Preliminary Education Specialist Teaching Credential with an authorization in Mild to Moderate Disabilities

School of Leadership and Education Sciences

University of San Diego

2014 Exit Survey Results

This report was prepared by the USD-SOLES Office of Assessment on September 23, 2014.
Executive Summary

Exit Survey Overview

The School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) - Office of Assessment administers the Exit Survey to graduating and credential completing students at the University of San Diego (USD) annually. The Exit Survey affords students the opportunity to reflect on their program experiences and to provide valuable feedback utilized for program review. This report is specific to the results for the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential program with mild to moderate disabilities authorization for the years 2014, 2013, and 2012. Candidates also earned an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction or an MEd in Special Education. This program prepares candidates to work with students with mild to moderate disabilities. General survey items address candidates’ satisfaction with courses, faculty, advisors, intellectual climate, support services, and communication. Candidates are also provided with program specific survey items relating to enhanced abilities through coursework.

Rating Scale

Two different five-point rating scales were used in this survey. The goal is to have response ratings in the four to five range for each item, where 5 is Strongly Agree and 4 is Agree and 5 is Extremely Well and 4 is Fairly Well.

Response Rate

Table 1 shows the percent of candidates who responded to the Exit Survey for the last three years. One of the four candidates responded to the 2014 Exit Survey (25%), four of the nine candidates responded to the 2013 Exit Survey (44%), and three of the five candidates responded to the 2012 Exit Survey (60%). Because of the small sample sizes, data are analyzed for the combined number of respondents (8 out of 18), yielding a combined response rate of 44%.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Completion Years</th>
<th>Total Number of Preliminary Education Specialist Candidates *</th>
<th>Total Number of Preliminary Education Specialist Respondents</th>
<th>Exit Survey Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Refers to the number of graduates for which correct email addresses were obtained.
Summary of Findings

Candidates were asked to rate aspects of the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program in seven areas: faculty; advisors; intellectual climate; program support and communication; university support; enhanced ability through coursework; and the overall program. All of the combined 2012-2014 mean ratings were in the desired four to five range (using a 5 point scale). All Cronbach’s alpha values were in the .73 to .96 range, suggesting relatively high internal consistency of survey item responses. (Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in most social science research situations.) Figure 1 shows the combined mean ratings for 2014, 2013, and 2012. These ratings indicate high levels of student satisfaction with the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential program with mild to moderate disabilities authorization at the University of San Diego.

Figure 1. Combined 2014, 2013, 2012 Candidates' Exit Survey Ratings of the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Measures</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Faculty Rating</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Advisor Rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Intellectual Climate Rating</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Program Support and Communication Rating</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean University Support Rating</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating of Enhanced Ability Through Coursework</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Satisfaction of Overall Program</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program

When candidates were asked which factors were most important in their overall satisfaction with the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program, they cited flexible, knowledgeable, and reliable faculty and advisors; the international experience; coursework; and small student to teacher ratios as contributing to their overall satisfaction. A sample of candidates’ comments regarding overall satisfaction is shown in Table 2 and in Table A8 in the Appendix of the full report.

Suggestions for Improving the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program

When candidates were asked for suggestions for improving the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program, they listed: offer a writing course prior to Action Research, share availability of part-time positions for students, add a student teaching seminar course, and increase the Special Education observation hours. A sample of candidates’ comments is shown in Table 3 and in Table A9 in the Appendix of the full report.

Fulfillment of Program Mission

Exit survey data from candidates serve as evidence of program goal fulfillment.

- Emphasize to candidates the connection between theory and practice, weaving together university-based coursework and thoughtfully designed field experiences.
- Provide candidates with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to flourish in their own classrooms, as well as the critical habits of mind and reflective practice that will allow them to grow as educators throughout their careers.
- Expose candidates to the values, concepts and themes needed to become ethical, civic-minded and committed leaders in their chosen fields.
Table 2

*Sample of Candidates’ Comments Relating to Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program*

Small student to teacher ratios.

The administrators and professors. Extremely flexible, knowledgeable, and reliable. These professionals treated me with respect. I truly felt like a professional.

The assigned advisors were the most beneficial. They were very knowledgeable and helpful to my success.

I really enjoyed the classes and the requirement for the international experience.

Table 3

*Sample of Candidates’ Suggestions for Improving the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Program*

Prepare students for writing their Action Research before the last semester. I would create a writing course because none of us knew how to write in the manner we were expected to write in.

Although the economy is tight, it would be nice to be knowledgeable about possible opportunities for part time work for students.

More communication with the Special Education Program and more observation hours specifically in Special Education and not in General Education.