

# NATIONAL RECOGNITION REPORT

## Preparation of Special Educators

**Southeastern Louisiana University**  
November 26, 2007

NCATE recognition of this program is dependent on the review of the program by representatives of the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**.

This report is in response to a(n):

- Initial Review
  Revised Report
  Response to Conditions

Program(s) Covered by this Review	Program Type:	Award or Degree Level(s)
M.A.T.: Special Education Mild/Moderate K-12	Initial Teacher Preparation	Master's

### PART A—RECOGNITION DECISION (see Part G for specifics on decision)

#### A.1—SPA Decision on NCATE recognition of the program(s):

- Nationally recognized  
 Nationally recognized with conditions  
 Not nationally recognized

#### A.2—Test Results (from information supplied in Assessment #1, if applicable)

The program meets or exceeds an 80% pass rate on state licensure exams:

- Yes
  No
  Not applicable
  Not able to determine

Comment: The data for 2003-04 Praxis II 0353 show that five candidates took this exam and at least one person had a low score of 127. If this is accurate, it would result in an 80% pass rate. The data for the 2004-05 Praxis II 0353 show that 25 candidates took the exam and at least one candidate had a low score of 117 which is below the state passing score of 143. If only one person scored less than 143, then there is a 96% pass rate for that year. However, without the disaggregation of data it cannot be determined how many candidates actually passed and how many did not for these two years.

### A.3—Summary of Strengths:

Candidates are required to participate in meaningful reflection throughout the program. This process is then culminated by an oral portfolio defense where candidates must take time to analyze all of their experiences and verbalize how they were relevant to the field of special education.

The program faculty has identified areas of relative strength and weakness, as well as strategies for improving candidate outcomes that involve additional instruction in courses, more applied practice opportunities, and closer monitoring during field experiences and student teaching.

### PART B—STATUS OF MEETING SPA STANDARDS

M = Met      NM = Not Met

CEC Standards	Specific Program or Level: MAT	Specific Program or Level
<p><i>Field Experiences and Clinical Practice Standard.</i> Special education candidates progress through a series of developmentally sequenced field experiences for <b>the full range of ages, types and levels of abilities</b>, and collaborative opportunities that are appropriate to the license or roles for which they are preparing. These field and clinical experiences are supervised by qualified professionals.</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	
<p>Comment: The field/clinical experiences are very comprehensive; however, it is not clear if candidates will receive the necessary experiences in K-12 settings to satisfy this requirement of the license.</p>		
<p><b>CONTENT STANDARDS</b></p>		
<p><i>Standard 1. Foundations.</i> Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with exceptional needs both in school and society. Special educators understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation. Special educators understand how issues of human diversity can impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact with issues in the delivery of special education services. They understand the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies. Special educators use this knowledge as a ground upon which to construct their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.</p>	<p><b>Met</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Candidates are required to take and pass Praxis II 0353 and 0542 before exiting the program.</p>		
<p><i>Standard 2. Development and Characteristics of Learners.</i> Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.</p>	<p><b>Not Met</b></p>	

CEC Standards	Specific Program or Level: MAT	Specific Program or Level
<p>Comment: Assessments #1 Praxis II 0542, #2 Praxis II 0353, #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, #6 Personal Management Model, #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies Addendum, and #8 Oral Portfolio make minimal reference to this standard and virtually no elements in the assessments appear to measure candidate knowledge related to this standard.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 3. Individual Learning Differences.</b> Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition<sup>2/</sup> can have on an individual’s learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual’s exceptional condition to impact the individual’s academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.</p>	<p><b>Not Met</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Assessments #1 Praxis II 0542, #2 Praxis II 0353, #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, #6 Personal Management Model, #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies Addendum, and #8 Oral Portfolio do not address the depth and breadth of this standard.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 4. Instructional Strategies.</b> Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with ELN. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula and to appropriately modify learning environments for individuals with ELN. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with ELN, and increase their self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Moreover, special educators emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan.</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Assessments #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, #6 Personal Management Model, and #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies Addendum address some aspects of this standard; however, there is no evidence that candidates are assessed on their knowledge and ability to use evidence-based instructional strategies or apply individualized instructional strategies.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions.</b> Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to para-educators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	

CEC Standards	Specific Program or Level: MAT	Specific Program or Level
<p>Comment: Assessments #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, the rubric for Assessment #6 Personal Management Model, and #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies address some elements of this standard. They do not assess elements of this standard as it relates to fostering cultural and linguistic diversity; inclusion of those with disabilities in regular classrooms; and guidance for paraeducators, volunteers, tutors.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 6. Language.</b> Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual’s experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with ELN. Special educators are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual’s language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide effective language models and they use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English.</p>	<p><b>Not Met</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Assessment #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies does not address this standard in terms of understanding typical and atypical development of language, individualized strategies to enhance language development, knowledge of augmentative, alternative communication and assistive technology, or resources for English Language Learners with Disabilities.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 7. Instructional Planning.</b> Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special curricula. In addition, special educators systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual’s abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors. Individualized instructional plans emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual’s exceptional condition, guides the special educator’s selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual’s learning progress. Moreover, special educators facilitate this instructional planning in a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts. Special educators are comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Assessments #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, and #5 Unit Assessment Plan do not address elements of this standard as it relates to considerations of cultural and linguistic diversity, the development of an ITP/IFSP, or collaboration with general education, outside agencies, and support personnel.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 8. Assessment.</b> Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	

CEC Standards	Specific Program or Level: MAT	Specific Program or Level
<p>understand the legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand measurement theory and practices for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure non-biased, meaningful assessments and decision-making. Special educators conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN. Special educators use assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs. Special educators regularly monitor the progress of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula. Special educators use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.</p>		
<p>Comment: Assessments #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, and #8 Oral Portfolio Defense address several elements of this standard; however, evidence that candidates understand validity, reliability, norms, bias, and knowledge of assessment limitations is not apparent.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 9. Professional and Ethical Practice.</b> Special educators are guided by the profession’s ethical and professional practice standards. Special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations. Special educators engage in professional activities and participate in learning communities that benefit individuals with ELN, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. Special educators are aware of how their own and others attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Special educators understand that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with ELN and their families. Special educators actively plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based best practices. Special educators know their own limits of practice and practice within them.</p>	<p><b>Met with conditions</b></p>	
<p>Comment: Assessments #1 Praxis II 0542, #2 Praxis II 0353, #3 Candidate Ability to Plan Instruction, #4 Clinical Practice Assessment, #5 Unit Assessment Plan, #6 Personal Management Model, #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies Addendum, and #8 Oral Portfolio Defense address several elements of this standard; however, evidence is lacking that other aspects of this standard are met as it relates to diversity and cultural issues, bias and influence on practice, families, and students, and professional development.</p>		
<p><b>Standard 10. Collaboration.</b> Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling. Moreover, special educators embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with ELN. Special educators promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences. Special educators are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with ELN. Special educators are a</p>	<p><b>Not Met</b></p>	

CEC Standards	Specific Program or Level: MAT	Specific Program or Level
resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to Individuals with ELN. Special educators use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services.		
Comment: The rubric Assessment #6 Personal Management Model assesses candidates on including parents, paraeducators, peers, and volunteers; however, there is a brief mention of parents only in the actual assessment. The major elements of this standard are not met.		

## PART C—EVALUATION OF PROGRAM REPORT EVIDENCE

### C.1—Candidates’ knowledge of content

Assessments #1 Praxis II 0542 and #2 Praxis II 0353 provide some evidence of candidate knowledge of content. However, the program may wish to combine Praxis II 0542 and Praxis 0353 as Assessment #1, and consider designing a second content assessment that more directly addresses the CEC content standards as informed by the Individualized General Curriculum and the common core.

### C.2—Candidates’ ability to understand and apply pedagogical and professional content knowledge, skills, and dispositions

Assessment #8 Oral Portfolio Defense provides a strong capstone project that is aligned with pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills. The mean scores for the Oral Defense range from 10.0 – 11.1 out of 12, although scores are difficult to compare across the assessment system because of the different scales used (4-point for some assessments and 5-point for others). However, there is weak evidence to support the individualized aspects of special education planning and instruction.

### C.3—Candidate effects on P-12 student learning

Assessment #5: Unit Assessment Plan is completed during student teaching/internship and is a comprehensive assignment that shows candidate impact on student learning. The analysis forms and reflective questions that guide candidates are quite thorough. Candidates are also given a list of “Common Areas of Concern” when planning the assessment and documenting student learning gains. The scoring rubric is vague and not congruent with the clear instructions provided for candidates, which raises issues of scoring reliability.

## PART D—EVALUATION OF THE USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### Evidence that assessment results are evaluated and applied to the improvement of candidate performance and strengthening of the program (as discussed in Section V of the program report)

The program faculty members appear to interpret the data appropriately, and have identified areas of relative strength and weakness (e.g., individual learning differences, assessment). They have identified strategies for improving their student outcomes that involve additional instruction in courses, more applied practice opportunities, and closer monitoring during field experiences and student teaching.

Based on the assessment results, SELU appears to be making changes in all three areas of candidate performance: Content Knowledge, Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions and Candidates Impact on P12 Learning. SELU continues to monitor candidate knowledge in the methods classes as well as in student teaching/internship. The MAT Program is currently under revision. If the MAT Committee decides to redesign the program, the following areas will receive more consideration: families, behavior management, individualization, technology and interpreting and utilizing results. These are areas that were noted as relatively weak in this review.

In terms of Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions, SELU noted that candidates did well on the majority of the LCET Performance Indicators (Unit Evaluation of Student Teaching). When examining the data SELU noted relative weakness in: planning and accommodating for individual differences and in incorporating technology into their lessons. Steps will be taken to work with Cooperating Teachers and with candidates to strengthen these areas.

During the fall 2006 semester, SELU required student teachers/interns to implement the assessment plan in their classrooms. Since many candidates struggled with interpretation of data and utilizing the data to impact student learning, beginning in spring semester 2007, more specific training and more practice with a variety of assessments, including interpreting and utilizing test results will be provided in the methods and assessment courses.

## **PART E—AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- In the Section I summary, it states that upon completing the program candidates will be able to teach special education mild/mod K-12. However, evidence is not provided that candidates will receive field/clinical experiences at the necessary age/grade levels to satisfy the K-12 endorsement.
- The assessment system has limited focus on CEC's common core and the Individualized General Curriculum knowledge & skills.
- Assessment #7 CEC Special Education/Language/Instructional Strategies Addendum does not provide candidates with substantive feedback that they can work on during their student teaching experience and therefore, does not appear to be a strong assessment of candidates' special education knowledge and skills.
- Issues of cultural and linguistic diversity should be addressed in the program and assessment of candidates' competency related to these issues.
- Data are vague and open to interpretation. The program provides mean scores on each element of the assessments, which does not allow for comparisons across the assessment system.
- Rubrics are vague, do not use consistent language, and do not contain specific criteria for the various levels of performance.

## **PART F—ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

### **F.1—Comments on context and other topics not covered in Parts B-E:**

The part of Assessment #4 Clinical Practice Assessment that states 'Develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or Individualized Family Plan (IFSP) as needed for the lesson (SPED teachers only)' implies that candidates in the special education program are not aware of the purpose, development, and proper use of an IEP or IFSP.

This dual certification MAT program does not provide strong evidence for judging candidates' proficiency in meeting the special education standards. However, the evidence is quite strong for judging general education knowledge and skills.

The documents often referred the reviewer to specific page numbers, but the pages are not numbered.

There are two faculty members that hold terminal degrees, or who have experience, in special education. This raises questions as to who will be supervising field/clinical experiences and who will be providing instruction in special education courses.

#### **F.2—Concerns for possible follow-up by the Board of Examiners:**

### **PART G—TERMS AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS FOR DECISIONS**

**Program is nationally recognized with conditions.** The program is recognized through spring 2009. The program will be listed as nationally recognized on websites and/or other publications of the SPA and NCATE. The institution may designate its program as nationally recognized by NCATE, through the time period specified above, in its published materials. **National recognition is dependent upon NCATE accreditation.**

***Subsequent action by the institution:*** To retain accreditation, a report addressing the conditions to recognition must be submitted within 18 months, or no later than **April 15, 2009**. The report must address the conditions ***specified in the box below***. Failure to submit a report by the date specified above will result in loss of national recognition.

Unless required to submit earlier by the state, programs are encouraged to take the full time period specified above to address conditions to recognition. If conditions to recognition are not removed in the Response to Conditions report, program status will change to Not Recognized.

**National recognition with conditions.** The following conditions must be addressed within 18 months (see above for specific date):

Evidence should be provided that meets the preponderance of standards in this report indicated as not met or met with conditions.

Assessment of candidates' competency related to issues of cultural and linguistic diversity should be addressed.

The program needs to revise its rubrics so that it reflects quantifiable measures of candidate performance and so that it aligns with the respective assessment tool. Rubrics should report data using a consistent scale and language that aligns with CEC standards.

The program needs to clarify at what ages/grade levels candidates will conduct field/clinical experiences to support the granting of K-12 mild/moderate licensure.

The program needs to provide separate data tables showing the Praxis scores and sub-scores for candidates in each of the two masters' programs that lead to initial licensure in special education.

*For further information on due dates or requirements, contact program review staff at NCATE (202-466-7496).*