

New Program Proposal
Master of Arts in Teaching
Special Education with concentration in Visual Impairment Education
USC-Upstate

USC-Upstate requests approval to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Teaching (MAT) in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment Education to be implemented in Fall 2013. The proposed degree will be offered through a mix of traditional and hybrid instruction on the campuses of USC-Upstate and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind.

The Program Planning Summary was submitted to the Commission on August 15, 2009, and reviewed and voted upon favorably without substantive comment by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) at its October 8, 2009, meeting. The proposed program was approved by the University of South Carolina's Board of Trustees on June 29, 2012. The Commission received the program proposal on September 6, 2012.

According to the proposal, the purpose of the program is to provide the opportunity for individuals who are not currently certified teachers to enter the visual impairment teaching field. This proposed program will allow individuals with bachelor's degrees the ability to earn a master's degree and initial teacher certification in two years. The proposed program will target individuals who currently hold a bachelor's degree in the areas of rehabilitation, social work, and orientation and mobility. The proposal states there are 966 students with visual impairments served by South Carolina schools who need a certified teacher in the area of visual impairment. The 2011 CERRA Supply and Demand Report listed 41 positions in visual impairment in South Carolina in 2011-12 and there were no vacancies. The proposal indicates that data from the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (2012) shows there were 95 teachers currently serving students with visual impairments in South Carolina. Additional data from the SC School for the Deaf and Blind show that 48 full-time or part-time teachers are employed in 25 school districts, an increase of eight teachers over the past year. Additionally, the data shows that 45.8% of these teachers are either retired and working or are eligible to retire.

The proposal states no other public or private institution in South Carolina offers a Master of Arts degree in Teaching in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment Education. A posting on the South Carolina Department of Education website notes that "no South Carolina institution currently has a program that leads to initial or advanced certification in visual impairment. However, the educator preparation unit at the University of South Carolina-Upstate offers the courses necessary for appropriately certified educators to achieve certification in visual impairment through the "add-on" certification process." Regionally, North Carolina Central University and Florida State University offer a MAT in Visual Impairment program. USC-Upstate offers a M.Ed. degree in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment for certified teachers.

The institution anticipates enrolling six new students (6.5 FTE) in the program's first year, increasing to 10 students (8.3 FTE) in the second year, and increasing to 12 students (9.8 FTE) in the third through fifth years. The proposal states that all students entering the proposed program will be new students. If enrollment and program completion projections are met, the proposed program will meet the Commission's productivity standards. According to

the proposal, these estimates are based on the number of inquiries received in previous semesters and the number of students who have enrolled each year in the program leading to the M.Ed. degree in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment at USC-Upstate.

Candidates for admission to the proposed program must provide documentation of a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university, three letters of recommendation, and official test scores from either the Miller Analogies Test or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Individuals may need to meet additional requirements from the education unit such as specific undergraduate courses and 3.25 GPA on the initial 12 hours of USC-Upstate graduate coursework. The proposal states that students must obtain a passing score on all sections of the Praxis I exam within the first year of study at the institution and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA on all graduate coursework at USC-Upstate.

The 42-credit hour curriculum for the proposed program in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment Education will be composed of four components: a foundation core, a professional studies core, a visual impairment studies core, and directed teaching. According to the proposal, a minimum of three classes each year will be taught onsite at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind.

The proposed program's assessment plan consists of multiple benchmarks that are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Proposed student assessment tools are a case study, classroom observation tool, an action research project, and a teacher work sample. The assessment system requires each individual to obtain passing scores on the appropriate Praxis I, Praxis II Content Area Core exam, and the Principles of Learning and Teaching exam. According to the proposal, additional evaluation of the program will include graduate surveys, employer assessments, and the graduates who earn National Board Certification. Additional assessments are those required for national recognition in the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and accreditation in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Proposal materials included information required by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) for certification authority.

Faculty for the proposed program will be drawn from six members (1.75 FTE) of existing faculty currently teaching in the undergraduate and graduate Special Education programs. According to the proposal, one new terminally credentialed faculty member will be hired in the second year of the program to replace current adjunct faculty.

The proposal states that no new space or facilities are needed for the proposed program. The classrooms on campuses at USC-Upstate and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind are adequate for the first five years. The only anticipated equipment needed in the first five years will be ten braillewriters.

The holdings available for faculty and students in the USC-Upstate library include six full-text journals and a substantial collection of materials related to visual impairment and special education.

The proposed program will be subject to accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and national recognition by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Additionally, the proposed program must demonstrate to South Carolina State Department of

Education officials that discipline-specific objectives as articulated in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the South Carolina Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) program. Graduates must be certified by the South Carolina Department of Education, pass the appropriate Praxis II and Principles of Teaching and Learning examinations, and undergo an FBI background check.

Costs and sources of financing identified by the institution for the proposed program are shown below.

Estimated New Costs by Year						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Totals
Program Administration*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty Salaries	0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
Graduate Assistants	0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
Clerical/Support Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Materials (braillewriters)	\$9,000	0	\$4,500	0	0	\$13,500
Library Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$9,000	\$35,000	\$39,500	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$153,500

*There will be no new administrative costs for this program; it will be administered under the current USC Upstate School of Education Office of Graduate Programs. The only anticipated costs for the new program will be for faculty, graduate assistants, and braillewriters.

SOURCES OF FINANCING BY YEAR						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Totals
Tuition & Fees	\$73,320	\$93,060	\$109,980	\$109,980	\$109,980	\$496,320
Other State Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reallocation of Existing Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funding (specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	\$73,320	\$93,060	\$109,980	\$109,980	\$109,980	\$496,320

According to the information provided by the institution, the proposed program will be able to cover costs in the first year and thereafter.

In summary, USC-Upstate proposes to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Teaching in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment Education to be offered on the campus of USC-Upstate and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind. The proposed program will provide graduates with the skills necessary to be successful in teaching students in grades K-12 in the area of visual impairment and provide highly qualified and certified teachers in the state of South Carolina.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission the program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Teaching in Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment Education at USC-Upstate, to be implemented in Fall 2013, provided that 1) no “unique cost” or other special state funding be required or requested; 2) the program be approved by the South Carolina Department Education prior to implementation; and 3) the program seek appropriate national recognition for special education/visual impairment by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).