POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
M.Ed. in Special Education

This document is designed to give additional information beyond the policies and procedures outlined in the University of Southern Mississippi’s Graduate Bulletin. M.Ed. Advanced Candidates should refer to both the Bulletin and this document for guidance. If you have additional questions, please contact your academic advisor.

Contents

PROGRAM OVERVIEW ........................................................................................................................................ 2
M.Ed. with Initial Teaching Licensure – Mild/Moderate Disabilities K12 (#221).................. 2
M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Mild/Moderate Disabilities K12 (#221)............ 3
M.Ed. with Special Subject Five Year Educator License – Emotional Disability (#206)...... 4
M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Severe Disabilities K12 (#222)......................... 5
M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Gifted Education K12 (#205)........................... 6
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS...................................................................................................................... 7
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS ............................................................................................................................. 9
PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT ......................................................................................................... 9
PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS .............................................................................................................................. 10
ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE .......................................................................................................................... 10
WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION ............................................................................................. 10
COMPREHENSIVE PORTFOLIO .................................................................................................................... 12
Tk20 .............................................................................................................................................................. 12
Portfolio Procedures ................................................................................................................................ 12
LICENSURE ........................................................................................................................................................... 14
PROGRAM OVERVIEW
The M.Ed. in Special Education is a 33 hour post-baccalaureate program designed primarily for those interested in teaching exceptional individuals. Those entering the program without a current, valid teaching license may be required to fulfill additional pre-requisites, course requirements, or other requirements as determined by the admission committee, academic advisor, graduate coordinator, and/or department chair. Advanced Candidates seeking to attain initial teaching licensure or add additional areas of licensure to their current teaching licensure should discuss requirements with their academic advisor. The following tables show the most common tracks M.Ed. Advanced Candidates follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.Ed. with Initial Teaching Licensure – Mild/Moderate Disabilities K12 (#221)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission to the USM Graduate School</td>
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<tr>
<td>An ACT composite score of 21 or higher, with no scale score below 18; or an SAT of 860 (verbal plus quantitative); or acceptable score on the Praxis CORE test (see <a href="http://www.ets.org/praxis/ms/requirements">http://www.ets.org/praxis/ms/requirements</a>);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earned bachelor’s degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.75</td>
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<td>Grade of “C” or better in freshman English composition</td>
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<td>Clear background check via the system selected by the Southern Miss Professional Education Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plan of Study:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-requisites: SPE 400 or 500 - Education &amp; Psychology of Exceptional Individuals or its equivalent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.Ed. in Special Education with Mild/Moderate Elective Area</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Practicum Requirement:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SPE 634 (with an additional practicum placement and supervision fee)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Assessment Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination Questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Comprehensive Portfolio addressing all standards in the CEC Common Core as well as those in the General Curriculum within their comprehensive portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Licensure Eligibility:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 5-Year Educator License #221 (Mild/Moderate Disabilities K-12)</td>
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</table>
**M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Mild/Moderate Disabilities K12 (#221)**

**M.Ed. Advanced Candidates** entering the M.Ed. program with a current, valid teaching license in an area **outside of special education** (i.e., elementary education, secondary education, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Requirements:</th>
<th>Current, valid teaching license in ANY area.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admission to the USM Graduate School</td>
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</table>

**Plan of Study:** M.Ed. in Special Education with Mild/Moderate Elective Area

**Practicum Requirement:**
- **SPE 680:** Advanced Candidates currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with mild/moderate disabilities. This may be done in a general education classroom setting provided the Advanced Candidate is providing instruction to students with mild/moderate disability rulings (i.e., learning disability, mild mental retardation, etc.).
- **SPE 634:** Advanced Candidates not currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with mild/moderate disabilities. These Advanced Candidates will be placed and monitored by a university supervisor. There will be a practicum placement and supervision fee.

**Program Assessment Requirements:**
- M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination Questions.
- M.Ed. Comprehensive Portfolio addressing all standards in the CEC Common Core as well as those in the General Curriculum within their comprehensive portfolio.

**Licensure Eligibility:** MS Supplemental Endorsement #221 (Mild/Moderate Disabilities K-12)
### M.Ed. with Special Subject Five Year Educator License – Emotional Disability (#206)

**M.Ed. Advanced Candidates** entering the M.Ed. program with a current, valid teaching license in **mild/moderate disabilities (#221, #223, or #224).**

| Entry Requirements: | Current, valid teaching license in mild/moderate disabilities*.  
Admission to the USM Graduate School |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan of Study:</td>
<td>M.Ed. in Special Education with Emotional/Behavior Disorders Elective Area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Practicum Requirement: | SPE 680: Advanced Candidates currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with emotional/behavior disorders. This may be done in a general or special education classroom setting provided the Advanced Candidate is providing instruction to students with an EmD ruling.  
SPE 654: Advanced Candidates not currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with emotional/behavior disorders. These Advanced Candidates will be placed and monitored by a university supervisor. There will be a practicum placement and supervision fee. |
| Program Assessment Requirements: | M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination Questions.  
M.Ed. Comprehensive Portfolio addressing selected standards in the CEC Common Core as well as those in the E/BD area. |
| Licensure Eligibility: | MS Special Subject Five Year Educator License – Emotional Disability (#206) |

* Advanced Candidates without a mild/moderate disabilities license may be admitted to the program upon submission of a signed statement indicating they understand they must submit proof of a mild/moderate license before USM will submit an institutional verification form to the M.Ed. for the EmD/206 license.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Severe Disabilities K12 (#222)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M.Ed. Advanced Candidates entering the M.Ed. program with a current, valid teaching license in mild/moderate disabilities (#221 only).</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current, valid teaching license in mild/moderate disabilities (#221).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admission to the USM Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan of Study:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. in Special Education with Severe/Low Incidence Disabilities Elective Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practicum Requirement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPE 680: Advanced Candidates currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with severe/low incidence disabilities. These are typically students classified as having a “significant cognitive disability”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPE 644: Advanced Candidates not currently employed in teaching situations in which they can log at least 350 contact hours with students with severe/low incidence disabilities. These Advanced Candidates will be placed and monitored by a university supervisor. There will be a practicum placement and supervision fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Assessment Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination Questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Candidates in the Severe/Low Incidence Disabilities elective area must address selected standards in the CEC Common Core as well as those in the Independence Curriculum area within their comprehensive portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Licensure Eligibility:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Supplemental Endorsement #222 (Severe Disabilities K-12)</td>
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</table>

*Advanced Candidates without a mild/moderate disabilities license may be admitted to the program upon submission of a signed statement indicating they understand they must submit proof of a mild/moderate license before USM will submit an institutional verification form to the M.Ed. for the Severe Disabilities/222 license.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>M.Ed. with Supplemental Endorsement in Gifted Education K12 (#205)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Advanced Candidates entering the M.Ed. program with a current, valid teaching license in any area (i.e., elementary education, secondary education, special education, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission to the USM Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan of Study:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. in Special Education with Gifted Education Elective Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practicum Requirement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPE 664 (two sections, 6 hours): Advanced Candidates must complete two practicum experiences through the programs offered by the Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies. These programs are offered on Saturdays during the spring semester or during designated weeks during the summer semester. You must apply to the Karnes Center at least one semester prior to taking your practicum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Assessment Requirements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination Questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Comprehensive Portfolio addressing all standards in the CEC Common Core as well as those in Gifted Education within their comprehensive portfolio.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Licensure Eligibility:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Supplemental Endorsement #205 (Gifted Education K-12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

It is strongly recommended that Advanced Candidates complete the application process as early as possible. In order to be assured that there is adequate time for all documents to be reviewed by the admissions committee, it is requested that all required documents be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the beginning of the beginning of the semester you wish to begin coursework. If documents are submitted after this time, Advanced Candidates may choose to enroll in courses with non-degree seeking admission status. Please note that non-degree Advanced Candidates are not eligible for financial aid.

Step One: Complete an application and submit all required documents.

1. Completed online application form. Applications are available at www.usm.edu/graduatestudies then click “Apply Here”.

2. Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended (including community colleges).

3. Official reports of test scores. Acceptable scores for admission to the M.Ed. programs in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education are the GRE, the MAT, or the Praxis II (PLT and Specialty Area scores). If your scores have not been sent to USM, please request these as soon as possible, as this can take some time:
   a. GRE: 1-888-GRE-SCORE or www.ets.org (select GRE under “Tests”, then click “Order Additional Score Reports”)
   b. MAT: www.milleranalogies.com, click “Request a Transcript” for the request forms.
   c. Praxis II: 1-800-772-9476 or www.ets.org (select the Praxis under “Tests”, click “Get Test Scores”)

4. Three letters of recommendation.

5. Application fee: All applicants must submit a $35 non-refundable fee for each program to which you apply. You may pay by credit card.

6. A brief letter of intent (approximately 2 pages) stating your professional experience and goals, your reasons for pursuing this degree, and how attainment of this degree would help meet those goals.

7. A copy of your professional vita (resume).

8. A copy of all current teaching licenses.

9. An analytic writing sample (Required for Advanced Candidates using the Praxis II as their entrance exam requirement. Those submitting GRE or MAT scores are not required to provide a writing sample). This writing sample is designed to provide the
DIRECTIONS: Present your perspective on the statement below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. You do not need to include references or citations, as your essay is purely your current perspective. You must write 750-1000 words (which is about 3-4 pages double spaced), and your perspective should be written in Standard English.

"The study of an academic discipline alters the way we perceive the world. After studying the discipline, we see the same world as before, but with different eyes."

Step Two: Apply for Financial Aid and Scholarships

1. Complete the Federal Financial Aid Application. Please note that applications are applicable to an academic year (which begins in the fall semester). Priority dates for applications are March 15 (prior to the fall semester). Therefore, if you are entering during the spring or summer semester, you will need to contact Financial Aid and ask how to apply for the current academic year. Personnel in the academic departments cannot assist you with this. Please contact Southern Miss Financial Aid Office at 601.266.4774 or via e-mail at financial.aid@usm.edu.

2. Please note that master's level Advanced Candidates in certain fields may be eligible for the TEACH grant. There is no application for this grant, rather it will be listed on your award letter from the Federal Financial Aid Application. If you are interested in the TEACH grant, and this award isn't listed on your award letter, please contact financial aid. Please review all information on the TEACH grant at http://www.usm.edu/financialaid/TEACHGrant_info.php.

3. Departmental scholarships may be available for qualifying Advanced Candidates. Applications are typically due in early April. For more information go to www.usm.edu/cise/scholarships.

4. Scholarships in gifted education are available for graduate students enrolled in full-time study during the summer semesters. These $500 scholarships are funded by the Frances A. Karnes Endowed Scholarship and the Christopher J. Karnes Gifted Education Memorial Fund. To apply, please call 601.266.5236 or e-mail gifted.studies@usm.edu.

Step Three: Apply for Disability Accommodations (if applicable)

If an applicant has a disability that qualifies under the ADA and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (preferably as soon as accepted for admission) for information regarding Southern Miss policies and procedures: voice (601) 266-5024; Tel (601) 266-6837; fax (601) 266-6035.
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The M.Ed. in Special Education is a minimum of 33 hours. Advanced Candidates in the M.Ed. in Special Education must adhere to all university requirements as given in the Graduate Bulletin (http://www.usm.edu/registrar/graduate-bulletins). There may be additional program requirements for individual Advanced Candidates as determined by the admissions committee. These additional requirements will be shared with the Advanced Candidate upon admission.

In addition of successful completion of all required coursework with a minimum GPA of 3.0 with no grade below “C”, Advanced Candidates must complete two end-of-program assessments: the M.Ed. Written Comprehensive Examination and the M.Ed. Comprehensive Portfolio. These assessments are described later in the Program Assessments section.

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT

If you currently teach students with rulings in the mild/moderate, severe/low incidence disabilities, or emotional/behavior disorders content area and/or can log at least 350 contact hours with this population through your current employment, you may enroll in SPE 680 for your practicum experience. If not, you will require a placement with this population and must enroll in either SPE 634 (mild/moderate disabilities), SPE 644 (severe disabilities), or SPE 654 (emotional/behavior disorders). Please note that these courses have an internship fee. All gifted education content area students must enroll in SPE 644 for the practicum/internship requirement. There is no internship fee for SPE 664 or SPE 680.

If you require a practicum/internship placement, you must notify your major professor and academic advisor the semester before you wish to complete your practicum. There will be application materials to submit, including proof of a clear background check, by October 15th for Spring placements and by February 15th for Fall placements. There are no summer placements for internships.
PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

Advanced Candidates working towards the M.Ed. in Special Education must complete two major assessments prior to graduation: 1) written responses to comprehensive examination questions; and 2) a comprehensive portfolio. These products must be based on the Advanced Candidate’s content area (generalist, mild/moderate disabilities, severe/low incidence disabilities, emotional/behavior disorders, or gifted education). Collectively, these products are designed to represent the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the M.Ed. Advanced Candidates.

These guidelines are provided to M.Ed. Advanced Candidates to provide an overview of the assessment process embedded into your degree program. You are strongly encouraged to discuss these guidelines with your academic advisor as well as with your major professor very early in your program. The most successful Advanced Candidates begin organizing their responses during their first semesters in the program.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

At the beginning of each academic year, the Graduate Faculty in Special Education determine the Assessment Committee for each program area (mild/moderate disabilities, severe/low incidence disabilities, emotional/behavior disorders, or gifted education). In accordance with U.S.M. Graduate School policy, committee chairs at the master’s level must have level 2 or 3 regular graduate faculty status, and have content expertise in the Advanced Candidate’s content area. The Assessment Committee includes at least two faculty reviewers, with the addition of a third reviewer in the event there is disagreement in faculty ratings. The Assessment Committee is the same for both the Written Comprehensive Examination and the Comprehensive Portfolio.

WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

All M.Ed. Advanced Candidates are required to submit extensive written responses to four examination questions (see Appendix A). The written comprehensive examination has been identified by the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education as the required comprehensive examination required by the Graduate School. Written comprehensive examinations are typically due at mid-term. Please confirm the due date with your major professor and/or academic advisor.

When Advanced Candidates submit the M.Ed. written examination questions, these will be scored by the committee described earlier and results will be reported to the Graduate School. Advanced Candidates who fail to pass the written comprehensive examination will be notified in writing by the department along with steps to remediate weaknesses in the responses. This Advanced Candidate will then use the comprehensive portfolio as his/her second attempt (and final attempt) to meet the comprehensive examination requirement of the Graduate School. In accordance with the policies described in the Graduate Bulletin, a Advanced Candidates will only be given two opportunities to pass the comprehensive examination.
The written examination is based upon a case study of a student in his/her content area (mild/moderate disabilities, emotional/behavior disorders, severe/low incidence disabilities, or gifted). Advanced Candidates compose the responses on their own time and are encouraged to research tools to compose their answers. All responses must be supported by the professional literature, and the Advanced Candidates must cite sources using A.P.A. format.

**Academic Integrity in Responses** - Advanced Candidates must take great care to ensure their written responses are well thought out, supported by the professional literature, and are original. Responses with unacceptable levels of unoriginal content will automatically receive a failing score. If it is determined that the response violates the university’s plagiarism policy, the university’s procedures will be followed. Written responses will be submitted using Turnitin, a platform designed to detect and report the percentage of a paper that is original content. Advanced Candidates may use Turnitin to check their responses prior to submission in order to ensure their responses are appropriate. Advanced Candidates are encouraged to review the university’s plagiarism tutorial (http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php) as well as Turnitin’s white paper on the plagiarism spectrum (see Appendix B).

**Scoring of the Written Responses** – Written responses are scored by committee members using a standard rubric. Responses are scored on a scale of 1 – 4, with an average score of 3 or higher required to pass.

- **Content:** Each question is scored on a scale of 1-4 as to how it meets the aligned CEC competency listed on the scoring rubric. The reviewer scores each competency, then an average for each question is tabulated.

- **Research/Practice Support:** The written responses are next assigned an overall rating based on the extent to which the Advanced Candidates supported those responses using the professional literature and practice. Professional practice examples include federal and state policies or procedures (which are cited appropriately), position statements or practice guidelines of professional organizations (which are cited appropriately), or other such materials.

- **Comprehensiveness and Organization:** Next, responses are rated on their comprehensiveness and organization. It is possible for a response to be supported by research/practice, yet not cover all elements relevant to the response. Advanced Candidates should ensure that each response to each question addresses ALL components of the question in a thorough manner.

- **Mechanics and Effectiveness of Expression:** Finally, the Advanced Candidate’s ability to express him/herself effectively using standard English is assessed.

**Criteria for Passing the Written Examination** – In order to pass the written examination, the Advanced Candidate must have a rating of 3 or higher from each faculty reviewer on each question. Additionally, the Advanced Candidate must have a rating of 2 or higher on each area included on the Writing Rubric.
Please note that some professors may assign the written examination questions as a requirement in the practicum course. When the examination is also counted as a course assignment, the Advanced Candidate should verify with the professor whether or not the submission will count as the written examination to meet the M.Ed. Comprehensive Examination requirement, or simply for formative feedback prior to this assessment. The Advanced Candidate should also remember that any grade assigned (passing or otherwise) for a course assignment should not be equated with passing or failing the M.Ed. Written Examination requirement, as different scoring criteria may be used (i.e., different grading scale, only one reviewer, etc.).

**COMPREHENSIVE PORTFOLIO**

The comprehensive portfolio serves as the second assessment of M.Ed. Advanced Candidate’s knowledge, skills and dispositions as a special educator. M.Ed. Advanced Candidates entering the M.Ed. in Special Education with a prior degree in Special Education from a NCATE-CEC accredited program and/or who have existing licensure in mild/moderate disabilities will only need to demonstrate those skill competencies for the standard areas for the new licensure area that they wish to add to their teaching license, as they have already demonstrated competency in the CEC Common Core through these requirements.

M.Ed. Advanced Candidates who did not complete an initial NCATE-CEC accredited program in Special Education will need to demonstrate knowledge and skill in the CEC Common Core as well as those areas competencies for all standard areas for the program area corresponding to their degree program. Please confirm with your major professor which standards must be addressed in your portfolio.

**Tk20**

M.Ed. in Special Education Advanced Candidates are required to use TK20 for their program assessments. TK20 is the university-adopted online assessment platform. It is an online support system created for the collection and evaluation of performance data and for overall management of academic activities at your institution. The conceptual framework, artifacts, portfolio formats, transition points, cooperating schools, and various forms in the system are all unique to our program. The system contains extensive functionality for messaging, coursework, artifacts, portfolios, document rooms, surveys, and advisement.

Advanced Candidates must subscribe to Tk20 either by purchasing a Student Access Kit from Barnes & Noble at Southern Miss or through the link on this page. Activation usually takes 2-3 business days. After securing a Student Access Kit, Advanced Candidates may log in at [https://usm.tk20.com/](https://usm.tk20.com/)

**Portfolio Procedures:**

1. The M.Ed. Advanced Candidate is to develop an electronic portfolio using the Tk20 system.
2. The portfolio must provide evidence of how the M.Ed. Advanced Candidate can successfully perform the skills across the CEC standards in their program area (i.e., independence curriculum, general curriculum, gifted and talented, or emotional disorders). Evidence may be projects from his/her program course of study, and may be text documents, presentations, and/or videos of his/her behavior in the classroom with his/her students. In addition, the M.Ed. Advanced Candidate must provide a reflection for each item in their portfolio on how they believe the item is related to the particular skill standard for which they are using it as evidence. It is possible that an evidence item may be used to demonstrative successful performance on more than one skill standard. In this case the reflection should describe how the evidence is related to that particular skill standard.

3. M.Ed. Advanced Candidates must be enrolled in course work at the University of Southern Mississippi during the semester they complete their portfolio and have it evaluated. If an M.Ed. Advanced Candidates has completed all program requirements prior to completing the portfolio they may enroll for 1 credit hour of SPE 797: Independent Study.

4. Portfolios are due in Tk20 by the due date specified in Tk20 which is typically **no later than** two weeks prior to the beginning of exam week. This is a firm deadline, there will be no extensions given. If the portfolio is not fully uploaded and submitted by 5 p.m. on this date, the Advanced Candidates will need to defer graduation until the next semester.

5. Members of Assessment Committee will have two weeks in which to grade the M.Ed. Advanced Candidate’s portfolio. Please note that results will not be disseminated until all results are compiled for all Advanced Candidates.

6. The M.Ed. Advanced Candidate must receive a rating of three or higher on each standard from at least two members of the Assessment Committee in order to successfully pass each M.Ed. portfolio standard. M.Ed. Advanced Candidates may resubmit portfolio entries for any standard area(s) in which they did not receive a 3 or higher.

7. Once the Assessment Committee submits evaluations, the committee chair will notify either the Chair of the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, or the graduate coordinator of programs in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, that the M.Ed. Advanced Candidates has either passed or failed the portfolio.

8. The Chair of the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, or the graduate coordinator in the Department of
Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at The University of Southern Mississippi, will notify the University that the M.Ed. Advanced Candidate has successfully completed the portfolio requirement.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The comprehensive portfolio is a requirement for the practicum course for M.Ed. Advanced Candidates [SPE 634, 644, 654, 664 (2nd experience), or 680 depending on your plan of study]. Even if your instructor does not use the portfolio as a whole as a grade in the course, failure to complete the portfolio will result in a grade of E/"ongoing" until it is successfully completed. M.Ed. Advanced Candidates must complete the portfolio before a final grade will be issued. Many Advanced Candidates choose to continue to work on the portfolio until their last semester in their plan of study. Please be sure that your major professor and academic advisor are both aware of when you will submit your portfolio.

**LICENSURE**

Please note that licensure is only granted by the state’s licensing agency (i.e., the Mississippi Department of Education). While USM has approved programs for meeting licensure, there are times when licensure requirements change. In this instance, we will attempt to inform you of these changes as soon as we are aware of them. The MDE maintains the final authority to approve or disapprove licensure applications.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
APPENDIX A:

M.Ed. in Special Education Written Comprehensive Exam Questions

Directions:
Please respond to each question based on your area of exceptionality study.
You must include professional references for answers. References must be embedded throughout answers.

Question One:
Describe the referral to placement process. Using a case study of an Hispanic or African-American student, identify the affective, psychomotor, and cognitive characteristics. Describe the procedures used to conduct a comprehensive assessment with both formal and informal assessment procedures. Provide examples of different types of both formal and informal assessment, purpose and limitations of each assessment tool, and explain how the information obtained from each assessment tool is best used. Include in your response the right and responsibilities of students, parent, teacher, and other professionals and schools related to exceptional leaning needs, therefore justifying the placement of the student.

Question Two:
Based on the learner selected in question one in your exceptionality area, explain how his/her development, language, social, affective, psychomotor, and cognitive characteristics would differ from other students and the impact that difference has on his/her learning and life. Based on those differences, plan a responsive learning environment (addressing a scope and sequence of curriculum) geared to meeting individual learner needs. Include models and theories for increasing the student’s self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem and cultural appreciation. Take into consideration the need for collaboration in instructional planning with families, other educators, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, and other agency personnel.

Question Three:
Give some specific instructional interventions for the learner selected in question one and modification to his/her learning environment (including strategies for management of the teaching and learning in the classroom where this student is included). Also, make suggestions for technology use and appropriate support services for the learner selected in question one addressing:
- Enhancing assessment performance
- Inclusion in various settings
- The advantages and limitations of specific instructional strategies and practices for teaching
- Sources of specialized materials, curricula, and resources
- Methods for increasing accuracy and proficiency in curriculum content areas

Question Four:
Describe the role of families as related to their child’s education and suggest potential parent education programs related to academic, language and social behavior. Discuss the interplay between the family culture and language, the culture biases of the teacher and the resulting educational programming.
APPENDIX B:

Turnitin White Paper on Plagiarism