

**Program Report for the  
Preparation of Special Education Professionals  
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION**

**C O V E R S H E E T**

**Institution:** Angelo State University **State:** Texas

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**Program documented in this report:**

**Name of institution's program (s)** Special Education EC-12

**Grade levels for which candidates are being prepared:** EC-12

**Degree or award level:** Undergraduate

**Is this program offered at more than one site?** ☐ Yes **XX** No

**If yes, list the sites at which the program is offered** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of the state license for which candidates are prepared**  
Special Education Generic EC-12 Endorsement

**Program report status:**

**XX** Initial Review

☐ Response to a Not Recognized Decision

☐ Response to National Recognition With Conditions

☐ Response to a Deferred Decision

**State licensure requirement for national recognition:**

NCATE requires 80% of the program completers who have taken the test to pass the applicable state licensure test for the content field, if the state has a testing requirement. Test information and data must be reported in Section III. Does your state require such a test?

**XX** Yes ☐ No

## SECTION I – CONTEXT

### **1. Description of any state or institutional policies that may influence the application of CEC standards.**

Located in the heart of West Texas, Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University system, serves approximately 6,000 students, undergraduate and graduate, in a city of 100,000 surrounded by a large rural area. The special education professional preparation program is designed to prepare candidates to meet the requirements for Texas special education teacher licensure but not as a standalone certification program. Candidates are required to select an instructional area of focus (Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, or a Core Subject area with licensure) and then add Special Education as a minor. This is required to meet the basic requirements of the state to be considered a Highly Qualified Special Education teacher in Texas. Candidates for certification must follow the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) and they must complete their undergraduate program in 120 credit hours or less.

At Angelo State University, the Department of Teacher Education has adopted the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Individualized General Curriculum Standards. The majority of candidates are earning their Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education or a few will connect a special education certificate with a secondary core content area. There will also be a few who already have baccalaureate degrees and are seeking only teacher certification with special education supplemental certification. Regardless of degree status, all candidates must follow the same course of study and complete the same courses in pursuit of a special education certificate.

### **2. Description of the field and clinical experiences required for the program, including the number of hours for field experiences and the number of hours/weeks for student teaching.**

Field experiences occur continuously throughout the program, bridging content and theory with practice through candidate development from observer to practitioner. The clinical experiences begin early in the program and include diverse students and settings. The first special education sophomore level course (**SPED 2361**) requires observations in local school settings for one hour per week over a ten-week period. This first practicum experience establishes the foundation of what is expected during the experience and provides an outline of expected foundation experiences based on field experience objectives (see Field Experience Outline in Appendix). The junior level special education courses (SPED 3360, 3364, and 3365) requires observations in local school settings over a ten-week period and requires students to extend their practicum experiences to cover additional objectives. In addition, the senior level courses (**SPED 4362 and 4363**) require a combined four hours per day for four weeks in a public summer school setting.

These practica enable students to use previously developed skills from earlier field experiences as part of a pre-culminating experience. Students are required to work with children with special needs by designing, developing, differentiating instructional plans, creating and implementing instructional lessons. This senior level experience continues from the summer into the fall with coursework that includes Internship I in methodology practicum courses (varies by secondary major). In the spring, Internship II, or student teaching (**ED 4315 and ED 4974**), which includes fourteen weeks over the course of one semester with one-half of this time spent in a special

education placement. Student Teaching experiences allow for a gradual release of responsibility until teacher candidates assume full control over a classroom for a minimum of two weeks.

The Special Education program has junior and senior level courses (**SPED 3360, 3364, and 3365**) that each require candidates to develop, implement, and evaluate a child's performance and teacher effectiveness on a series of informal assessment procedures. In addition the final year's coursework includes Internship I that includes methodology practicum courses (depending on teaching area) and Internship II for student teaching (**ED 4315 and ED 4974**). The summer special education practicum incorporates **SPED 4362 and 4363** and involves the integration of instruction and behavior management in a four week (forty hours) in a public school classroom that provides candidates the opportunity to design, develop, and implement lessons with a small group of children. In addition Internship II, or student teaching, includes fourteen weeks over the course of one semester. Student Teaching experiences allow for a gradual release of responsibility until teacher candidates assume full control over a classroom for a minimum of two weeks. (See Section I Field Experience chart)

### **3. Description of the criteria for admission, retention, and exit from the program, including required GPAs and minimum grade requirements for the content courses accepted by the program.**

This report will provide explanation and evidence about the Angelo State University's Special Education program. Due to changes and revisions in the program, the ideal timing of this transition has provided a meaningful context in which to accomplish this work. We have gone about this work systematically with the goal of building faculty and stakeholder consensus each step of the way. We have not completed this journey but as our new program is being implemented we will be able to complete the process.

The redesigning of the Angelo State University program has systematically followed a sequence of steps to implement a system for the dual purposes of using assessment data to determine individual teacher candidate performance and to improve the program on an ongoing basis. Steps in this process include:

1. Curriculum Alignment: At this initial point we have determined which sets of standards are relevant to our special education program. The specific CEC Knowledge and Skills for the Common Core & Areas of Specialization have been aligned with the program. While considering the Unit Conceptual Framework, we simultaneously aligned various sets of standards with courses & field/clinical experiences. The process highlighted curriculum gaps and/or overlaps which resulted in program revisions as appropriate.
2. Program Sequence: The original curriculum has been adjusted to align carefully with the sequence of courses & field experiences for the program. At this point we determined the critical knowledge and skills to be assessed.
3. Assessment Points: In conjunction with the assessment system for the unit, we identified logical assessment points for the program.

4. Key Assessments: For each assessment point, performance-based assessments related to knowledge and skills have been identified in courses and field experiences. Also, we linked each performance assessment to individual CEC standards 1-10 and assured that all CEC standards were addressed.
5. Assessment Criteria and Rubrics: Now that the key performance assessments have been identified, specific assessment criteria and targeting candidate performance levels have been established. Rubrics are being or have been developed for all performance assessments.
6. Curriculum and Assessment Implementation: A variety of ways are being developed to communicate the assessment system to teacher candidates. We are also taking steps to assure that courses and/or field experiences are implementing the assigned standards and performance assessments as previously determined. This requires informing all faculty, including part-time/adjunct of the assessment system. Further steps are being taken to promote consistent implementation with the development of a syllabus template that identifies the standards and key assessments for each course/field experience. Critical information related to standards and assessments will be inserted for each syllabus, which will then be used as the starting point for faculty developing their courses each semester.
7. Data Collection and Aggregation: We are currently collecting pilot data for key assessments in the fall of 2008 and have recorded and aggregated the data for each assessment. Another aspect of our data collection involves "Staffing" meetings each semester during which the progress of each student will be reviewed and faculty input is solicited. We are in the process of designing a feasible system for collecting, aggregating, & recording data for all assessments. As the first data are compiled, we are reviewing the system to assure that the program and data are adequately supported.
8. Data Analysis Process: We are currently developing a process and procedures for regularly analyzing the aggregated performance data.
9. Data Usage to Inform Candidates: At appropriate decision points, we will use the data to inform each teacher candidate regarding his or her performance. We will determine if each candidate meets or does not meet expectations and inform the candidate if he or she is eligible to continue or not continue in the program. If areas of improvement are needed, a "Remediation Plan" will be implemented.
10. Data Usage to Improve Program: We are in the process of developing a plan using the past and present performance data to systematically improve our teacher preparation program. It is anticipated that faculty will meet to review the data and relate findings each summer to improve the program.

Candidates desiring special education teacher certification must be concurrently entering or actively enrolled in one of the core subject areas or elementary teacher certification programs. This process toward teacher licensure includes completing the following steps: (1) admission to

the Teacher Education Program, (2) completion of certification program, (3) approval to take appropriate TExES tests, and (4) recommendation for certification.

To apply for admission to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP), applicants must have completed between 60 and 75 semester credit hours (SCH), with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50. Furthermore, they must have completed course work demonstrating proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, communication, and critical thinking. All course work used to demonstrate proficiency requires a grade of C or better. All applicants must have sound physical health, sound mental health, and acceptable moral character. The Admission Committee may require students to undergo physical and/or psychiatric evaluation.

Students must complete a Student Teaching Application and a degree plan or post-baccalaureate certification plan during the long-term semester prior to student teaching and meet the deadline date. At the time of application, all applicants must have completed: (1) All criteria for admission to the Education Preparation Program, and (2) A minimum of 95 SCH with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50. Before student teaching, the candidate must complete all courses in the Interdisciplinary major, as well as Internship I (the block of methodology practicum courses). The candidate must also complete the required Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility courses and all advanced Education courses with minimum grade point averages of 2.50 and with no grade lower than a C to establish eligibility for student teaching. Any deficiencies in the candidate's major or pedagogy and professional responsibility courses must be corrected by the end of the term before student teaching.

Candidates must report to the Teacher Education Department to determine eligibility for the Special Education and other certification exams (Texas Examination of Educator Standards - TExES): (1) Content for elementary generalist or for core content subject area, (2) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities and (3) Content area for Special Education. They must have completed the approved certification program requirements for each exam. Eligible candidates will be issued a TExES Registration Bulletin by the certification secretary in the Department of Teacher Education.

The Certification Officer will recommend candidates for certification if they have earned a 2.50 overall grade point average and completed all the required course work in the teacher certification areas with a grade point average of 2.50 and no grade lower than a C. In addition, the candidate must have earned a 2.50 grade point average in all advanced education and reading courses. All other university requirements must be completed. The candidate must also demonstrate sound physical health, sound mental health, and acceptable moral character. It is the candidate's responsibility to inform the Department of Teacher Education that all certification requirements have been met and to ensure that all appropriate forms and fees have been submitted. The candidate must also present satisfactory scores on all required Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) certification exams in order to be recommended for certification.

#### **4. Description of the relationship of the program to the unit's conceptual framework.**

The special education teacher preparation program shares a conceptual framework with all the other education programs in the College of Education. Our unit's goal is to prepare professional education leaders with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet changing societal needs in

diverse school and community settings. Our candidates embrace student-centered learning in successful partnerships with diverse families, schools, and communities.

Throughout their program, candidates are constantly immersed in the study of content knowledge, practical and theoretical. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and professional organization standards are studied and implemented in each subject area of the education, special education, reading, early childhood, and elementary education course work. Pedagogical study includes an introductory special education course (SPED 2361) in Survey of Exceptionalities. It includes field observation in a variety of special education settings, including Head Start and low socio-economic status areas. This course also includes information on communicating with diverse families and communities. Throughout the remaining courses the program covers diversity of students, communication with families, disability characteristics, and laws affecting individuals with special needs.

In addition, developmentally and academically appropriate practices are emphasized throughout the special education courses. Technology knowledge and skills are introduced in a sophomore level course (ED 2323) and applied in other classes emphasizing technology integration. In SPED 3364 child development instruction is included with characteristics of student's with mild or high incidence disabilities.

Candidates apply their knowledge by designing, developing, and implementing lessons in practicum courses in the major content areas of reading, math, science, and social studies. In this way, candidates have the opportunity to implement techniques with students in classroom settings for each content area before attempting to "put it all together" in student teaching. The practicum courses, called Internship I, contribute greatly to the successful performance of our candidates as future educators. During student teaching, candidates return to campus to do course activities (ED 4315) that includes a concentrated study of classroom management, professionalism, and legal/ethical issues.

##### **5. Indication of whether the program has a unique set of program assessments and their relationship of the program's assessments to the unit's assessment system.**

Program assessments consist of ones that are both program specific and ones that are employed by the entire unit. The unit's assessment system provides key information on how student teachers in the Department of Teacher Education as well as other departments impact student knowledge during student teaching; involve family and community in their teaching experience; and plan and implement lessons during field experiences. Through our program assessments, we are able to see where we need improvement in terms of courses, advising, and curriculum cohesiveness. Faculty conducts a cyclical process of data gathering, data compilation, data assessment, and implementation of changes to the program.

Common unit assessments include the state certification exams and the student teaching evaluation. The required first assessment for content, or the state licensure test, is actually taken during the final year of coursework. Candidates must pass the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES), which is divided into two parts: (1) Content Area and (2) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities. The required assessment of student teaching is based on the Ball State model for an evaluation system based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and

Support Consortium (INTASC) standards through a collection of artifacts and benchmark conferences.

There is one area in which the SPED program places a strong emphasis on the idea that “all students can learn and it is our responsibility to create an environment that will facilitate student success.” The SPED program endeavors to provide an environment that fosters the belief that all students can flourish which is integral to the teachings of the SPED faculty. Presenting candidates with opportunities to learn how to structure the learning environment and then giving them many opportunities to incorporate what they are learning in their classrooms is inherent in all courses. Another concept evident in the SPED program is the commitment to the “value of diversity”. Special educators are leaders in advocating for and providing culturally sensitive instruction. This is evident in the fact that content related to linguistic and cultural diversity is evident in every SPED course. This is required because of the ever-increasing diversity among young children in West Texas (where the University is located), in Texas and in the nation.

The special education teacher preparation program has a unique set of assessments as candidates proceed through this course sequence. All assessments are tied to CEC Standards. Other assessments include a case study, behavior management plan, and unit lesson plans which are all scored with rubrics. Additionally, evaluations of public school classrooms, observations and teaching performance is done by classroom teachers, supervisors, and professors during the field observations, practica, and student teaching experiences.

## **Field Experiences and Clinical Practices**

### **Introduction**

Students will participate in a variety of developmentally appropriate field experiences integrated with courses throughout the program. These frequent clinical experiences will foster ongoing applications of knowledge and skills. Through collegial relationships with practicing teachers and administrators at the building and division level, exemplary field placements, which model best practices, will be identified. Teachers and classrooms will be identified for their critical contributions to the preparation of future special educators. With joint knowledge of both the field and the teacher preparation curriculum faculty and teachers will collaborate to provide relevant opportunities for learning and development of skills. The connections between course and fieldwork are purposeful and vital.

The Field Experiences and Clinical Practices section of this report includes placement identification, sequential progression of field experiences, and supervision. All required field experiences and related courses must be completed prior to student teaching. In some situations faculty have the option to arrange or at least request placement sites. All special education faculty supervise students in various types of field placements. Through the support of the local ISD, the special education program at Angelo State University has been able to establish excellent practicum sites and arrange for field components to accompany various aspects of courses. Faculty often meet with school professionals while the field experience is being planned. Upon completion, feedback is sought from school professionals.

### **Placement Identification and Partnerships**

Field and clinical experiences provide the opportunity to continually link theory to practice and encourage the sharing and modeling of best practices across the university and the public school. The Special Education Program Advisor in conjunction with the course instructor make requests for specific field sites with local school personnel and work with school divisions to obtain high quality placements. They make determinations about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of placements based on feedback from a variety of sources. Teachers and past graduates have been instrumental in designing some of the field experiences. Field and clinical experiences are a critical part of the program and this priority is evident in the total number of clock hours. Clock hour calculations by licensure program and level are presented in the table below.

#### **Field Experience Clock Hours for the EC -12 Undergrad Program by Experience Level**

**Level 1** SPED 2361 (10) and SPED 3360 (10)

**Level 2** SPED 3364 (10) and SPED 3365 (10)

**Level 3** SPED 4360 (40) and SPED 4364 (40)

**Level 4** SPED 4974 (500)

**Total Hours 620 Hours**

The success of the Angelo State University program is integrally linked to our partnership schools and field sites and is viewed as a mutually beneficial responsibility and collaboration. Each party takes its responsibility seriously and willingly contributes to the primary mission and goals of the other. Our primary responsibility is to prepare high quality teachers but we also have an obligation to sustain and improve education for students in the schools. The schools' primary responsibility is to educate students but they take seriously their obligation to help prepare future teachers. Our partnerships provide a continuous feedback loop helping us strengthen our programs and also influence practice.

Local LEA schools have initiated some collaborative efforts while program faculty has initiated others. Regardless of who initiated the collaboration, faculty have ongoing opportunities to participate in activities in numerous schools. Several of our key practica have been designed and implemented in collaboration with local schools. A critical field experience cite in the area of education is the San Angelo Independent School District's summer school program that services special needs and low performing youngsters.

#### **Sequence and Levels**

Clinical experiences have been determined and sequenced to enable teacher candidates to engage in a range of skills at developmentally appropriate times in the progress from their first course to final student teaching. The clinical experiences are specifically integrated with a course or series of courses during a semester in order to provide the opportunity to acquire and polish skills under the direct supervision of both university faculty and cooperating professionals in the field.

There are three broad levels of field experiences that are carefully scaffolded. The first level involves structured observations and exposure to individuals with disabilities, levels of schooling, curricula, and service delivery models. Candidates use structured forms to link the observation to course content or they may interact with the individual with exceptional learning



needs in informal ways. The next level expects candidates to apply their knowledge and skills in order to assess students or plan, deliver, and adapt academic or social skills instruction to meet the needs of individual and small groups of students. This level is tightly supervised with frequent feedback provided to the candidate. The last level requires the candidate to “pull it all together” as they manage the entire instructional program. Candidates achieve this level during the summer practicum experience. See Section I Field Experience chart which show the sequence, levels, types, and varying purposes of the field and clinical experiences.

### **Supervision**

All field and clinical placements for Angelo State University are in approved educational settings with certified and experienced teachers. Faculty at the university level provide direct supervision of most of the clinical experiences, which promotes keeping current with practices and issues. All placements are closely supervised by qualified personnel and feedback solicited at the end of each placement.

### **Key Performance Assessments**

A system to assess teacher candidates’ performance will be used and will incorporate ongoing self-appraisal as well as external measures of progress. Multiple forms of assessment, including clearly identified “key assessments,” will provide key information related to candidates’ development of professional dispositions, knowledge, and skills. Multiple measures are or will be used to assess candidate’s progress in the special education teacher preparation programs and their competence related to the CEC Common Core standards.

These performance assessments will be systematically implemented across all levels of the program and across various courses and field experiences. Ongoing efforts and significant communication with full-time and part-time faculty will assure program consistency. A variety of assessment formats will be used to measure knowledge, skills, and dispositions including projects, assignments, simulations, rating scales/rubrics, and tests. Care has been taken to identify a manageable number of “key assessments” which comprehensively address the ten content standards. These have been designed to provide a rigorous assessment of the content standards. As much as possible, these credible assessments are integrally tied to naturally occurring course and field experience requirements thus providing the infrastructure to support and sustain the system.

### **Rubrics and Rating Scale**

Final versions of the performance assessment and accompanying rubrics are not yet developed for some of the assessments identified but will be completed prior to initial use at each assessment point. Limited samples of draft performance assessments and rubrics are included. As each semester’s courses and field experiences unfold in the program, both the assessments and rubrics will be refined as needed to improve the program.

The program anticipates using a standard rubric rating scale with descriptors varying as appropriate for different assessments. This will provide more useful data recording, aggregation,

and analysis. Consistency in rubric format is being piloted. The program and the Unit are piloting a consistent rubric rating scale with four performance categories. The generic format is shown below with specific levels of performance described more thoroughly as appropriate for each assessment.

Unsatisfactory - (0 pnts): Does not meet standards

- Knowledge: Minimal level of attainment and understanding
- Skill or disposition is not yet apparent or is emerging.

Basic - (1 pnts): Does not consistently meets standards

- Knowledge: Minimal level of attainment and understanding
- Skill or disposition is not yet apparent or is emerging.

Proficient - (2 pnts): Consistently meets standards

- Knowledge: Adequate level of attainment and understanding
- Skill or disposition is progressing.

Distinguished - (3 pnts): Consistently exceed standards

- Knowledge: High level of attainment and understanding
- Skill or disposition is consistently demonstrated.

### Candidate Information

**Program: SPED EC -12 Undergraduate Program**

Academic Year	# of Candidates Enrolled in the Program	# of Program Completers <sup>1</sup>	
2007	10	10	100%
2006	16	13	81 %
2005	7	6	85%

**Program: SPED Undergraduate Supplement with Secondary Education**

Academic Year	# of Candidates Enrolled in the Program	# of Program Completers	
2007	2	2	100 %
2006	6	5	83%
2005	3	1	33%

**Combined Program: SPED EC -12 Undergraduate Completers**

Academic Year	# of Candidates Enrolled in the Program	# of Program Completers <sup>2</sup>	
2007	12	12	100%
2006	22	18	81 %
2005	10	7	70%

<b>Certification Test Pass Rates.doc</b>									
	COMPLETION YEAR 2005			COMPLETION YEAR 2006			COMPLETION YEAR 2007		
Certification Description	Tests taken	Tests Passed	Pass Rate	Tests taken	Tests Passed	Pass Rate	Tests taken	Tests Passed	Pass Rate
Generic Special Education	1	0	<b>0%</b>	3	3	<b>100%</b>	Program Phased out		
Special Education (TExES EC-12)	7	6	<b>86%</b>	16	13	<b>81%</b>	10	10	<b>100%</b>
Special Education Supplemental (TExES)	4	2	<b>50%</b>	6	5	<b>83%</b>	2	2	<b>100%</b>
Combined Pass Rate	12	8	<b>67%</b>	25	21	<b>84%</b>	12	12	<b>100%</b>

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