

MSE Concentration in Special Education Writing Assessment Policy

Purpose:

The two purposes of the Special Education Writing Assessment are to

- develop proficient writers through assessment and support, and
- provide data for the purposes of program evaluation and improvement.

A similar writing assessment is required of all graduate programs in the College of Education.

Process:

- SPED 531/532/535 have been identified as the course in which graduate student writing is assessed. This is done via the use of a Writing Rubric on the Literature Review.
- The final draft of the writing assignment is assessed.
- The same assignment will be assessed for all course sections.
- The analytic rubric used to assess writing quality is common across the College of Education.
- The rubric includes a 6-point scale (5-6 = Exceeds Expectations, 4 = Meets Expectations, 1-3 = Below Expectations), with a total score of 24.
- Four categories of traits are assessed:
 - Completeness of Response & Quality/Clarity of Thought
 - Organization, Sequence of Ideas/Focus
 - Accuracy of Content/Vocabulary
 - Resources/Support/Examples
- An additional assessment of content is also conducted.

Student Support Prior to Writing Assessment:

- The Writing Assessment Rubric will be used in SPED 462 and SPED 463/464/400 in order to give students advance experience in using this rubric as part of the writing process.

Determination of Proficiency:

- Candidates scoring a 4 or greater will be identified as proficient.
- Candidates scoring less than 3 will be identified as less than proficient.
- Note: Passing scores for final grades on overall assignment may vary according to program if additional rubric items are used.

Responsibilities of Candidates Determined to be Non-Proficient Writers:

- Students who demonstrate less than satisfactory writing skills (i.e., below 4 on the rubric)
 - Will be notified in writing and a letter will be included in the candidate's file.
 - Will be required to meet with the graduate program advisor to identify ways to improve.
 - Will be required to meet a Student Improvement Plan.
- Possible ways for the candidate to improve skills in English include:
 - Receiving tutorial help at the University Learning Center, OR
 - Enrollment in a composition course, e.g., English 301.
- Students' writing will continue to be monitored throughout the program until their writing improves to the satisfactory level. Further sanctions may include:
 - Placing student on probation until writing performance is satisfactory, AND/OR
 - Requiring course instructors of student to report to graduate advisor on student writing performance, AND/OR
 - Student demonstration of completion of one of the above recommendations by way of a writing sample.

Reporting Scores:

- Individual candidate writing assessment scores will be reported as a total/percentage students scoring in each range.
- Scores will be reported each semester by the course instructors to the College of Education Assessment Director via the Department Chair and Graduate Program Advisor.
- Data will be used for program evaluation and improvement.

- Student names and CWIDs will be confidential.