



University Council

October 13, 2023

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2023-2024

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Mary Frances Early College of Education to offer the existing major in Education (Ed.S.) with an Area of Emphasis in Literacy Specialist online will be an agenda item for the October 20, 2023, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR AN ONLINE PROGRAM

Date: July 21, 2023

College/School: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department/Division: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Program (Major and Degree): Education (Ed.S.)

Program CIP: 13010101

Will any areas of emphasis be offered under this major? Area of Emphasis in Literacy Specialist (new)

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2024

1. Assessment: A needs assessment demonstrating a sufficient pool of qualified applicants.

In April 2021, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), the state's educator certification agency, contacted the Mary Frances Early College of Education requesting consideration of the development of an educational specialist level certification in Literacy Specialist. Given the national and international expertise of faculty at the flagship educator preparation and research institution in the state, the GaPSC was specifically interested in the development of a research-based preparation degree for Georgia teachers and leaders around literacy at UGA.

Since this initial request, legislation passed in Georgia regarding educator preparation in reading, along with alarming declines in P-12 students' reading performance, has prompted the need for school-based personnel with skill sets to support teachers in their work with youth and the teaching of reading. Within the state of Georgia, no other institution of higher education provides certification for the Literacy Specialist credential at the Educational Specialist level. Two other institutions provide the credential at the master's level. Those institutions are Georgia State University and the University of West Georgia. Both institutions provide the credential through online programs.

The Educational Specialist degree is a self-contained degree program intermediate between the master's degree and the doctoral degree both in length and depth. It provides advanced study for those preparing for positions which call for a higher level of competence, specialization, and leadership than that of the master's degree but without the heavy emphasis on original research within the doctoral degree. This degree is also specifically tailored for program completers who will be based in Georgia school systems. The greatest need in this educator certification area is for an accessible online degree at the educational specialist level. The offering of this degree online is also consistent with UGA's initiative to grow online graduate programs. Completers of this program would receive a certification upgrade from the GaPSC as well as a pay increase for completing the credential (certified at the S-6 level).

To increase access to educators across the state of Georgia, a major service would be for the university to provide access to a degree program that can reach all teachers within the state. Of specific note, the two other institutes of higher education providers of the degree are located in the Atlanta-area and western part of the state, leaving major sections of the state with limited access to this advanced degree program in general and specifically the Ed.S. level. As the University of Georgia has an extension home in each of Georgia's counties, faculty perceive this program can meet a need that these other two

programs cannot. During the most recent PRAC review for the on campus educational specialist degree, the review team also recommended that the college pursue an online option for the degree.

In 2014, many Educational Specialist programs in the college were consolidated under the Educational Specialist in Education program, which have all been offered on campus. The Area of Emphasis in Literacy Specialty under Education (Ed.S.) will be the first online offering under this major. The program would be implemented by faculty within the Department of Language and Literacy Education and the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy.

2. Admission Requirements

Requirements for admission to the fully online Ed.S. program will be the same as the current campus-based degree. Prospective candidates must, at a minimum, hold a master's degree from an accredited college or university and Clear Renewable Certification at the T-5 level.

Based on the written preparation rule from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the accompanying certification also requires that potential candidates have three years of teaching experience and a valid level 4 or higher Induction, Professional, Advanced Professional, or Lead Professional teaching certificate, leadership certificate, service field certificate, or Life certificate. Additionally, applicants to the program must demonstrate earned proficiency through completion of the Reading Endorsement (based on GaPSC Rule 505-3-. 96, effective July 1, 2023 or later), certification in Elementary Education (earned after July 1, 2025), a passing score on the Reading Education GACE (after July 1, 2025), or another valid and reliable measure of candidate proficiency.

College admissions criteria and standards for judging applicants' suitability include: (1) current resume/CV; (2) TOEFL/IELTS for international applicants; (3) statement of purpose; (4) transcripts from all institutions attended; (5) three letters of recommendation (one must come from an administrator at the applicant's current school or a school where the applicant previously taught within the past five years); (6) a graduate grade point average of 3.0 from prior degrees. The program will admit students with an annual fall semester start. Additionally, for this program, students must certify that they have access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection.

3. Program Content

The Educational Specialist in Education currently exists as a 10-course program. Within the existing face-to-face program, units within the college have areas of emphasis that are discipline specific that fall under the college-wide Ed.S. All areas of emphasis have a set of research courses accompanied by content in the specific discipline. The proposed Area of Emphasis in Literacy Specialist is the only program that will be offered online at this time.

4. Student Support Services

Students will be advised by faculty within the specific area of emphasis within the degree program. Matriculated students are made aware of university student support services (e.g., libraries, CAPS, career center, ELC helpdesk, Student Care and Outreach, etc). The College of Education also has an internal Office of Information Technology that can provide technical assistance for students.

5. Resident Requirements

Residence requirements will be identical to those established for the on-campus degree program.

6. Program Management

This program will be administered by faculty within the respective departments within the Mary Frances Early College of Education, with day-to-day services supported by a Faculty Program Coordinator. All courses in the program are approved courses at UGA and will be taught by program faculty and/or vetted part time instructors (PTI), which will be hired on an as-needed basis. Once established, the hope is the program will attract and support a minimum of 15 new students per cohort. The online platform will provide the capacity to admit and serve more students.

The program is structured to be completed in five academic terms. Admissions will be managed on a continuous basis and a new cohort will begin every other year. Student Learning Objectives for the online program are reported within the UGA required processes and are already operationalized based on the current face-to-face program.

Timetable for the first iteration of the degree program:

- Fall 2023-Spring 2024: Obtain approval for the online program and complete the approval of one required online course (LLED 7655E) through the CAPA System.
- Spring 2024: Advertise, recruit, and admit students to the online program.
- Summer 2024: Hold online orientation for first students in the online program.
- Fall 2024: Students expected to enroll in the first two courses of the program.
- Spring/Summer 2026: Graduate first student cohort of students in the program.

Assessing the Program

- Summer 2025: Formative assessment of first year of the program via online interviews, course evaluation, and /or surveys of students. Focus will be to determine strengths and weaknesses in the ongoing program.
- Summer 2026: Summative evaluation of the program in the light of the experiences of its first graduates, addressing issues identified in individual courses in the past to determine if issues have been remediated. Ongoing assessment will occur annually by survey in subsequent years.

Duplication

There are two online master's degree programs in Georgia that support earning the literacy specialist credential for educator certification. There are no programs in the state offered at the Educational Specialist level. The College of Education currently offers one undergraduate major, nine graduate majors, and four certificate programs that may be completed entirely online. This program would not duplicate or compete for potential students with any of those.

7. Library and Laboratory Resources

There are no laboratory requirements for the program. In terms of library access, students will have access to Galileo and GIL. Students also have access to a multitude of interactive internet-based resources.

8. Budget

Because this online version of a program mirrors the existing program in the department with face-to-face classes, no funds are requested for the development of, and transition to, an online version. Some resources from the respective departments and the college have been awarded to faculty for the development of the curriculum. Courses in the proposed program are subsumed in regular faculty teaching loads (academic year) and customarily funded Summer courses.

The proposed program will employ current library resources and does not anticipate additional fees in the form of library, laboratory, or other specialized facility resource requirements. The departments do not anticipate any start-up costs for the proposed program, special costs for the completion of the first cycle of students, or any additional costs associated with future cycles of students. Therefore, this proposal is submitted with a \$0 budget.

9. Program Costs Assessed to Students

Costs for students taking the online Education (Ed.S.) would be consistent with the established graduate tuition rate for College of Education programs. The current cost per credit hour is \$417.

10. E-Rate

An E-rate is not being requested for this program.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Offer the existing major in Education (Ed.S.) with an Area of Emphasis in Literacy Specialist as an online program

College: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Proposed Effective Term: Fall 2024

Approvals:

- Mary Frances Early College of Education Associate Dean, Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, 7/21/23
- Mary Frances Early College of Education Dean, Dr. Denise Spangler, 7/21/23
- Graduate School Associate Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 10/12/23