

Degree Program: Master of Education (M.Ed.) Special Education

Revised
3/24/03

Review of MFA Results and Report on Curricular Change

Program Goals:

- To develop and maintain a quality education program in which graduate students develop and apply their understanding of the special education field.
- To foster an understanding of the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.
- To foster and maintain a positive environment for student's professional development.

Assessments:

Computer-generated report of graduate student GPAs: At the end of each semester the departmental secretary will request that a report be generated listing GPAs for the semester for students enrolled in the master's degree program.

Exit Survey: Survey completed by graduating students at the end of each semester, results to Department of Teaching and Learning once a year.

Exit Questionnaire: Three weeks prior to the date of the comprehensive exam preparation (CEP) meeting, the exit questionnaire with an explanatory letter will be mailed to each candidate. They will be requested to complete the questionnaire and to return this form anonymously by the date of the meeting.

Structured Interview: The structured interview will be administered individually or in small groups by assigned faculty members at the end of the comprehensive exam preparation meeting.

Comprehensive Examination:

- (1) Each semester qualified individuals will be administered comprehensive examinations following university, college, departmental, and program guidelines.
- (2) Two faculty members will read each question and determine whether a response is satisfactory. A third faculty member will be used as a tie breaker when necessary.
- (3) Students failing one question will be administered an oral examination.
- (4) Students failing two or more questions will fail the comprehensive examination and will be provided with a plan for further study. See comprehensive examination manual for specifics.

Special Education course syllabi: Course syllabi will be examined annually to determine if students are receiving instruction and experiences to facilitate disability awareness and knowledge of current best practices in the field.

Assessment Results

1. The computer-generated report of graduate student GPAs is reviewed to determine if 90% of students enrolled in the program are maintaining “good standing” status.
2. Graduate faculty administer the exit questionnaire, structured interviews, and comprehensive examinations at the end of the students’ program each semester (fall, spring, summer).
3. The Exit Survey is administered to students at the end of each semester by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and results are presented to departments in a timely manner. Results for 2001-2002 were recently released.
4. Graduate course syllabi are examined to determine if course objectives, learner outcomes, and course activities reflect an understanding of, and sensitivity toward, persons and families with disabilities, as well as best practice in the field.

Use of Results:

1. Information gained from the candidate exit questionnaires, exit surveys, and structured interviews is used to evaluate program effectiveness. Data from the various assessments are reviewed annually to determine if candidates feel satisfied with their advanced preparation in curriculum and instruction, management, assessment, and collaboration. Additionally, data are collected on candidates’ knowledge of research, best practices in their area of concentration, individuals with disabilities and their families, and professional development. Finally, candidates are assessed on their overall knowledge of the above topics during comprehensive examinations.
2. To ensure that courses contain a component on disability awareness and reflect current best practices, all special education graduate syllabi are reviewed annually. All syllabi were revised at the beginning of the Fall, 2001 semester to reflect best practice as mandated by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).
3. Currently, the exit questionnaire is undergoing a substantial revision to ensure that it reflects new CEC standards for special education teachers.
4. Due to the reorganization of the college in the summer of 2000, a decision was made to maintain the program as designed. The faculty did not feel that they had sufficient data to warrant substantial changes at that time. Additionally, the State Department of Education has recently mandated the redesign of all graduate programs as well as “add-on” special education certification. Program changes will be made pending dissemination of new regulations for these graduate programs.