



---

# The University of Georgia

---

University Council  
Athens, Georgia 30602

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Margaret M. Robinson, Chair  
Executive Committee

FROM: Dr. Jan M. Hathcote, Chair  
University Curriculum Committee

DATE: February 24, 2005

SUBJECT: External Degree Proposal –Special Education (B.S.Ed.)

Attached is the proposal from the College of Education requesting to offer the Major in Special Education (B.S.Ed.) as an External Degree.

This proposal was approved by the University Curriculum Committee at our February 15, 2005 meeting, and is submitted to the University Council for consideration.




---

# The University of Georgia

---

College of Education  
*Department of Special Education*

TO: University Council  
University of Georgia

FROM: John Langone, Ph.D.  
Head, Special Education 

RE: Addendum for Distance Education Delivery – SPECTRUM

DATE: February 23, 2005

In September 2004, the Department of Special Education received a \$2.4 million Transition to Teach grant from the United States Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. This grant project, entitled SPECTRUM, will use the infrastructure of the existing SETWEB program to offer an online bachelor's degree program in special education to paraprofessionals teaching in high-need schools throughout the state of Georgia. The SPECTRUM grant will provide financial support to 80 students over the course of the next 5 years. This online bachelor's degree program will be identical to the program of study required for our on campus degree. Coursework will be offered online, and practica will be supervised via distance using webcam technology. Additional onsite supervision of practica will be available through local school district mentors or administrators and grant staff will be available to provide onsite supervision if warranted by student progress. All courses in this program meet the same accreditation requirements as our on campus degree programs.

We are requesting Board of Regents approval for the SPECTRUM project under their provision for distance education delivery of new programs. The completed addendum detailing our proposed program is attached.

## Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs

### PROCEDURES

The Board of Regents encourages the use of distance education to help meet the instructional needs of the citizens of the State. The guidelines and questions below are not considered to be exhaustive, but rather, are listed to provide an idea of the kind of information being sought in order to judge the merits of the proposal.

**Date:** November 8, 2004                      **Institution:** University of Georgia  
**College/School/Division:** Education                      **Department:** Special Education  
**Degree (please indicate whether this is a stand-alone degree):** Stand-alone Degree  
**Major:** Special Education                      **CIP Code:** 13.1001  
**Proposed Start Date:** August 2005

The President shall forward to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, information that addresses the following issues:

#### 1. Description of the Delivery System

The primary delivery mode (95% +) for the program will be internet-based instruction via UGA's Web Course Tools (WebCT) platform. Course content and activities will be delivered through both synchronous and asynchronous means. Horizon Live and online chats via WebCT will support synchronous interactions. Asynchronous interaction will take place via email and on-line discussion boards within WebCT. Additional face-to-face interactions will occur each semester. We are proposing that this program be initially offered for a period of approximately 6 years. This will allow for 5 grant-funded cohorts\* (a total of 80 students) to complete the program.

\*Program development is being supported through the U.S. Department of Education's Transition to Teach office, which awarded a \$2.4 million grant to the Department of Special Education for delivery of expanded online programs in the field. This grant (SPECTRUM: Special Education Training on the Web: Undergraduate Degree, Certification, and Mentoring) will prepare provisionally certified special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals to be certified special educators. All funds necessary to cover development and delivery will come from this grant budget or from the existing SETWEB program. No additional state funds will be requested.

#### 2. Assessment of Societal Need and Demand for Distance Education Delivery

Shortages of special education personnel have been well documented on a national, regional, and state level through a variety of sources. The Council on Exceptional Children (2001) reports that, nationally, institutions of higher education prepare only half as many teachers as are needed in any given year. According to the American Association for Employment in Education (2000), the Southeastern U.S. has a "considerable shortage" of teachers across all areas of special education. Furthermore, the United States Department of Education indicates that, of employed special education teachers in Georgia, approximately one quarter are not fully certified (2002). The Georgia Professional Standards Commission reports that the state will need 12,781 special education teachers by Fall 2007 and 15,828 by Fall 2012. Meanwhile, Georgia student teacher production has declined 59.8% in recent years from 5,415 in 1998 to 3,388 in 2002 (The Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003). Clearly, current efforts to prepare and retain special education teachers in the state of Georgia and beyond fall terribly short of projected need.

The proposed program is needed throughout the state because the current pool of potential new teachers includes individuals such as paraprofessionals and provisionally certified teachers working full time who require a flexible delivery system in order to obtain their teaching credentials. Further, individuals in Georgia's most impoverished communities lack ready access to the caliber of program that UGA is equipped to offer. During the 5-year funding period, we plan to primarily serve 37 counties throughout Georgia that are designated by the grantor as high need (percentage of teachers teaching out of field or not fully certified and percentage of students living in poverty as determined by

### **Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

U.S. census figures). It is expected that the program will be self-sustaining at the end of the 5-year period and may be expanded to other areas of the state. We also perceive this program as one that can be offered on a regional or national basis in the long term.

#### **3. Readiness of the Institution to Offer the Program**

##### ***a. Institutional Mission and Relevance to Other Programmatic Offerings--***

This program does duplicate our on-campus program in that we will hold our students to the same expectations with regard to knowledge and skills. However, our current campus-based program is unable to adequately meet the demand and diverse needs of non-traditional students in remote areas of Georgia and this further impacts our ability to prepare a sufficient number of highly qualified teachers.

This proposed program is consistent with our mission and role as defined by the Southern Regional Education Board [SREB]. The proliferation of for profit programs (e.g. The University of Phoenix) compels institutions of higher education like UGA to offer high quality alternatives in order to remain competitive. This program also supports the College of Education's mission to provide the highest level of leadership in furthering education and lifelong learning for all citizens. Additionally, this program supports the strategic plan of the College's initiative of commitment to service and improving the quality of teaching and learning through distance education.

##### ***b. Faculty Inventory with Delivery Expertise --***

Within the Department of Special Education, 7 full time faculty have experience delivering distance education through on-line instruction. Tenure-line faculty regularly teach SETWEB courses as part of their normal instructional load. The Special Education program has extensive experience providing distance education through SETWEB and several faculty are actively engaged in research related to best practices in teacher preparation via distance education.

In regard to technology supports for faculty, SETWEB funds one doctoral-level graduate assistant in the Office of Information Technology whose duties included providing technical assistance to SETWEB faculty. Additionally, the university provides training in WebCT for all faculty members involved in distance education activities as well as technical assistance for faculty and students. Course design is supported by the WebCT template, which guides the faculty member through development of coursework.

##### ***c. Facilities --***

With the exception of regularly updating computer equipment for faculty, no changes or alterations are required of the existing facilities.

##### ***d. Instructional Support --***

WebCT will provide a platform for course delivery as well as student support. Students will need access to the Internet. Based on experience with the SETWEB program, we expect that the majority of students will be employed in the school systems where they will have access even if they do not have access at home.

Communication through email, bulletin boards (delayed, asynchronous interaction), and chat rooms, and Horizon Live (real-time synchronous interactions), will be used by students and faculty to interact during the learning process. WebCT provides the security and infrastructure required to guarantee protection of student privacy as well as validate student submission of course assignments. Students will access WebCT using their UGA MyID. Students will also have access to library resources at UGA through GALILEO. On-line tutorials will be available to assist students with procedural issues regarding access and use of GALILEO.

### **Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

Students supported by the grant will be paraprofessionals and provisionally certified teachers working in special education classrooms. Student teaching seminars will be offered online and intensive supervision via distance will be provided throughout the program of study. Internet protocol (IP) cameras, sometimes referred to as “webcams,” will be used to allow frequent supervision of students. Graduate assistants, employed by the grant and supervised by special education and Learning Performance Support Lab (LPSL) faculty will provide on-site assistance as needed to ensure that the cameras operate without interfering with the classroom experience.

#### **e. *Student Services***

We recognize that the non-traditional students who will be participating in this distance education initiative will likely require a number of supports in order to successfully complete the program. Programmatic, academic, and financial supports are outlined below.

##### Programmatic Support:

An initial orientation to the program will include an in-person meeting to familiarize students with the academic program and WebCT format. Because our 80 grant-funded students will be admitted as a cohort according to region, we will be able to offer orientations in locations that are within reasonable driving distance for participants. The group orientation will also allow program advisors to personally assist students in developing their programs of study. Students will be able to register for all course work online and will have the option of ordering books and materials needed for all program courses. An advisor in the existing SETWEB office will be available to assist students in these tasks as needed. Student advisors will also be available to assist students throughout their program to ensure a successful experience.

We anticipate that many of our participants will be special education paraprofessionals who have some college credit but lack the 4-year degree necessary to qualify for teacher certification. The SPECTRUM program has established, and will continue to seek out, partnerships with two-year programs that prospective students may attend in order to complete 60 transferable hours. These partnerships are aimed at providing individual advising to prospective students to ensure that they are able to complete core requirements and experience as easy a transition as possible into the University program. The eCore program will also be utilized for completion of required coursework. While the SPECTRUM project cannot fund students who have not yet transferred into UGA, our Recruitment Coordinator and Student Support Specialist will work with individual students to identify other financial supports (e.g., HOPE scholarships) to help meet their financial needs prior to admission to the program.

##### Academic Support:

In an effort to meet the academic support needs of our students, the SPECTRUM project has contracted with the Georgia Center for Continuing Education to develop and deliver a flexible student support program. This program will include online and telephone support on issues such as assignment preparation/proofreading, study strategies, and test preparation. The SPECTRUM Student Support Specialist will team with faculty to provide individualized consultation and online tutorials to assist students who may have varying levels of experience with college coursework. Additionally, funds are available to support faculty travel to deliver in person orientations, workshops, and group consultations. SPECTRUM faculty will also develop an online self-study course to help students prepare for the PRAXIS II exam necessary for certification. Development of the course is funded by the grant and it will be available free of charge to all SPECTRUM participants who wish to take advantage of the service.

##### Financial Support:

### **Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

The SPECTRUM grant includes funding of up to \$5,000.00 for 80 participants. This funding may be used at each student's discretion, as long as it is used for expenses related to completing the program and obtaining certification. Examples of costs that might be covered by this stipend include tuition/fees, books, computers, Internet access, registration for PRAXIS exams, and application fees for teacher certification. Because the proposed certification program is in a high-need subject area, we anticipate that many of our students will qualify for the HOPE teacher scholarship. Additionally, many of the special education directors in high need, impoverished districts with whom we will partner have funds available to support individuals in obtaining certification. Our Student Support Specialist and Recruitment Coordinator are both very familiar with various financial aid options and will be responsible for working with individual students to identify and secure additional monies as needed.

#### Other Supports:

Accommodations will be made in courses that rely heavily on streaming video to provide students with an alternative format for viewing that video (e.g. CD-ROM with video or VHS tapes shipped to the student). Additionally, we will take advantage of a current relationship established through the SETWEB program with Off-Campus Bookstore. This proprietor has worked to streamline the ordering and delivery process for students in our current programs and will be able to provide these same services for the proposed program.

#### f. *Cooperative Links with the Community* –

Cooperative links have been made (and will be sought on an ongoing basis) with high need schools systems throughout the state of Georgia. This program will offer certification options to aspiring teachers in geographic regions of the state previously un(der)served by UGA Special Education programs.

#### g. *Accreditation and Legal Issues* –

The program does not differ in any substantive way from the on-campus program in admissions, programmatic, or graduation requirements. Therefore, NCATE, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission will review it at the same time as all other programs in the Department of Special Education. As with all programs in the Department, this program will follow all UGA policies and procedures.

### 3. *Recruitment and Admission of Students* –

No specific technology competencies will be screened; however, students are expected to be able to use web browsers and common office productivity software. No specific residency requirements are associated with the program; although grant-funded participants are required to serve 3 years in a high need school system upon completion of their program.

During the period in which it receives grant funding (the first 5 years), the program will have a dedicated Recruitment Coordinator. This individual will work with the Project Directors and Program Coordinator to recruit students and review applications. The application process and admission requirements will mirror what is currently required for on campus students. In addition to identifying and recruiting students into the program, we will provide support for students as they navigate through the application, enrollment, and registration process. SETWEB already employs a dedicated student advisor with extensive experience helping nontraditional students who may be intimidated by the application requirements. We believe that this existing support will be important, particularly as we seek out paraprofessionals with 2-year degrees who might otherwise be deterred by the process.

The program will have a direct impact on affirmative action because it will give equal opportunity to any and all students no matter where they are located. The SETWEB program has already increased the diversity of students enrolled in Departmental programs because it is able to cross geographic barriers and allow greater access to individuals in remote areas of the state.

### Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs

Initially, students will be classified as in-state or out-of-state for tuition purposes based on USG Board of Regents Policy. Ultimately, we plan to apply for inclusion in the Academic Common Market so that we can offer our program at an affordable rate throughout the region and differential tuition so that the program is competitively priced for prospective students in any state.

#### 4. Curriculum –

The academic standards for this program are identical to our current campus based offerings. Faculty members who are experienced teaching and designing courses for on-campus delivery will teach courses. All courses in this program are appropriate for on-line delivery. Courses with labs will have an on-line equivalent that will involve student work in the school systems (where they will be in practicum placements) and the labs will be facilitated by UGA faculty, mirroring what is done for our on campus program. It is estimated the program will take students five semesters to complete.

##### Required Coursework:

- SPED 2000 Survey of Special Education
- SPED 3030 Introduction to Assessing Individuals with Disabilities
- SPED 3040 Introduction to Individuals with Special Needs
- SPED 3050 Classroom Behavior Management for Individuals with Disabilities
- SPED 4040 Special Education Technology
- SPED 4100 Instruction of Individuals with Mild Disabilities
- SPED 4200 Advanced Instructional Methods for Individuals with Mild Disabilities
- SPED 4300 Methods in Math Instruction (under development)
- SPED 4440 Practicum in Special Education
- SPED 5400 Collaboration Among Families and Professionals
- SPED 5450 Student Teaching Seminar
- SPED 5460 Student Teaching in Special Education

#### 5. Consistency with Principles of Good Practice –

All distance-learning activities offered by the Department of Special Education are in accord with the Principles of Good Practice as outlined at: <http://alt.usg.edu/research/goodpractice.html>. These principles encourage a high level of student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active listening, prompt feedback, emphasis on task, communication of high expectations, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The Department will assess all on-line courses through surveys and questionnaires and faculty and student interviews. The program provides an appropriate balance of core, research, and elective courses and through the sequential scheduling of courses students are better able to plan their program of study. The learning structure provides opportunities for growth and development, faculty support, and the rigor of the program is comparable to traditional programs.

#### 6. Fiscal Implications of the Program --

*The costs in the chart below are paid for the first five years of the program from a federal grant. Any additional costs will be covered by tuition returns (based on the model established by SETWEB).*

**Costs Per Year of Implementation**

<u>Item</u>	<u>FY 1</u>	<u>FY 2</u>	<u>FY 3</u>	<u>FY 4</u>	<u>FY 5</u>
Hardware Acquisition	5,600	40,000	N/A		
Software Acquisition	11,000	N/A			
Personnel (On-Campus Faculty)	88,000	89,760	91,555	93,386	95,254
Personnel (Adjuncts & Teaching Assistance)	70,000	71,400	72,828	74,284	75,770
Personnel (Student Advisor)	49,000	49,980	50,979	51,999	53,039
Personnel (Records)	21,000	21,420	21,848	22,285	22,731

**Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

Personnel (Technical Support)	25,000	25,500	26,010	26,530	27,060
Personnel (Secretarial)	23,000	23,460	23,929	24,407	24,898
Estimated Cost for Renovated Facilities for Technological Support	N/A				
Operating Expenses	50,000	51,000	52,020	53,060	54,121
Total:	342,600	372,520	339,169	345,952	352,871

**a. What is the funding stream for this type of delivery as well as upgrades and replacements?**

The SPECTRUM grant will support the program in its first five years of operation. After the grant period, the funding stream for the proposed program will be derived from the University tuition return program. The SETWEB program is fully supported through the tuition return program and it is anticipated that the proposed program will be self-sustaining as well. **No additional state funds will be requested to support the proposed program during or after the grant-funding period.**

**b. What are the line costs for delivering the program?**

Many of the courses in the proposed program are already being offered to a broad audience as part of SETWEB. Faculty members teach these courses as part of their normal instructional assignment. Additional courses will be developed and delivered by grant-funded personnel during the grant period. Upon conclusion of the funding period, it is anticipated that tuition returns will support any additional faculty required to maintain the program.

**c. Does the campus project that any tuition adjustments will need to be requested in support of the delivery of the program?**

The primary audience at this time is Georgia residents who pay in-state tuition. The Department's degree programs are recognized as among the best in the United States. Therefore, future enrollment projections include attracting a regional audience and then a national audience. We will seek participation in the Academic Common Market to support reduced tuition for a regional audience. In order to attract a national audience, we will seek a tuition adjustment to reduce out-of-state tuition.

**d. What are the external sources of funding and support for the program?**

During the first 5 years of the program, support will be provided through a U.S. Department of Education grant. The grant, administered through the Office of Innovation and Improvement as a Transition to Teach project, will provide approximately \$2.4 million to develop and deliver the program and financially support students in high-need areas of the state. Upon conclusion of the funding period, it is anticipated that the proposed project, like SETWEB, will be self-sustaining.

**e. Will there be any operating budget requests for this program that would exceed normal operating budget guidelines?**

The University already provides site licenses for WebCT and Horizon Live, networks to host the hardware and software, and support services through the Office of Instructional Technology. Faculty members will need laptop computers to stay current with the latest software developments. Initial investments in hardware and software will be covered by the Transition to Teach grant, with subsequent upgrades underwritten by SETWEB.

**f. Please demonstrate the cost and benefit of developing this program for a distance education format.**

This program is serving an audience of future educators who could not attend the University of Georgia due to the distance they would have to travel to participate in on-campus coursework or



### **Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

because the demands of their work would prevent them from attending on-campus classes. Use of web-based courses, which are highly flexible in nature and the practice of allowing students to complete practicum requirements in the classrooms where they are teaching on provisional certificates or as paraprofessionals will facilitate the inclusion of individuals who are already highly committed to working in the field of special education but who need to complete academic requirements.

No state funds will be necessary to develop or support the proposed program, which will utilize the existing, self-supporting SETWEB program as a base and federal funding to support expansion.

#### **8. Assessment --**

##### **a. Evaluation Plan --**

Students will complete anonymous online evaluations of courses and instructors at the end of each semester, consistent with UGA and Department policy and similar to those evaluations currently in place for the SETWEB program. Core evaluation items will be identical to those included on the standard evaluation used by the Department. Additional items will be included to assess student satisfaction related to the delivery system and technology support provided. Core items will be rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Additional items will include both Likert items and open-ended questions designed to provide the opportunity for in-depth commentary from students. Student evaluations will be reviewed each semester in order to determine appropriate changes.

External reviewers who have content expertise and experience with online course delivery will also evaluate courses. The SETWEB program currently engaged in this external review process with all course offerings and will support external reviews for new courses as well.

The SETWEB budget includes funds for personnel, including a doctoral-level coordinator. Because we will be able to hire additional personnel and pay summer salaries of current faculty to develop and teach courses for the undergraduate program, the proposed program will not increase the teaching load of any faculty member unless he/she elects to teach summer courses for additional pay. Based on our experiences with the SETWEB program, we project that faculty engaged in online learning spend approximately 50% more time engaged in instructional activities than they would in teaching an on-campus course. This additional time commitment is due primarily to the amount of time spent interacting electronically with individual students. The SPECTRUM grant provides funding for doctoral level graduate assistants to assist faculty of record, thereby making teaching assignments manageable. Consistent with existing SETWEB policy, these teaching assistants will devote approximately 10 hours per week to answering student questions, grading minor assignments under the direction of faculty, and monitoring discussion boards. Faculty will maintain responsibility for addressing content-related student questions, grading major assignments, and interacting directly with students through WebCT mail, chat rooms, and phone conversations.

Student performance will be monitored throughout the program in a manner consistent with the undergraduate assessment plan already in place in the Department of Special Education. The learning outcomes for the program were identified, defined, and updated based on the Council for Exceptional Children's 2000 publication, *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The Standards for Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators*. This publication sets the minimum informational and performance competencies to be mastered by special educators. Through faculty discussion, a set of activities and products was developed to evaluate student achievement of these expected "outcomes". Evidence of student achievement is outcomes are then included in an individual student portfolio. Upon completion of the program, therefore, each student will have developed a portfolio that documents his/her mastery of learning objectives. Live Text, for which UGA holds a site license, will be used as a platform for developing student portfolios.

**Addendum for Distance Education Delivery of New Programs**

Consistent with existing Department policy, we will ask our graduates to complete student questionnaires 1 and 3 years after completing the program. These questionnaires assist faculty in determining what changes might be made in the program in order to prepare teachers who are ready to meet the challenges of a special education classroom. Employer evaluations will be solicited from principals and special education directors after program completion in order to determine our graduates' competencies related to classroom responsibilities. Both student and employer evaluations are already in use within the Department and are appropriate for use in the proposed online program.

Data on student progress and retention will be maintained in a database specifically designed for this project. The SPECTRUM project includes a number of quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures, which will also be part of this database.

M. M. Middleton

Revised on 8/31/00 9:39 AM

D:\Data\Distance Education Policy Project\DE Addendum to Section 2.03.02 Draft#2.doc