



EXCEMPILS SCHOLAR OPPORTUNITY

The **Excellence in Multilingual Personnel in Illinois Schools (EXCEMPILS)** training project is designed to address state needs for highly qualified bilingual/multilingual special educators, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists with specialized academic, clinical, research, and leadership training to: 1) provide evidence-based, culturally and linguistically responsive services to school-age bilingual/multilingual learners with disabilities and their families, and 2) engage in interprofessional, collaborative teamwork to support the provision of inclusive and differentiated instruction to bilingual/multilingual students with disabilities with interdisciplinary service needs (e.g., autism, intellectual disability, and Down syndrome). The aim is to train exemplary, master's level special educators, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists committed to working in Illinois schools, including trainees from racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The project is funded through a competitive, 5-year federal grant (2023-2028) awarded from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.

Grant support will cover approximately 50% of scholars' graduate tuition.

Speech-language pathology scholars will complete their M.S. degree and meet all standards to apply for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC), the Illinois State Board of Education Professional Educator License (PEL), and the Illinois Bilingual Special Educator Approval to document their qualified bilingual provider status.

Occupational therapy scholars will complete their M.OT. degree and all standards of the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) required to sit for the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam and achieve high training standards for practice as bilingual/multilingual and culturally responsive personnel.

Special education project scholars will complete their M.S.Ed. degree in Special Education and requirements to apply for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Special Education Endorsement and Bilingual Approval.

The comprehensive curricula will entail **academic, fieldwork/clinical practicum** across a variety of settings, **research**, and **leadership** activities.



Coursework will include evidence-based, culturally and linguistically responsive services to school-age bilingual/multilingual learners with disabilities and their families, and interprofessional, collaborative teamwork to support the provision of inclusive and differentiated instruction to bilingual/multilingual students with disabilities with interdisciplinary service needs.



Fieldwork/ Clinical Practicum

Various assignments with bilingual/multilingual learners with disabilities and interdisciplinary needs in the on-campus clinic and in a school-based externship. **Special Education scholars**, who will be continuing their school employment while enrolled in the graduate program, will complete fieldwork/course assignments in the context of bilingual classrooms within their schools or districts.



Research

Scholars will collaborate to complete their master's research with mentorship from project faculty on a topic related to school-age bilingual/multilingual learners with disabilities and interdisciplinary needs (e.g., ASD, ID, and DS). Research and dissemination will promote scholars' leadership, advocacy, and sustained training of professionals in the field.



Project Monthly Team Meetings

Scholars and project directors will meet together regularly during Monthly Team Meetings (MTMs). These MTMs will be utilized to continue advancing scholars' learning and experiences to meet the designated competencies through activities including collaborative case studies, simulations, hands-on lab rotations, planning/hosting of family events, and interdisciplinary assessments and co-treatment of children with disabilities, both through in-person and distance learning modalities. The MTMs will also be utilized for the directors to provide ongoing culturally and linguistically responsive guidance, mentoring, feedback, and other needed supports during training.



Additional Supports for Scholars

The program utilizes a **cohort model** in which students take classes, achieve milestones, and graduate together. Along with supportive **faculty mentors**, first-year scholars will also be paired with second-year scholars as **peer mentors**.

Elmhurst University faculty are known for excellence in teaching. Faculty have participated in training through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) on best teaching practices.

These trainings include the use of culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices and Universal Design to Learning (UDL) for adult learners, creating equitable learning environments active learning strategies that promote higher order thinking (e.g., large and small group discussions, case studies, simulations, labs, reflections), and assessment to provide meaningful feedback to enhance learning. Faculty create environments that prioritize equity and inclusion and where all members share responsibility to sustain this inclusive environment.

Scholars will also have access to strong **Elmhurst University Support Services** including the Learning Center, Access and Disability Services, and Wellness and Counseling Center with whom we work closely to ensure equitable access and participation in the program.

HOW TO APPLY

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EXCEMPILS Scholar Application. After completing the regular CSDCAS (CSD, MOT) or Slate (Special Education) application for graduate admission, candidates pursuing the EXCEMPILS Scholar opportunity will complete the online EXCEMPILS application to provide information for federal grant reporting and to describe their 1) interest and experience serving school-age children, 2) depth of qualifications to serve bilingual/multilingual children with disabilities, and 3) commitment to a professional career in Illinois schools to fulfill the service requirement (i.e., 2 years in Illinois schools per year of funding). **Closes January 15, 2024.** [Click here](#) or use the QR code to access the application.



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Interview. An interview with the EXCEMPILS program directors will allow candidates to provide additional insight into their interest, qualifications, and commitment to the profession and answer potential remaining questions regarding the project components and requirements. Interviews will be scheduled February through March.

Accepted students will first be accepted into the graduate program and then receive separate notification (estimated March 15th through April 1st) of acceptance as an EXCEMPILS Scholar.

EXCEMPILS personnel are committed to equal access and treatment of scholars from historically excluded communities; they adhere to Elmhurst University's non-discrimination and non-harassment policy and do not tolerate discrimination on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, veteran status, marital status, or other protected group status.



FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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