

## **Program Assessment Summary**

### **Program Design**

The Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential at California State University, Fresno is under the auspices of the Division of Graduate Studies and is offered in conjunction with the Masters in Education Degree, although either one may be earned separately. The ECE Specialist Credential is one of two Specialist Credentials within the Literacy and Early Education Department in the Kremen School of Education. Day-to-day operations are managed by the Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator and four additional ECE-designated faculty. An ECE Advisory Committee provides input on at least an annual basis.

Excellent communication exists within the credential program and with the institution. The ECE Coordinator attends bi-monthly meetings held by the Division of Graduate Studies. The Division also provides direct email communication with graduate students providing timelines and professional development opportunities and hosts a University Graduate Orientation and barbeque each fall. At the school level, graduate program coordinators meet monthly to discuss common concerns and plan for program improvement. Within the department monthly meetings are held for both input to the program and opportunities to share successes and challenges with others in the department.. Within the program, ECE faculty meet monthly to discuss students, curriculum, assessment data, etc. Each spring the ECE Advisory Board provides input to the program based on real world needs from a variety of ECE professional perspectives. There is a strong line of communication between faculty and students within the program. Each student has an ECE Academic Advisor who meets with each student at least once a semester. The ECE Academic Advisors are also ECE faculty. Students are enrolled in their classes and see them on a weekly basis. Class sizes are small and students and faculty enjoy a more personal relationship than one might see in a larger program. Monthly emails from the ECE Program Coordinator keep students and faculty up-to-date with timelines and professional development opportunities.

The ECE Specialist Credential Program requires that

- Students hold a valid California elementary teaching credential
- Students have two years of experience teaching at at least two levels of ECE: preschool, Kindergarten, and grades 1-3.
- Students complete an accredited ECE Specialist Credential Program

The ECE Specialist Credential Program at California State University, Fresno requires students to complete fifteen units of required course and fieldwork plus fifteen units of approved electives within five years. The ECE Specialist Program may be combined with the Master's program or taken separately. Master's candidates in the ECE Teacher Leader Specialization may use their course work to fulfill requirements for

the ECE Specialist Credential. For the Specialist Credential only, a summative research paper is required in lieu of a thesis or project. The course of study is as follows:

*Required ECE Core Courses (6 Units)*

LEE 235 Concept Development in ECE (3 units)

LEE 241 Field Work in ECE (3 units)

*Elective ECE Core Courses (9 units, Select 3 of 4 courses)*

LEE 171 Trends and Issues in ECE (3 units)

LEE 232 Literacy in ECE (3 units)

LEE 233 Curriculum and Assessment in ECE (3 units)

LEE 271 Diversity and Inclusion in ECE (3 units)

*Other Electives*

15 units approved electives

LEE241 provides Credential students with a supervised fieldwork experience working with young children and their families. This experience provides students with extended field experience that is tailored to meet our program's areas of specialization: ECE Teacher Leader and ECE Program Leader. The ECE Specialist Credential student would be considered part of the ECE Teacher Leader specialization and would have specific fieldwork experiences to provide him/her with opportunities to demonstrate leadership, knowledge of child development and constructivist theory, as well as application of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support the realization of National Association of the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Standards and Essential Tools.

The Program's structure has remained the same over the past several years, although improvement efforts have been made to program elements such as more discreet scoring of students' skill mastery through structural changes to assessment rubrics, the triangulation of data from multiple sources to inform program improvement efforts, the development of a data system that can efficiently track student performance on program assessments, and an on-going effort to replace an efficient, albeit valid and reliable, assessment of dispositions with one that can be practically integrated into the program.

Improvements to the program such as those mentioned above are motivated by input from stakeholders. Students provide input to the program informally through their faculty and Academic Advisors and formally through an Exit Interview when they have completed the program. Employers provide input through a Survey and the ECE Advisory Board meets once a year to discuss the program and how it is meeting the needs of the professional ECE community.

**Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)**

Students enrolled in the ECE Specialist Credential enroll in three to nine units a semester although rarely do students exceed six units (two classes) a semester. All

courses are offered in the evening after 5:00 p.m. to accommodate the majority of our students who are working professionals. There is some latitude in the sequence of courses, but it is recommended that students take LEE171 Trends and Issues in ECE the first or second semester and candidates must enroll in the fieldwork class LEE241 in their next-to-last or last semester. Credential students must wait until their last semester to complete their summative research paper as a culminating activity.

Because the Specialist Credential requires candidates to hold a valid elementary credential, most Credential candidates enter the program with several years of experience in kindergarten or the primary grades, while some also have professional experience with preschool aged students. Coursework builds on that experience with its theory-to-practice model and the expectation that candidates must not only show theoretical understanding, but must be able to apply that knowledge to their work with young children and families. The fieldwork class, LEE241 expands the student’s skills even further by requiring a high level of performance and documentation of meeting the Essential Tools identified by NAEYC. Documentation of this high level of performance is made by the fieldwork supervisor and in writing by the candidate’s principal or professional supervisor.

**Assessment of Candidates**

Candidate assessment is embedded in the Program’s course and fieldwork. Candidates are informed of these requirements through their course syllabi and by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students not only have a copy of the assessment protocol, but a detailed rubric describing the expectations at three qualitative levels. Upon completion of the assessments students receive feedback in the form of scores and written comments.

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Approximate Place in Program Sequence</b>
Action Research Project	CI285	Within the first 2-3 semesters
Developmentally Appropriate Practice: The Charter School	Combined in LEE241; individual components in LEE171, LEE232, LEE233, & LEE 271	Next-to-last or last semester; individual components done throughout program
ECE Leadership Activity	LEE241	Next-to-last or last semester
ECE Portfolio	LEE241	Next to last or last semester
Thesis/Project/Research Paper	As an Independent Study with Advisor/LEE298B/LEE299	Last semester
Dispositional Survey	Not embedded	First and last semesters