



The University of Georgia®

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

March 21, 2012

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to offer the existing major in Educational Psychology with Area of Emphasis in Gifted Education (M.Ed.) as an online degree program will be an agenda item for the March 28, 2012, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

David E. Shipley, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost Jere W. Morehead
Dr. Laura D. Jolly

**Gifted and Creative Education Program
Proposal for an External Degree
The University of Georgia**

Institution: The University of Georgia
Date: November 7, 2011
College/School/Division: Education
Department: Educational Psychology and Instructional Technology,
Gifted and Creative Education Program
Degree: Master of Education
Major: Educational Psychology, Area of Emphasis: Gifted and
Creative Education
CIP Code: 42.1806
Proposed Start Date: Spring 2013

1. Needs Assessment

The mission of the Gifted and Creative Education (GCE) program at the University of Georgia is to advance knowledge about the attributes of giftedness and creativity within and across groups that may differ by age, culture, and economics, and to promote the application of assessment principles, learning and developmental theories, teaching strategies, counseling strategies and research methodology to the education of these gifted and creative individuals.

The mission is based on the philosophy that giftedness and creativity are expressed in diverse ways among diverse people; that creativity is a universal potential to be nurtured and enhanced; that the best education is tailored to students' specific needs and interests for talent development rather than general instruction for students identified as gifted. This mission will be accomplished by focusing on instruction, research, and service.

Students who graduate from this program may assume a variety of roles including those of college or university professor, classroom teacher, coordinator of school system programs, coordinator in state departments of education, or educational consultant.

Currently, coursework in the GCE program has been offered online for the last ten years, increasing from delivery of in-field endorsement coursework to enrolling multiple cohorts of students each year from around the state of Georgia who pursue our coursework for degree purposes. The demand for GCE to offer an online degree has coincided with the needs of:

1. graduate students who plan to work or serve in rural or urban school settings where training in talent development is rare;
2. educators who are employed full-time and need/desire coursework related to gifted education to meet professional or academic goals;

3. non-degree seeking individuals who hold a bachelor's degree and desire flexible delivery, on-line courses due to (a) work, academic or personal responsibilities which create barriers for travel to campus; or (b) limited course offerings in the local area;
4. future degree seeking students from the southeastern region of the United States who desire UGA coursework to be applied toward a graduate degree that is pursued at a later time.

In sum, not only is there a need for the current GCTWeb online coursework to serve students who are not able to be on campus, but there is also a need to serve many other students who can only complete their degree requirements via distance education and an online degree. A wait list of students exists for seats in the current GCTWeb courses, which has encouraged more online course offerings over recent years. We have also seen that online versions of our on-campus courses, when offered simultaneously, fill more quickly and consistently than their face-to-face counterparts.

The need for educational professionals with a deep understanding of and how to provide for student differences among gifted and creative students and how to provide for them is replete within educational literature. The leading professional associations in gifted education (namely the National Association for Gifted Children and the Council for Exceptional Children) advocate for increased professional training at the graduate level through online education and have established national standards to guide educator preparation programs who offer degree programs. The current on-campus and online coursework within the GCTWeb program is responsive to the standards by emphasizing the ten number of areas, including:

1. Foundations
2. Development and Characteristics of Learners
3. Individual Learning Differences
4. Instructional Strategies
5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions
6. Language and Communication
7. Instructional Planning
8. Assessment
9. Professional and Ethical Practice
10. Collaboration

However, our reach and impact is narrow because our on-campus coursework is limited to the few students who can come to campus, and the online coursework is limited primarily to Georgia residents who can afford to enroll.

An online program in gifted education will attract and meet the needs of many Georgians, particularly in those areas not nearby to a university campus. It will allow a student base that has rarely been able to participate in our programs due to

distance, time and cost. Our experience with the GCTWeb online programs is that our coursework has reached out to students in remote areas of the state. Additionally, there are very few programs exclusively devoted to gifted education and creativity in the nation.

Our faculty plans to tap into and establish national and international connections to enroll students from many diverse places and backgrounds to learn together; enhancing and expanding the community of educational professionals and advocates who can provide excellent and equitable educational services for all gifted and creative students.

2. Admission Requirements

Requirements for admission to the GCTWeb Online Masters Degree in Educational Psychology (Gifted and Creative Education) mirror those in place for our on-campus degree. Prospective candidates for the MEd program online, must hold a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. The following guidelines are used in making admission decisions.

- An applicant's cumulative grade point average for all previous undergraduate courses;
- Before admission, applicants must have taken one of the following examinations:
 - The Graduate Record Examination
 - Miller Analogies Test
 - The graduate school will accept scores as valid for 5 years, until September 15 following the 5th anniversary of the testing date. Otherwise, applicants must take one of the tests again.
- A statement of intent that explicates the candidate's relevant background, interests and goals is required.
- A resumé or curriculum vita is required.
- In addition, three letters of recommendation are requested from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's scholarly ability and potential for success in a graduate program. At least two of these recommendations should be completed by faculty who have previously instructed the student in a program of study.

Admission decisions are complex and dependent upon many factors. High test scores and G.P.A.s are necessary, but not sufficient for admission into a graduate program. All materials submitted as part of an application are considered and evaluated by the faculty within the GCE Program. Admissions are evaluated holistically, and recommendations for admission are based on an applicant's qualifications, recommendations, statement, and how these match with faculty interests, and the program's capacity. Admissions are competitive; merely meeting minimum requirements does not ensure admission.

The online program stimulates greater diversity among the COE students population by giving greater opportunity to all students no matter where they live or work. Students are classified as in-state or out-of-state for tuition purposes based on USG Board of Regents Policy.

3. Program Content

The academic standards for our M.Ed. online degree program are the same as those for on-campus degree program. The degree requires the same standards of academic excellence and rigor. Expectations for student participation are consistent with our departmental standards. All courses have been taught online anywhere from 5-10 years now. Four of the five on campus faculty teach our courses along with five Part-time Assistant Professors who exclusively teach for our online program. All courses offered are appropriate for distance delivery. There are no laboratory requirements required as a part of the program. Students are paired with a full time faculty member and work together in an advisor-advisee capacity to plan their Program of Study, set professional/career goals and establish a support system for the student. If students follow the curriculum outlined for them in the Program of Study, then they should finish the degree in six consecutive terms. The curriculum for the MEd online program includes:

Gifted Education Foundations

Spring Semester First Year (7 credit hours)

EPSY 7110e : Characteristics of Gifted Children and Youth

EPSY 7060e: Assessment of Gifted Children and Youth

EPSY 6990e: Seminar in Gifted Education (1 hour)

Summer Semester First Year (6 credit hours)

EPSY 7230e: Methods and Materials for the Gifted

EPSY 7250e: Programming and Curriculum for the Gifted

For subsequent semesters, students will work with their advisors to assemble their program of study by taking:

Social and Emotional Strand (3 credit hours)

EPSY 7260e: Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of the Gifted

Diversity Strand (3 credit hours)

*EPSY 7270e: Retention of Ethnic Minorities in Gifted and Advanced Programs **OR**,*

EPSY 7210e: Multicultural Gifted and Talented Education

Creativity Strand (3 credit hours)

EPSY 7240e: Creativity: Instructional Procedures and Problem-Solving Processes
OR,

EPSY 8160e: Creativity and Cognition

Educational Psychology Foundations Strand (3 credit hours)

EPSY 6010e: Human Development for Education **OR**,

EPSY 6800e: Cognition for Education **OR**,

EPSY 8160e: Creativity and Cognition

Research Strand (3 credit hours)

ERSH 7500e Action Research **OR**,

EPSY 8160e Applied Research Methods in Gifted Education **OR**

ESPY 6200e Research Methods in Education

Field Experiences (6 credit hours)

EPSY 7110e: Practicum in Educational Psychology

Elective (3 credit hours)

*Another GCE course from a program strand OR another course from the College of Education that meets the students' individual interests/professional setting.

As in our campus-based MEd degree, online degree-seeking students are required to take a total of 37 hours as listed above. The course offerings for our online degree-seeking students provide a strong foundational understanding of research-based areas within and surrounding gifted education. This includes the areas of social and emotional development, creativity, diversity, foundations in educational psychology and research. Students in the MEd degree program qualify for the Gifted In-Field Endorsement for the State of Georgia after taking their first four courses.

The requirements of our MEd and EdS degree programs are similar in nature, however, within each of the strands (Creativity, Social and Emotional, Diversity, Foundations, Research), students have several options for courses that meet the specific program of study requirements. For example in the creativity strand, students can take either EPSY 7240e: Problem Solving Processes and Procedures OR EPSY 8160e: Creativity and Cognition to meet their requirement depending on their degree objective and/or professional goals. Another important item to note is, typically, students do not seek multiple degrees (at least not a MEd AND EdS) in Gifted and Creative Education. Most students come to us with a MEd in another area (i.e. Science Education or Elementary Education, for example) and are seeking then an EdS in Gifted and Creative Education, or perhaps, may get their MEd in Gifted and Creative Education to then go on and receive their EdS (or PhD) in another area of emphasis. Lastly, a major difference in the degree programs is the practicum experiences for the MEd students and the Applied Project requirement for EdS students. With the Applied Project, EdS students complete a very focused and detailed action research project that integrates and culminates their degree program. In the Masters degree, students complete 6 credit hours (120 contact hours) of practical experiences on site within schools and programs. Students are not expected to earn both degrees in this program.

Students in the MEd online degree programs utilize both synchronous and asynchronous components in their coursework. Distance learning at the University of Georgia works with a learning management system called Blackboard Vista (or eLC for UGA students). Within this learning management system, students access their instructor, email, keep calendars, work with other class members, complete and deliver assignments, receive readings, participate in discussions, activities and all other course related materials in this forum. Each course and each instructor designs their instructional environment according to the course concepts, instructor style and students' needs. The faculty also has access to a platform called, the Wimba classroom, whereby they are able to have live course meetings and activities with audio and visual materials in a synchronous classroom environment. Each instructor utilizes this tool differently, but might use it to complete lectures, small/large group discussions, work sessions, project collaboration or other course related activities where students are able to work in "real time" with each other and their instructor.

4. Student Advising

Students in our GCTWeb MEd online degree program will be assigned an advisor from existing faculty. Any of our faculty who instruct courses in gifted education will receive degree-seeking students as advisees and will be paired according to interests or professional goals. Students receive advisement via email, telephone conferencing, online synchronous ("live") meeting spaces (such as Wimba classroom, Blackboard Instant Messaging or Skype) or in person, if desired. Together students and their advisor will work to plan a Program of Study, identify professional/career goals and establish a support system for the student while they seek their degree with the Gifted and Creative Education program. Students also have access to online orientations about the online program and the College of Education website with important information and links.

5. Resident Requirements

The residence requirement is two consecutive semesters of six credit hours (12 total hours) of online coursework.

6. Program Management

The coordination of the GCTWeb online programs will be the responsibility of the Academic Professional/Coordinator of GCTWeb programs, along with the GCE faculty. The coordinator will maintain the quality and viability of the online program by taking the lead with the support of the faculty. All courses will be taught by Gifted and Creative Education full time UGA faculty members or part time faculty members associated with the program.

The plan for new online program cohort (which includes endorsement seeking, certificate seeking, Masters degree and Education Specialist degree seeking students) will be to support, at a minimum of 20, new students each year. Students will be able to apply for programs to begin in the Spring terms each year. If students follow the timetables as described below, they can finish their degree in six terms or two years.

Timetable for MEd Degree Seeking Cohort

Cohort students begin degree in Spring Term (January):

| Semester | Courses | Actions |
|---|--|---|
| August-December (prior to students beginning): | | -Advertise and recruit students -Ready all online courses -Process applications for upcoming term |
| Spring Semester, Year 1 | EPSY 7110e EPSY 7060e EPSY 6990e | -Online orientations held - Process applications for upcoming term -Yearly evaluation of program conducted in May |
| Summer Semester, Year 1 | EPSY 7230e EPSY 7250e | -Online orientations held -If seeking Georgia endorsement, students may apply at this time for Gifted In-Field endorsement in the State of Georgia |
| Fall Semester, Year 1 | EPSY 7260e EPSY 6800e OR 6010e | -Ready all online courses -Process applications for upcoming term |
| Spring Semester, Year 2 | EPSY 7270e EPSY 7710e | -Online orientations held - Process applications for upcoming term -Yearly evaluation of program conducted in May |
| Summer Semester, Year 2 | EPSY 7500e *Elective | |
| Fall Semester, Year 2 | EPSY 7240e EPSY 7710e | -Comprehensive examinations -Students graduate |

Assessing the Program

Course evaluations are conducted each term with every course, just as they are in on campus courses. Students take the course evaluations at the close of the semester

by logging on and filling out the required evaluation form information for each of their courses. In addition, yearly, students will have the option to participate in an online survey to provide feedback on the GCTWeb online program experience. The focus of this survey will be to assess advisement, registration, support, programmatic issues and other related topics in order to yearly assess and adjust the program. The program is also developing a portfolio system that will highlight student progress at various transition points (beginning, middle, end) of their program. These course evaluations, student work, programmatic surveys and student portfolios will be gathered for evaluation purposes for our overall online program. Once up and running, data will be collected and evaluated on time to degree and tracking placement of our students.

Application and Matriculation

Student will apply for this online degree program in the same way they would apply for on-campus degree programs through the Graduate School. As a part of their letter of intent, students will need to specify that they would be an online student. Applications are reviewed between August and December. Acceptance into the online program will be made by the Gifted and Creative Education Faculty as a whole using the criteria discussed in the *Admission Requirements* area of this document.

The online Masters degree will be obtained in two years if the sequence above is followed. There is some room for exchange in the program of study because of the number of required courses, course offerings, and other programs in GCE. However, it is encouraged for students to follow this sequence to maintain a “cohort” community. Establishing a cohort also allows and guarantees minimum enrollment in our courses.

In their last term, students are required to complete the comprehensive examinations as outlined by the GCE faculty for completion of the Masters degree program. These examinations require students to reflect on their coursework in terms of how their degree program informs their future teaching practice and learning in the field. Comprehensive exams will be reviewed by all GCE faculty members. The comprehensive examinations given by the GCE faculty for Masters degree students is the same for both on campus and online students.

| Term | <i>On Campus Students Passing Masters Comprehensive Examination</i> | <i>On Campus Students Not Passing Applied Project Comprehensive Examination</i> | <i>Online Students Passing Applied Project Comprehensive Examination</i> | <i>Online Students Not Passing Applied Project Comprehensive Examination</i> |
|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Spring 2009 | No participants | No participants | 5 | 0 |
| Summer 2009 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Fall 2009 | No participants | No participants | 2 | 0 |
| | | | | |
| Spring 2010 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Summer 2010 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Fall 2010 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | | | | |
| Spring 2011 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Summer 2011 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Duplication

As of this report, we know of no other solely online Masters degree program in gifted and creative education in the state of Georgia and few nationwide that are solely online. The market has great potential.

7. Library and Laboratory Resources

There are no laboratory requirements for the online program. In terms of library access, students will have access to Galileo and GIL, a wonderful online library system. Also, students have access to support persons for library use like Curriculum Materials Lab faculty in the College of Education.

8. Budget

This online degree program has been maintained with relatively low costs for the College of Education, particularly when compared to the income it generates. Typically, the needs of this program are graduate assistant support, faculty (both full and part time), computers, and advertising.

Graduate Assistants play an integral role in the success of our online program. Their specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Technical Support** (structuring/making changes to course sites, uploading items, responding to students with troubleshooting aid, training faculty and staff in new technologies, supporting major learning management changes like migration to new LMS such as eLC),
- **Instructional Support** (respond and participating in asynchronous discussions, facilitating small group work simultaneously with course instructor in synchronous class meetings, coordinate and prep any guests for course meetings)
- **Student Support** (responding to student emails about course requirements and technology, on-campus needs for distance students, helping utilize and access online resources such as the library systems, etc)
- **Promotion and Development of the Online Program** (assisting coordinator of GCTWeb program with programmatic initiatives such as tutorials, presentations, upkeep of websites; arranging legal use of multimedia materials from third parties, recruitment materials for online program, registration surveys and communication)

Expected Budget of MEd and EdS Degrees in Gifted and Creative Education via GCTWeb Online Programs

| Anticipated Revenue | |
|---|----------|
| Expected <i>Yearly</i> Tuition Income (Based on an estimate of \$275 per credit hour times 6 courses times 20 students) | \$99,000 |

| Anticipated Yearly Expenses | |
|---|-----------------|
| Three, twelve month 1/3 Graduate Assistants (\$15,354 <i>each to be shared with the MEd and EdS online programs</i>) | \$46,062 |
| Upgrading of program technology | \$5,000 |
| Professional Development for faculty | \$3,000 |
| Advertising | \$3,000 |
| TOTAL | \$57,062 |

| Anticipated Start Up Expenses | |
|--|-----------------|
| Three, twelve month 1/3 Graduate Assistants (\$15,354 <i>each to be shared with the MEd online program</i>) | \$46,062 |
| Faculty computers-upgrades for part time faculty | \$5,000 |
| Graduate Assistant Computers | \$7,500 |
| Advertising | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL | \$61,062 |

*please note this budget includes BOTH the MEd and EdS online degree programs that run simultaneous with one another with cohorts of students.

9. Program Costs Assessed to Students

Costs for students taking the online MEd would roughly approximate those costs incurred by on-campus students, aside from slight fee differences (like waiving transportation fees, parking fees, and health service fees).

10. Accreditation

The online Masters degree, like all degrees in Gifted Education, will be subject to accreditation by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.