

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 2820S
Date of Senate Approval 04/09/20

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 25 (EDUC): Revise Program Requirements for Special Education Licensure

Effective Date: Fall 2020

1. **Delete:** On page 127, item II under the heading **Special Education: General Curriculum (K-12):**
- II. Required courses outside Education – 22 hours, including: MATH 211, 215; PSYC 100, 208, 214, 319.

Add: On page 127 in place of deleted entry:

- II. Required courses outside Education – 10 hours, including: MATH 211, 215; PSYC 319.

Impact: This change will reduce the number of hours required for students seeking Special Education licensure while still allowing them to meet the Special Education (General Curriculum) Licensure Standards from the NC Department of Public Instruction. Candidates will save tuition dollars and the length of the program will be reduced by the equivalent of a full-time semester.

With the reduction in required hours, we expect that enrollment in the Special Education licensure program will increase, particularly among post-baccalaureate students and students majoring in disciplines other than Psychology. An increase in students will require the department to offer two to four courses unique to the Special Education licensure program per academic year. **(Note: the licensure area was approved in 2016. We are not adding any additional courses to the program.)**

- EDUC 305: Classroom and Behavior Management (Fall only)
- EDUC 342: Diagnostic Assessment and Instruction in Reading (Fall only)
- EDUC 348: Assessment for Exceptional Learners (Spring only)
- EDUC 349: Evidence-Based Strategies for Teaching Mathematics to Learners with Disabilities (Spring only)

EDUC 348 was offered once by Tiece Ruffin in Spring 2019 with five students enrolled. EDUC 342 is currently being delivered to one student as an online course through our distance learning lateral entry program. The instructor of that course receives a small stipend for working with the single student. If enrollment in the Special Education program increases, these two courses will require six hours of faculty load per academic year, as approved previously.

For EDUC 305, we have been substituting a K-6 course, EDUC 325: Classroom Management and Instructional Differentiation. For EDUC 349, we have been substituting another K-6 course, EDUC 340: Teaching Mathematics – Content and Process. These substitutions allow for efficiency with the current number of Special Education candidates, but are problematic in that the content is focused only on K-6 students, and these licensure candidates will earn a K-12 license. If the program grows in enrollment, EDUC 305 and 349 will be taught and tailored more specifically to the needs of K-12 Special Education candidates.

These two courses require six hours of faculty load per academic year. We have not been able to teach these classes because of low numbers.

The change may reduce demands on the Psychology Department by reducing the number of students needing access to PSYC 208 and 214. Though the program is too small to have made a significant impact on those course enrollments prior to this point, removing them from the requirements will ensure that the Psychology Department does not see an increase in Special Education students needing the courses in the future. Special education licensure candidates who major in Psychology could still take all four classes as part of their degree programs, but post-baccalaureate students and students from other disciplines will be able to meet licensure requirements with PSYC 319.

Rationale: Since it launched in Fall 2016, the special education licensure program has had disappointing enrollment and has shown significant attrition. In the past four years we have had 27 candidates who have been informally admitted into the special education licensure program. However, student persistence is a concern. Of those 27 students, 9 are currently taking at least one EDUC course; 4 are no longer enrolled at the university, 4 are enrolled but taking no EDUC courses, 5 graduated without completing licensure, and 5 have been academically suspended. Additionally, this fall several prospective post-baccalaureate students who were interested chose not to enroll once they learned the extent of the course requirements and the length of the program. Clearly, the program needs close scrutiny and revision to make it viable. These changes are a first step in that process.

As it is currently structured, the Special Education licensure program requires candidates to take two Psychology courses that meet no particular NCDPI Teacher Education standards. PSYC 100 was included in the original program because it is a prerequisite to PSYC 214 and 208 which have been required. PSYC 208 (Abnormal Psychology) meets no distinct standards in the Special Education licensure program. In fact, its inclusion in the program as a requirement is questionable as it seems to suggest that individuals with disabilities, by nature, display concomitant mental health concerns. This insinuation is problematic and sends an unproductive (though unintended) message about the beliefs that undergird the program. Because PSYC 100 and PSYC 208 do not address any program-specific standards, they are unnecessary and should be eliminated from requirements.

Requiring both PSYC 214 and PSYC 319 leads to some redundancy of content; candidates do need to demonstrate understanding of human development and should be able to use that information to design appropriate, research-based teaching and learning experiences. However, human development specifically as it relates to Education is covered in PSYC 319; PSYC 214 approaches development from a psychological research perspective. Colleagues in the Psychology department suggest that PSYC 319 should be the required course for licensure candidates and that 214 should be eliminated from the program. They concur with these proposed changes.

Requiring PSYC 319 rather than allowing a choice between PSYC 214 and 319 will not put our candidates at a disadvantage. Candidates who have not had PSYC 100 can take PSYC 319 because it allows for either PSYC 100 *or* EDUC 210 as prerequisite. Since all licensure candidates must earn credit for EDUC 210, students who have not had PSYC 100 can take PSYC 319 and meet the standards related to human development without taking PSYC 100 and 214.

Yet another reason to move forward with these changes is that we will reduce the need for candidates to retake PSYC 100 and 208 to earn a C or better when a D is a credit-earning grade for major and general education purposes. Education department policy driven by accreditation guidelines stipulates that if a licensure candidate earns a C- or below in a course that is required for their program, they must retake the course and earn a grade of at least C. This semester we had the case of a student who made a C- in PSYC 100 and who, per departmental policy, will have to retake it to earn a C even though the course doesn't meet any specific program standards. When the issue arose, department members discussed the policy to see if it

should be or could be amended but ultimately decided that it should stand as is. The revisions in this document would eliminate scenarios like the one we encountered this fall.

Finally, this document would bring the number of hours required for Special Education licensure candidates more into line with the number of hours required for the K-6 program. Currently, K-6 candidates take 51 hours; with these changes, Special Education candidates would take 52 hours. As the program is currently structured, it requires 64 hours.

Special education is a high-needs licensure area in North Carolina and across the country and our local partner districts have expressed interest in UNCA continuing to offer special education licensure. However, the program is in need of significant streamlining and revision if we are to recruit and retain students and use university resources in the best ways possible.