

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
EUGENE T. MOORE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, TEACHER EDUCATION**

**PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY**

**TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**TO OFFER A NEW DEGREE**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Date of Submission: February 15, 2014**

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**Classification:** College of Health, Education and Human Development, Eugene T. Moore School of Education, Teacher Education

**Name of Program:** Special Education

**Concentrations/Options/Tracks:** N/A

**Designation, type, and level of degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

**CIP Code:** 13.1001

**Implementation Date:** Fall 2015

**Number of Credit Hours:** 63

**Program Length (years):** 4 years

**Methodology (traditional, online, blended):** Traditional

**Site of delivery:** Clemson University Main Campus

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the proposed PhD in Special Education is to prepare scholars to be researchers, teacher educators, and leaders in the field of special education in order to address the needs of individuals with mild/moderate disabilities from high poverty and culturally diverse backgrounds.

### **Justification**

A critical shortage of special education faculty has existed for several years and is projected to continue with significant numbers of faculty expected to retire in the near future (Montrosse & Young, 2012; Smith, 2012). In addition, school populations have changed dramatically and the need for highly-qualified teachers who are able to address the unique needs of students with disabilities is extensive. However, teachers' ability to provide high quality instruction is inextricably linked to the quality of their teacher preparation programs (Robb et al., 2012). The shortage of highly qualified special education teachers is impacted by the shortage of highly qualified special education faculty (Robb et al., 2012). Over a decade ago Smith et al. (2001) reported that over a 20-year time frame the number of earned special education doctorates will decrease annually by 30%, resulting in a nationwide shortage of special education faculty. Furthermore, over 20% of teacher preparation faculties in special education are projected to retire each year across the next five years (Robb et al., 2012). In real numbers, they estimate that between 388 and 582 special education faculty members will retire by 2017.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) in SC, like much of the nation, have experienced vacancies in special education faculty positions. Over the last two years, the two largest IHEs (Clemson University and University of South Carolina) have hired 5 new faculty members in special education. Across the state last year, at least 4 special education faculty positions (Anderson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Southern Wesleyan University) have been advertised for which two of our doctoral candidates have been hired.

The Department of Teacher Education at Clemson currently offers a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and doctoral students may choose an emphasis in special education. We have had 10 doctoral students who have completed their degrees in C & I with special education emphasis over the last 4 years, with 100% of graduates employed in the field of special education.

Although the C & I degree has served our students well, future students who wish to complete a doctoral program in special education would benefit from a program tailored specifically for the needs of higher education special education faculty. Three primary benefits of the proposed PhD in special education are that the degree would: (a) would attract applicants from a broader geographic area beyond upstate South Carolina, (b) better position the program area with U.S. Department of Education and other sources for grant funding, and (c) allow the special education faculty to better individualize programs of study to meet doctoral students' needs and enhance graduates' marketability for positions in higher education and leadership positions.

Currently, only University of South Carolina offers the Ph.D. in special education in our state. The Ph.D. program in special education at USC focuses upon the preparation of teacher educators and special education administrators through an intensive course of advanced study. The needs across the state, region, and nation suggest that Clemson University also has a role to play in addressing faculty shortages and in preparing special education faculty. To address the demand for special education faculty who have the expertise to prepare teachers and to conduct rigorous research to address their unique needs, Clemson University proposes a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education.

### **Program Demand and Productivity**

We anticipate annual enrollment for the planned program to average 8 to 10 students per year beginning the first year of initiation and thereafter. Because the program is to be completed in four years, we expect approximately 5 graduates per year.

### **Employment Opportunities for Graduates**

Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared to seek employment as researchers and teacher educators within higher education, research scientists, special education administrators within school districts, and consultants in professional education. Across the nation, there are insufficient numbers of doctoral personnel to fill special education faculty positions in higher education.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Research and Methodology (15 hours)**

EDF 927 Quantitative Research Designs and Introduction to Statistics for Educational Contexts

EDF 977 Multiple Regression/General Linear Model in Educational Research

EDF 978 Multivariate Statistics for Educational Research

EDF 979 Qualitative Research Methods

EDSP 936 Single Subject Research Design

#### **Specialty (18 hours)**

EDSP 9XX Professional Writing in Special Education

EDSP 934 Evidence-Based Research in Instructional Design and Delivery

EDSP 935 Preparing Highly Qualified Special Educators: Research in Teacher Education  
EDSP 937 Research in High Incidence Disabilities  
ED 938 Grant Writing in Education and Related Fields  
EDSP 9XX Accountability and Assessment for Diverse Populations in High Needs Schools

**Choose at least one course from the following (a minimum of 3 hours)**

EDSP 931 Advanced Research in Learning Disabilities  
EDSP 932 Advanced Research in Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders  
EDSP 933 Advanced Research in Intellectual Disabilities

**Choose at least one course from the following (a minimum of 3 hours)**

EDSP 953 Legal Trends in Special Education  
EDF 920 Philosophy of Educational Research  
EDF 9710 Case Study and Ethnographic Research Methods and Design  
EDF 9720 Phenomenology and Grounded Theory Research Methods and Design  
EDF 9730 Narrative and Historical Research Methods and Design  
EDF 9750 Mixed Methods Research  
SOC 803 Survey Designs for Applied Social Research  
PSYCH 873 Structural Equation Modeling in Applied Psychology  
MTHSC 807 Applied Multivariate Analysis  
EDSP 9XX Meta-Analyses & Research Syntheses

**Teaching and Supervision Internship (6 hours)**

EDSP 980 Internship in Special Education

**EDSP 991 Dissertation (18 hours)**

**Program Objectives**

Graduates of the PhD in Special Education program will:

1. Develop, revise, and implement an effective personnel preparation program by focusing on identification and implementation of evidence-based practices and culturally-responsive teaching practices.
2. Develop, implement, analyze, and disseminate high-quality research related to the unique needs of students with disabilities and teachers in high-needs schools.
3. Design and implement research studies that meet high quality, research standards.
4. Provide high-quality, targeted professional development in academic and behavioral interventions for students with disabilities to teachers and leaders in high-needs schools.
5. Apply leadership skills in a variety of contexts (e.g., teaching in higher education, collaborating with school partners, involvement in professional organizations).

**Articulation and Inter-institutional Cooperation**

Currently, only University of South Carolina offers the Ph.D. in Special Education in our state. Clemson University special education faculty members have had, and continue to have, strong and positive relationships with special education faculty from USC. Faculty have collaborated on state-level grants (e.g. Project CREATE), state-level initiatives (e.g. State Improvement Grant, annual Research to Practice Conference), state and national presentations (e.g. Katsiyannis &

Yell; Marshall, Stecker, & Hodge), and refereed publications (e.g. Katsiyannis & Yell). The move to a PhD in special education should not negatively impact the candidates matriculating through the program at USC as Clemson has had individuals completing the PhD in C & I with emphasis in special education for many years.

**Estimate of Costs**

There is no cost associated with this proposed program as it has been an emphasis under the Curriculum and Instruction Doctoral program in the Teacher education, School of Education. A stand-alone doctorate in special education will enable the program to attract students at the regional and national level and be competitive in securing leadership training grants from the U.S. Department of Education. The proposed program builds on the existing specialty course work and utilizes foundational coursework from teacher education, psychology and statistics.