

**Mission Statement:**

The Department of Special Education, as with all The State University of New York at Potsdam education programs, is aligned with the College's conceptual framework, *A Tradition of Excellence: Preparing Reflective and Creative Educators*. We in the department recognize that the development of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions is essential to the preparation of educators for our public schools, and as such our courses seek to develop our candidates' attributes as *Well-Educated Citizens*, *Reflective Practitioners*, and *Principled Educators* (See attachment.)

***Well-Educated Citizen.*** In our special education programs, we seek to develop our candidates' special education knowledge base and ability to use that knowledge to critically analyze problems. Faculty members regularly bring in recent research to support their teaching.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate a strong command of the legal basis for special education in the United States, characteristics of individuals with a variety of disabilities, principles of effective and valid assessment, as well as the principles and ethical issues in conducting special education research. They are expected to use library resources widely to build their professional knowledge base. They are also expected to communicate effectively and correctly in oral and written English.

***Reflective Practitioner.*** Throughout a candidate's program of study they are exposed to research-based models of instruction and assessment, including direct instruction and learning strategies. They are required to demonstrate their ability to use multiple and effective strategies to teach students with a variety of learning needs, to analyze behavior and design positive behavioral supports and to collaborate with parents and peer professionals. They demonstrate the ability to effectively select and use assistive technology to assist student learning. Throughout the program, they are regularly asked to reflect on their own learning and performance, promoting professional development throughout their careers. Written and oral self-reflection on the candidates' own experiences is an integral part of all field experience and practicum requirements. The data-based teaching units in SPED 649 and the final practicum (SPED 669) allow the candidate to reflect on the effectiveness of the entire teaching process.

***Principled Educator.*** Our program holds the highest standards for professional behavior among our candidates. They are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and work well with others in the many cooperative activities in the program and in the authentic application assignments and performance assessments. Many of these tasks require them to demonstrate their ability to work well with others and to accept responsibility for their own actions. Faculty regularly monitor candidates' dispositions for teaching, with checklists and rubrics based on our SUNY Potsdam *Principled Educator* attributes. Candidates must demonstrate the willingness to take risks and show a tolerance for ambiguity so often found when working with students with disabilities. Competence, integrity and a respect for others are hallmarks of the SUNY Potsdam special education graduate student.

***SUNY Potsdam Special Education Philosophy and Principles***

When the MSED Special Education program began preparing special educators in 1993, we considered carefully the design of the program in response to current trends in the field.

Nationally, service delivery models for students with mild/moderate disabilities (i.e., learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional-behavioral disabilities) were in a state of transition. "Pull-out" models (i.e., resource rooms) were proving to be ineffective at remediating student learning and behavioral problems. Additionally, students with disabilities were in increasing

numbers being moved into more restrictive self-contained programs due to the failure of resource programs. This trend was viewed as problematic since it violated the letter and the spirit of IDEA which stipulates that services to students with disabilities must be rendered in the least restrictive environment. This trend also strained our supply of special education teachers since fewer students can be served per teacher in self-contained settings.

The principles embodied in the General Education Initiative were promoted as a solution to this problem. Research in this field indicates that effective services for these students can be provided in the general education classroom **IF** general education teachers have the support and assistance from special education teachers trained in strategies for working with students with disabilities, and **IF** the special educators have the skills needed to work collaboratively with general educators to plan and implement programming for a variety of learners. Our special education preparation program focuses on these competencies and was designed to assist students with disabilities remain productively in general education, stemming the increase of students moving into self-contained settings and the accompanying increase in demand for special educators to serve those more labor intensive models.

Our program includes a course in research methods and current issues to help the new special educator become familiar with the issues in special education as well as the primary means of adding to the knowledge base. The coursework in characteristics of learners with disabilities has been designed to help the prospective special educator identify and understand from a cross-categorical perspective the broad range of behaviors and challenges exhibited by students with disabilities. Strong preparation in assessment, instructional strategies, assistive technology and behavior management allows our candidates to design effective interventions in collaboration with other professionals. Principles of Universal Design for Learning are infused throughout the pedagogical core. The course in collaborative consultation sensitizes the candidate to the difficulties and challenges of working collaboratively with other professionals and parents and to develop skills for doing so. The practicum and culminating portfolio help assure that candidates are able to use their knowledge and skills to impact their students learning in a principled manner. These components of our special education programs were designed to develop in our candidates the attributes SUNY Potsdam associates with the *Well-Educated Citizen*, the *Reflective Practitioner*, and the *Principled Educator*.

**Department Assessment Coordinator or Faculty Member Completing this Form:**  
Dennis Conrad

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This annual program assessment and action plan will address results regarding two learning outcomes: 1) content assessment and 2) pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

These assessments aim to meet the following CEC Standards:

- Standard 1: Foundations of Special Education
- Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
- Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences
- Standard 4: Instructional Strategies
- Standard 5 Learning Environments and Social Interactions
- Standard 6: Language Learning
- Standard 7: Instructional Planning
- Standard 8: Assessment
- Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice
- Standard 10: Collaboration

Content knowledge is addressed through the following assessments:

- Assessment 1:** NYSTCE-Students with disabilities Content Specialty Test (CST)
- Assessment 2:** SPED Department Comprehensive Test comprising 100 questions covering all 10 CEC standards. Candidates are expected to complete at no less than Level 2 mastery.

The pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions component is addressed through the following six program assessments:

- Assessment 3:** Planning Assessment [unit/lesson plans] that addresses CEC Standards 4 and 5-8.
- Assessment 4:** Pedagogical skills [Clinical Evaluation/Practicum] that addresses CEC Standard 7 and 1-10.
- Assessment 5:** Student Learning [CBM] that addresses CEC Standards 8, 2, 5-7]
- Assessment 6:** One REQUIRED 'other' assessment [the Case Study, Midterm Exam for sped 601, IEP Project] that addresses CEC Standard 3.
- Assessment 7:** One OPTIONAL 'other' assessment [the collaboration project]
- Assessment 8:** One OPTIONAL 'other' assessment [the research proposal].

### **Assessment #1: NYSTCE Students with disabilities CST**

#### **Intended Student Learning Outcome #1 Content Assessment**

Students will demonstrate content knowledge of Special Education through completion of NYS Competency Specialty Test for students with disabilities.

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

The New York *Students with Disabilities* Content Specialty Test addresses all 10 of the CEC Program Standards, as follows:

<b>Subarea 1</b> -Understanding and Evaluating Students with Disabilities	* CEC Standard 2-Characteristics * CEC Standard 3- Individual Differences CEC Standard 7: Planning * CEC Standard 8-Assessment
<b>Subarea II and IV</b> - Promoting Student Learning and Development in a Collaborative Learning Community	* CEC Standard 4: Instruction * CEC Standard 5: Learning Environments CEC Standard 6: Language CEC Standard 7: Planning
<b>Subarea III</b> - Working in a Collaborative Professional Environment	CEC Standard 1: Foundations CEC Standard 9: Professional Practice * CEC Standard 10: Collaboration

\* Indicates strongest focus of subarea

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

The *CST Students with Disabilities Test* consists of three multiple-choice sections  
 Subarea 1-Understanding and Evaluating Students with Disabilities;  
 Subarea II-Promoting Student Learning and Development in a Collaborative Learning Community;  
 Subarea III- Working in a Collaborative Professional Environment.  
 The last section is a constructed-response section, addressing the same content area as Sub-area II Subarea IV- Constructed Response: Promoting Student Learning and Development in a Collaborative Learning Community.

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Assessment #2: Secondary Program Content Assessment - SPED Department's Comprehensive Examination**

**Intended Student Learning Outcome #1: Content Assessment**

Teacher candidates will demonstrate content knowledge of Special Education through completion of a departmentally developed comprehensive review, to be completed in the first summer and prior to SPED 669.

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

Direct Assessment #2- Program Assessment of Content

Levels/ Criteria based on CEC Standards
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Standard 1: Foundations of Special Education  
Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners  
Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences  
Standard 4: Instructional Strategies  
Standard 5 Learning Environments and Social Interactions  
Standard 6: Language Learning  
Standard 7: Instructional Planning  
Standard 8: Assessment  
Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice  
Standard 10: Collaboration

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**Data Source/Results & Analysis: Departmental Comprehensive Exam**

In 2009, the Special Education Department created a comprehensive exam that would be used to measure the department's effectiveness in teaching essential content within the instructional constructs of the courses leading to a Master's Degree in Special Education. A pool of 50 questions assessing specific content was created for each discipline taught in the fall and spring semesters. Students completed a random pool of 100 questions in the June, 2010 Exam. The results for this exam were aggregated and discussed at the Fall, 2010 department meetings. (See chart below.)

This assessment provided the department with valuable information, however, it was determined the comprehensive exam results would garner more effective future goal setting if questions were correlated with the CEC Standards; in future exam planning each of the ten CEC Standards would be represented with an equal assessment value.

The 2011 Comprehensive Assessment was designed to:

- accurately measure whether the department has been successful with empowering students with essential content through their coursework leading to a Masters Degree in Special Education
- provide data that would outline student performance in each of the CEC Standard Areas

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Assessment # 3: Planning - Lesson Unit Plan in SPED 646, 647, 648**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome #2: Pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions*

Teacher candidates will demonstrate pedagogical, knowledge, skills and dispositions through their submission of a lesson unit plan developed in any of their instructional strategies classes (SPED 646, 647, 648) and evaluated using a common rubric.

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s): Unit/Lesson Planning Activity**

Levels/ Criteria	CEC Standards	INTASC Principles
Planning	Standard 7	Standard 7
Instruction	Standard 4	Standard 4
Learning Environments/Classroom Management	Standard 5	Standard 5
Language/Assistive Technology	Standard 6	Standard 6
Assessment	Standard 8	Standard 8
Individual Differences	Standard 3	Standard 3

**Data Source/Results & Analysis – Unit/Lesson Planning Activity: SPED 646, 647, 648, 649 in SPED 670 DRF**

Our program includes two 30-hour field experiences. The second of these (SPED 649) occurs in the semester before their practicum, and in conjunction with their age-level appropriate strategies course(s) (SPED 646, 647, and/or 648)

In this second field experience, they are required to complete 2 lesson plans and then to teach those lessons to a group of students in their field placement. This activity gives them a preparatory experience for the lessons they will plan and teach in their final practicum.

The cooperating teacher reviews the lesson plans and provides formative feedback. The lesson evaluations are also completed by the cooperating teacher and returned to the college. This assessment is evaluated by the college instructor based on the materials submitted by the candidate at the end of the field experience. By completing these lesson plans and then teaching them to groups of P-12 learners, our candidates are acquiring skills in and being evaluated for their competence in skills related to the following CEC Standards:

- Standard 7 -Planning
- Standard 4 - Instruction
- Standard 5 -Learning Environments/Classroom Management
- Standard 6 Language/Assistive Technology
- Standard 8 -Assessment
- Standard 3 -Individual Differences

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Assessment #4 Pedagogical Skills: Clinical Evaluation – SPED 669**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome #2 Pedagogical Skills*

Teacher candidates will demonstrate pedagogical, knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their clinical evaluation (SPED 669) as determined by the college supervisor’s final rubric.

The Rubrics are used to assess key indicators for all 10 standards, and are a composite based on assessment of performance throughout the practicum and the following permanent products:

	<b>CEC Standard</b>	<b>Permanent Product Assessed</b>
<b>CEC 1</b>	Foundations of Special Education	IEP development
<b>CEC 2</b>	Development and Characteristics of Learners	IEPs; Final Reports
<b>CEC 3</b>	Individual Learning Differences	Teacher Work Sample Lesson Plans
<b>CEC 4</b>	Instructional Strategies	Formal Observations; Teacher Work Sample
<b>CEC 5</b>	Learning Environments/Social Interactions	Functional Behavioral Assessment & Behavior Intervention Plan
<b>CEC 6</b>	Language Learning	Technology Log ELA focus for curriculum/lesson planning
<b>CEC 7</b>	Instructional Planning	Lesson Plans; Teacher Work Sample
<b>CEC 8</b>	Assessment	PLPs and final assessments on IEPs; Final Reports
<b>CEC 9</b>	Professional and Ethical Practice	Individual Professional Development Plan; Reflective Journals Final Reflective Essay
<b>CEC 10</b>	Collaboration	Parent Contact Log; Final Reports; Parent Conferences

**Data Source/Results & Analysis:**

Clinical Evaluation Rubrics- SPED 669 in SPED 669 DRF

Candidates complete a 30-day practicum in special education at the end of their programs of study, as described in Section I. This college-supervised experience is designed to assess our candidate’s competencies across all 10 of the CEC Standards. At the end of the experience, college supervisors and sponsor/lead teachers both complete Final Rubrics using critical indicators as an evaluation of the candidates’ final competency levels. These evaluations are based on a composite of all of the activities involved in the practicum, as well as some additional critical dispositional indicators.

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Assessment #5 Student Learning: Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome #2 Pedagogical Skills*

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

Teacher candidates will demonstrate pedagogical, knowledge, and skills through an evaluation of student learning indicators. These are evidenced from the feedback given by SPED 637 faculty re Curriculum Based Measurement unit in SPED 637.

This project [Curriculum Based Assessment/Measurement] addresses CEC Standards 2, 4-8 and is reflected in the assessment group titled Student Learning. The related rubric includes descriptions of the students' present levels of performance, researched based intervention strategies, an intervention plan, monitoring of student progress, the effectiveness of the intervention, and a presentation.

The appropriate standards are:

Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners;

Standard 4: Instructional Strategies;

Standard 5 Learning Environments and Social Interactions;

Standard 6: Language Learning;

Standard 7: Instructional Planning; and

Standard 8: Assessment

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

CBM Unit from SPED 637 in the SPED 670 DRF

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Assessment # 6 Other Assessment – IEP Unit Project**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome 2: Pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions*

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

Teacher candidates will demonstrate pedagogical, knowledge, and skills through their development and submission of an individualized education program (IEP) for a specific (real or hypothetical) student. The IEP would have been developed in one of the instructional strategies classes viz. SPED 646, 647, and 648. The product will include: present levels of performance, goals and objectives, and appropriate materials, strategies and evaluation procedures. The product also includes a reflective statement addressing CEC Standard 7.

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

IEP Project from Strategies courses (SPED 646, 647, 648) in SPED 670 DRF.

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**Other Assessment #7: Collaborative Project**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome # 2: Pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions*

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

Teacher candidates will demonstrate their knowledge and skills associated with collaborative practice by uploading an appropriate product or final report on a product and reflective statement (CEC Standard 10) from SPED 650.

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

Collaborative Project from SPED 650 in the SPED 670 DRF.

It includes the product, reflective statement, and rubric.

**Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement**

**OPTIONAL 'Other' Assessment # 8 Research Project**

*Intended Student Learning Outcome #2: Pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions*

The student will demonstrate ability to conduct educational research.

**Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)**

**Research Proposal and Ethics Dossier (SPED 607)**

This project predominantly addresses CEC Standards 1 and 9:

**Standard 1: Foundations of Special Education** relies upon good research to build the skills and knowledge of the next generation of teachers. This assessment is designed to assess our candidates' command of the principles of reading and conducting research so necessary to understanding and renewing the foundations of special education.

**Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice** requires knowledge of the principles of ethical practice and the dispositions to adhere to those principles. This assessment assesses the candidate's knowledge to the quality of good research but more importantly it stresses the ethical ramifications of human subjects research.

**Data Source/Results & Analysis**

Research Proposal and Ethics Dossier (SPED 607) in SPED 670 DRF.

In SPED 607: Educational Research: Critical Issues in Special Education, the candidates are asked to prepare a Research Proposal and Ethics Dossier. The objective of this assignment is to demonstrate mastery of the process of preparing a research proposal and

ethics dossier that must be completed by researchers who conduct research projects that involve human subjects in their methodology. In SPED 607: Educational Research:

Critical Issues in Special Education Ethics, the candidates were given the instructions for the project as included in 8.5.a below.

The second section of this project is the ethics dossier: This assignment entails the preparation of an ethics dossier that is an extension of the research proposal assignment described above. The objective of this assignment is to demonstrate mastery of the process of preparing a research ethics dossier.

The required elements for this assessment include:

**Research Proposal**

- Introduction
- Research Question & Hypothesis
- Rationale for Proposed Study:
- Purpose of the Proposed Study
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Contribution to the field of special education
- Conclusion

**Ethics Dossier**

- Recruitment text to participants
- Research Project
- Research Participants
- Recruitment of participants
- Selection of participants
- Participation in research
- Informed consent
- Proportionality of harms and benefits
- Privacy of research participants
- Confidentiality of data

Throughout this assignment, candidates work closely with the peers and instructor, evaluating research proposals with supporting preparation for completing their own.

Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement

<i>Summary of Action Plans for upcoming Academic Year 2011-2012</i>	
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2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	