

The Graduate Program 4+1 Degree in Special Education (PreK-8 or 7-12 Certification)



Free Functional Rehabilitation BIP FBA Least Behind Individualized CSE IDEA Behavioral Restrictive LRE Public

Environment FAPE RTI Committee Disabilities Individuals Response Special NCLB

Intervention **Act Plan** Education

Left Child Assessment Appropriate

Program Description:

To more fully compliment Elizabethtown College's pledge to prepare students *"intellectually, socially, aesthetically and ethically for lives of service and leadership as citizens of the world"* by *"combining classroom instruction with experiential learning [to] advance independent thought, personal integrity and social responsibility as the foundations for a life of learning"* (<http://www.ETown.edu/about/mission.aspx>), the Education Department offers a Master's degree in Special Education (PreK-8 and 7-12).

Federal and state mandates drive the need for highly qualified teachers in these areas of special education, and, by designing the 4 + 1 model for special education in the PreK-8 and 7-12 options, all certificate candidates at Elizabethtown (Pre-K to 4, 4-8, 7-12 and K-12) are able to participate. Candidates in the new pipeline program will be exposed to opportunities for more advanced curricular study, more time and variety in the field (urban, suburban, rural, learning support, emotional support, inclusive, resource, and self-contained classrooms), enhanced quality of practice in the field, two full semesters of student teaching, and research and reflection about pedagogical best practices through seminar coursework.

This new model embraces the college's 2012 *Strategic Plan*, namely the emphasis upon expansion of graduate programs and greater emphasis upon high impact practices and student/faculty research collaborations. It is also the expression of a 2010 qualitative survey of departmental alumni who cited the development of this academic pathway as a "top priority".

Program Hallmarks:

- Students will complete their baccalaureate degree in a general education certification area in 4 years.
- Eligible students may then move to finish the special education requirements, including a research project (Graduate Seminar) and another semester of student teaching.
- The intensive student teaching supervision of the undergraduate program (weekly supervisory visits) will continue in the graduate program.
- Courses in the fifth year will be administered using a mixture of traditional, on-line, hybrid, and accelerated formats.

Program Assessments:

Teacher candidates are regularly assessed through formative and summative coursework assignments according to key learning objectives which are mapped to specific program competencies as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and to the general student learning outcomes for the Education Department. Such expectations and objectives are included on every course syllabi.

The department's learning outcomes dictate that every student demonstrates the following: A thorough knowledge of the content and pedagogical skills in planning, preparation, and assessment.

- An ability to establish and maintain a purposeful and equitable environment for learning.
- An ability to deliver instruction that engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies, including technology.
- Qualities and dispositions that characterize a professional person in aspects that occur in and beyond the classroom/building.
- An awareness of, and adherence to, the professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities of being a certified teacher.
- An ongoing commitment to lifelong learning and professional development through field-related clubs, conferences, and organizations.
- Teaching and advocacy for principles of social justice and civic competence.

Teacher candidates are regularly assessed (formative and summative) on Danielson's Domains (*Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professionalism*) during field placements. Input is given from classroom professors, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers across these areas. In fact, student teachers are observed on a weekly basis by their supervisors. Students also provide self-assessment/reflection through blogs, journals, and similar assignments.

Teacher candidates are also regularly assessed regarding their dispositions, meaning the non-academic competencies critical to the success for a career in Education. These competencies include: Communication/ Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, Cognitive Dispositions, and Personal and Professional Requirements.

Teacher candidates complete a professional portfolio using the Danielson Framework for Professional Practice. The compilation begins in Year 1 of the program and is continued through Year 5. Students must meet expectations for the portfolio in individual coursework, for admission requirements to the program, and then exit expectations for the degree in the Senior and Graduate Seminars respectively. Students construct the portfolio using *Digication* software.

Teacher candidates navigate a three-step process for full admission into the graduate program - Provisional Acceptance and Formal Acceptance at the undergraduate program and then Graduate Acceptance.