Gifted Education Letter of Endorsement
Field Experience Guide

2016-2017 Edition

Wilkes University
School of Education
Graduate Education Department
84 West South Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
Introduction
As an educator pursuing the PDE Gifted Education Letter of Endorsement at Wilkes University, you already recognize the importance of meeting the needs of students with giftedness within the Pennsylvania PreK-12 schools. Whether you are new to working with students with gifted education needs or have experience with a particular service model, you are also part of a community of educators committed to providing students with gifted learning needs the best educational experiences to meet their needs.

In this program, you will be immersed in a practical curriculum focused on design, delivery, assessment, emerging trends, and professional responsibilities for gifted education. The program content is grounded in theory and aligned to the PDE framework for gifted education, Title 22, Pennsylvania Academic and Alternative Standards, Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for Gifted Children. Culminating in 30-hours of field experience at the conclusion of the program, your understanding of gifted education instruction will be shaped by a targeted curriculum, talented faculty members and instructors, mentorship by current and experienced gifted educators, and your own perspective as an educator.
Candidate Competencies
The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established four competencies aligned with the National Association for Gifted Children. These competencies are embedded throughout the four courses in the Wilkes University Gifted Letter of Endorsement program. The information provided in this section is derived directly from the PDE guidelines for this endorsement.

The professional core courses, competencies and experiences for the Gifted Endorsement are designed to increase the level of knowledge, expertise and understanding of educators working with students who are gifted. The endorsement is intended to raise awareness of the unique characteristics, emotional/social needs, other challenges and issues associated with the students who are gifted. It is designed to foster an understanding of historical, state and national trends, policies and guidelines to ensure implementation of appropriate academic curriculum, differentiation strategies, current best practice, educational interventions and support for this diverse population.

The courses and field experiences must prepare educators who will be able to support students’ growth in their area(s) of academic strength. All courses and field experiences must be grounded in theories of cognitive, social and emotional development and demonstrate research based practices which enable candidates to gain the knowledge and experience needed to work successfully with all stakeholders including families and the broader community.

The Gifted Letter of Endorsement establishes that eligible individuals will demonstrate competency related to the following key domains:

Eligible candidates will demonstrate competency related to the following key domains:

I. Foundations of Gifted Education
II. Identification and Assessment
III. Service Delivery Options
IV. Curriculum Design and Strategies in the Classroom

I. Foundations of Gifted Education:
   a. Explain the relevant history of the changing definitions, interventions, and cultural attitudes regarding gifted learners and their relationship to educational services.
   b. Explain the relevance, importance, and application of state and federal documents, regulations and reports, including PA Chapter 16 Regulations and related documents through direct interaction with a student who requires services (Gifted Written Report, Gifted Individualized Educational Plan, Notice of Recommended Assignment).
   c. Articulate the importance of collaboration and communication with all interested stakeholders (Gifted Support Teachers, families, student, teachers, administration, and community members).
   d. Provide information on and advocate for gifted individuals and services to professional staff, parents and the community.
   e. Identify and locate organizations and materials that will present current data, resources and pedagogy for gifted education.

II. Identification and Assessment
   a. Recognize diverse characteristics and behaviors of gifted individuals.
   b. Understand social and emotional needs of gifted individuals.
c. Respect and understand the impact of cultural differences in gifted individuals.
d. Understand cognitive and affective differences of gifted individuals.
e. Recognize and understand the potential of creative thinking; the process stages of creative thinking; the core affective and intellectual skills of creative thinking; and the influence that instructional strategies for creative thinking have on creativity in content areas.
f. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple and alternative assessments that can be used for identification purposes and how these assessments align to academic needs within the educational placement.

III. Service Delivery Options

a. Use instructional models and classroom services based on research and current literature on gifted education with a gifted child.
b. Facilitate use of different organizational options for gifted services that provide enrichment, acceleration, or a combination of both in a school setting. Some examples include but are not limited: curriculum compaction, acceleration by whole subject or grade, grade telescoping, mentorships, school-wide enrichment, independent study, etc.
c. Understand the importance and use of measurable individualized plans based on the identified academic strengths of each gifted student for use in the regular classroom and in smaller group settings.
d. Understand how to utilize on-going district data (benchmarks, formative, summative and diagnostic assessments) to determine alignment between student ability, standards and differentiated instruction through service models that include modification of the content, process, product and classroom environment.
e. Understand how to utilize different student grouping options for gifted students, including options that are flexible and based on ability.
f. Promote the intellectual leadership of students who are educationally, economically and culturally disenfranchised.
g. Accept and respect different cultural backgrounds, different ways of communicating, and different values by exhibiting how culture affects manifestation of gifted abilities.

IV. Curriculum Design and Strategies in the Classroom

a. Select and use data from a variety of assessments (formative, summative, diagnostic and benchmark) to inform instructional decision-making to meet the needs of individual students through enrichment, acceleration or a combination of both and to document student progress.
b. Design differentiated learning plans/curricula for gifted learners in a school setting that include but are not limited to tiered lessons/performance tasks, graphic organizers, curriculum compactions, learning contracts.
c. Select appropriate curriculum resources, strategies, products and service options (acceleration, enrichment, both) that respond to cultural, cognitive, and affective differences among gifted and advanced learners.
d. Integrate academic and career guidance experiences for gifted learners into curriculum and instruction in the school setting.
e. Demonstrate knowledge of questioning techniques that facilitate higher-level learning and enhance critical and creative thinking.

f. Understand and implement flexible grouping practices.

g. Use best practice models in lesson development and instruction to increase depth/complexity for tasks, foster the development of self-awareness, positive peer relationships, intercultural experiences, self-efficacy, lifelong learning, self-advocacy and leadership skills that require gifted and advanced learners to engage in higher-levels of thinking.

h. Design learning opportunities that foster the development of self-awareness, positive peer relationships, intercultural experiences, self-efficacy, lifelong learning, self-advocacy and leadership.
Gifted Letter of Endorsement Program Overview

Admission
Applicants must possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution, a minimum of an Instructional I teaching certificate. Along with a completed application, applicants must submit the following:
- Official transcripts from bachelor’s degree and any additional, relevant coursework
- Two letters of recommendation
- Copy of teaching certificate

Gifted Letter of Endorsement (12 credits)
- EDSP 501 Special Education Methodology I (10 hours field experience)
- ED 569 Teaching Diverse Learners Using Inclusive Classroom Practices
- EDSP 508 Foundations of Gifted Education (10 hours field experience)
- EDSP 509 Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (10 hours field experience)

Course Descriptions:

EDSP 501: Special Education Methodology I with Field Experience
3 Credits

This course addresses the development, implementation, and monitoring of individualized management, instructional, curricular, and environmental strategies and adaptations for students with special needs. Pedagogical recommendations and research based effective teaching practices are reinforced from prerequisite courses. Emphasis is placed on a needs based model incorporating the cognitive, language, attentional, affective, physical, and sensory needs of higher incident populations (learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, speech disorders, and behavioral challenges) within included settings, resource room, self-contained and learning support environments. A 10 hour field experience component facilitates direct interaction with students with gifted and talented needs, current gifted education teachers, and will be supplemented by cooperative discussions of experiential applications to course content by the course instructor and peers enrolled in the course.

ED 569: Teaching Diverse Learners Using Inclusive Classroom Practices
3 Credits

This course will focus on co-teaching models and differentiated instruction and enable teachers to effectively apply previous learning of content and pedagogy in an inclusive classroom environment to meet the needs of diverse learners.

EDSP 508: Foundations of Gifted Education with Field Experience
3 Credits

This course addresses the cognitive, language, attentional, affective, behavioral, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students within a variety of school settings. Students will be exposed to the history of gifted education as well as theories of gifted education. Students will evaluate the characteristics that are unique to students with gifted and talented needs through effective pedagogical research-based practices. Review and analysis of Individualized Gifted Education Plans will be addressed through a 10 hour embedded field experience component. These hours will facilitate direct interaction with students with gifted and talented needs, current gifted education teachers, and will be supplemented by cooperative discussions of experiential applications to
course content by the course instructor and peers enrolled in the course.

EDSP 509: Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction with Field Experience
3 Credits

This course addresses the development, implementation, assessment and monitoring of effective instructional strategies and developmentally appropriate curriculum for students with gifted and talented education needs. Pedagogical recommendations and research based effective teaching practices are reinforced from prerequisite courses and corresponding embedded field experiences. Emphasis is placed on the analysis and evaluation of current curriculum, assessment and instructional trends related to gifted education. A needs based model incorporating the cognitive, language, attentional, affective, behavioral, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students within a variety of school settings will be incorporated throughout the course structure. A 10 hour embedded field experience component facilitates direct interaction with students with gifted and talented needs, current gifted education teachers, and will be supplemented by cooperative discussions of experiential applications to course content by the course instructor and peers enrolled in the course.

Gifted Letter of Endorsement Program Outcomes (GLEPO)

1. The student will develop an in-depth knowledge and valuing of the origins and nature of high levels of intelligence, including creative expressions of intelligence and how intelligence manifests itself in different domains and in diverse learners;
2. The student will promote an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics, needs, and potential challenges experienced by gifted learners from diverse populations;
3. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of and access to enhanced and advanced content and instructional strategies;
4. The student will develop and apply the ability to develop differentiated curricula appropriate to meeting the unique academic strengths as well as consider the emotional needs and interests of gifted learners; and
5. The student will recognize and implement the ability to create an environment in which gifted learners can feel challenged and safe to explore, take risks, and express their uniqueness throughout their coursework and during field-based experiences.

PDE Gifted Letter of Endorsement Candidate Certification Competencies can be found within all course syllabi. These competencies are embedded across and throughout the courses within the endorsement program to meet these set program outcomes.
Field Experiences

Overview
Students will complete 30 hours of embedded fieldwork across three program courses: EDSP 501, EDSP 508 and EDSP 509. Each course will carry 10 hours of embedded field work to equal the 30 required for the entire program. To ensure this experience is as meaningful as possible, students will secure a mentor with satisfactory, demonstrable experience in online instruction. Along with the mentor, students will identify a project aligned with the PDE Candidate Competencies and their own professional goals.

The Gifted Letter of Endorsement Field Experience Guide, developed for students in this program, can be found in Appendix E of this document. It contains all forms referenced in the forthcoming section.

Securing a Mentor
In preparation for embedded field experiences in the program, the program coordinator for the Gifted Letter of Endorsement will send a welcome packet via email to all accepted students in the program. This will contain specific information and guidelines for how to secure a mentor teacher for the different required field experiences in the program. Additionally, all students will submit a field placement plan assignment form in the first week of each course that requires field hours for instructor review and approval prior to starting any field work for the semester. All field placement and mentor forms will be collected and placed in the students’ file as part of their certification documentation.

Guidelines for Selecting a Mentor
1. Students are responsible for identifying a mentor who will serve as a supervisor for their fieldwork.
2. The mentor must be employed by the school or district where the field experience and project is taking place.
3. The mentor must hold a Level II teaching certification.
4. The mentor must have experience in gifted education, instruction, curriculum and assessment. They must possess the Gifted Endorsement or relevant qualifications in gifted and/or special education. Mentors should have duties assigned as a part of their regular position that align with the PDE Gifted Letter of Endorsement Candidate Competencies.
5. Mentors should have knowledge of the following areas:
   - Gifted Service Delivery Models
   - Gifted Individualized Education Plans
   - Gifted Curriculum and Assessment
   - Effective Instructional Practices in Gifted Education
   - Legal and ethical considerations for gifted education
   - Emerging trends (state and national) in gifted education
6. Students must provide the name, position, district, contact information, and relevant experience for their mentor on the Project Proposal Template (Appendix A).

Field Projects
During those courses with embedded field experiences, students will complete several projects that are aligned to their course content and the correlated field experiences. These assignments align to program goals and state certification competencies in gifted education. These field projects were chosen to put learned theory into practice with gifted education students under the supervision of a seasoned mentor teacher.
Completing and Documenting the Field Experience

Students will maintain a log of hours and a reflection journal to document the activities performed as a part of the field experience. Along with these entries, the students will submit all associated assignments during those courses with embedded field work. These will be placed in the student’s file as documentation towards completion of program competencies for recommendation of the Gifted Letter of Endorsement with the Pennsylvania Department of Education upon completion of their program.

*Failure to submit Final Field Log Sheet with Signatures and Field Experience Journal Assignment, will result in a failing grade for the course(s). Additionally, if it is found that field hours have been falsified, the student will be dismissed from the program and will not be eligible for recommendation to the state for the Gifted Letter of Endorsement.

Guidelines for Documenting the Field Experience

1. The field experience must be completed during those identified courses.
   - Field hours cannot be collected until the field placement has been approved by the course instructor during the first week of the course. Any hours collected prior to approval by the instructor will not count towards the required hours for the course.
2. Field hours should be largely focused on the course approved assignments.
3. Students must complete a Field Experience Log (Appendix B) and a journal to document the hours and activities performed.
4. The mentor, via his or her signature on the student’s completed Field Experience Log, must verify the documented field hours.
5. Along with the course project(s), the field experience placement plan, Field Experience Log, journal, and personal reflection must be submitted by all set deadlines in the course by the instructor.

Evaluating the Field Experience

The final evaluation of the field experience reflects the input of the EDSP 501, EDSP 508 and EDSP 509 course instructor(s) and the mentor teachers. Combined with the successful completion of 30-hours in the field, each course with embedded field hours will have an associated field benchmark assignment that is representative of authentic knowledge and skills gained in the area of gifted education.

1. The student must review the completed project with his or her field placement mentor, prior to submission for grading by the course instructor.
2. The course instructor will evaluate the completed project.
3. The completed field experience log with the mentor’s signature must be scanned and uploaded to the course for review and grading by course instructor.
4. If the Field Experience Log is not submitted and/or does not meet the required total hours embedded within the course requirements, the student cannot pass the course.
Certification Application Process

The following instructions for certification application are originated from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Gifted Education Letter of Endorsement Guidelines:

The institution’s certification officer will recommend the candidate for the endorsement after successful completion of the Gifted Education Letter of Endorsement Program. The candidate must complete the required PDE application for endorsement and pay the appropriate fee to add the endorsement to their instructional certificate. The application process may be found at the following link:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=506890&mode=2
# Field Placement Planning Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Current Certification Grade Band:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course:</td>
<td>Semester:</td>
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<tr>
<td>School District:</td>
<td>School:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher Name:</td>
<td>Grade Level(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Certification Area(s) &amp; Issue Date(s):</td>
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<td>Phone:</td>
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Program/Classroom Description (i.e.: Exceptionalities served, caseload size, inclusion based/pull-out, etc.):

Description of your plan for completion of field hours (days of the week, hours per day, etc.):

*Submitted during the first week of EDSP 501, EDSP 508 and EDSP 509 for instructor approval of placement before starting to collect hours in the field. All areas MUST be completed on this form or it will not be approved!*
Field Experience Journal Rubric (42 points)

**Directions:** Your journal entries should include the following five topics (4 separate comments for each topic). You will submit your journal on the designated field experience journal forms, including signatures and initials of supervisor/cooperating teacher. More than one topic may be addressed in a single entry. You may have entries that do not include any of the topics, if you feel that you would like to comment on other areas of your experience. **Be sure to include and specifically identify, label and highlight, the following five topic areas in your journal. To fall into the advanced category all provided descriptions for the 5 topic areas are required to be specific, detailed, connect to course content and have a reflective component to practical and applicable use within the field of special education. If the student’s descriptions do not adhere to this, then even with all components, they will be marked down to the proficient column of the rubric for that particular topic(s) area.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics to Address (4 comments required for each topic):</th>
<th>Advanced 6</th>
<th>Proficient 4</th>
<th>Basic 2</th>
<th>Below Basic 0</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Academic characteristics of students</td>
<td>4 or more academic characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>3 academic characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>2 academic characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>1 or no academic characteristic is identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Social/Emotional characteristics of students</td>
<td>4 or more Social/Emotional characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>3 Social/Emotional characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>2 Social/Emotional characteristics are included and developed</td>
<td>1 or no Social/Emotional characteristic is identified</td>
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<td>C. Assessment practices</td>
<td>4 or more assessment practices are included</td>
<td>3 assessment practices are included and developed</td>
<td>3 assessment practices are included and developed</td>
<td>1 or no assessment practice is identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Your perceptions and attitudes about what you are observing</td>
<td>4 or more comments about your perceptions/attitudes are included and developed</td>
<td>3 comments about your perceptions and attitudes are included and developed</td>
<td>2 comments about your perceptions and attitudes are included and developed</td>
<td>1 or no comment about your perception or attitude is identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Identify any other key ideas and/or themes of your choice from the course that are relevant to experience</td>
<td>4 or more other key ideas/themes from the course are included and developed</td>
<td>3 other key ideas/themes are included and developed</td>
<td>2 other key ideas/themes are included and developed</td>
<td>1 or no other key idea/theme is identified</td>
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<td><strong>FOCUS:</strong> The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic.</td>
<td>Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task</td>
<td>Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task</td>
<td>No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic</td>
<td>Minimal to no evidence of a topic Incoherent</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STYLE:</strong> The choice, use of arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice.</td>
<td>Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience</td>
<td>Generic use of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer’s voice and tone appropriate to audience</td>
<td>Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone</td>
<td>Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures</td>
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<td>CONVENTIONS: The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.</td>
<td>Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation</td>
<td>Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence structure</td>
<td>Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation</td>
<td>Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation</td>
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Wilkes University
Graduate Education

Student Log Field Experience Cover Sheet

Required Signatures:

Student: _______________________________

Course Instructor: __________________________

Course Number: EDSP _________

Supervisor #1: _______________________________  Hours spent ________

Supervisor #2 (if needed) ________________________  Hours spent ________

Supervisor #3 (if needed) ________________________  Hours spent ________

Supervisor #4 (if needed) ________________________  Hours spent ________

Supervisor #5 (if needed) ________________________  Hours spent ________

Total Hours Accumulated ____________
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>General Field Hour Observation Description</th>
<th>Supervisor Initials</th>
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Total hours (this page) ___________  Cumulative Hours ___________
Gifted Education Field Experience Journal
Specifics, Details, Connections, and Reflection Entries

(Save this into a Word processing document and type in the provided boxes. This is where you place all of your specific details from your field experience observations – the dates/times should match your log sheet that the supervisor signs during each observational period)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Specific Task Descriptions and Analysis</th>
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