

Program Summary
Special Education Credential Program
California State University, Fresno

Program Design

Leadership within the Special Education credential program at CSU, Fresno is provided from the Dean (Director of Teacher Education) and Associate Dean's office, as well as at the department level from the Chair. The SPED Coordinator is appointed by the Dean and serves in a leadership position for the program. An advising office is open in the Education building, M-F 8 AM-5 PM, across the entire calendar year. Candidates may make appointments and drop-ins are seen in the order they arrive. In addition, advising is provided by the SPED faculty during scheduled office hours or by appointment prior to program entry and throughout the program.

Communication within the credential program and with the institution is varied and frequent. Prospective teacher candidates are required to attend an orientation and to have an advising interview prior to admission to the program. The SPED program faculty meets bi-weekly to review and improve the program. Collaboration occurs regularly between the program and our Field Placement office, Advising staff, the Basic Credential Committee, and the departments offering courses. *Stakeholders*, including our District partners, also provide input through our Advisory Board, input meetings, and as adjunct professors, and personnel in partner schools are involved in both the planning and delivery of courses and fieldwork.

The structure of coursework and field experiences in the credential program prepares students to observe, plan, apply/teach, and reflect in a full range of service delivery options including the general education classroom, special education classrooms, tiered intervention settings, the community, and at times, special schools. All candidates have experiences in diverse settings. Signature course assignments and practicum requirements are aligned.

Program modifications over the recent two years include a significant and thorough program redesign to address revised state standards. As part of this process, we streamlined our program so that students can transition seamlessly from Preliminary to Clear Credential and Master's degree.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

Description of the sequence of coursework: The Liberal Studies undergraduate major prepares students with subject matter competency. Individuals demonstrate subject matter competency by passing all sections of the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET). Teacher candidates must complete three prerequisite classes before they are admitted to the program: *EHD 50: Introduction to Teaching*, *SPED 120: Introduction to Special Education*, and *CI 100: Educational Applications of Technology*. The Education Specialist Credential Program at California State University, Fresno and its prerequisites were developed based on research-based practices and organized in a cohesive and sequenced design. The program includes a purposeful, interrelated, developmentally designed sequence of coursework and field experiences that effectively

prepares candidates to teach all K-22 students and to understand the contemporary conditions of integrated and inclusive schooling as well as high need rural and urban schools. By design, the program provides extensive opportunities for candidates to learn to teach the content of the state adopted K-12 academic content standards to all students. All content-specific courses are based on the CCTC Standards and the state-adopted content standards and frameworks.

Coordination of coursework with field work: The sequenced design of the program is based on a clearly stated rationale that requires candidates to complete foundational classes and basic content-specific pedagogy coursework while concurrently practicing the application of these concepts and teaching skills in a field placement setting. Candidates are expected to apply the theoretical and scholarly concepts, knowledge, and teaching skills in planning and implementing effective and appropriate lessons and units of study. Candidates learn to use state-adopted instructional materials, assess student progress, and apply these understandings in teaching K-22 students as related to the content of the pedagogy coursework and to practice this knowledge in their field placements.

Number and type of field placements: The sequence of the professional preparation coursework permits the candidate to begin an incremental and developmental series of activities, which prepare him/her for full day teaching responsibilities. The first of three required field placements requires students to observe a variety of teaching situations and activities such as different classroom organizational patterns, content area instruction and the context of classrooms. This includes settings with diverse student populations. The candidate then moves on to engaging in one-on-one and small instructional group activities. In their initial practicum, teacher candidates begin to plan and teach lessons for whole-class and small group instruction. In Final Practicum, candidates are expected to develop and demonstrate pedagogical competence as defined by the CCTC Standards & Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). The candidate gradually assumes all classroom preparation and teaching responsibilities (i.e. instructional planning, classroom management, diagnosis of student strengths and needs and prescription of intervention to support student learning, assessment of student learning, record keeping, etc.). These activities are based on graduated comprehension and complexity.

Types of coursework in critical areas: The understanding and acceptance of differences in culture, cultural heritage, ethnicity, language, age, religion, social economic status, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and abilities and disabilities of individuals served are covered in SPED 120, SPED 145, LEE 172, and SPED 219. Teacher candidates also attend a seminar connected to fieldwork related to **At-risk students** that specifically covers gender identity/expression and sexual orientation as it relates to educating and serving diverse learners and their interactions in schools and community. Teacher candidates do an activity matching school and community resources with classroom or environmental supports for the students. Bullying and resiliency are also covered. SPED 145 has curriculum covering issues of gender and sexuality for students with disabilities. In **LEE 172: Cultural and Language Contexts of the Classroom**, candidates are introduced to the state and federal requirements for assessment, placement and instruction of English learners, as well as the philosophy,

design, goals, and characteristics of school-based organizational structures designed to meet the needs of English learners. A variety of assignments enrich their practical knowledge of school-based structures, philosophy, student outcomes and goals as a requirement of this class. Structured classroom observations focus on the ways in which teachers are using SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) strategies to meet the needs of English learners at various grade levels and in various content area instruction. High expectations and appropriate instructional strategies for all students are discussed and practiced through activities and assignments throughout the program.

Field supervision, advisement, evaluation: frequency, type, from BOTH the program personnel and the district employed individual (master teacher) when required in a program: Candidates are carefully observed, monitored, and advised during their 2nd and 3rd semester field placements by both their university supervisor and cooperating/master teacher so that they receive constructive, formative feedback with regard to their growing teaching competence and progress toward the achievement of CCTC Standards and Teaching Performance Expectations. In addition, candidates are given constructive feedback through goal-setting meetings, lesson observations, mid-semester and final assessment meetings, responses to reflective journals, and course competencies throughout all of the student teaching placements. This enables them to practice and refine their teaching performance in preparation for the performance assessments. Candidates gradually move toward this goal through the required sequenced practicum experiences.

Assessment of Candidates

How, when candidates are assessed for program competencies: The Special Education Program implemented 10 assessments, five of which are considered “key” (i.e., direct measures; indicated by an asterisk). These measures are intended to be comprehensive in scope and thorough in content when they are used to examine teacher candidate learning and program effectiveness in meeting university, state, and national standards/requirements.

1. Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidates (end of program)
2. Evaluation and Needs of Assessment Survey- Administrators (end of program)
3. CSU System Wide Survey (end of program)
4. CSU System Wide Survey (First Year Graduate)
5. Classroom Management Plan Rubric* (Direct Measure)
6. Behavior Support Plan* (Direct Measure)
7. Formal Assessment* (Direct Measure)
8. Curriculum-Based Assessment Rubric* (Direct Measure)
9. Portfolio Assessment* (Direct Measure)
10. Candidate Dispositions Survey (based on NCATE Standards; beginning and end of program)

Special Education Program assessments are characterized by the following features: (1) Direct measures (e.g., performance-based student assignments) and indirect

measures (e.g., surveys) are used. (2) Longitudinal and cross sectional designs are employed. Data are collected by semester, academic year, and biennially for longitudinal studies from student, alumni, and employers. (3) Surveys are used at multiple levels (e.g., program, school, campus, and CSU system wide surveys). (4) Summative and formative procedures are utilized in combination (e.g., four surveys are used as summative procedures). Informal measures, such as portfolio and curriculum-based assessment report rubrics, are used as formative procedures. It should be noted that the Special Education Credential Program utilizes surveys, but does not rely on surveys. Surveys are used to examine perceptions and perceptions can be subjective and, therefore, unreliable. Measures of teacher candidate competencies are currently the most credible tools. Direct measures are authentic assessments. They link evaluation and instruction by measuring teacher candidate performance in direct relation to what has been taught in the curriculum.

What advice candidates receive about how they will be assessed in the program and informed of the results of those assessments: Students are assessed in a variety of ways throughout the program. They initially receive information regarding signature course assignments and portfolio requirements in a practicum orientation. This information is further elaborated upon in the specific course with which each assignment is aligned. Students are informed of assessment results (assignment scores/g, practicum observation feedback, etc.) in a timely manner at various points in each semester.