



Recommendations of the
Higher Education Consortium in Special Education
for
Quality Indicators for Preparation of Leadership Personnel in Special Education
April 1, 2014

HECSE Leadership Quality Indicator Subcommittee

Jeannie Kleinhammer-Tramill, Chair

Katharine G. Shepherd, President of HECSE

Belva Collins, Member

Cathy Newman-Thomas, Member

Wilfred Wienke, Ex-Officio

Harvey Rude, Past President, Ex-Officio

Tara Kaczorowski, Student Representative

Joshua Barton, Student Representative

Quality Indicators for Preparation of Leadership Personnel in Special Education

The information to follow includes background information on formulation of the HECSE Quality Indicators committee and membership, the committee's charge, and draft indicators for doctoral programs. HECSE's intent in developing the indicators is to assist our members and USED-OSEP in considering what constitutes quality doctoral preparation. HECSE has no intent or interest in evaluating member programs. These indicators are intended for strictly voluntary use by special education doctoral programs for the purposes of self-evaluation and guidance for continuous improvement. HECSE recognizes that many current assessment and evaluation efforts focus on the impact that educator preparation programs have on preK-12 students; however, graduates of doctoral programs in special education fulfill a variety of leadership roles that have an important, but indirect, impact on student achievement. As such, these indicators focus on the preparation and success of leadership program graduates who will prepare future educators, conduct research, develop policy, and/or provide programmatic leadership that, in turn, leads to student success. Given that different doctoral programs may have a different focus, the indicators are general in nature but are intended to focus on the activities that will have the outcome of producing doctoral-level leaders who are skilled in administration, research, teaching, and service.

Background Information and Committee Membership

At the Winter, 2013 meeting of HECSE, members recommended that a committee be formed to consider quality indicators for doctoral programs in special education. Based on that recommendation, HECSE past president, Harvey Rude, appointed a committee consisting of members who had expressed interest. The resulting Committee on Quality Indicators for Doctoral Programs in Special Education included the following members: Jeannie Kleinhammer-Tramill (committee chair, University of South Florida), Belva Collins (University of Kentucky), Cathy Newman-Thomas (University of Missouri), Katharine Shepherd (President of HECSE, University of Vermont), Wilfred Wienke (University of Central Florida), Tara Kaczorowski (student representative, University of Buffalo), and Joshua Barton (student representative and recorder, University of South Florida).

Charge to the Committee

The committee's charge, as delivered by Harvey Rude, was as follows:

The HECSE Quality Indicators for Doctoral Programs Committee is charged with developing a recommended set of performance indicators for the Office of Special Education Programs

personnel preparation projects. I am asking that your committee review the previous work that was completed through the HECSE Blue Ribbon Panel that is posted on our website at <http://www.hecse.net> and the Special Education Faculty Needs Assessment (SEFNA) information at <http://www.cgu.edu/pages/5506.asp> as you develop a set of robust performance indicators that illustrates the quality and demonstrated efficacy of the personnel preparation projects. I am asking that your committee follow these steps:

- (1) Identify and analyze the current desired outcomes as well as prescribed outcomes from the personnel preparation projects
- (2) Identify and document the issues with current outcomes statements and analyze for common areas of concern
- (3) Secure input on what outcomes are desired from the personnel preparation projects, including current and projected future needs
- (4) Determine the relationship between the development of quality indicators with existing policy and the implications for projected policy
- (5) Formulate a set of recommendations for quality indicators and measurable outcomes of personnel preparation projects
- (6) Develop a final report for adoption by the membership of HECSE to be forwarded for consideration by the Office of Special Education Programs and other appropriate agencies in the U.S. Department of Education
- (7) Consider whether additional resources and stakeholders should be involved in your work
- (8) Identify the impact of personnel preparation projects on recent graduates
- (9) Provide recommendations regarding the focus of future personnel preparation competitions from the Office of Special Education Programs.

I am asking you to address leadership preparation projects as your first priority, and general considerations for all areas of personnel preparation secondarily.

The Committee's Work

The committee completed the review of the HECSE Blue Ribbon Panel, recommendations from the SEFNA study, OSEP Personnel Preparation Goals and Outcomes, and HECSE Indicators of Quality for Special Education Doctoral Programs. The committee informed OSEP of our work, presented an early draft of the 2013 Quality Indicators at the HECSE meeting held in conjunction with the 2013 OSEP Project Directors' Meeting, presented the indicators to an interested group at the annual meeting of the Teacher Education Division of Special Education (TED) in November, 2013, and presented the indicators to the full HECSE membership at the 2014 Winter summit. The primary work of the committee was to develop the attached draft of

quality indicators for doctoral programs. Our intent in developing these indicators was to provide measurable indicators that might be useful for special education doctoral programs to implement for purposes of self-assessment and program improvement. The Committee will also work with OSEP to suggest that these indicators be considered as potential criteria for assessment of the impacts of OSEP's investments in preparation of leadership personnel. However, any use of the indicators by HECSE member institutions is strictly voluntary and should not imply any evaluative role for HECSE.

HECSE Quality Indicators for Doctoral Programs in Special Education Adopted February, 2014

The Quality Indicators for Doctoral Programs in Special Education were developed by HECSE for use by individual programs to meet their own needs and purposes. HECSE's intent is to provide measurable indicators that might be useful for special education doctoral programs to implement for purposes of self-assessment and program improvement. Any use of these indicators by HECSE member institutions is strictly voluntary and should not imply any evaluative role for HECSE.

1. The program has a mission statement that addresses both process and product elements.
2. The roles and functions of program graduates are clearly defined and meet an identified need in the field.
3. The program has a clearly defined set of competencies related to teaching and/or administration, research, and service, as well as measurable instructional objectives for each of those competencies.
4. The program content is grounded in foundational literature of the field, reflects state of the art research and evidence-based practice, and is related to the mission and identified competencies of the program.
5. Syllabi, program descriptions, and doctoral experiences include best practices related to research and evaluation methods and use of data.
6. Scholars in the program participate in an array of professional experiences that progress from mentored to independent, and that align to expectations for research, teaching/administration, and service.
7. Program faculty are productive scholars, researchers and practitioners who serve as models and mentors and whose skills contribute to the mission of the program.
8. The program demonstrates commitment to recruiting, sustaining, and matriculating students from under-represented populations.
9. The resources necessary to maintain and assure a high quality program over time are available at the program level and at the institutional level.
10. The program has a mechanism for ongoing assessment and evaluation of the progress of individual doctoral scholars.

11. The program has a system for keeping track of graduate outcomes that indicates alignment between the program's mission and scholars' subsequent employment.
12. The program has a system for keeping track of current and former student accomplishmentsⁱ throughout their program and for at least three years after graduation in the areas of teaching/administration, research, and service resulting in a clear alignment to the program's mission.
13. The program's evaluation plan is used to revise and refine the program as necessary to ensure continuous improvement.

Sources

In developing these indicators, we were guided by previous work by HECSE members and the work of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, including:

- HECSE's 1984 Position paper on quality indicators in special education doctoral programs
- Guidelines for OSEP Leadership Program Competition Applications (2004) pp. 5-8
- Special Education Personnel Preparation FY2010 program performance report (selected measures related to leadership personnel preparation)

ⁱ HECSE recognizes that many current assessment and evaluation efforts focus on the impact that educator preparation programs have on preK-12 students; however, graduates of doctoral programs in special education fulfill a variety of leadership roles that have an important, but indirect, impact on student achievement. As such, these indicators focus on the preparation and success of leadership program graduates who will prepare future educators, conduct research, develop policy, and/or provide programmatic leadership that, in turn, leads to student success. Given that different doctoral programs may have a different focus, the indicators are general in nature but are intended to focus on the activities that will have the outcome of producing doctoral-level leaders who are skilled in administration, research, teaching, and service.