



# SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

*An Alternate Pathway to a Career in Education*



LUZERNE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

## **Special Education Teacher Certification with an Instructional I Certificate Accelerated Program**

**Academic Year Handbook 2023-2024**

**Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18  
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## **Vision Statement**

The Luzerne Intermediate Unit endeavors to focus our internal and external leadership, guidance and support resources to ensure the provision of meaningful and purposeful education-related programs and services to our educational clients, community stakeholders and business partners.

## **Mission Statement**

The Luzerne Intermediate Unit strives to increase each student's individual potential in the most appropriate environment by implementing a model of collaboration and resource allocation that responds to the needs of the community.

## **Mission Statement specific to Special Education program**

The mission of the LIU 18 special education teacher pathway to PDE certification is to offer a high-quality program which combines expert mentorship, real-world classroom experience, and collaboration among all stakeholders in order to allow candidates to reach their fullest potential as educators.

## **Rationale for the Special Education Program**

The Special Education Teacher Certification Program at Luzerne Intermediate Unit allows highly qualified individuals with a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, who do not currently possess their Instructional I certificate, to obtain their teaching credentials. Participants will develop skills and techniques that are indicative of best practices in the field of Special Education. The comprehensive program provides opportunities for teacher interns to develop teaching knowledge, skills, and professional ethics through field experiences and a rigorous sequence of professional educator courses.

## **Admission**

- To be eligible for admission to the program all applicants must possess:
- A BA or BS from an accredited university or college with an overall GPA of 3.0.
- Have completed 6 undergraduate credits in mathematics, 3 credits in English composition, and 3 credits in English Literature.
- All state required clearances

## **Academic Probation**

If your GPA is below a 3.0 in your BA or BS, you can be granted admission under our academic probation policy. This policy states that you must receive an A in your first two courses taken towards our program to remain in the program.

Applicants will submit the following required paperwork along with their application:

- Act 151 Clearance
- Act 34 Clearance
- PDE-6004
- TB Test
- Act 114 (Federal Criminal History Check)
- Act 186
- ACT 126 (instructions will follow once you are admitted to the program)
- 3 Letters of Reference
- An essay that answers the question: “Why do you want to become an educator in the area of special education?”
- An updated Resume

After a review of transcripts for entrance criteria and previous experience, and an interview, applicants will be admitted into the program.

## **Academic Integrity**

All assignments must be turned in on time, unless previously discussed with the instructor. All grades for late assignments will be reduced. If you receive a grade below a “C”, you will need to retake the course. All materials submitted must be referenced using APA style or be solely created by the candidate. Students should be proactively aware that when writing papers for this course, they should avoid plagiarizing a source’s ideas or words without rephrasing the content into their own words. Using the words and ideas of another source without clearly stating where the information was taken from falls under academic dishonesty. Be sure to give credit where it is due by giving the original author credit by citing the source within the

content of the paper when applicable, as well as providing a work cited page at the end of each paper. When using direct statements or quotations of a source or even providing close paraphrasing, the source must be referenced. When using direct quotations, quotation marks are required along with the author's last name, year, and page number of the source. If multiple sentences are taken from a source, blocked indentation is required. Please refer to the APA guidelines for writing requirements.

### **Attendance**

Attendance for all classes is required. A missing class will result in an automatic reduction of a full letter grade. This will continue for each subsequent absence. Being late to class three times will be the same as one unexcused absence. Absences for scheduled doctor's appointments are not considered excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to arrange with the instructor any work to be made up due to the absence.

### **Clearances**

Updated clearances must be provided every year you are in the program. If you are arrested or convicted of a crime, you must notify your advisor and complete a new PDE-6004 form. You have 3 days to report the change.

### **Professional Conduct Policy**

Professional conduct includes interactions with peers, faculty and field experience personnel, timely completion of assigned tasks and responsibilities, and adherence to policies regarding academic integrity. Professional conduct means behaving in words and actions as a teacher. This includes being supportive of each other, focusing class time on the material being discussed, and being open to new ways of learning material. The authority to teach in Pennsylvania schools is a privilege bestowed on those of you who have completed an accredited teacher education program and who maintain a professional reputation at all times. This reputation is defined in the Code of Conduct for educators. Professional educators in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania believe that the quality of their services directly influences the nation and its citizens. Professional educators recognize that their primary responsibility is to the student and the development of the student's potential. Central to that development is valuing the worth and dignity of every person, student and colleague alike, with a devotion to excellence; development of knowledge; and democratic

principles. As you become a professional educator, you will be expected to abide by this code. Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators can be found at 22 Pa. Code §§ 235.1 - 235.11.

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

As a mandated reporter, your required training provided you with guidelines for action if you suspect a student may be the victim of neglect or abuse. If you suspect that a report to ChildLine is necessary, you are obligated to do so on your own. The ChildLine number to call is 1-800-932-0313. In addition, you may communicate your concerns to your mentor teacher or advisor.

### **Private Interactions**

Student teachers and student observers should always meet with students in a visible, public location—even for one-on-one tutoring, conferencing, or interviewing. Special care must be taken to ensure that the mentor teacher is aware of all of your interactions with students. You may not transport students in your own vehicle. Likewise, you should not meet with parents or students at non-school locations without your mentor teacher being present.

### **Concerns About Student Behavior**

The student teacher/student observers should report any instances of inappropriate student behavior immediately. Any incident where a student discloses any information regarding abuse or inappropriate advances to the student teacher/student observer must be reported to the mentor teacher immediately. Any incident where a student discusses self harm or harm to another student must be reported to the mentor teacher immediately. If the mentor teacher is unavailable, another individual (guidance counselor or principal) must be notified before the student is allowed to leave the school building. Please notify your advisor of the situation as well.

### **GPA Requirement**

Pennsylvania Department of Education and LIU18 requires students to have an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 and successfully pass the required Praxis exams to be eligible to student teach and seek certification.

### **Use of Cell Phones, Social Media and Technology**

Cell phone/Social Media use is prohibited during class instruction and field experience. This includes, but is not limited to, making and receiving phone calls, text messages, audio and video recording, and accessing email and the internet. All cell phones should be silenced as not to interrupt class. Students are encouraged to use computers and other instructional technologies for educational purposes whenever possible, but only if approved by the instructor, mentor teacher or cooperating teacher. Students are never to use school computers to access email or the internet for personal use. Students are cautioned when utilizing social media for personal purposes. Platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat should never reference or show any students or any aspect of field experience or student teaching. Further, these platforms should not be used to make commentary related to the district, LIU organization or classrooms. Students are also cautioned about how they portray themselves individually on such platforms. While working in the local school, candidates are considered professionals and should appear as such in all posts. Please be aware that many employers review social media prior to hiring individuals.

**LIU Certification Program Required Courses**  
 (10 Core, 7 Special Education Methods Courses)  
 50 credits plus 12 for student teaching  
 7 weeks for each course

Course Title	Credits	Completed
<b>Education Core</b>		
Educational Psychology 530	2	
Assessment 517	4	
Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction (Pre-Req. Educational Psychology) 511 <i>Requires 10 Observation Hours</i>	3	
Instructional Planning (Pre-Req. Intro to Curriculum and Assessment) 512 <i>Requires 10 Observation Hours</i>	3	
ELLs in the Special Education Classroom 506	2	
Literacy Foundations and Instruction 521	3	
Mathematics Instruction 523	3	
Home, School, and Community Relations 531	3	
<b>Special Education Methods</b>		
Introduction to Special Education (Parts I and II) 501/502 <i>Requires 20 Observation Hours Per Part</i>	6	
Special Education Law	3	

502		
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with High Incidence Disabilities 515	4	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities (online) 516	4	
Emotional Disturbance 504	2	
Autism 505	2	
Early Intervention 513	3	
Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support 514	3	
Assessment 517	4	
<b>Internship</b>		
Student Teaching 400	12	

**\*All core courses must be satisfied before taking any methods courses**

**Exit Criteria:**

- Successful completion (3.0 or better) of all courses
- Pass required state required exams
- Submit Graduation Audit

**Praxis Tests Required:**

Since the program is approved for Pennsylvania Certification in Special Education (PK-12) testing requirements are dictated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

For current information visit PDE's Website:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/CertTestingRequirements/Pages/default.aspx>



You can also visit ETS for more information on PA Certification testing:  
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa/requirements/>

## Candidate Monitoring Form

Activity	Date	Signature of Facilitator
Entrance Interview		
1st semester Advisor Meeting		
2nd semester Advisor Meeting		
3rd semester Advisor Meeting		
4th semester Advisor Meeting		
Informal Observation (1)		
Informal Observation (2)		
Formal Observation (1)		
Formal Observation (2)		
Portfolio Review/Exit Interview		

## Advisors Course Audit Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title	Credits	Completed
<b>Education Core</b>		
Educational Psychology 530	2	
Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction (Pre-Req. Educational Psychology) 511 <i>Requires</i>	3	
Instructional Planning (Pre-Req. Intro to Curriculum and Assessment) 512 <i>Requires 10 Observation Hours</i>	3	
ELLs in the Special Education Classroom 506	2	
Literacy Foundations and Instruction 521	3	
Mathematics Instruction 523	3	
Home, School, and Community Relations 531	3	
<b>Special Education Methods Block</b>		
Course Title	Credits	Completed
Introduction to Special Education (Parts I and II) 501/502	6	

Requires 20 Observation Hours Per Part		
Special Education Law 503	3	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with High Incidence Disabilities 515	4	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities (online) 516	4	
Emotional Disturbance 504	2	
Autism 505	2	
Early Intervention 513	3	
<b>Internship</b>		
Student Teaching 400	12	

## **Field Experiences**

As part of the special education certification program, you will be required to perform observations in special education classrooms. Not all courses will require observation hours.

### **Student Requirements**

- Updated clearances (no older than 1 year, unless you are already a Guest Teacher in the district you will be observing)
- Written permission from the school principal
- Observation log signed by the mentor teacher(s) of the class observation(s) was completed in (see attached log)
- Two page reflection of each observation per course (see attached rubric)

### **Required Observations**

10 Hours (5 of these should be spent working with a small group of children) hours in a rural setting (Tunkhannock, Lake Lehman, Crestwood, Northeast, Dallas)

10 Hours (5 of these should be spent working with a small group of children) hours in a suburban setting (Pittston, Wyoming Area, Hanover Area, Greater Nanticoke)

10 Hours (5 of these should be spent working with a small group of children) hours in an urban setting (Hazleton, Wyoming Valley West, Wilkes Barre Area)

\*All observations must include varied grade levels and content areas.

### Sample Field Experience Observation Log

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Date</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Teacher Signature</u>

# Observation Hours Log

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Hours:

Date(s)	Time/Hours	Description of Task <small>(Do not include any identifying information about students and/or teachers)</small>	Course Objectives Met
		Task:  Analysis:	
		Task:  Analysis:	
		Task:  Analysis:	
		Task:  Analysis:	

(You may use as many papers as you need)

## Professional Code of Conduct Requirements

- Understand and adhere to professional educator codes of conduct.
- Appreciate the need for, and maintain, student, family, and staff confidentiality.
- Acquire and maintain appropriate clearances.
- Understand and adhere to policies and procedures of the specific institution.
- Advocate for high-quality, student-centered teaching practices using appropriate supervisory channels, including requirements related to mandated reporter status.

## Reflection Grading Rubric

	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Teacher Signature</b>	Teacher signature for each observation	Teacher signature for each observation	Teacher signature for most observations
<b>Observation Placement</b>	Observation conducted in a special education classroom	Observation conducted in at least one special education classroom	Observation not conducted in a special education classroom
<b>Content</b>	Demonstrates a thorough self-reflective analysis including a summary of the activities observed supported by specific details.  Draws conclusions and makes connections to their own future classroom.	Demonstrates reflective analysis including a summary of the activities observed supported by specific details.  Draws conclusions and makes connections to their own future classroom.	Lacks development and self-reflection.  Does not include a summary of the activities or does not include sufficient details.  Does not make a connection to their own future classroom.
<b>Conventions</b>	Uses articulate and appropriate language, sophisticated word choice, and sentence structure.  0-1 errors	Uses articulate and appropriate language, sophisticated word choice, and sentence structure.  2-3 errors	Uses articulate and appropriate language, sophisticated word choice, and sentence structure.  4 or more errors

# Graduation Audit

COMPLETED BY CANDIDATE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

PPID \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Admission to Program \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Approval \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETED BY AUDITOR

(Verified via transcript)

Course Title	Credits	Completed
<b>Education Core</b>		
Educational Psychology 530	2	
Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction (Pre-Req. Educational Psychology) 511 <i>Requires</i>	3	
Instructional Planning (Pre-Req. Intro to Curriculum and Assessment) 512 <i>Requires 10 Observation Hours</i>	3	
ELLs in the Special Education Classroom 506	2	
Literacy Foundations and Instruction 521	3	
Mathematics Instruction 523	3	
Home, School, and Community Relations (Face to Face) 531	3	
<b>Special Education Methods Block</b>		
Course Title	Credits	Completed
Introduction to Special Education (Parts I and II) 501/502 <i>Requires 10 Observation Hours Per Part</i>	6	



Special Education Law 503	3	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with High Incidence Disabilities 515	4	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities (online) 516	4	
Emotional Disturbance 504	2	
Autism 505	2	
Early Intervention 513	3	
<b>Internship</b>		
Student Teaching 400	12	

Monitoring of progress log    YES    NO  
Praxis Score report            YES    NO  
GPA 3.0 or higher                YES    NO  
Employment Seminar            YES    NO

Approval granted                YES    NO

Auditor signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_