



Deputy Commissioner  
Office of Higher Education  
Room 977, Education Building Annex  
Albany, New York 12234

Tel: (518) 486-3633  
Fax: (518) 486-2254  
E-mail: [jfrey@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:jfrey@mail.nysed.gov)

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To: Deans and Directors of Institutions of Higher Education Offering Teacher Education Programs

From: Joseph P. Frey 

Subject: Regulation Changes for All Teacher Education Programs and Restructuring Students with Disabilities Certification

**Revised Guidance**

The original version of this guidance document was dated November 3, 2010. We are providing this revised version to clarify the response to question number 13 (page 7), regarding graduate level programs, as follows:

**The six credits each in math, social studies, English and science may be earned at the graduate and/or undergraduate levels.**

In 2007, the New York State Education Department (Department) began examining ways to strengthen teacher preparation programs for candidates to ensure greater success for all students. The field has informed the Department that all educators need to be better prepared to teach all students, especially students with disabilities. Additionally, the Board of Regents has been reviewing the structure of special education certification to ensure there is a sufficient quantity and quality of special education teachers at the adolescence level. Based on this review and comment, the Department put forth emergency regulations that became effective as an emergency measure October 26, 2010 to support better preparation of all teachers to understand the needs of students with disabilities and restructure students with disabilities certificate titles at the adolescence level. Pending the Board's approval in January 2011, the proposed amendment will become effective as a permanent rule on February 2, 2011. This timeline and the regulatory language may change in response to comment and the State's regulatory process.

The Board of Regents item, *Emergency Adoption of Proposed Regulations Relating to the Program Registration Requirements for Teacher Education Programs and the Restructuring of Adolescence Level Teacher Certification for Students with Disabilities*, and the emergency regulations, may be found at [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/October2010/1010hea1.doc](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/October2010/1010hea1.doc). Please find attached an informational Questions and Responses document regarding the details for the implementation of the regulations relating to the program registration requirements for teacher education programs and the restructuring of adolescence level teacher certification for students with disabilities teachers. If you have questions, please contact the Office of College and University Evaluation at (518) 474-1551 or via E-mail to [ocuecal@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:ocuecal@mail.nysed.gov).

Attachment

cc: Commissioner David Steiner  
Senior Deputy Commissioner of Education John King

## Changes to All Teacher Education Programs

The new regulations relating to the program registration requirements for teacher education programs and the restructuring of adolescence level teacher certification for students with disabilities require that **all** teacher education programs include **three semester hours** of study for teachers to develop the skills necessary to provide instruction that will promote the participation and progress of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. In addition, for traditional programs, 15 of the 100 hours of introductory field experience is required for the initial certificate, and for programs that lead to Transitional B Certificates, 6 of the 40 hours of required introductory field experience must focus on understanding the needs of students with disabilities.

### **Three Semester Hours of Study in Students with Disabilities**

The requirement for three semester hours of study in meeting the needs of students with disabilities applies to all teacher education candidates in cohorts entering programs on or after **September 1, 2011**. The three semester hours of study are for teacher candidates to develop the skills necessary to provide instruction that will promote the participation and progress of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum and prepare candidates with the knowledge and skills to work collaboratively with colleagues. The three semester hours should include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- effective practices for planning and designing co-teaching and collaboration with peers
- categories of disabilities
- identification and remediation of disabilities
- the special education process and State and federal special education laws and regulations
- individualizing instruction
- applying positive behavioral supports and interventions to address student and classroom management needs

If these requirements cannot be completed within a standalone, three semester hour course of study, the remaining requirements may be infused in other existing or newly created courses.

### Questions and Responses

**Question 1:** Must we re-register our existing programs to include the three semester hour course?

**Response:** No. There is no requirement to re-register a program or to seek approval to add a three semester hour course unless such change results in a cumulative

curricular change of 1/3 or more to the pedagogical core from the program's last registration date.

**Question 2:** Must this be a separate three-semester hours course, or can this requirement be met by infusing the equivalent of three semester hours with a focus on the required areas of study in a combination of courses or as a six or seven credits course that covers students with disabilities and a variety of other areas?

**Response:** There must be at least one, standalone, three semester hour course. However, if there is too much content to effectively cover the required elements in the three semester hour course, the teacher education program may infuse the additional elements into other courses, but there must be at least one, standalone, three semester hour course. The course may be greater than three semester hours, provided the course is solely dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities. The Department encourages teacher education programs to include, or continue to include, content on meeting the needs of all learners in each teacher education course, as practicable.

**Question 3:** Can institutions apply for a waiver to this requirement?

**Response:** Yes, there is flexibility for a waiver upon showing that the program provides adequate instruction to prepare candidates to understand the needs of students with disabilities through other means. Because of the credit rich requirements to design and complete effective dual certificate programs, this waiver is intended to provide flexibility especially for dual certificate programs (7-12 general education content specialist with SWD 7-12 Generalist with content extension). To apply for such a waiver, the president of the institution must send a letter to the Department:

- identifying the outcomes of the program
- explaining why the waiver is necessary to achieve the outcome(s)
- listing the titles of the courses in which the required elements will be found
- identifying how the equivalent of a total of three semester hours is covered in each course
- providing any other information pertinent to consideration of the request including a plan for demonstrating the success of the program

**Question 4:** Who meets the qualifications to teach the newly required course?

**Response:** Institutions must ensure that instructors meet the faculty requirements established in Part 52.2 and 52.21 (b) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. However, prior to this new regulation, program standards required, as part of the pedagogical core, that candidates study the nature of students

within the full range of disabilities. Graduate and undergraduate schools with programs that lead to students with disabilities certificates should already have this faculty. Graduate and undergraduate schools with programs that do not lead to students with disabilities certificates may need to hire additional faculty with special education expertise to meet this requirement.

**Question 5:** Who must take the three semester hour study in meeting the needs of students with disabilities?

**Response:** If the registered teacher education program cohort begins fall 2011 or thereafter, this requirement applies and must be fulfilled before the institution can recommend for any teaching certificate. Once a candidate has met the three semester hours of study in one registered program, s/he does not need to complete the requirement a second time. For example, if the candidate completes an undergraduate program that leads to the Early Childhood Birth – Grade 2 initial certificate in 2016, the candidate will not have to complete three semester hours of study in meeting the needs of students with disabilities when seeking a second initial certificate in a master’s program that leads to a Childhood 1-6 initial/professional certificate. The requirement does not apply to programs for pupil personnel services (PPS) or school administrators.

### **Field Experience 15 Hour Requirement**

Beginning with fall 2011 cohorts, teacher education programs that lead to an initial certificate must include a minimum of 15 of the 100 clock hours of introductory field experience, and for candidates in Transitional B certificate programs, a minimum of 6 of the 40 hours of introductory field experience must include a focus on understanding the needs of students with disabilities. Part 52.21(b)(1)(vi) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education defines field experience as direct observation of teaching, participation in teaching, or teaching itself that is related to the teacher education program in which the candidate is enrolled; engaged in prior to student teaching or practica; and carefully selected and planned by program faculty. The Regulations currently require that candidates have field experiences that include specific populations of students including students who are English language learners, students with disabilities, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. This regulatory change strengthens the requirement as it relates to students with disabilities to ensure that there is a direct attention, with objectives and purposes that have been carefully selected and planned by program faculty, toward meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

### Questions and Responses

**Question 6:** Must these field experiences be in separate or special settings?

**Response:** No. Students with disabilities are placed in a range of settings; therefore, the Department supports field experiences in a range of settings.

**Question 7:** What must be included in the 15 hours?

**Response:** Programs can be creative in their thoughtful design of the field experience. The related assignments, coursework and seminars should ensure that the candidate is focused on what will help ensure growth (academic, social, emotional) for students with disabilities. For example, candidates, with appropriate permission, may observe a Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting or interview a parent of a student with a disability. Faculty may ask candidates to observe and/or participate in team discussions, plan for co-teaching, review individualized education programs (IEPs) with personally identifiable information redacted, discuss with the CSE or individual members of the CSE the process for the development of the IEP, watch for differentiated and individualized instruction and many other teaching-related activities that have been carefully planned.

### **Changes to Students with Disabilities Certificate Structure**

Since the time the changes to the State certification requirements went into effect in 2004, the Department has analyzed data related to the supply and demand of special education teachers and the data has shown a persistent shortage of special education teachers with the appropriate certification to teach students with disabilities in grades 7-12. Although the number of students with disabilities is almost evenly split between the birth to grade 6 and grades 7 to 12 ranges, 80 percent of special educators are being prepared at the early childhood or childhood level and only 20 percent at the middle or secondary level. This shortage is exacerbated because the 20 percent for grades 7-12 are divided between the middle childhood level (5-9) and the secondary level (7-12) and further subdivided by academic disciplines. The need to ensure both a sufficient quantity and quality of special education teachers at the middle and secondary levels has led to recommendations to change the special education certification structure.

#### **Structural Changes**

The structure of students with disabilities certificates will continue to mirror the general education structure with the following two exceptions:

- the Students with Disabilities Middle Childhood certificates, both Generalist and Content Specialist, will be eliminated; and
- the Students with Disabilities 7-12 Content Specialist will be eliminated.

A new Students with Disabilities 7-12 Generalist certificate with the option for a content area extension will replace those titles being eliminated. For quick reference, below is a chart comparing the current structure with the new structure:

**Comparison of Current and New Students with Disabilities (SWD) Certificate Structures**

<b>Current SWD Certificate Structure</b>	<b>New SWD Certificate Structure</b>
Birth - Grade 2 (Early Childhood)	No Change
Grades 1-6 (Childhood)	No Change
Grades 5-9 Generalist and Content Specialists (Middle Childhood)	Eliminate for SWD series only
Grades 7-12 Content Specialists (Adolescence)	Grades 7-12 Generalist with interdisciplinary core 18 credit subject area extension available

Questions and Responses

**Question 8:** When will the Students with Disabilities 5-9 Generalist and Content Specialists and 7-12 Content Specialists be eliminated?

**Response:** After February 2, 2011, teacher education programs may no longer enroll students in the traditional Students with Disabilities 7-12 Content Specialist or 5-9 teacher preparation programs. Transitional B programs may continue to enroll their summer 2011 cohort in programs leading to the titles being eliminated. By February 2016, almost all candidates who entered programs leading to the certificates being phased out will have completed their programs.

**Question 9:** If our institution has a teacher education program that leads to one of the certificate titles being eliminated, what paperwork must the institution complete?

**Response:** The institution need not complete any paperwork. In time, the Department will provide notice to institutions that we will remove these programs from the Inventory of Registered Programs (IRP) at a future date. If the date is problematic for the institution, the Department will work with the institution to resolve any issues.

**Question 10:** If our institution has a teacher education program that leads to multiple certificates, including one of the certificates being eliminated (i.e., Adolescence English 7-12 and Students with Disabilities English 7-12), what paperwork must the institution complete?

**Response:** The Department will notify the institution when it removes the program from the IRP. The institution will need to decide whether they want the program to be eliminated or if they want to register a new program.

**Question 11:** If our institution wants to register a program that leads to one of the new students with disabilities certificates, what must the institution do?

**Response:** The institution must complete the program registration process. Please see [www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/aipr/register.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/aipr/register.html) for more information about the registration process. **Additionally, the Department is in the process of developing a template to help frame the design of a program leading to the new certificate.**

### **Students with Disabilities 7-12 Generalist**

This certificate title will replace the Students with Disabilities 5-9 and 7-12 Content Specialists and 5-9 Generalists. Beginning fall 2011, institutions of higher education may offer registered teacher education programs that lead to the Students with Disabilities 7-12 Generalist certificate. In addition to meeting the general requirements for the content core, which includes a major, concentration, or the equivalent in one or more of the liberal arts and sciences, the program must include six semester hours in each of the following subjects: math, science, English language arts and social studies to provide an academic foundation to prepare the candidate to teach to the State's learning standards and to teach in supportive roles such as consultant teachers, resource room service providers and integrated co-teachers. Programs must also ensure that the candidate has sufficient pedagogical skills to teach these subjects.

### Question and Responses

**Question 12:** As we design programs for the new certificate, are the six semester hours in math, science, English language arts and social studies above and beyond what is already counted as our liberal arts core?

**Response:** This depends on what the institution counts/allows as their liberal arts core. The six semester hours in each of the four subject areas are supposed to provide candidates with the content knowledge to prepare them to support adolescence level students with disabilities in meeting the learning standards. A 300 level Foundations in Math course is likely to provide the candidate with sufficient preparation to teach, in a supportive role, a student with a disability taking a general education math class that is taught by a certified math teacher. The institution also needs to ensure that the candidate has been provided with sufficient pedagogical knowledge to teach the subject area.

**Question 13:** If we want to offer a graduate level program that leads to this certificate, must the six credits in the four subjects be at the graduate level?

**Response:** **The six credits in each of the four subjects may be completed at the graduate and/or undergraduate level depending on the structure of the program.**

*Example:* an individual with a bachelor's degree in math enters a graduate program that prepares candidates for the SWD 7-12 Generalist certificate with an extension in Math 7-12. If that candidate enters with 33 undergraduate math credits, 6 English credits, 9 science credits, and 3 social studies credits, the program would be responsible for ensuring that the candidate completes an additional three credits in social studies prior to program completion. In addition, the program must ensure the candidate has the pedagogical knowledge to teach the four subject areas.

**Question 14:** What will special education teachers who hold this certificate be able to teach?

**Response:** At the grades 7-12 adolescence level, those holding this certificate will be prepared to teach in supportive roles, such as consultant teachers, resource room service providers and integrated co-teachers.

**Question 15:** Will institutions still be able to register programs that lead to adolescence level dual certificates (i.e., Adolescence Earth Science 7-12 and Students with Disabilities 7-12 Generalist with an Earth Science extension)?

**Response:** Yes, we encourage institutions to register such programs. Candidates that successfully complete such dual certificate programs will have the tools to teach all students in a range of environments and will have the appropriate content expertise to help ensure all students are meeting the learning standards.

### **Extension to the SWD Generalist**

The Students with Disabilities 7-12 Generalist will include the option of completing 18 credits in a specific subject area. This, coupled with passing the Content Specialty Test in the specific subject area, will allow candidates to earn an extension to the base certificate to permit the teacher to be employed as the special class teacher in that subject. This model will require weekly collaboration between the certified general education content specialist and the special educator, with at least one period per month co-taught by both teachers. The length of the required weekly collaboration and co-taught lesson will be defined at the local level.

## Questions and Responses

**Question 16:** What extensions will be available and who are the extension holders eligible to teach?

**Response:** The following will be available in 2011: Students with Disabilities - Earth Science (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Biology (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Chemistry (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Physics (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Social Studies (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Mathematics (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - English Language Arts (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Languages other than English-specified (grades 5-9); Students with Disabilities - Earth Science (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - Biology (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - Chemistry (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - Physics (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - Social Studies (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - Mathematics (grades 7-12); Students with Disabilities - English Language Arts (grades 7-12); and Students with Disabilities - Languages other than English-specified (grades 7-12). Teachers holding a students with disabilities certificate with content extension will be eligible to teach the content area to students with disabilities in a special class, with the required collaboration and co-teaching pursuant to Part 80-4.3(n) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. This certificate with extension does not permit such teachers to perform as the teacher of record for a general education content area class.

Questions may be directed to Lisa Luderman, Office of College and University Evaluation at (518) 474-1551 or via E-mail to the Office of College and University Evaluation at [ocuecal@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:ocuecal@mail.nysed.gov).