



**Docket Item:**

University Program Approval: Portland State University, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)/Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Special Education.

**Summary:**

Portland State University proposes a new degree program leading to a B.A./B.S. in Special Education. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the program as proposed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following program: B.A./B.S. in Special Education at Portland State University.

**Portland State University seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission's approval to offer an instructional program leading to a BA/BS in Special Education.**

1. *Describe the purpose and relationship of the proposed program to the institution's mission and strategic plan.*

The Department of Special Education at Portland State University is dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities and the professionals who work with them in school and community settings. We offer a variety of degree, licensure, and certificate programs to students throughout the Portland metro region, state, and nation. At the graduate level, students can earn the MA or MS in Special Education, as well as the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership with a specialization in Special Education. MA/MS degree and licensure options include elementary and secondary special education, visually impaired learner, early intervention special education, and inclusive elementary educator (dual program in general and special education). Our existing and proposed degree programs align well with the campus Strategic Plan (PSU-SP) and Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework and are mapped to our department vision, mission and beliefs below:

Portland State University Strategic Plan (PSU-SP) <https://www.pdx.edu/strategic-plan>

1. Elevate Student Success
2. Advance Excellence in Teaching and Research
3. Extend Our Leadership in Community Engagement
4. Expand our Commitment to Equity
5. Innovate for Long-Term Sustainability

Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework (GSE-CF)

1. Diversity and Inclusiveness--Advocacy for Fairness and Respect
  - a. Candidates work effectively with diverse populations (1.1)
  - b. Candidates promote inclusive and therapeutic environments (1.2)
2. Research based Practices and Professional Standards--Professionalism
  - a. Candidates critically analyze and implement research-based practices (2.1)
  - b. Candidates demonstrate appropriate professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions (2.2)
3. Impact on Learning and Development--Commitment to Learning
  - a. Candidates ensure that all learners and clients succeed (3.1)
  - b. Candidates use technology to enhance learning and development (3.2)
  - c. Candidates influence policy and provide leadership for organizations (3.3)
4. Evidenced-Informed Decision Making--Reflection.
  - a. Candidates use evidence to address problems of practice and make informed educational and therapeutic decisions

### Vision Statement

The Special Education Department at Portland State University is dedicated to preparing and supporting professionals to improve the educational outcomes and quality of life for all learners.

### Mission Statement

To achieve our vision, the Special Education programs strive to increase the use of evidence-based practices by preparing exemplary educators, collaborating with schools, building community partnerships, and conducting and disseminating research

## 2. *What evidence of need does the institution have for the program?*

In Oregon, southwest Washington and the United States, there have been chronic shortages of special educators for decades. A 2016 report of national teacher shortages from the U.S. Office of Postsecondary Education Oregon reported a shortage of special educators annually from 1990 to 2016

(<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.pdf>). Graduates of PSU's Special Educator program are also employed in Washington State. Washington's Superintendent of Public Instruction conducted a survey in 2016 with human resource directors and principals who reported that retirements and increased pupil enrollment and other factors had made it "more" or "much more" challenging to fill positions in 2016 compared to 2015 (<http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/TeacherShortage.aspx>).

Another indicator of market demand is the need to fill vacant special educator positions with emergency-licensed unprepared individuals. In order to help school districts fill vacant special educators positions at the start of the school year, Oregon's Teaching Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) provides emergency and provisional licenses to unprepared individuals. More emergency and provisional licenses occur in special education than in any other teaching area

(<http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/researchteacher-shortage-final-report.pdf>).

Market demand for special educators is further substantiated by the employment rate of our graduates. Over the past 5-10 years the PSU Special Educator graduate program has prepared 35-45 special educators annually. Post-graduation employment is monitored by our faculty for grant-related reporting. Consistently, all graduates of the program who seek employment in the field of special education are hired as special educators.

### Survey of PSU Undergraduates Who Want to Become Special Educators

In May of 2017 we surveyed students attending undergraduate courses related to special education and received 15 responses. Seventy-eight percent were seniors and 21% were juniors and 100% of them said they would have been interested in an undergraduate degree and licensure special education program if it had been available

3. *Are there similar programs in the state? If so, how does the proposed program supplement, complement, or collaborate with those programs?*

According to the Oregon Teaching Standards and Practices Commission ([www.tspc.state.or.us](http://www.tspc.state.or.us)) ten universities and colleges in Oregon are approved to provide special education licensure programs in 2016-17. Only one of the ten, University of Portland, provides an endorsement (but not a degree) in special education at the undergraduate level. The Oregon Teaching Standards and Practices Commission that reviews and approves teacher preparation programs and licenses teachers has strongly encouraged the PSU Special Education Department to create and provide an undergraduate special educator licensure program. This need has been communicated to TSPC and to PSU from area school districts.

All appropriate University committees and the Statewide Provosts Council have approved the proposed program. The PSU Board of Trustees approved the program on May 31, 2018.

***Recommendation to the Commission***

The Statewide Provosts Council recommends that the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission authorize Portland State University to establish an instructional program leading to a BA/BS in Special Education, effective Fall 2018.

**Institution:** Portland State University

**Program:** B.A./B.S. in Special Education and Licensure Program

**Action:** At the June 5, 2018 meeting, the Statewide Provosts Council approved a new program for Portland State University, B.A./B.S. in Special Education and Licensure, to move forward to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission for its review and approval. The PSU Board of Trustees approved the program at its May 31, 2018 meeting.

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**Eastern Oregon University**

Sarah Witte, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Oregon Health & Science University**

Elena Andresen, interim provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Oregon State University**

Ed Feser, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Oregon Tech**

Gary Kuleck, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Portland State University**

Margaret Everett, interim provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Southern Oregon University**

Susan Walsh, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**University of Oregon**

Jayanth Banavar, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained



**Western Oregon University**

Steve Scheck, provost

Approved

Opposed

Abstained

