

Your Letter of Introduction

Your application to the doctoral program in special education will include a letter of introduction that should help the admissions committee understand your history and interest in special education. In composing your letter, consider addressing the areas emphasized below. Your letter should reflect the work you done to learn about individual faculty, the program outcomes, and your specific interest in choosing the intellectual and scholarly community at KU. The questions or statements in each section provide direction for composing your letter. Feel free to improvise with the caveat that we are interested in understanding why you are interested in pursuing this degree and how your history and experience will contribute to the development of a committed cohort of doctor students who inspire each other to excel in their scholarship and collegiality.

Preparation for Doctoral Study

- What factors, experiences, and questions prompted you to pursue a doctoral degree?

Academic

- What are three or four big ideas that you have about the field of special education and why are they meaningful to you? How will advanced study add to your knowledge?
- If you completed an independent action research project or thesis for your master's program, what was the topic of your research and your rationale for selecting it?
- If you worked directly with faculty members on their research, how did your responsibilities help you grow as a scholar and colleague?

Professional and Related Experiences

- Identify the faculty member you would like to work with that best aligns with your areas of interests
- Discuss any full-time professional positions that you have had with students (with and without disabilities) and their families in either a teaching or a consulting role. Provide a description of your responsibilities and the opportunities for learning that you experienced. What did you gain from your professional position(s) that prepares you for doctoral study?
- You may have had other, volunteer or part-time experiences that led to your application to this program. Describe the context(s) and what you came to understand about yourself as well as others.

Projected Course of Doctoral Study

- What does it mean to you to hold a doctoral degree?
- How will either the Ed.D. or the Ph.D. help you achieve your professional goals and future contributions to the field?

Advanced study area and research emphases

- Discuss the doctoral program areas on the Department's webpage that interest you and explain why.
- List three or four major questions about the education of learners with disabilities that advanced coursework could help you answer. Explain why these questions interest you.

Minor areas of concentration

- Discuss areas of interest that you have in related fields outside special education that support your program area and research emphasis.

Professional goals

- Discuss your professional goals and the kinds of position(s) for which you expect to apply after completing your degree.
- What contributions to the field of special education do you hope to make in your professional career?
- What is your rationale for selecting special education for your doctoral study?