Bachelor of Special Education

Program Review 2017

A report of the review panel

Spring 2017

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Introduction

Special education has a long and distinguished history in our Province, which began with an initial certificate program in 1976, and extended to a Bachelors degree (BSpEd) in 1979. During the ensuing years the degree has attracted a consistent number of students each year with an equally consistent number of graduates. While the overall structure of the degree (a 12-course, post-degree program with a combination of required and elective courses including a practicum) has remained relatively unchanged, the courses themselves have continuously evolved. Likewise, models of program delivery have also changed from courses being offered exclusively on-campus, to correspondence, and now to online learning environments, with limited requirements for students to be on campus. In many ways, the degree has stayed relevant because of this continuous process of adaptation and evolution. Two formal reviews (1996 & 2003) guided changes to the degree and resulted in more learning experiences in special education at the graduate level.

Changes to both education and to the discipline of special education have occurred in our Province in recent years. Newfoundland and Labrador has witnessed a sharp decline in student enrollment from 106,205 students in 1996 to 66,800 students in 2016. Paralleling this trend has been the consolidation of school districts to two, namely: the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) and Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF). There has also been a population shift away from rural areas, leaving rural schools struggling to survive and relying increasingly on multi-grade and on-line learning in high schools. In 2016, more than 72 schools have multi-grade classrooms, and with population decline, that number is expected to increase. In 2016, 66 schools in the province have less than 10 Kinderstart students registered for September 2017. At the same time, schools on the eastern Avalon are facing overcrowding. The Province launched full-day Kindergarten (September 2016) and a Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes is underway. Economic downturns have resulted in educational funding/program cuts and a streamlining of resources. The number of full-time equivalent teaching units fell from 7,101 to 5,379 during the last 20 years. In 1996, the province had 994 special education teachers, while in 2015/16 there were 778 with the more recent title, Instructional Resource Teacher (IRT).

Amidst this period of change in the delivery of education in Newfoundland and Labrador came equally dramatic shifts in the discipline of special education, moving from a medical model of diagnostic/prescriptive individualized teaching and supports to inclusive learning environments. Concepts such as Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Response to Intervention inform the practice of the classroom teacher, the lead educator for all students, regardless of individualized need; the IRT becomes a support to them through a co-teaching

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1 All education statistics cited in this report were provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, unless otherwise indicated.
model. Collaborative planning within a common learning environment, at times multi-grade, now characterizes contemporary classrooms in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2016, the regular classroom teacher requires increased training in meeting the needs of students with exceptionalities.

The release of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), in 2013 offered what is considered in the field as a radically new articulation of some areas of disabilities. This is especially so in the areas of learning disabilities, autism and behavioral challenges, which comprise a significant number of the students receiving special education supports. Improvements to maternal and infant health have resulted in decreases in cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, spina bifida, sensory impairments, etc., which were once dominant areas of special education during the 1970s and 1980s. Given changing definitional criteria and a shift away from a categorical model, comparison of the numbers of students receiving individualized supports is difficult. The 2007 report Focusing on Students identified that approximately 20% of the student population in our provinces was receiving supports. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development reports this number has decreased slightly in 2015/16 to approximately 16.4%. However, early indicators for 2016/17 show a dramatic increase in students with Specific Learning Disability occurring. In 2016/2017 it is expected that the total number of students with at least one exceptionality will increase to over 20%. Holistically, autism, learning disabilities, speech/language and behavioral challenges are the dominant areas of exceptionalities.

Meanwhile, changes have occurred within the Faculty of Education to initial teacher preparation degrees. The current post-degree Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary), Bachelor of Education Conjoint with Diploma in Technology Education, and Bachelor of Education (Primary/Elementary) as a second degree either brings graduates close to, or at, 6th grade teacher certification and the associated pay scale. For prospective candidates who already hold level 6th grade certification, there is no financial incentive to complete the Bachelor of Special Education degree. The Report of Admissions (October 2016, Faculty Council) documents a steady decline in the applicants to initial teacher training programs for each of the last 5 years, as well as a decline in the academic standing of applicants. Table 1 documents enrollment trends between 2006 and 2016. This trend is creating a less academically competitive pool from which to draw applicants. Collectively, these factors will have consequences for the existing Special Education program, in terms of interest in the degree, the number of applicants and their academic caliber.

In many ways, 2017 presents a different student base within a changing discipline and school system, against a whole new paradigm of diversity. A comprehensive review of the Bachelor of Special Education degree was warranted.
Table 1: Admission trends in initial teacher preparation programs at MUN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate/Secondary</td>
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<td>84</td>
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<td>Tech Ed. Conjoint</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
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</table>

**Mandate of current review**

In early 2016, the special education program faculty group requested the Dean of Education to approve a review committee to conduct:
- a comprehensive self-review of the current BSpEd degree;
- a review of the opportunities in graduate studies within the faculty for special education; and
- an exploration of the aspirations of BSpEd students and graduates for continuing education opportunities.

The Dean appointed a committee with a mandate to consult broadly to realize these three goals. The committee consisted of the three faculty members within the program, two faculty members external to the program, and one senior staff member. A final report was initially scheduled for the end of 2016. However, valuable consultations on the design of the survey by stakeholders delayed the launch and data was not available until January 2017. The final report was completed in Spring 2017.

**Methodology**

The review committee decided on a mixed methods approach to collect data. University ethics was consulted and the committee was cleared to conduct the study as proposed.

A series of consultations and roundtable interviews were held with key stakeholders, including the NLTA, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, NLESD, CSPNL, the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Autism Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Registrar of Teacher Certification.

A graduate assistant completed an environmental scan of special education teacher preparation programs in a representative sample of 16 other Canadian universities. The intention was to compare Memorial’s program and course structure with other leading Canadian universities.
An online survey was developed with broad input from members and stakeholders. The survey was made available in October 2016 and remained open until late November, 2016. Individuals who had been accepted into the B. Sp. Ed. were invited to complete the survey regardless of whether or not they had completed the degree, or were still active in the teaching profession. The intention was to explore perspectives on the degree and its courses, the professional needs of educators in meeting the needs of exceptional students, and their further educational goals. The Faculty's webpage contained a link to the survey and it was emailed directly to students listed as active on the degree. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the NLESD and the NLTA also distributed the survey to educators. In total, 310 respondents completed the survey and the committee, with the assistance of Dr. Gerry White (Research Computing Specialist), analyzed the results.

Following analysis of the data an additional round table with all of the key stakeholders consulted during the initial phase was held to present and discuss the emergent themes and discuss possible recommendations. The committee then drafted the final recommendations for submission as the final report.

**Current Bachelor of Special Education**

The special education program group has been diligent in updating the program to respond to the changes in the discipline and field. Today, 11 of the 20 courses are available on-line through the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL). The program group meets regularly, reviews courses, and presents calendar changes for approval of Faculty Council each year as necessary. There are six required courses (Education 3040, 3600, 3610, 3620, 3630 and 3650) and six electives required for the degree (total of 36 credit hours). Students with more than two years experience as a special education teacher can apply to have 3650 (Practicum) waived and complete an other elective course. With the exception of 3600 (Assessment), the degree can be completed on-line. A robust summer semester allows students to complete on-campus requirements in a six-week time frame. Significant planning ensures a stable and often predictable enrollment. Care is also given to ensure that courses deemed more relevant (e.g., Autism, Speech/Language) are regularly offered. (Appendix A contains an overview of the current degree structure and Appendix B contains a list of the individual courses).
Table 2. Enrollment trends in Special Education at MUN

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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It should be noted that the degree may be completed on a full-time or a part-time basis with many candidates starting full-time but then switching to part-time status. Consequently, the size of the graduating group does not match the intake group of any given year. It is also important to note that there is no time limitation on the degree, resulting in hundreds of students continuing studies. Many of those active on the degree are current educators. Teachers’ pensions are calculated on the best seven years, resulting in senior teachers trying to finish the degree for pension planning purposes, despite having started the degree many years before. It should also be noted that the number of males in the graduating class is typically less than 10%. Finally, graduates acquire teaching positions across the country, increasingly so as teaching positions in this province decrease. Hence, graduates need to be familiar with models of practice broader than the service delivery model used in this Province.

The program has four full-time faculty members (Maich, Penney, Philpott, Young) and one faculty member whose teaching load is predominantly special education (Furey). Per-course instructors, who are hired in accordance with the LUMUN contract, teach approximately half of the course sections. The program group has taken the position that per-course instructors bring current practice and a strong link with contemporary schools. However, per-course instructors who are retired from the school system for many years have seniority for hiring, yet may be no longer familiar with current program delivery models.

2 information provided by the Office of Undergraduate Programs, Faculty of Education
Current graduate degree

In responding to recommendations from previous reviews (1996 & 2003), a graduate degree was begun in 2005/06. At that point, a hiring freeze at MUN resulted in a policy that any new degree program could only be initiated if offered within existing resources. Subsequently, a Master's degree in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning was developed with a specialization in “Special Education” comprised of three elective courses from an existing slate of four graduate course options, and a thesis. The intention was that the elective courses, combined with a thesis in special education, would ensure a solid graduate experience in the discipline. The four available graduate electives include:

• 6710 Issues in Development and Implementation of Special Education Policy and Practices
• 6712 The Nature and Assessment of Behavior Disorders in Children and Adolescents
• 6714 Principles and Practices in Exceptionality
• 6755 Nature and Assessment of Learning Disabilities

Since 2005, the program has admitted 21 candidates, but only six have completed the degree. The others either dropped out or changed to another program. In January, 2017, only seven\(^3\) candidates were listed as active on this degree. Anecdotal reports to various faculty members have consistently identified two reasons for this: no identifiable career outcome with the degree, and fear of completing a thesis. A 2013 report by MUN, entitled *Strengthening the Value Chain*, identified that less than 7% of graduate students in education pursue a thesis route.

Environmental scan

The Faculty of Education has always prided itself on having the most course intensive degree in Special Education in the country – a claim it can continue to make. A representative search of 16 universities across eight Provinces found no other Bachelors degree in Special Education, rather a series of undergraduate certificates/diplomas or graduate degrees specializing in inclusive education, or educational psychology. There was also great variety in the amount of education required, ranging from Ontario's three additional qualification courses offered by the Ontario College of Teachers through various universities/colleges to broad slates of courses offered through various specialization options. The following table gives an overview of the number of available degree routes/programs at a sample of Canadian institutions:

\(^3\) Information provided from Office of Graduate Programs and Research, Faculty of Education
Previous reviews

The committee examined the 1996 and 2003 review reports with particular attention to the recommendations. It should be noted that 1996 recommendations #5 and #7, referencing a core course specific to Newfoundland and Labrador’s model of program planning and a course on writing Individualized Education Plans, have not been addressed. Likewise, recommendation #11 calling for a specific course in classroom management has not been implemented. Finally, recommendation #13, which references mandatory courses in special education for initial teacher education, is still not fully implemented. (The committee mentions these recommendations specifically as both emerged as ongoing concerns in this current review).

The recommendations of the 2003 report have been addressed except: recommendation 6 – interdisciplinary training on collaboration; and recommendations 7 and 8 – initial teacher preparation in special education. Interestingly, like the outstanding recommendations from the 1996 review, both of these themes emerged in this current review.

It should be noted that both of the previous reviews relied solely on interviews with key informants and did not survey students or complete environmental scans.
Overview of Findings: What We Have Heard

Throughout the consultations and survey there was enthusiastic response to the review. Participants were eager to share their perspectives and offer input to ensure that the program continues to produce top caliber graduates who can meet the needs of the province’s most vulnerable students. Each consultation went over the allotted time and conversations were rich. A total of 310 participants completed the on-line survey and qualitative data submitted was as rich as the in-person consultations. What is presented in this section is a synopsis of the dominant themes that emerged from both the survey and the interviews with the key informants. Data from the survey is referenced throughout the narrative.

Profile of survey respondents

- 84% female
- 75% BEd (primary/elementary)
- 15% currently completing BSpEd
- 18% less than 5 years teaching experience
- 32% 11-20 years teaching experience
- 23% more than 20 years teaching experience
- 52% currently employed as an IRT
- 50% employed in primary/elementary classes
- 58% employed in Eastern Avalon
- 44% of participants who are currently studying, are completing a MEd
- 38% have completed a MEd

Dominant Themes

1. All educators are “special education teachers”.

Participants were consistent in stating that in 2016 every classroom teacher requires many of the skills of a special education teacher. With the rise of inclusive education and recent policy changes at both the district and the department level, classrooms are increasingly diverse and the needs of all learners are the responsibility of all educators. Some students with more complex needs continue to be the responsibility of specialist teachers. However, the majority of students who have been identified as having exceptionalities are being taught by regular classroom teachers - who are frequently struggling to meet their needs. Despite the current model of co-teaching and collaborative practice, classroom teachers are not equipped to identify, understand or accommodate the individual needs of many students. The majority of survey participants (82%) reported that classroom teachers do not have sufficient preparation in special education, while 78% felt that school administrators also lack sufficient preparation. In contrast, 67% reported
that IRTs are sufficiently prepared. The majority of participants (89%) also felt that courses on the BSpEd program should be available to all educators.

These sentiments were echoed during consultations, where participants expressed disappointment in the lack of mandatory special education courses in initial teacher preparation programs. Participants were clear in stating that even if all initial teacher preparation programs now had two mandatory courses, it would not be sufficient to meet the needs of today’s educators.

Suggestions emerged relative to the initial teacher preparation degrees:

- Include a course on multi-grade classrooms
- Include more education on play-based learning
- Include a course on working in rural and small schools
- Include a minimum of two mandatory courses on exceptionalities that address differentiated instruction
- Include a course on co-teaching and collaborative planning
- Develop short summer institutes on student mental health, assistive technology, behavior management, autism, etc.
- Raise the academic standard for admission to initial teacher education programs
- Review the high use of per course instructors, many of whom have been retired from the field for an extended time

2. Diploma in Inclusive Education for Classroom Teachers.

There was a strong recognition that classroom teachers are underprepared to face the demands of contemporary classrooms. This spurred significant interest in developing a diploma in inclusive education for classroom teachers. New teacher graduates, or existing teachers, would have the opportunity to continue their studies for an additional semester and complete five courses that would specifically meet the needs of classroom teachers. It was suggested that the diploma could include courses such as: an introduction to the service delivery model and individualized education planning; co-teaching and collaborative planning; differentiated instruction; behavior issues; understanding high incidence disorders such as autism and learning disabilities. The intention of a diploma is not to prepare IRTs but to better prepare classroom teachers. It could be offered as a separate, stand-alone diploma or it could be completed conjointly, similar in structure to the Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary) Conjoint with the Diploma in Technology Education.
3. Classroom Management Skills

It was recognized that new teachers are ill equipped to manage contemporary classrooms and that such education is best offered as professional learning during the introductory years to teaching. The NLTA voiced considerable interest in co-hosting (with the Faculty of Education) an on-line professional learning (PL) course for new teachers in their first two years of teaching. Such a course would be voluntary but could be entered for recognition as part of teacher’s professional growth plans. There was some discussion of the need for a two-year teacher induction program where new teachers working through their probationary period could avail of targeted professional learning during this introductory phase. The majority of survey participants (90%) reported that educators are interested in pursuing PL during their careers and 69% reported that on-line courses are an effective medium of course delivery.

4. Relative Support for the Existing Degree Structure

While there were significant changes suggested for the current BSpEd program, the majority of participants felt that the degree has been a valued and effective learning experience. Participants who had completed the degree spoke with nostalgia of their experience and appreciation for the content and the rigor it provided. 64% of survey participants agreed that the degree was academically rigorous; 83% reported that it enhanced their professional skill set; and 89% reported confidence in their professional competence. Likewise, the majority of the courses were seen as being relevant to their duties, with only slight variation in courses for low incidence issues (deaf education, hearing loss, giftedness). It should be noted that several courses have undergone significant revamping in recent years and, given the high level of experience of the survey participants, many may have completed a different version of the course than now exists. It should also be noted that prevalence of different exceptionalities might warrant low interest but for educators dealing with those students the need for training is high. Cochlear implants are one example. Gifted education is another where few children are identified and who have been a historically underserviced group of students. Therefore, care should be exercised in reviewing course relevancy.

5. Changes to the Degree are Warranted

Despite the general high level of support for the current degree structure and relevancy of courses, qualitative comments on the survey and the consultations noted consistent areas for improving the degree. These include:

- 3600 (Academic and Behavioral Assessment) is an essential, cornerstone course
- Redevelop 3620 (Nature and Characteristics of Emotional/Behavioral Disorders), with a title change, to include a greater focus on student mental health
• 3650 (Practicum in Special Education) is a critical capstone experience and should not be waived since it is essential that graduates display professional competence
• 3680 (Inclusive Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder) should be a mandatory, introductory course on autism
• Develop a mandatory second course following 3680 (Inclusive Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder) that focuses on program planning, sensory balance and self-regulation for autism
• 3690 (Collaborative Practice) is essential and needs to be strengthened to ensure co-teaching and collaboration as central content
• 4505 (Transition Planning for Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities) should focus on transition planning for all students with exceptionalities.
• 4520 (Inclusive Practices for Students with Behavioral Challenges) should be mandatory and include a strong focus on functional behavior analysis as well as developing behavioral management plans
• Less courses on intellectual disability, as prevalence has reduced significantly since the degree was first developed
• Reduce the repetition of strategy courses and develop one, strong course on Differentiated Instruction
• Develop an introductory course on the model of support services and Universal Design for Learning
• Develop a separate course on Assistive Technology & Alternate Format Materials
• Develop blended courses instead of either on-campus or online

6. Establish Enhanced Communication Between Stakeholder Groups

There was wide recognition that the Faculty, the NLTA, the School Districts and the Department do not meet frequently enough. In one province with one union and one teacher preparation program and two school districts there should be scheduled semi or, at the very least, annual scheduled meetings where the stakeholders discuss the needs of special education in the province and seek ways to coordinate efforts for optimal service. Participants agreed that there has been a drift between preparation, policy and practice that could have been easily avoided if communication structures were in place. This was also reflected in the qualitative responses in the survey where students reported a disconnect between what MUN teaches, what provincial policy expects, and what the school district directs. There was agreement to prioritize this communication in the future.

7. French Immersion and Francophone Needs

There was considerable discussion around accommodating students with individualized learning needs in French Immersion classes in NLESD and at CSFP. There are not enough French Immersion or Francophone teachers who are pursuing
the BSpEd program and having supports delivered by English speaking IRTs does not work in an environment where the language of instruction is French.

8. Promote More Research on Provincial Practice

A pronounced decrease in the amount of provincial research on education was noted. Fewer graduate students pursue thesis routes and there is limited educational-focused research occurring in the province. In 2015 282 students graduated with a Masters degree in Education and only 18 (6.3%) completed a thesis route. In 2014 that number was 5.5%. In 2013 it was 7.2%. The Autism Association, the Learning Disability Association, the Department of Education, and NLESD reported this concern. It was widely felt that this is separating the faculty from the school system and valuable opportunities to evaluate programs as well as inform practice are being missed.


The survey explored future professional learning needs of participants and a trend emerged. The majority of participants report that they look to their employer or their professional association to provide professional learning and not the Faculty of Education. Given the high number of participants who had 6th grade salary, as well as those who were at (or nearing) 7th grade salary, this was not surprising. Despite this, 67% of survey participants did agree that they would pursue additional courses even if there was no financial incentive; a near identical number (65%) reported that the step increase in pay was a significant factor in considering additional training. Such apparent contradictions are noted.

The few participants who did identify interest in pursuing certificate or Master degrees in special education identified the following areas: autism, mental health, behavior and assistive technology.

10. Bachelors or Masters Degree?

There was considerable debate on whether the existing BSpEd should be converted to a Masters degree. While the existing course structure and length of degree was well respected, the 2017 environment is different. As noted earlier, the change to a post-degree model results in teachers achieving 6th grade status (or within a couple of courses of it) at the completion of their initial teacher degree. The financially prudent decision for new graduates is to immediately begin a Masters degree where relatively the same number of courses will move them to 7th grade status. As the number of teachers in the province continues to decline the desire for a third Bachelors degree lessens.

At the same time, participants noted that the value of the content of the Special Education degree is that it is strategy-based (versus being theoretical or research-focused). Switching to a Masters degree could significantly compromise that. It was
also noted that the vast majority of MEd students at MUN are not pursuing research and thesis routes, opting instead for online, all-course routes which could further limit research options on provincial programs. There is also concern for the number of graduates that a Masters program could produce annually, given class sizes are capped at 20 in graduate courses versus 40 in undergraduate courses. Finally, given that there are several hundred students eligible to complete the current degree, a reasonable completion time (3 - 5 years) would have to be given for the current BSpEd, should the degree be changed to a Masters. This would result in a small number of faculty members having to develop a new Masters degree and run two degrees simultaneously until current candidates finish, unless alternate provisions can be explored to minimize the transition.
Recommendations

Preface

The shift to a second degree for initial teacher education has had a significant impact on the existing Bachelor of Special Education degree. The absence of elective courses in special education for the primary/elementary and intermediate/secondary degree prevents students from completing two special education courses prior to beginning the special education program. This reduces course requirements to ten from the existing twelve. New teachers will be at, or within a few courses of, 6th grade certification, resulting in limited appetite for a third bachelors program. A 5 course certificate will ensure 6th grade certification, after which most teachers will be interested in pursuing graduate studies for 7th grade pay level. At the same time, initial teacher education programs are not preparing teachers to meet the needs of contemporary classrooms. Moving forward, the emphasis for the faculty will have to be enhancing professional learning for classroom teachers and providing appropriate graduate studies to allow specialization in the discipline. The following recommendations are presented:

1. That the Faculty of Education develop a 15 credit hour diploma program titled Diploma in Inclusive Education for classroom teachers. The courses should be developed for on-line delivery with the option of summer institutes.

2. That the following new 3 credit hour courses be developed for the diploma:
   - *Responding to Diversity* (universal design for learning, response to intervention, differentiated instruction);
   - *Monitoring Student Progress* (IEP process, collaborative planning, developing individual goals and objectives, models of support delivery);
   - *Supporting Student Behavior* (redevelopment of 3620 and 4520);
   - *Understanding Autism* (redevelopment of 3680);
   - *Understanding Specific Learning Disorders* (redevelopment of 3630 & 4530).

3. That students have the option of exiting with a diploma or continuing with an additional 15 credit hours and receive a Bachelor of Inclusive Education (30 credit hours beyond their initial degree), which will replace the existing BSpEd degree (36 credit hours).

4. That the diploma have an admission average of 70% in the last 60 attempted credit hours. Students must maintain this average to remain in the program.

5. That a Bachelor of Inclusive Education have a mandatory 3 credit hours on assessment (3600) and a mandatory 3 credit hour practicum (3650). The remaining 9 credit hours be elective from the following list of courses on the existing BSpEd program: 3040, 3610, 3660, 3941, 4520, 4540.
6. That the faculty develop a new course on assistive technology and alternate format materials which would also be an elective on the new Bachelor of Inclusive Education

7. That all courses on the existing BSpEd, other than those listed above, be delisted.

8. That the courses listed as elective in recommendation 5 and 6 above be open-electives as professional learning opportunities for educators.

9. That a Master of Inclusive Education be developed with either the Diploma of Inclusive Education, the Bachelor of Inclusive Education, or the existing BSpEd being a prerequisite for admission. Faculty responsible for inclusive education programs identify and develop the graduate courses for this degree, using a blend of existing graduate courses as well as new course developments.

10. That the new Master of Inclusive Education allow students to specialize in areas of exceptionality, such as (but not limited to) Autism, Learning Disorders, Behavioural Challenges, Student Mental Health, Assistive Technology, Intellectual/Developmental Disability.

11. That a Master of Inclusive Education have a strong thesis option and that the faculty develop and deliver an ongoing “thesis support” seminar.

12. That students currently completing the BSpEd be given three years to finish the program before it is closed.

13. That the Faculty of Education partner with the NLTA to develop a series of on-line learning modules on classroom management, targeting new teachers but open to all educators.

14. That semi-annual meetings occur between the faculty responsible for inclusive education programs, both school districts, the NLTA, community support groups (such as Autism NL and LDANL), and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to discuss emerging issues and concerns relevant to the preparation of educators to work in inclusive classrooms. This meeting be chaired annually on a rotating schedule.

15. That the Faculty of Education offer a bursary program to encourage French Immersion teachers to pursue the Bachelor of Inclusive Education

16. That the Faculty of Education offer a bursary program to encourage graduate thesis in Inclusive Education.
Appendix A: Overview of Existing program

Admission

To be considered for admission an applicant shall have a minimum of a 65% average in the last 60 attempted credit hours (not including the internship) and also meet the following requirements:

- have been awarded a degree in Primary and/or Elementary Education, Music Education, or Intermediate/Secondary Education from Memorial University of Newfoundland or from an institution recognized by Memorial University of Newfoundland;

- have completed Education 4240 (or equivalent) and Education 3312 and 3543, or 4350 (or equivalent); and

- have successfully completed a professional internship in education or have equivalent teaching experience prior to admission.

Course requirements for the degree (36 credit hours)

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<th>18 Required credit hours:</th>
<th>18 Elective credit hours chosen from:</th>
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<td>ED 4543</td>
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Appendix B: Calendar course descriptions

* Web delivery

**3040 The Assessment and Development of Children's Language** focuses on techniques for assessing language abilities in primary/elementary and intermediate/secondary students and will provide models for developing strategies in implementing language instruction appropriate to students’ needs.

**ED 3600 Academic and Behavioral Assessment** applies the theories of test development in establishing a competent understanding of the utilization of diagnostic and prescriptive instruments as well as teacher-made tests as they apply to the area of exceptional children.

**ED 3610 Nature and Characteristics of Intellectual Disabilities** aims to provide an understanding of the nature and characteristics of intellectual disabilities and the psycho-social implications of this area of exceptionality.

**ED 3620 Nature and Characteristics of Emotional/Behavioral Disorders** includes an examination of procedures for the early identification of children with behavioral disabilities and major systems of classification of mechanisms, deviant development and specified behavior problems with implication for therapeutic education.

**ED 3630 Nature and Characteristics of Learning Disabilities** examines our theoretical understanding of the nature and characteristics of learning disabilities. It explores contemporary understandings, assessment/identification approaches, and current research as it relates to educational practice.

**ED 3640 Current Issues in Special Education** consists of a study of special and selected problems related to the teaching of special education with particular emphasis placed on special education within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**ED 3650 Practicum in Special Education** encompasses a practice experience with students who have an identified exceptionality. The emphasis will be on a supervised field placement in a special education position within a school setting. PR: completion of 18 credit hours in Special Education including ED3600

**ED 3660 A Study of the Gifted Child** is an examination of the nature and characteristics of gifted children, with emphasis upon methods of identifying gifted children, implications of giftedness for learning and instruction and reviews of several educational programs for the gifted.
*ED 3680 Inclusive Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*
examines the nature of ASD with particular focus on methods of behavioral
assessment, use of assistive technology and specific therapy techniques. Support
programs will be considered within an ecological context that prioritizes
collaborative planning with parents and other therapeutic agents.

*ED 3690 Collaborative Practice* examines the theoretical and practical aspects of
collaborative practice within an interagency model of case planning for students
with diverse learning needs. Emphasis is on exploring issues of
power/empowerment, consultation, communication, conflict resolution/problem-
solving, advocacy and collaboration. Perspectives of parents and families, educators,
and community resource professionals will be explored. The course strives to create
a family-focused approach to effective planning in contemporary schools.

ED 3691-3699 Special Topics Courses in Special Education will have topics to be
studied, as announced by the Faculty of Education.

ED 3941 Diagnosing and Directing Learning in Primary and Elementary
Mathematics is a study of aspects of diagnosis and remediation in primary and
elementary Mathematics, and of the basis for constructing and applying diagnostic
techniques. The course offers an examination, development, and application of a
variety of manipulative aids and assistive technology to be used in the teaching of
Mathematics in the primary and elementary grades.

*ED 4505 Transition Planning for Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities*
focuses on the application of educational procedures relevant to successful post-
secondary education, employment and community integration of adolescents and
young adults with mild and moderate developmental disabilities. Appropriate
senior high programming, life skills development, use of assistive technology and
resource materials necessary for transition planning for this population will be
reviewed.

*ED 4510 Inclusive Practices for Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities*
gives consideration to the establishment of objectives; selection, development and
review of materials; the use of various instructional strategies; assistive technology
and the provision of appropriate experiences for the education of students with
mild intellectual disabilities.

ED 4515 Inclusive Practices for Students with Moderate Intellectual
Disabilities focuses on inclusive educational practices for students with moderate
intellectual disabilities. Emphasis will be placed on the development,
implementation and management of a well-balanced individualized curriculum as
articulated in an individual educational plan. Students will be expected to
demonstrate fluency in the design of effective instructional strategies, including the
use of assistive technology to maximize student’s individual strengths across a
variety of environments.
*ED 4520 Inclusive Practices for Students with Behavioral Challenges* examines programs and strategies for students with behavioral issues. These will include counseling skills, case conferences, structured learning environments, use of assistive technology and therapeutic interventions for specific behavior problems. In addition, consideration will be given to collaboration with mental health practitioners and procedures to develop readiness for return to regular instructional programs.

**ED 4530 Inclusive Practices for Students with Learning Disabilities** investigates specific teaching methods, use of assistive technology and programming practices as they pertain to reading, writing, language, mathematics, social skills, and metacognitive skills for students with identified learning disabilities.

**ED 4540 Inclusive Practices for Students with Speech/Language Disorders** examines theoretically sound and research-based methods for the identification and remediation of speech and language concerns in children and adolescents. Topics include typical language development; nature of developmental concerns for both speech (articulation, voice and fluency) and language (receptive, expressive and phonetic awareness); social use of language; and use of assistive technology. Particular focus will be placed on current interventions/strategies and programs/models. The course is aimed at supporting teachers in developing effective individualized programs.

**ED 4541 Communication for the Deaf** introduces communication strategies and patterns of language development for students with hearing impairment. A component of the course is designed to impart a degree of skill in practical usage of American Sign Language and Finger Spelling. The primary emphasis will be on manual systems of communication common to the deaf, as well as those systems in use as supplementary instructional methods at schools for the deaf.

**ED 4543 Inclusive Practices for Students with Hearing Loss** examines the effects of hearing loss on language and social/emotional development in students and the resulting programming implications for the inclusive classroom. The course strives to prepare teachers to identify the needs of students with various degrees of hearing loss and develop effective programs to accommodate their needs. The use of assistive technology such as hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive listening devices will be discussed.