



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 2026-2027

Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18

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Vision Statement

The Luzerne Intermediate Unit strives to allocate our leadership, guidance, and support resources effectively internally and externally. We aim to deliver meaningful and purposeful educational programs and services to our academic 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 community's needs.

Mission Statement specific to the Special Education program

The mission of the LIU 18 special education teacher pathway to PDE certification is to offer a high-quality program that combines expert mentorship, real-world classroom experience, and collaboration among all stakeholders 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 still need to possess their Instructional I certificate to obtain their teaching credentials. Participants will develop skills and techniques indicative of best practices in 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.
- All state-required clearances

Academic Probation

If your GPA is below 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 (Must be less than 4 months old)
- Act 114 (Federal Criminal History Check)
- ACT 126 (instructions will follow once you are admitted to the program)
- 2 Letters of Reference

Participants receiving a grade lower than a “C” in a class must retake the course.

Academic Integrity (from academicintegrity.org: [link](#))

The International Center for Academic Integrity (2014) defines academic integrity using six fundamental values inherent in our program, “honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. By embracing these fundamental values, instructors [and] students...create effective scholarly communities where integrity is a touchstone.” The Pennsylvania Department of Education borrows from the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (2023) by explaining that all educators engaged in scholarly work take “responsibility and credit only for work actually performed or produced, and acknowledging the work and contributions made by others.” With these tenets in mind, instructors in this program reserve the right to question the authenticity of any text, audio, or video a student submits to ensure academic integrity. Here are some guidelines all students must follow to ensure academic honesty is maintained.

All materials submitted that the student did not author must be referenced using a style determined by the course instructor to ensure appropriate attribution is made. We agree that submitted content is enhanced when connected to other scholarly sources. However, plagiarizing a source's ideas or words is not permitted. When another source is used either directly or rephrasing the content in your own words, it is the student's responsibility to clearly state where the information was retrieved. Failure to do so constitutes academic dishonesty. To give proper credit, cite the original author(s) within the work submitted by you. The source must be referenced when using direct statements or quotations from a source, or even close paraphrasing. The following is a rule to keep in mind when considering citing a used source of information. Direct quotations require quotation marks along with the author's last name, year, and page number of the source. For multiple sentences taken from a source, blocked indentation is required.

We encourage the use of technological tools to enhance your learning experience, but it is crucial to use them ethically and responsibly. Content submitted in any capacity that has been generated or enhanced by technology, including artificial intelligence platforms, must be appropriately referenced and cited as directed by your instructor. Additionally, you must ensure that content generated by an artificial intelligence source is factually accurate, includes use of references to source material, and reflects your understanding and analysis of course content.

The Brown University Library (2024) provides some guidelines students can follow when using artificial intelligence to enhance their submitted work. These include:

- Citation or acknowledgment of the outputs of generative AI tools when used in your work.
- Do not use sources cited by artificial intelligence tools without reading those sources yourself.
- When in doubt, remember that we cite sources for two primary purposes: first, to give credit to the author or creator; and second, to help others locate the sources you used in your research.

You should always check with your instructor before using AI for coursework.

Academic integrity includes the concept of fairness. This includes appropriate treatment of staff deadlines, your time, and the program's integrity. In this regard, it is at the discretion of your instructor to manage submitted content turned in after an established due date. Meaning, assignments must be turned in on time unless previously discussed and approved by the instructor. Your instructor can then make a decision that promotes the academic rigor of the course and respects the conditions that lead to a late assignment submission. This can include the provision of a minimum grade, a grade reduction, and/or an extended due date

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. The students are responsible for arranging with the instructor any work to be made up due to absences.

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. It also 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 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 a professional educator, you must 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 guidelines for action if you suspect a student may be the victim of neglect or abuse. If you suspect a report to ChildLine is necessary, you must do so alone. 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

Teachers and 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 inappropriate student behavior immediately. Any incident where a student discloses 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 can leave the school building. Please notify your advisor of the situation as well.

GPA Requirement

Pennsylvania Department of Education and LIU18 require 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 recordings, and accessing email and the internet. All cell phones should be silenced so 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 aspects of field experience or student teaching. Further,

these platforms should not be used to comment on 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 in all posts. Please be aware that many employers review social media before hiring individuals.

LIU Certification Program Required Courses

39 credits plus 12 for student teaching

7 weeks for each course

Course Title	Credits	Completed
Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction 511	3	
Instructional Planning 512	3	
ELLs in the Special Education Classroom 506	3	
Literacy Foundations 521	3	
Mathematics Instruction 523	3	
Home, School, and Community Relations 531	3	
Introduction to Special Education 501	3	
Special Ed Law 503	3	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with High Incidence Disabilities 515	3	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities 516	3	

Early Intervention 513	3	
Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support 514	3	
Assessment 517	3	
Internship		
Student Teaching 400	6/12	

***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:

Six weeks of student teaching is required for those who currently hold an Instructional I certificate, while twelve weeks is required for those who do not.

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

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		
Informal Observation (1)		
Informal Observation (2)		
Formal Observation (1)		
Formal Observation (2)		
Portfolio Review/Exit Interview		

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 the 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

	Distinguished	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Teacher Signature	Teacher signature for each observation	Teacher signature for each observation	Teacher signature for most observations
Observation Placement	Observation conducted in a special education classroom	Observation conducted in at least one special education classroom	Observation not conducted in a special education classroom
Content	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.
Conventions	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

Course Title	Credits	Completed
Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction 511	3	
Instructional Planning 512	3	
ELLs in the Special Education Classroom 506	3	
Assessment 517	3	
Literacy Foundations and Instruction 521	3	
Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support 514	3	
Mathematics Instruction 523	3	
Home, School, and Community Relations 531	3	
Introduction to Special Education 501	3	
Special Education Law 503	3	

Curriculum and Instruction for Students with High Incidence Disabilities 515	3	
Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities 516	3	
Early Intervention 513	3	
Student Teaching 400	12	

Monitoring of progress log YES NO
Praxis Score report YES NO
GPA 3.0 or higher YES NO
Student Teaching Paid YES NO

Approval granted YES NO

Auditor signature _____ Date _____