also required. Beyond this, students have opportunities to choose their own profile based on various options. Two recommended courses of study focussing on teaching or school development are presented in the attachment.

The programme offers opportunities to develop practice-related research by linking degree projects to developments needs and projects of relevance to students' professional practice.

Programme curriculum

Note that the programme courses can have other titles than the ones listed below. More information on the order of courses can be found in the attachment.

Programme courses:

Special Needs Education: Research and Practice (15 ECTS cr)

Required course for all programme students. The aim of the course is to introduce central concepts and perspectives in the knowledge domain and problematise special education in terms of current research.

Special Education in Practice (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is to study different theories of learning and teaching as well as assessment, documentation and cooperation practices from a special needs education perspective, focusing on prerequisites for an inclusive learning environment.

Leading Local School Improvement (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is that students deepen their understanding of the pedagogical leadership in preschool and school with special focus on the quality assurance of the whole school unit.

Inclusion (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is that students deepen their knowledge of how research on inclusion can be understood and relevant to the practice in school. The inclusion discourse is addressed from the perspectives of educational practice, policy, and ideology.

Professional dialogue (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is to advance knowledge and understanding of the professional dialogue in the research fields and practices of special needs education and its usefulness in development work.

Theory of Science and Methods with Subject Specialisation (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is to deepen and integrate theoretical and methodological issues in the field of special needs education. Research traditions and research approaches in the field are analysed and related to the planning of the independent project.

Inclusive perspectives on Language, Writing and Reading Development (15 ECTS cr)
 The aim of the course is to provide advanced knowledge of language and literacy learning, identifying potential obstacles and how to create inclusive environments for language learning.

Special Needs Education: Master thesis I (15 ECTS cr)

Students complete and defend an independent research project in special needs education at Master (60 credits) level.

Students opting for the Master 120 credit, can take the following programme courses:

Schools as Learning Organisations (15 ECTS cr)

The aim of the course is that students deepen their knowledge of the different conditions for school development through studying school development from different theoretical perspectives.

Special Needs Education: Master thesis (30 ECTS cr)

In the course of two terms students complete and defend an independent research project in special needs education at the level of Master 120 credits.

Special Needs Education: Master thesis II (15 ECTS cr)

Students complete and defend an independent research project in special education at Master (120 credits) level. Only students who have completed a 15-credit independent project at Master (60 cr) level in special education may take this course.

Degree Title

Degree of Master of Social Science (60 credits)

Major: Special Education

Degree of Master of Social Science (120 credits)

Major: Special Education

Transfer of Credits

According to the *Higher Education Ordinance* Ch. 6 sects 6-8, students have the right to request transfer of credits for previous studies.

Additional Information

The local regulations for undergraduate and master studies at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.

Previous versions of the programme syllabus have been approved:

2020-03-06, reg. no HS 2019/1511, valid from the autumn semester of 2020

Attachment to the Master-level study programme in Special Education
 Two recommended courses of study are presented below with a teaching specialisation and a school development specialisation, both requiring a 30-credit independent project at Master level.

Semester	Teaching	School development
Semester 1 HT	<i>Special Needs Education: Research and Practice (15 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 2 VT	<i>Special Education in Practice (15 ECTS cr)</i>	<i>Leading Local School Improvement (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 3 HT		<i>Inclusion (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 4 VT		<i>Professional dialogue (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 5 HT	<i>Inclusive perspectives on Language, Writing and Reading Development (15 ECTS cr)</i>	<i>Schools as Learning Organisations (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 6 VT	<i>Theory of Science and Methods with Subject Specialisation (15 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 7 HT	<i>Special Needs Education: Master thesis (30 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 8 VT		

Two recommended courses of study are presented below with a teaching specialisation and a school development specialisation, both requiring two 15-credit independent projects at Master's levels 60 and 120 credits respectively.

Semester	Teaching	School development
Semester 1 HT	<i>Special Needs Education: Research and Practice (15 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 2 VT	<i>Special Education in Practice (15 ECTS cr)</i>	<i>Leading Local School Improvement (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 3 HT	<i>Theory of Science and Methods with Subject Specialisation (15 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 4 VT	<i>Special Needs Education: Master thesis I (15 ECTS cr)</i>	
Semester 5 HT		<i>Inclusion (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 6 VT		<i>Professional dialogue (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 7 HT	<i>Inclusive perspectives on Language, Writing and Reading Development (15 ECTS cr)</i>	<i>Schools as Learning Organisations (15 ECTS cr)</i>
Semester 8 VT	<i>Special Needs Education: Master thesis II (15 ECTS cr)</i>	