Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Department or Program: Special Education  
Academic Year of Report: 2019-20  
Department Contact Person for Assessment: Sylvia-Linan Thompson

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report
For each major in the department, list the learning objectives that were assessed during this period.

Special Education Master’s Degree

1. **LO2: Field Study/Practicum** – All Master’s students are required to participate in fieldwork aligned with their area of interest and/or focus as part of their master’s program. Through field study experiences, students will apply theoretical understandings of positive discipline approaches for children, implementation of evidence-based teaching practices, and managing the learning environment to meet student’s individual needs and abilities. Students will practice written and oral reflection and participate in group meetings to explore classroom practice and share insights while being exposed to multiple viewpoints and settings.

2. **LO4: GPA** - Students must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward the Master’s degree by maintaining a 3.0 GPA and earning a ‘C’ or better in all required courses.

3. **LO5: Terminal Activity** - Students must complete and earn a passing grade on their terminal activity (i.e., thesis, project, specialization, or oral comprehensive exam* [*EI option only]).

Section 2: Assessment Activities
For each learning outcome, describe what information was collected, how it was analyzed and discussed, and the conclusions that were drawn from the analysis. In the narrative, reference all relevant means of collecting information about learning goals, including direct measures (e.g. assessment of student assignments), indirect measures (e.g. overall grade patterns in a particular course, student reflections on learning, SERU data), and qualitative information (e.g. faculty observations, student input). While the choice of which assessments are most meaningful is up to the department, a mix of direct and indirect measures is requested.

1. **LO2: Field Study/Practicum** – Students will earn a passing grade (P) in a minimum of 3 credits of practicum or field study.
   - Information was collected via transcript review. Students in practicum also receive clinical observations from their cooperating teachers and university supervisors. According to the data, all students were successful and met this objective. These results suggest that students are able to successfully meet practicum or field study requirements and no changes are indicated at this time.

2. **LO4: GPA** - Students will maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout their Master’s program.
   - Information was collected via transcript review. The majority of students successfully maintained a 3.0 GPA. There were a few students whose GPA fell below 3.0, cumulative or in a given term. For these students, action plans were developed that identified the issue(s), outlined expectations, and provided a timeline for meeting expectations. One of the students was able to successfully meet the expectations within the given timeline and two of them were not able to meet the expectations due to the additional challenges presented by the Covid pandemic.

3. **LO5: Terminal Activity** - Students will earn passing grades for their chosen terminal activity.
   - Information was collected via transcript review. All students earned passing grades for the terminal activity. These results suggest that students are able to successfully meet requirements for the terminal activity and no changes are indicated at this time.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis
For each learning goal assessed for each major, describe any actions taken as a result of assessment information, or plans to take action during the next academic year. Describe how the actions or action plans are meant to address the issues arrived at through the assessment activities in Section 2.
1. **LO2: Field Study/Practicum**-- Students will earn a passing grade (P) in a minimum of 3 credits of practicum or field study.
   - During this academic year (2020-21), given the COVID pandemic, students have completed practicum experiences both remotely (via video conferencing) and in-person, with COVID precautions in place. We have made changes to supervision in practicum experiences, with allowances for remote supervision, and have accommodated student preferences for in-person vs. remote, as needed. It is anticipated that students will be participating in in-person experiences in the Fall, and students continuing in the program next year will be supported in making the transition to these experiences. We are also partnering with a local school district to support graduates in their first year of teaching and graduates from the SPED:EI program have been offered induction support during their first year teaching in the field via monthly meetings via Zoom with the SPED:EI’s Methods and Practicum/Student Teaching instructor.

2. **LO4: GPA**-- Students will maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout their Master’s program.
   - Students typically meet this objective. We will continue to monitor student progress throughout their program, addressing specific student needs for support/remediation as they arise.

3. **LO5: Terminal Activity**-- Students will earn passing grades for their chosen terminal activity.
   - Students typically meet this objective. We will continue to monitor student progress throughout their program, addressing specific student needs for support/remediation as they arise.

**Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

Briefly describe other continuous improvement efforts that are not directly related to the learning goals above. In other words, what activity has the department engaged in to improve the student educational experience? This might include changes such as curriculum revisions, new advising approaches, revised or new co-curricular activities, etc. Describe the rationale for the change(s) and any outcomes resulting from the change(s).

This year, the faculty are engaging in a curricular review focused on improving equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are currently evaluating syllabi and will implement changes to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion upon completion of this review.

**Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

Briefly describe tentative assessment plans for the next academic year. Which goals will be assessed and how? What actions will be taken as a result of this year’s analysis of assessment information? What other plans does the department have to improve the student educational experience? What are the budgetary implications of any proposed actions? How will those be addressed?

In the 2020-21 academic year, we will assess the following learning objectives:

- **LO3: Research** - Students will demonstrate competence in locating, evaluating and using published research to inform decision making in educational, clinical, and social settings by evaluating and critiquing published research articles and applying research to practice in education. To assess this objective, we will evaluate student scores on their Action Research Project assignment or Final Research Paper assignment in EDUC 611 (or equivalent course). Students are expected to earn a minimum of 80% of the points possible on this key assignment.

- **LO4: GPA** - Students must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward the Master’s degree by maintaining a 3.0 GPA and earning a ‘C’ or better in all required courses. This will be assessed via transcript review.

- **LO5: Terminal Activity** - Students must complete and earn a passing grade on their terminal activity (i.e., thesis, project, specialization, or oral comprehensive exam* [EI option only]). This will be assessed via transcript review.

As a result of compiling and sharing information about student progress at our faculty meetings, a number of actions may be implemented, based on a review of the data and common themes that emerge. These include but are not limited to: changes related to student support, access, and equity; revisions to academic policies and procedures; changes to course
structure (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, distance education, and online); revisions to field study and practicum experiences, practices, and procedures.