In order to meet the Commonwealth of Virginia’s need for well-trained and well-qualified special education teachers, ODU’s College of Arts and Letters’ Interdisciplinary Studies Program offers a Bachelor of Science degree with endorsement in special education general curriculum, K-12. Teacher candidates in this special education concentration also will be highly qualified in the elementary content area. This concentration is designed to prepare professionals who are able to develop and implement appropriate educational programs for students who manifest mild disabilities. The concentration combines coursework, supervised practica, and student teaching internships to facilitate the integration of theory and practice in the development of innovative interventions applicable for individuals with special needs from kindergarten through adulthood in both public and private facilities. The concentration is committed to a philosophy of serving as a catalyst to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. The course work focuses on the improvement of the quality and scope of educational and related services available to individuals with disabilities from infancy to adulthood. Teacher candidates are prepared to work effectively with children, adolescents, and adults who require special educational services. Classroom instruction is supplemented by field experiences with children, adolescents, and adults in a variety of settings.

Typically, a teacher with this license would be the special education co-teacher or support instructor for the general education teacher. In the majority of schools, these teachers would be working with special education students in an inclusion setting rather than teaching a self-contained classroom with students with mild disabilities. In a few schools, teachers may be assigned to teach an entire elementary education class with all Special Education students. However, most school systems are following the inclusion model described above. Special Education teachers with the K-12 general curriculum license will not be able to teach an elementary general education classroom even though they will be highly qualified in this content. Pursuant to governmental regulations, in order to be licensed to teach Special Education, one also must be highly qualified in the content that will be taught in the general education classroom. School divisions are directing their hiring efforts at teachers who meet this requirement.

In addition to passing PRAXIS Core and being admitted to the undergraduate teacher education program, teacher candidates must pass the Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects: Reading & Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science Assessment (formerly Praxis II), Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment, Reading for Virginia Educators Assessment, Special Education Departmental Exam, a background clearance check, child abuse training, and be certified in First Aid/CPR prior to student teaching.