

Degree/Certificate: SPED

Major/Option: Dual Endorsement Program in Special Education and Elementary Education

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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16

Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year: Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

Special Education (SPED) Students Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate special education content knowledge competencies by passing the WEST-E Exam.
 - Students will apply special education knowledge and skills by passing special education field experience.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
 SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 SLO is met without change required
 3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

WEST-E State Test for Special Education is an end of program content test for teacher certification in Special Education. This test is designed to measure a teacher candidate's knowledge of the special education content and is aligned with teacher endorsement competencies. There are approximately 110 multiple choice questions, covering four content domain areas (below) containing three objectives each that define the content of the test,

- 25 percent of the items are related to “understanding students with disabilities” (Domain 1),
- 25 percent of the items are related to “assessment and program development” (Domain 2),
- 25 percent of the items are related to “promoting development and learning” (Domain 3), and
- 25 percent of the items are related to “foundations and professional practice” (Domain 4).

A score of 240 is required to pass the test (range 100-300) and the candidates have approximately 135 min to complete the test. The performance indices used for each domain are described in Table 1 below.

Table 2: Special Education WEST-E Domain Performance Indices

Multiple Choice Questions	
4	Most or all of the questions were answered correctly.
3	Many of the questions were answered correctly.
2	Some of the questions were answered correctly.
1	Few or none of the questions were answered correctly.

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.
 - a. **Findings:** Eighteen special education teacher candidates completed the Special Education WEST-E in 2015-2016. All (100 percent) special education teacher candidates passed the test during the year and one teacher candidate completed two retakes successfully. Two teacher candidates from 2014-2015 who scheduled retakes during Fall 2015 passed the test as well.

WEST-E Special Education: Scale Scores

The average total scale score in 2015-2016 for this group (n=18; 18 tests) was 256.1, range 240-276 and with a standard deviation of 12.5 points compared to the average total scale score 256.7 and a standard deviation of 9.7 points in 2014-2015, and 260.1, and with a standard deviation of 12.1 points in 2013-2014.

In 2015-2016, the average domain scores ranged from 3.0 to 3.17, Domain 1 & 3 had an average score of 3.17, respectively, and Domain 2& 4 had an average score of 3.0, respectively. In 2014-2015, the average domain scores ranged from 2.74 to 3.42, Domain 1 had the lowest average, Domains 4 had the highest average and Domain 2& 3 had an average score of 3.0, respectively.

WEST-E Special Education: Domain Scores

The distribution of 2015-2016 domain scores for each domain is presented in Table 2 (n=18). A quick overview suggests that the majority of scores were 3s & 4s (level of content competency), accounting for 82 percent (84 percent in 2014-2015 & 85 percent in 2013-2014) of all domain scores.

Domain 1: Understanding students with disabilities.

Domain 2: Assessment and program development.

Domain 3: Promoting development and learning.

Domain 4: Foundations and professional practice.

In 2015-2016, fewer 3s & 4s were found in Domain 4 (72 percent) than in Domains 1, 2 & 3 (78-94 percent). In 2014-2015, fewer 3s & 4s were found in Domain 1 (62 percent) than in Domains 2 & 3 (79-90 percent) and most 3s & 4s were found in Domain 4 (100 percent). In 2013-2014, fewer 3s & 4s were found in Domain 1 (77 percent) and most 3s & 4s were found in Domain 4 (94 percent).

Table 2: Special Education WEST-E Domain Scores 2015-2016

Domain 1				Domain 2			
01	Count	%		02	Count	%	
2	3	17%		2	4	22%	
3	9	50%		3	10	56%	
4	6	33%		4	4	22%	
Grand Total	18	100%		Grand Total	18	100%	
Domain 3				Domain 4			
03	Count	%		04	Count	%	
2	1	6%		2	5	28%	
3	13	72%		3	8	44%	
4	4	22%		4	5	28%	
Grand Total	18	100%		Grand Total	18	100%	

A more in-depth analysis of 2015-2016 data suggested that our special education candidates struggled with content related to “foundations and professional practice” (Domain 4) in relationship to other content covered by the test. In 2014-2015, candidates struggled with content related to “understanding students with disabilities” (Domain 1) in relationship to other content covered by the test.

Specifically, 5/18 (28 percent) candidates had “some” correct responses on questions covering the following content objectives in Domain 4:

Objective 10: Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations in the education of individuals with disabilities.

Objective 11: Apply knowledge of strategies for communicating and collaborating with others to help students with disabilities achieve desired learning outcomes.

Objective 12: Demonstrate knowledge of the professional responsibilities of the special education teacher.

Note: Examples for each objective is provided in the Special Education WEST-E Test pamphlet.

In addition, 4/18 (22 percent) candidates had “some” correct responses on Domain 2 questions covering the following content objectives:

Objective 4: Demonstrate knowledge of types of characteristics of assessments for students with disabilities.

Objective 5: Demonstrate knowledge of procedures for conducting assessments to address the individual needs of students with disabilities.

Objective 6: Apply knowledge of procedures for developing and implementing individualized programs for students with disabilities.

Note: For additional information see:

http://www.west.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/WA070_PrepMaterials.html

Finally, an analysis of domain scores by one student who failed the test twice before passing suggested that Domains 2 & 3 were most challenging.

Analysis of findings: First, we recognize that ALL special education candidates passed their WEST-E test in 2015-2016. Second, our analysis of 2015-2016 data revealed that 8/18 (44 percent) of teacher candidates’ scores were between 240-250 points, 1/18 (6 percent) scores were between 250-260 points, and 9/18 (50 percent) scores were between 260-276 points. In 2014-2015, 8/29 (28 percent) teacher candidates’ scores were between 240-250 points, 10/29 (34 percent) scores were between 250-260 points, and 11/29 (38 percent) scores were between 260-275 points.

Third, looking at 2015-2016 data, we identified Domain 4 and its objectives as a challenge to our teacher candidates and we also found that Domain 2 and its objectives could be challenging as well. However, Domains 2 & 3 were the most challenging for the candidate who failed the test twice. In 2014-2015, we identified Domain 1 and its objectives as a challenge to our students and we also found that Domain 3 and its objectives could be challenging for some students.

Fourth, in 2015-2016, even if all 18 teacher candidates passed the test, data suggests that there are clear differences in domain scores between the lower and higher

scoring candidates. In addition, comparing 2015-2016 results with 2014-2015 results suggests changes in what candidates are finding challenging, domains and objectives, with the test and in the distribution of scale scores, i.e. very few students scored in the 250-259 range. In 2014-2015, even if all 29 teacher candidates passed the test, there are clear differences in domain scores between the lower, middle and higher scoring groups.

**Table 4: Domain Average Scores and Number of 4s
Comparison 2015-2016 and 2014-2015**

2015-16 Domain	Low scoring group (240-249; n=8)	Middle scoring group (250-259; n=1)	High scoring group (260+; n=9)
1	2.63/0 (4s)	3.00/0 (4s)	3.67/6 (4s)
2	2.50/0	3.00/0	3.44/4
3	2.88/0	3.00/0	3.44/4
4	2.38/0	3.00/0	3.56/5
2014-15 Domain	Low scoring group (240-249; n=8)	Middle scoring group (250-259; n=10)	High scoring group (260+; n=11)
1	2.38/1 (4s)	2.70/1 (4s)	3.18/3 (4s)
2	2.75/1	3.00/0	3.45/5
3	2.25/0	3.30/3	3.55/6
4	3.00/0	3.70/7	3.73/8

Results from 2015-2016 and 2014-2015, presented in Table 4, suggests that teacher candidates who scored between 240-249 were as successful as teacher candidates who scored between 250-259, scoring 2s or 3s, but with slightly different scores across domains. No candidates in these two groups scored a 4 in 2015-2016.

In contrast, even if teacher candidates who scored over 260 were more successful overall, they were similar in their scores i.e. scoring a 3 as majority of the other candidates related to Domain 3 scores. It is clear, that candidates who scored 240-250 scored mostly 2s and 3s, and they do not demonstrate a particular content domain area with high scores, except for Domain 3 in 2015-2016. Candidates who scored 250-259 scored mostly 3s and some 4s, and they demonstrated Domain 4 as an area with high scores. In contrast, teacher candidates in 2015-2016, who scored 260+ scored mostly 3s and 4s and were successful scoring 4s related to questions in Domains 1 & 4.

5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

We will discuss differences between the 2015-2016 results and prior years. We will continue to discuss and identify all courses that target WEST-E objectives related 2015-2016 results and 2014-2015 results:

2015-2016: “understanding the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations in the education of individuals with disabilities”, “applying knowledge of strategies for communicating and collaborating with others to help students with disabilities achieve desired learning outcomes”, and “demonstration of knowledge of the professional responsibilities of the special education teacher”.

2014-2015: “understanding students with disabilities”, “promoting development and learning”, and “foundations and professional practice”.

We will use these results to help us identify strengths and weaknesses in students’ work in these courses and make revisions and changes to courses as needed.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

We will continue the process and discussion during Fall 2016 & Winter 2017 Quarters and then continue to revise our plan and implement any proposed changes during Spring 2017 Quarter. We will align our SLO assessment and use of WEST-E data with current CALE/EWU assessment efforts.

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

No change to the assessment process or plan needed at this time.

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2013-14, and then describe actions taken during 2014-15 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

PLEASE NOTE: The College-Level Synthesis report includes a section asking Deans to summarize which programs/certificates have demonstrated "closing-the-loop" assessments and findings based on the previous year's assessment report.

Working definition for closing the loop: *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2014-15

Special Education (SPED) Students Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate special education content knowledge competencies by passing the WEST-E Exam.
- Students will apply special education knowledge and skills by passing special education field experience.

2. Strategies implemented during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2014-15 assessment activities.

Addressed alignment of program, courses and assessments to state standards as part of Department of Education program approval process. This included follow-up work prior to the school start Fall 2016. We discussed and identified all courses that target WEST-E objectives, including signature assessments" related to "understanding students with disabilities", "promoting development and learning", and "foundations and professional practice".

3. **Summary of results** (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.

The Education department and its programs went through state program approval and a one-year follow-up process this past year. We, together with the department, have responded to “required actions” and areas of “unmet” reported by the state review team and related to our curriculum, pedagogy and instruction.

In response to the strategies implemented listed in Item 2 above, we first recognize that all special education candidates passed their WEST-E test in 2015-2016, including the two candidates who failed their test in 2014-2015. In 2014-2015, all but two special education candidates passed their WEST-E test in 2014-2015.

Second, in comparison with WA average scale score results, our candidates scored slightly lower on average than completers around the state, 256 versus 264.

Third, we identified Domains and objectives based on results from both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 tests, reported as challenges to our candidates and continue its alignment with our course content.

Compared to last year, we observed differences in our results; these will be discussed in detail. We have identified all courses that target WEST-E objectives and will continue our work to improve alignment and content examples presented in those courses. We will also make sure that candidates that are in need of WEST-E retake support will receive such through the program and department processes. Changes within our faculty will provide a new opportunity to address continued course alignment and student support.

4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery**, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

No change to the assessment process or plan needed at this time.

Definitions:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** This checklist informs the reader whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

3. **Strategies and methods used to gather student performance data**, including assessment instruments used, and a description of how and when the assessments were conducted. Examples of strategies/methods: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional information could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
4. **Observations gathered from data**: This section includes findings and analyses based on the above strategies and methods, and provides data to substantiate the distinction made in #2. For that reason this section has been divided into parts (a) and (b) to provide space for both the findings and the analysis of findings.
5. **Program changes based on the assessment results**: This section is where the program lists plans to improve student learning, based on assessment findings, and provides a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year. Programs often find assessment is part of an ongoing process of continual improvement.
6. **Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed**. Evaluation of the assessment plan and process itself: what worked in the assessment planning and process, what did not, and why.

Some elements of this document have been drawn or adapted from the University of Massachusetts' assessment handbook, "Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement" (2001). Retrieved from http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf