EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION, M.A.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership (TEEL) is to prepare students to become Empowered Professionals Making a Difference. Programs are designed to provide students with Knowledge, opportunities to take Action, and Leadership skills in order to produce graduates who are Decision Makers, Problem Solvers, Critical Thinkers, Lifelong Learners, Counselor/Mentors, and Ethical Moral Professionals.

Content
1.1 Continuously analyze exceptional student education instructional programs based on approved standards using exceptional students' performance to design instruction. (FEAPS 1a, 3j)
1.2 Analyze and apply exceptional student education current methods and instructional practices essential to the subject area. (FEAPS 1a, 1b, 1c, 2g)
1.3 Interpret, analyze, and evaluate professional research in the area of exceptional student education to identify relevant evidence-based practices to increase exceptional student achievement. (FEAPS 1c, 2g, 3b)
1.4 Monitor and report the success of exceptional education students in the learning environment, evaluate performance, and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process. (FEAPS 1d, 1e, 2c, 2h, 3i, 4b)

Critical Thinking
2.1 Contrast and compare current literature related to problem solving and critical thinking and design instruction that will enable exceptional education students to improve their creative thinking abilities. (FEAPS 5b, 5e)
2.2 Analyze and apply assessment data from multiple sources to determine exceptional education students’ learning needs, identify instructional changes, and monitor student progress. (FEAPS 4a, 4c, 4d)
2.3 Plan effective learning experiences employing critical thinking, problem solving, and high-order questioning techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous improvement of students with special needs. (FEAPS 1f, 3f, 5a, 5d)

Communication
3.1 Produce accurate and effective written and oral communications integrating innovative technologies. (FEAPS 2e, 2g)
3.2 Support exceptional education student learning and continuous improvement through the reporting of student assessment data to student and parent/caregiver. (FEAPS 4e, 5c)
Integrity/Values

4.1 Analyze ethical behavior in educational settings using Florida Department of Education's Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession. (FEAPS 6a)

4.2 Act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner identifying statutory grounds and procedures for disciplinary action, the penalties that can be imposed by the Educational Practices Commission, and the appeals process available to the individual. (FEAPS 6a, 6b)

4.3 Develop self-reflection practices regarding research based performance and feedback to demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement in effective goal setting. (FEAPS 5d)

Diversity Skills

6.1 Create educational climates that foster openness, inquiry and concern for others. (FEAPS 2c, 2d, 2f, 2h)

6.2 Demonstrate exceptional education student advocacy by seeking information about students’ culture, home environments and backgrounds. (FEAPS 2d, 2h, 3e, 3h)

6.3 Collaborate with home, school, and larger communities to design instruction meeting the needs of exceptional education students and acknowledging preconceptions and misconceptions. (FEAPS 2h, 3d, 3h, 5c)

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

From the beginning of their studies, master’s degree students develop content knowledge, engage in critical thinking activities, communicate with their classmates and professors both orally and in writing, engage in self-reflection, enhance their professional behaviors, learn to manage increasingly complex projects, and refine their interactions related to diverse populations. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they develop culminate in the action research capstone experience. Thus, this experience becomes the primary assessment tool in identifying success with the Student Learning Outcomes. Students work individually or in small groups to identify an education problem; research that problem in the current literature; design a study; collect and analyze data related to the design; and then report the findings. The experience is considered successful if the student is able to produce a project acceptable to his faculty mentor who is teaching the action research course.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) are based on the legislatively mandated Florida Department of Education 2010 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPS) and the Professional Education Unit’s Conceptual Framework. The FEAPS are grouped into UWF’s domains and are broken into the smaller Student Learning Outcomes seen in the Academic Learning Compacts and the Academic Learning Plans. The SLOs are integrated into individual course activities, “critical tasks”, and are assessed through common rubrics. Progress on the SLOs, FEAPS, and Conceptual Framework Outcomes are monitored through Tk20 Comprehensive Assessment and Reporting System. Collective data are used to track individual student’s achievement of the SLOs, FEAPs, and Conceptual Framework Outcomes. Student data are checked at two points in the candidate’s program, benchmark and mastery of a particular outcome. These data are aggregated and used in programmatic continuous improvement to affect policy, initial broad curricular changes as needed, and to modify individual course activities and assessments.
Job Prospects for Graduates with the M.A. in Exceptional Student Education

Florida, the 4th largest school system in the nation, is comprised of over 4,000 public schools situated in 67 public school districts. With a current annual enrollment of almost three million students, Florida continues to have a tremendous need for highly qualified teachers, including a critical need in the areas of mathematics, science, reading, technology, and exceptional student education. The Exceptional Student Education, M.A. is designed to enhance the professional skills and knowledge of special educators in the classroom as well as to help them advance their careers in agencies and private settings.

Find out more about M.A. in Exceptional Student Education at UWF:

http://uwf.edu/ceps/academic-programs/graduate-degrees/