

**VSBPE**

Date: May 16, 2023

Item: UVM Special Education Substantive Change Request

**ITEM:** Shall the VSBPE approve UVM's request for approval of the proposed substantive change to their Special Education/Early Childhood Special Education programs, giving UVM approval to recommend their candidates for the dual ECSE and SE endorsements?

**AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the VSBPE approve UVM's request for approval of the proposed substantive change to their Special Education/Early Childhood Special Education programs, giving UVM approval to recommend their candidates for the dual ECSE and SE endorsements.

**BACKGROUND:**

UVM currently offers a Special Education minor as an add-on endorsement and an Early Childhood major. The Special Education minor was reviewed and approved as part of UVM's ROPA review in 2018 and the ECSE major was reviewed through UVM's CAEP review in 2017. UVM is proposing a new Special Education major that would lead to licensure in both ECSE and SE endorsements.

**RATIONALE:**

Colby Kervick and Lori Meyer from UVM have been working on unifying their two separate Special Education programs since at least as far back as May, 2022. When determining if this new program would be counted as a substantive change to their existing approved programs or would require a new program ROPA review, we asked if the changes amounted to more than 20% in differences from the already-approved programs. Although this was somewhat of a random measurement, it seemed like a valid determinant. Through a review of the syllabi and program requirements, the determination was made that the new program was not more than 20% different from the old programs, and that a substantive change request was the best way to proceed.

Colby and Lori met with Ellen Cairns, AOE ROPA Coordinator, to review their proposal, and have revised their documentation based on her feedback. They have also successfully gone through UVM's Curriculum Revision process. After thoroughly reviewing the materials submitted, we have concluded that the new proposed program meets the Core Teaching Standards (through the same courses that were already approved for this purpose in the ECSE program) and all endorsement and licensure requirements.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

- UVM memo to VSBPE
- Course Standards Matrix
- Revised Major Course List

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE)  
FROM: The University of Vermont Special Education Faculty  
DATE: April 21, 2023  
RE: Significant Revision to B.S.Ed. major in Early Childhood Special Education

In Spring 2022, the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) within the University of Vermont (UVM) deactivated the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) major due to low student enrollment. As part of the deactivation, the Special Education faculty within the Department of Education (DOE) was charged by our Dean, with the support of the Provost and our Department Chair, to initiate a process of significant revision to the major with the goal of making changes that would attract more students to want to pursue an undergraduate major in Special Education and address the needs of the field to fill teacher shortages.

The Special Education faculty have worked on the revisions in consultation with Ellen Cairns, ROPA Coordinator, at the Vermont Agency of Education. The proposal is officially approved through the UVM curricular review process.

What follows includes:

1. A brief overview of the significant revision to the ECSE major
2. An explanation of the alignment between revisions and InTASC Standards
3. An overview of pathways to teacher licensure (i.e., practicum/student teaching requirements)

### **Overview of the Significant Revision to the ECSE major**

UVM is merging two separate teacher licensure programs, and their respective coursework to establish one B.S.Ed. in Special Education. The two programs include (1) the Early Childhood Special Education major (ECSP prefix; Birth through age 6, approved under a CAEP review) and the minor in Special Education with endorsement (EDSP prefix; Kindergarten through age 21, ROPA approved). By merging these programs, we have ended the Special Education minor with endorsement. That curriculum will now be a part of the revised major.

The revisions we are proposing to the ECSE major support the retention of an undergraduate major in Special Education at UVM. The UVM Department of Education will keep the 18-credit non-licensure Special Education minor with no changes. The program we are terminating is the pathway to a 21-credit minor in Special Education

with an endorsement that a subset of our teacher education candidates enrolled in to earn a dual endorsement. Many of these students pursued the minor with endorsement because their goal was to become special educators within the K-age 21 band. There was no pathway to major in Special Education K-age 21 at the undergraduate level. The good news is that with the revisions to the major, we can capture the undergraduate students who come to UVM wanting to become special educators across the birth-21 span.

Other students intended to be general education classroom teachers but wanted the added expertise in Special Education. Students interested in boosting their Special Education knowledge can enroll in our Accelerated Master's Program in Special Education. With the accelerated pathway, they can add a fifth year to their program of study, pursue their General Education major as an undergraduate, and then earn their Master's degree in Special Education in their fifth year.

We are excited about proposing these revisions to the undergraduate ECSE major. Looking forward, UVM undergraduate students can major in Special Education, minor in Special Education, or pursue a dual endorsement in General Education/Special Education through the Accelerated Master's Pathway.

Regarding coursework for the B.S.Ed. in Special Education, 100% of the core content coursework is retained from both the Special Education minor with endorsement and the Early Childhood Special Education major. In sum, students enrolled in the B.S.Ed. in Special Education will take all 15 **ECSP and EDSP core courses** regardless of which licensure/endorsement bands they seek to pursue through practicum and student teaching experiences (see attached Revised Major Course List). As a program, we believe there is value for future Special Education teachers to understand and develop their content knowledge and skills across the birth-post secondary trajectory.

Four new courses are being added. New courses will reinforce and add content to the existing program of study, which already addresses VT Core teaching standards and Endorsement competencies (see below). Two of the new courses deepen knowledge and align content with the CAEP approved master's degree program for initial teacher licensure in Special Education. A third course will be an early seminar to prepare for field experience options for endorsement/licensure. The fourth course focuses on collaborating with families from diverse backgrounds and is offered through UVM's Education for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity program. More details about the four courses are provided below. We calculate these changes to be less than 20%.

- **EDSP 202 Severe Disabilities** is a course that will focus more deeply on the needs of students with severe disabilities, curricular planning, and assistive technology. The content builds upon prior knowledge taught in a currently ROPA-approved course (EDSP 224).
- **EDSP 3230 Collaboration and Communication in Schools and Communities** will be a new course on collaborative teaming theory and practice. In particular it

will prepare students to be more effective collaborators with colleagues within their professional sites and related service providers. Students are introduced to collaborative teaming in EDSP 005 and then have opportunities to apply collaboration skills in EDSP 3220 and their culminating student teaching internships. However, this course will reinforce and build skills in collaborative practice earlier in the degree program.

- **EDSP 1000 Topics in Special Education Careers** is a new one-credit seminar that will orient students to the profession of special education in their first year and help them become informed about the endorsement age bands and prospective field experiences. It will also orient them to the professional organizations that inform our profession.
- **ECLD 205 Family School and Community Collaboration** is a 3-credit course that prepares students to work with families from diverse cultural backgrounds including families for whom English is not their first language. There is a focus on collaboration with families in culturally responsive and family-centered ways.

Also, all UVM teacher education programs are aligning with the new general education requirements (i.e., The Catamount Core). The Catamount Core requires 42 credits in liberal arts coursework with specific requirements in content areas, including natural sciences, social sciences, math, arts and humanities, diversity, sustainability and global citizenship. Students also have to take coursework in quantitative data literacy, writing and information literacy. As such, students will deepen their content knowledge across General Education subject areas. We addressed these requirements within our revision to the ECSE major.

Lastly, two human development courses are available for students to take. We will advise students to take the one that most closely aligns with the instructional bands in which they hope to be licensed. We have permission from both the Early Childhood Education program and the Human Development and Family Science program for Special Education undergraduate majors to take their development courses, so through the process of advising, students will choose which one makes the most sense.

### **Alignment Between Revisions and InTASC Standards**

The Special Education faculty undertook extensive work to ensure that all Vermont Core Teaching Standards and Vermont Endorsement Standards for Special Educators and Early Childhood Special Educators are met through courses that have already been vetted to meet them via CAEP or ROPA (see Course Standards Matrix). The Course Standards Matrix shows in detail the significant revision to the ECSE major by listing courses retained from that major (i.e., mostly ECSP coursework) and a list of courses that are added because of the revision (i.e., mostly EDSP coursework). At the bottom of the matrix is a “notes” section to help interpret the highlighting (e.g., yellow columns are all courses already ROPA-approved or approved through CAEP review). Notable, alignment with Core Teaching Standards and CEC standards remains unchanged and

is strengthened by the proposed new courses, which will bolster what previously existed in the Birth – age 6 major now that it will span Birth-age 21.

### **Overview of Pathways to Teacher Licensure**

Students pursuing this major will have options to add one or more of the following Initial Licensure Special Education Endorsements upon completion of the degree:

1. Early Childhood Special Educator (Birth–Age 2 & Ages 3–6; Part C & B requirements)
2. Special Educator (Kindergarten-Grade 8)
3. Special Educator (Grade 7 – Age 21)

With the combination of coursework that addresses content across Birth- Age 21 and supervised practicum hours (i.e., 60 hours) and student teaching within specific age bands, students enrolled in the B.S.Ed. in Special Education can easily stack licensure/endorsements. The B.S.Ed. in Special Education will have a consolidated, repeatable practicum course (i.e., EDSP 295) and offer placements for endorsement options across age bands. All practica and student teaching requirements are covered. We are the first Special Education teacher preparation program in the nation to advance a Birth-Age 21 model within a single major/degree. In doing so, we anticipate attracting more undergraduate students into the special education major and better preparing teacher candidates to work with individuals with disabilities and their families from birth through adulthood. Given the dire number of shortages for Special Educators across Birth-Age 21, we believe that innovation is necessary, and particularly advantageous for addressing teacher shortages in rural communities. We are asking the standards board to approve this revision under our current ROPA approval status.

## Revised Major Course List

Blue=Existing CAEP or ROPA approved major courses

Green=New major courses

**UVM and other Course Requirements:** 48 credits. Students will need to meet the 42 credits of Catamount Core UVM General Education requirements in the areas of Diversity, Foundational Writing and Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning and Sustainability. In addition, students will take ECLD 056 Language Policy Issues, Race and Schools and one of two human development course options (either HDFS 005 Human Development or EDEC 063 Child Development).

**Special Education Major Courses:** 55 credits

EDSP 005 Issues Affecting Persons with Disabilities

EDSP 117 Behavior Management

ECSP 202 EI for Infants and Toddlers

ECSP 211 Assessment in EI/ECSE

ECSP 210 Curriculum in ECSP

EDSP 280 Assessment in Special Education

EDSP 224 Meeting the Instructional Needs of All Students

EDSP 290 Early Literacy and Numeracy

EDSP 297 Adolescent Literacy and Numeracy

EDSP 295 Practicum: (60 Hour practicum available to students beginning sophomore year-students must complete a minimum of 1 practicum and can repeat up to 4 times depending on licensure bands desired)

ECSP/EDSP 4991(note new course number): Student Teaching (full time 12 credits) (former course numbers ECSP 186 and EDSP 296)

ECSP 220 Seminar (Student teaching seminar-3 credits)

EDSP 1000 Topics in Special Ed Careers( 1 credit seminar to introduce students to the profession of special education and provide guidance on licensure age bands and professional pathways-taken in the second semester of their first year)

EDSP 3230 Collaboration and Communication in Schools and Communities

EDSP 202 Severe Disabilities

## ECLD 205 Families Schools and Community Collaboration

Additional credits to meet minimum of 120 graduation requirements (17-26 credits):  
Some of their catamount core requirements can double dip with some of their major requirements which will free up some credits to pursue minors, study abroad, take additional practicum or pursue study abroad.