Special Education

**Degree conferred**  
Philosophiae Doctor in Paedagogia Speciali / Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education (PhD)

**Commencement of studies**  
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

**Regulation**  
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/dGLfK (French and German only)

**Application procedure**  
Candidates with Swiss qualifications  
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/0bJpN  
Candidates with foreign qualifications  
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/4a2qV

**Fribourg profile**  
The Department of Special Education (formerly curative education) offers a doctoral training in French and in German in the field of special education.

Special Education is the practice of educating students with special educational needs. The Department of Special Education contributes to the development, enrichment and dissemination of scientific knowledge and to the deployment and optimisation of professional skills and practices in the field of special education.

The theses in the Department are likely to cover themes concerning, for example:

- Educational interventions, therapeutic pedagogical measures and systems used in the field of special education and/or clinical speech therapy;
- The learning journeys and/or the characteristics of people – children, teenagers and adults – for the benefit of services in the field of special education and/or clinical speech therapy;
- Monitoring the journeys of people on the academic, developmental or social level depending on living and learning conditions proposed to them;
- The functioning and/or organisation of ordinary and/or specialised environments in welcoming people;
- Contact between these people, the community and/or the immediate or more distant entourage (family, neighbours, school, work, other);
- Training of professionals working in the field of special education and/or clinical speech therapy;
- Social attitudes towards persons receiving services in the field of special education and/or their entourage;
- etc.

The Department of Special Education focuses on fundamental research and on action or application-orientated projects. It is also interested in on meta-research in the field of special education.

In the doctoral programme, doctoral students who speak either German or French can register for the PROWEL (Social Problems and Social Welfare) doctoral school, which is led by Prof. Winfried Kronig from the Department of Special Education in collaboration with Prof. Monica Budowski (Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, University of Fribourg) and Prof. Christian Suter (Sociology, University of Neuchâtel). French-speaking doctoral students can also opt to attend the EDSE (Etudes doctorales en sciences de l'éducation) offered by CUSO.

During the academic year, a research seminar is organised 6 to 7 times by the Department of Special Education. Doctoral students writing their thesis under the direction of one of the Department's professors periodically present their work within this framework and thus benefit from feedback from other Department researchers. In addition, the Department organises meetings and/or study days for doctoral students, in collaboration with other national and international research teams.

**Professors who are eligible to supervise theses**

- **Prof. Gérard Bless**  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Academic integration
  - Efficiency of interventions
  - School-related problems
  Theses can be supervised in German or French.

- **Prof. Erich Hartmann**  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Diagnostic, prevention and intervention in the field of acquired or developmental communication disorders
  - Diagnostic, prevention and intervention in the field of reading and writing disorders
  - Evidence-based practices
  Theses can be supervised in German or English.

- **Prof. Winfried Kronig**  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Analysis of academic systems
  - Estimation of academic performance
  - Effects of the composition of classes
  Theses can be supervised in German or English.

- **Prof. Christoph Müller**  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Behavioural problems
  - Peer influence
  - Social integration
  - Intellectual disability and autism

http://studies.unifr.ch/endoctorat/pedpsy/specialeducation,doctorat/pedpsy/speechtherapy,doctorat/pedpsy/specialeduminor  
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Theses can be supervised in German or English.

- Prof. Geneviève Petitpierre

Areas of specialisation:
- Intellectual disability, multiple disabilities and/or neuro-development disorders
- Pedagogy-therapeutic intervention, efficiency and/or implementation
- Meta-research (research methods for people with intellectual disability)

Theses can be supervised in French.

**Studies organisation**

**Structure of studies**

No ECTS credits can be earned.

**Doctoral school**

http://education.cuso.ch

**Admission**

In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic bachelor’s and master’s degree or an equivalent qualification by an university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact a professor who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

There is no general right to be admitted to a doctorate.

The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.

**Contact**

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http://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-specialeducation (French)
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-specialeducation (German)

**Doc- Postdoc-portal**

http://www.unifr.ch/phd