

# Program Level Learning Outcomes Assessment

## Annual Program Assessment Report UAS Special Education Programs Spring 2025

### 1. Program Overview

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) nationally recognized the special education programs at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) School of Education (SOE) in 2015. CEC SPA Recognition is coordinated with CAEP, currently and faculty submitted programs reports to CEC in March, 2025. The special education programs consist of four pathways: Master of Education (M.Ed.), Graduate Certificate (G.C.), Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.), and the Bachelor of Arts (BA). The M.Ed. and the G.C. (K-12) programs lead to the (PK) K-12 special education endorsement to those already holding an Alaska teaching certificate. The M.A.T. degree was initiated in 2012 to provide an alternative route to certification with the (PK) K-12 endorsement in special education for candidates who do not have a valid teaching certificate but who do have a baccalaureate degree. The BA. in special education, requested by Alaska's Department of Education and Early Learning (DEED) was initiated in 2012 and allows candidates to complete their baccalaureate degree, which includes coursework leading to certification with the (PK) K-12 endorsement in special education.

The special education programs are fully distance delivered and cater to non-traditional students. Courses are “stacked” which means that all programs are typically represented in the course roster for each course offering in a given semester. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP views the BA. and M.A.T. as initial certification programs. The M.Ed. and G.C. advanced programs house candidates who are certified general education teachers working in the field. The Council for Exceptional Children views all programs (M.Ed., G.C., BA., and M.A.T.) as initial certification programs unless the undergraduate degree is in special education, the program is considered advanced. This unique situation fosters opportunities for mentoring relationships among the candidates.

The special education program faculty support candidates who work in challenging situations in public schools. The programs are committed to inclusive practice, cultural safety, curricular equity, and social justice. All of the required core courses emphasize the development and implementation of culturally sustainable special education services in all Alaska communities and in particular the rural and remote Alaska Native villages. Faculty are student-centered in course delivery and in a similar manner, encourage candidates to develop universally designed, culturally sustaining, strength-based, individualized and trauma-informed classroom practices.

The importance of collaboration with families and the community, reflection on practice, and knowledge of the theoretical foundation of practice and instruction are central components to the special education programs at UAS.

## 2. Program Level Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

Performance Learning Objectives (CEC Standards)	Measures
1. Candidates practice within ethical and legal guidelines; advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity; and engage in ongoing self-reflection to design and implement professional learning activities.	STOT Practicum Observation Form (clinical placement observation form) IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Language and Literacy Intervention Project Portfolio PCA
2. Candidates use their understanding of human growth and development, the multiple influences on development, individual differences, diversity, including exceptionalities, and families and communities to plan and implement inclusive learning environments and experiences that provide individuals with exceptionalities high-quality learning experiences reflective of each individual's strengths and needs.	IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project Practicum Observation Form STOT
3. Candidates apply their understanding of the academic subject matter content of the general curriculum and specialized curricula to inform their programmatic and instructional decisions for learners with exceptionalities.	Practicum Observation Form STOT IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project
4. Candidates assess students' learning, behavior, and the classroom environment in order to evaluate and support classroom and school-based problem-solving systems of intervention and instruction. Candidates evaluate students to determine their strengths and needs, contribute to students' eligibility determination, communicate students' progress, inform short and long-term instructional planning, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction using technology as appropriate.	Practicum Observation Form STOT IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project

Performance Learning Objectives (CEC Standards)	Measures
5. Candidates use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs, and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates use explicit instructional strategies and employ strategies to promote active engagement and increased motivation to individualize instruction to support each individual. Candidates use whole group instruction, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individual instruction. Candidates teach individuals to use meta-/cognitive strategies to support and self-regulate learning.	STOT Practicum Observation Form IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project
6. Candidates create and contribute to safe, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities through the use of effective routines and procedures and use a range of preventive and responsive practices to support social, emotional and educational well-being. They follow ethical and legal guidelines and work collaboratively with families and other professionals to conduct behavioral assessments for intervention and program development.	STOT Practicum Observation Form IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project PCA
7. Candidates apply team processes and communication strategies to collaborate in a culturally responsive manner with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals within the school, other educational settings, and the community to plan programs and access services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.	STOT PCA Practicum Observation Form IEP Project Case Study, Transition Project Portfolio Language and Literacy Intervention Project

### 3. How the data is collected on the PLOs?

Small class sizes allow faculty to develop meaningful relationships with their teacher candidates in order to facilitate candidate success in the key competencies. Program faculty use a model of assessment often referred to as “mastery learning.” Typically, candidates who struggle are provided individualized support in identifying the areas that need attention and reconsideration. In this way, the candidates’ learning is supported throughout many of the courses in the program, providing faculty with more information relating to the candidates’ abilities to perform well as special educators, and to support students with exceptional learning needs. Every rubric for each key assessment is aligned with the competencies for the program (PLOs), which makes it possible to quickly identify areas where candidates need additional support. The PLOs listed above are reflected in the Synthesis of Learning Table below, which denotes the key assessment data collected in the programs.

### 4. The data collected on the PLOs during 2023/2024 academic year.

## Synthesis of Learning Table

Year	2023	2024
Key Assessment		
IEP	Met/Exceeds: 30 GC 3 MED 9 MAT 14 BA 4	Met/Exceeds: 28 GC 4 MED 2 MAT 16 BA 6
Case Study	Met/Exceeds: 21 GC 5 MED 4 MAT 9 BA 3	Met/Exceeds: 29 GC 5 MED 5 MAT 15 BA 4
Language and Literacy Intervention	Met/Exceeds: 8 GC 1 MED 2 MAT 4 BA 1	Met/Exceeds: 20 GC 3 MED 10 MAT 3 BA 4
Transition Plan	Met/Exceeds: 26 GC 3 MED 7 MAT 12 BA 4	Met/Exceeds: 30 GC 6 MED 4 MAT 13 BA 7
Clinical Placement Observation Form	Met/Target: 30 GC 5 MED 10 MAT 8 BA 7	Met/Target: 18 GC 3 MED 7 MAT 5 BA 3
Portfolio	Met/Target: 18 GC 5 MED 4 MAT 5 BA 4	Met/Target: 19 GC 3 MED 5 MAT 6 BA 5
PCA	Met/Exceeds: 11 MAT 7 BA 4	Met/Exceeds: 11 MAT 5 BA 6
STOT	Proficient 3 + and above	Proficient 3 + and above

	(86%, 2.5 emerging): 11 MAT 7 BA 4	11 MAT 5 BA 6
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## 5. An evaluation of the data collected.

The table presents summary data for candidates who are enrolled in each of the programs in a given annual year. Evaluation scores are based on criteria listed in the descriptive rubrics for each key assessment. Faculty review candidate progress on each key assessment following the completion of each course in order to make informed program changes where necessary. In preparation for the Council for Exceptional Children Report and for Council for the Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) Report the special education faculty completed interrater reliability evaluations of key assessments.

All candidates receive specific instruction prior to, and after the key assessment is administered in specific courses. Typically, candidates who have not met the criteria listed in each assessment rubric have the opportunity to resubmit assessments after receiving extensive feedback. For this reason, the data table submitted for most key assessments show that the majority of candidates have reached either the “met” or “exceeded” level for criteria in each key assessment.

During AY 23/24 candidates scored in the met/exceeded range across the key assessments in all categories, with the exception of the MAT students on the Student Teaching observation Tool (STOT) in 2023 (N=7). The tool is scored by University Supervisors at the midpoint and conclusion of the Student Teaching course. The summative assessment is used for data analysis purposes. Eighty six percent of the students scored in the “emerging category”. The emerging categories included responding appropriately to student behavior, demonstrating intellectual curiosity, and integrating culturally responsive teaching into their practice.

## 6. Conclusions and ideas for program improvement.

Many of our MAT students are serving as the teacher of record without any background in education. The criteria to observe demonstrating “intellectual curiosity” will be evaluated by faculty during our ongoing assessment review of interrater reliability in order to address the best way to provide training on the assessment instruments for program faculty and adjuncts. Faculty will work with our partners at SEALAKSA Heritage Institute and pursue professional development to enhance faculty skills in teaching culturally responsive practices. The special education faculty see the need, not only in our programs at UAS, but across the state to enhance the content our candidates receive in behavior management. Faculty are converting a special topic seminar course to focus on behavior. We are creating a Behavior Management Graduate Certificate (12 credits) to substantially improve the behavior management content our candidates receive in the programs at UAS. The courses will be open to all candidates in the UA system.