



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Syllabus

Reg. no: 2023/1035

Master's Programme in Special Education

Programme Code	SASPP
Programme Title	Master's Programme in Special Education (60 credits/120 credits) <i>Masterprogram i specialpedagogik</i>
Credits	60/120
Approval	The programme study plan was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 14 September 2023, and is valid from the autumn semester of 2024.
Language of Instruction	Swedish
Education Cycle	Second
Degree Qualifications	General
Prerequisites	Degree of Bachelor, Teacher Education Degree, or other professional qualification of at least 180 credits with a major in special education, pedagogy/applied pedagogy, sociology, social work, psychology or speech and language pathology, including a degree project of at least 15 credits. Upper secondary school level English 6/A and Swedish 3/B or Swedish as a Second Language 3/B. Equivalence assessment may be made.

General Information

The Master's programme in Special Education is designed for students and professionals who are interested in special education activities in and out of school, as well as in other educational institutions.

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

Programme Outcomes

National outcomes for a Degree of Master (60 credits)

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) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and to analyse, assess and handle complex phenomena, issues and situations in the field even with limited information,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues autonomously as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames,
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

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

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (60 credits) is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) for at least 15 credits in the main field of study.

National outcomes for a Degree of Master (120 credits)

Knowledge and understanding

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 specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

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, autonomously 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, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or autonomous employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

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

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work,
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master (120 credits) is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) for at least 30 credits in the main field of study. The degree project may comprise less than 30 credits, however no less than 15 credits, if the student has already completed an independent project in the second cycle for at least 15 credits in the main field of study or the equivalent from a programme of study outside Sweden.

Programme Structure

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

The programme offers the choice of either of two qualifications: A Master's degree of 60 credits or a Master's degree of 120 credits.

The programme starts with a mandatory course, Special Needs Education: Research and Practice. The course in theory of science and methods with subject specialisation 15 credits is also mandatory, as well as independent projects of 30 credits in total that are offered as a 15-credit course at Master's level 60 credits and a 15-credit course at Master's level 120 credits in the recommended study routes. Beyond this, students have the opportunity to choose their own profile based on various options. Two recommended study routes with a specialisation in either teaching or school development are presented in the attachment.

The programme offers opportunities to develop practice-based and relevant research by linking the independent projects to development needs and projects of relevance to the 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 credits)

Mandatory 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 credits)

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

Leading Local School Improvement (15 credits)

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 credits)

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 credits)

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 credits)

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 credits)

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's thesis I (15 credits)

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

Students opting for the Master's 120 credits, can take the following programme courses:

Schools as Learning Organisations (15 credits)

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's thesis II (15 credits)

Students complete and defend an independent research project in special education at Master's level (120 credits).

Degree Title

Degree of Master of Social Science (60 credits)

Main field of study: Special Education

Degree of Master of Social Science (120 credits)

Main field of study: Special Education

Transfer of Credits

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

Additional Information

The local regulations for first- and second-cycle education at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.

Previous versions of the programme syllabus have been approved:

6 March 2020, reg. no HS 2019/1511, valid from the autumn semester of 2020

15 December 2021, reg. no HS 2021/1066, valid from the autumn semester of 2022

Attachment to programme syllabus of the Master's Programme in Special Education

The two recommended study routes of the Master's Programme in Special Education are as follows:

Semester	Teaching	School development
Semester 1 Autumn	Special Needs Education: Research and Practice (15 credits)	
Semester 2 Spring	Special Education in Practice (15 credits)	Leading Local School Improvement (15 credits)
Semester 3 Autumn	Theory of Science and Methods with Subject Specialisation (15 credits)	
Semester 4 Spring	Special Needs Education: Master's thesis I (15 credits)	
Semester 5 Autumn	Inclusive Perspectives on Language, Writing and Reading Development (15 credits)	Schools as Learning Organisations (15 credits)
Semester 6 Spring	Professional Dialogue (15 credits)	
Semester 7 Autumn	Inclusion (15 credits)	
Semester 8 Spring	Special Needs Education: Master's thesis II (15 credits)	