WHAT YOU MUST KNOW TO BECOME A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OFFERS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHING CREDENTIALS IN MILD/MODERATE DISABILITIES, MODERATE/SEVERE DISABILITIES, AND DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING
An Overview of the Credential Process

Step One: Getting Started

Welcome to National University’s Credential Program. In California, the credential process is regulated by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). This packet contains information that will provide you with a clear picture of the program and the requirements you need to meet to be eligible for a Special Education Teaching Credential.

1. The process begins with enrolling into a School of Education Credential Program and providing proof of a conferred bachelor’s degree with a minimum 2.5 GPA from a regionally accredited Institution of Higher Education (IHE). Candidates with a non-US bachelor’s degree must have their degree evaluated by a CTC-approved international agency before being admitted and starting the first course (see an Admissions Advisor).

Candidates enrolled in a Preliminary Level I Education Specialist concurrent with a Preliminary Multiple Subject or Single Subject Credential Program (Dual Program) will also need to complete an additional Request for Student Teaching Placement form (RP-2) for the regular education student teaching portion of the program. This form will indicate with what district you would like to complete your regular education student teaching and during which semester.

2. To ensure you are educated on key requirements you must attend a credential orientation within 30 days of enrollment. At this orientation you will complete a candidate statement and obtain a faculty signature for admission to the School of Education.

3. The first form you must complete is the Acknowledgement of Terms and Agreements for a Special Education Credential (SP-1). This document outlines your obligations and includes most of the procedural regulations related to your credential program. Carefully read and initial all items, sign the form, and return it to your National University Credential Advisor. The second form you must complete is the Request for Student Teaching Placement (SP-2). This document will allow you to request a school site and month to begin your student teaching. You will need to submit this form 60 days prior to the requested month. This form will prompt the placement specialist to contact you regarding the placement process. Be sure to keep copies, as you may wish to refer to them later.

Candidates applying to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing program must submit an application packet to the DHH Lead Faculty Advisor. This packet needs to include the following content:

- Application for admission to Education of the Deaf graduate program.
- CD or DVD portfolio of ASL fluency to include an introduction, narration of an ASL story, and narration of a selected work of children’s literature.
- Intermediate proficiency or better in American Sign Language.
- Personal and professional goals essay.

4. Next, you must begin to collect your documents. Under Step Two: Determining Eligibility you will find the list of documents you must provide in order to continue towards your Advanced Special Education coursework and to be considered for student teaching. You will not be able to move ahead until the University has all of the documents.

5. You must be fingerprinted or have current prints on file.

In order to participate in the field components of your coursework, as well as student teaching, you must have fingerprint clearance. If you hold an Emergency Substitute Permit, California credential, or a Certificate of Clearance, then you already have fingerprint clearance.

If you do not, the CTC requires that you obtain a Certificate of Clearance by completing a fingerprint process and filing your application for a Certificate of Clearance online directly with the CTC. In addition to the fee for the fingerprints, there is a $29.50 fee that must be paid with a valid credit card. The billing address submitted on the CTC website must match the billing address on the credit card used. Detailed information is available on the Certificate of Clearance Application Process form (RP-3).

6. Once you complete your Generic Core coursework, you will need to meet with your Credential Advisor to take the Generic Core Exam. In order to be eligible to take the Generic Core Exam and to enroll into the Advanced Special Education coursework you will need to show passing verification of Basic Skills Assessment and Subject Matter Competency.
Meeting Subject Matter Competency

Subject Matter Competency can be met in one of two ways:

1. Passing the required examination(s): CSET (multiple subject and/or single subject). You must submit original score reports to your Credential Advisor. Testing companies do not send individual score reports.

   Please be aware there may be more than one exam (subtest) required for the subject area in which a candidate is obtaining their credential. All appropriate examinations are required to be passed before student teaching. **Passing exam scores are valid for five years from the date that the test was taken.** If the five-year time limit expires before the completion of a teacher preparation program, the candidate must retake the current examination(s).

2. Completion of a CTC approved subject matter preparation program at a California college or university which demonstrates that subject matter equivalency has been met with appropriate coursework from the candidate's undergraduate degree.

   If a candidate completed an approved subject matter equivalency program it is his/her responsibility to contact the appropriate college for verification. This verification letter must be signed by a CTC authorized signer. National University accepts only full waivers if subject matter competency is met by coursework. National University does not evaluate transcripts from other universities for eligibility into one of the approved subject equivalency programs at National.
Step Two:

Determining Eligibility

Before beginning any part of student teaching, candidates must meet the following requirements:

- Verification of Basic Skills Assessment
- Verification of Subject Matter Competency
- Possession of fingerprint clearance
- Verification of a negative tuberculin (TB) examination taken within the last four years
- Completion of all credential coursework with a 3.0 GPA; “D” and “F” grades are not accepted
- Zero account balance
- Passing status on the Generic Core Exam
- Faculty interview
- Credential packet on file

In order to be eligible for student teaching placement you must meet all of the above requirements and have turned in all documentation to your Credential Advisor 60 days prior to the month you want to student teach. Please see your Credential Advisor for the specific deadline dates for student teaching in your region. Any documents turned in after these dates will be submitted for consideration; however, placement is not guaranteed.

Candidates enrolled in a Preliminary Level I Education Specialist concurrent with a Preliminary Multiple Subject or Single Subject Credential Program (Dual Program) are required to complete all coursework for both special education and regular education before becoming eligible for student teaching.

Step Three:

Student Teaching

Eligible candidates are required to successfully complete 45 days of supervised full-time student teaching. This must be conducted in a classroom where the majority of students are legally defined as having either Mild/ Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/ Severe Disabilities, or DHH as their primary disability (as dictated by the candidate’s credential program). These disabilities must be designated as the primary disabilities on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Disabilities not aligned with the candidate’s credential program will not qualify.

Candidates enrolled in a Preliminary Level I Education Specialist concurrent with a Preliminary Multiple Subject or Single Subject Credential Program (Dual Program) are required to complete an additional nine weeks of supervised full-time student teaching within the credential area.

Each semester, the Placement Specialists hold student teaching information meetings to inform candidates specifically about student teaching and placement procedures. These meetings are open to all credential candidates regardless of where they are in their program. It is strongly recommended that candidates attend so they can become familiar with student teaching policies.

Additional information regarding placement policies is located in the Special Education Student Teaching Handbook.

All student teachers are required to enroll into a student teaching seminar concurrently with student teaching courses. The Placement Specialists will enroll students into the appropriate courses.
Step Four:
Exiting

The following requirements are to be met before applying for your Preliminary Level I credential/certificate. Please take steps to complete these requirements throughout your program to ensure they are satisfied and turned in to your Credential Advisor before you wish to exit the program.

1. CPR in Adult, Child and Infant certification
2. Passing status on Exit Assessment
3. Verification of RICA
4. Verification of U.S. Constitution
5. Zero Account balance
6. 3.0 GPA with no “D” or “F” grades
7. Verification of Employment form, if a job has been secured
8. Passing status on e-portfolio (for regular education candidates)
9. Completion of Teaching Performance Assessments (TPA)

Candidates enrolled in a Preliminary Level I Education Specialist concurrent with a Preliminary Multiple Subject or Single Subject Credential Program (Dual Program) will be required to complete the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). This will be required for all Multiple and Single Subject credential candidates beginning their program on or after July 1, 2008 and is designed to assess candidates’ proficiency of the 13 Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs). Per CTC regulations, all four TPA tasks must be successfully passed before being recommended to the state for a preliminary credential.

To exit the program you will meet with your Credential Advisor who will verify that you satisfied all of the requirements for your Preliminary Level I credential by completing the credential exit checklist and collecting the Application for Credential form (CA-1).

The CTC will issue Certificates of Eligibility to California trained individuals who meet all the requirements for the Preliminary Level I credential but who cannot provide verification of employment in a specialist position. The Certificate will not have an expiration date. The Certificate verifies that the individual meets all the academic requirements to hold the Preliminary Level I Credential, but should not be used for employment purposes as it is not a credential. The Certificate does allow the individual to actively seek employment in the specialist position(s) listed on the certificate. Once employment is secured the Certificate of Eligibility will be converted to the Preliminary Level I Education Specialist Credential effective the date of employment. The application to convert the Certificate of Eligibility to the Preliminary level I credential can be filed directly with the Commission by the applicant and employing agency. It does not need to be filed through National University.

To exit the program you will meet with your Credential Advisor who will verify that you satisfied all of the requirements for your Preliminary Level I credential by completing the credential exit checklist and collecting the Application for Credential form (CA-1).

The paperwork you complete with your Credential Advisor will be sent to the National University Credential Processing Department which will review and, if applicable, submit your recommendation to the state. The CTC will send you a notice asking that you go online and pay the processing fee. Once the CTC has your payment, you will be notified in approximately 10 days about the granting of your Preliminary Credential. The University will receive notification of your status directly from the CTC. Please note this time frame varies depending on time of year and the number of applications received.

Your Preliminary Credential is valid for five years.

Congratulations!
You’re a Teacher!

The University of Values