

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1) **VA State Licensure Requirements**

a) **Virginia Reading Assessment (a new VA requirement for licensure)**

i) **Who is required to take the Virginia Reading Assessment?**

The Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA) will be required for initial licensure for prek-3, elementary prek-6, and special education (with the EXCEPTION of the following areas exempted from the test: early childhood special education, speech-language disorders, and severe disabilities). In addition, individuals seeking the reading specialist endorsement will be subject to the VRA test. [Please note that the VRA includes (1) a test for prek-3, prek-6, and special education and (2) a test for reading specialists.] Please note that the test will be required, but a cut score will not be required until July 1, 2006.

Individuals who have completed a VIRGINIA approved program in one of the areas listed above PRIOR TO DECEMBER 31, 2004, will NOT be required to take the VRA test.

The licensure office will begin citing for the VRA January 1, 2005. Individuals who apply prior to December 31, 2004, or those completing a VIRGINIA approved program prior to December 31, 2004, will not be required to take the test.

PLEASE NOTE: The two years of full-time successful teaching experience in another state exemption applies to the VRA.

This assessment costs \$105.00 and is an additional to requirement to passing scores on PRAXIS. For information go to: <http://www.vra.nesinc.com/>

ii) **When should I take the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA)?**

GMU recommends that students take the VRA as soon as possible following completion of the two licensure program courses that concentrate on methods for teaching reading (EDSE 628 Elementary Reading, Curriculum and Strategies and EDSE 503 Language Development and Reading).

b) **Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (a new VA requirement for licensure)**

The Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment™ (VCLA™) measures the communication and literacy skills necessary to teach and communicate effectively with parents and others in the education community. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate comprehension and analysis of readings; development of ideas in essay form on specific topics; outlining and summarizing; interpreting tables and graphs; mastery of grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary; and writing.

i) **Who is required to take the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment?**

The Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) is required for all teachers applying for initial licensure beginning January 1, 2006.

Anyone applying for an **initial** license (provisional or conditional) that have already taken and passed Praxis I will be required to take and pass the VCLA. Individuals issued a license prior to January 1, 2006 and were advised to take and pass the Praxis I can either take or pass Praxis I (SAT or ACT substitute tests) or the VCLA.

**There are no substitution tests for the VCLA.**

The VCLA Website (<http://www.vcla.nesinc.com/#>) will be updated as new information regarding the determination of passing standards and the distribution of score reports becomes available.

c) **PRAXIS I**

Anyone seeking teaching licensure through **George Mason University's state approved teacher licensure program** who does not already have a Collegiate Professional License in Virginia, or a license in another state with 2 years documented teaching experience with that license, must pass PRAXIS I in Reading, Writing and Math (PPST composite of 532, CPPST composite of 973) or take the Praxis I workshop in the area(s). As an alternative, the state has recently approved the use of the **SAT** as a substitute for PRAXIS I. The board approved a score of 1000 on the SAT, taken prior to April 1, 1995, with at least 450 on the verbal and 510 on the mathematics tests or a score of 1100 on the SAT, taken after April 1, 1995, with at least 530 on the verbal and 530 on the mathematics tests as a substitute for PRAXIS I. The Board of Education approved the **ACT®** as a substitute for the Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) required for initial licensure. The Board approved a score of 24 with a minimum 22(Math)/46(English plus Reading) for tests taken after April 1, 1995 or a score of 21 with a minimum 21 (Math)/37 (English plus Reading) for test taken after September 1989 and before April 1, 1995.

2) **GMU administrative services**

a) **How can I access my records on-line (e.g. registration, unofficial transcripts, advisor assignment, application status)?**

Student information is available at <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu>. Log in using your GMU ID number and your PIN. If you don't have a PIN or have difficulty logging in, contact the Help Desk at 703/993-8870.

b) **Do I need a GMU e-mail account?**

If you haven't already done so, it is **imperative that you activate your GMU e-mail address as soon as possible**. You will need this information to access grades, degree progress, etc. In addition, important notifications will be sent to you via your GMU e-mail account regarding application status, graduation status, etc. GMU will only contact you via your GMU e-mail account. You can activate and access your GMU e-mail account at <https://mail.gmu.edu>. Activation and log-on instructions are available at the website. Also, phone support is available at (703) 993-8870.

c) **What is my student identification number?**

Everyone who has taken a course or applied to the GMU program has been assigned a student identification number (G number). George Mason University has discontinued the use of Social Security numbers. To find your GMU ID number, go to Patriot Web; <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/> and click "[Patriot Web Login Help](#)". You will find links for determining your ID number as well as finding or resetting your PIN.

d) **Do I need a GMU ID? How do I get one?**

You are not required to get a GMU ID., however, you will need one to access GMU library services or to take advantage of discounts and other benefits afforded to GMU students. ID's can be obtained at the Prince William, Fairfax or Arlington campuses. You will need to be active in the GMU system to obtain your ID (either admitted to a program or currently enrolled.) If you are unsure of your status, you may check it on-line at <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu> before going to the ID office. For information on the benefits offered, location of ID offices, or hours of the ID office, please visit <http://www.gmu.edu/univserv/allunivcard/photo/id/>.

3) **Enrollment and Admissions (GSE Admissions Phone: 703-993-2010, E-mail: gseadmit@gmu.edu**

a) **If I am admitted as an Extended Studies student doesn't that mean I am also admitted to the GMU program?**

No, all credits taken as an Extended Studies student, prior to your application to GMU and acceptance into a program are Extended Studies, or non-degree, credits. Although, you can take an infinite number of credits through Extended Studies, **you can only transfer 12 credits, from Extended Studies and/or from another university, into your M.Ed. or certificate program once you have been accepted. If you want your courses to apply to a degree or certificate program, you must submit an application to GMU and be accepted into the program. GMU highly recommends that you submit your application no later than your 2<sup>nd</sup> course in the non-degree program. You can apply online at <http://admissions.gmu.edu/>**

b) **What program/s are available through GMU?**

GMU offers many separate programs that can run simultaneously: the M.Ed. in Special Education (M.Ed.) with no teacher licensure; state approved licensure certificate programs (ED/LD, ED/LD/MR, MR, SD, ECSE), and graduate certificate programs with no teacher licensure (ABAC, AT). Many of the requirements for the M.Ed. and licensure programs overlap, so students are able to work toward their M.Ed. while completing their licensure certificate program. Keeping the programs separate allows students to graduate upon completion of one program before they have completed the requirements for the second program (e.g. students could finish all licensure certificate requirements first and then complete the final 2 courses required for the M.Ed., so students can graduate from the licensure program when the requirements are met and then apply for graduation from the M.Ed. program upon completion of the additional 2 courses.)

c) **In addition to the courses required, what other requirements must I meet to complete the M.Ed.?**

To fulfill the M.Ed. program requirements, you must complete a minimum of 30 credits, of which at least 18 credits must be taken after admission to the program. If you start and complete your program as an admitted GMU student, you will have enough credits from the regular coursework to meet the minimum credit totals, however, if you are transferring credit from another institution or from Extended Studies/non-degree status, you will need to ensure that you have 18 credits remaining after admission to the M.Ed. program.

Also, students in graduate programs must maintain a 3.000 GPA (B average) and only two grades of C or C+ will be allowed for completion of the M.Ed.

d) **In addition to the courses required, what other requirements must I meet to complete the licensure certificate program?**

GMU licensure certificates require that students complete at least 15 credits of coursework in residency. Since the licensure certificate programs require coursework totaling 30-36 credits, the majority of students will easily complete 15 credits of licensure coursework, however, if you are requesting course waivers based on coursework done at another institution (e.g. as an undergraduate, or coursework taken through Extended Studies that exceeds the 12 hour limit for transfer), you will need to ensure that the courses you take at GMU plus any courses you are able to transfer into your program equal or exceed 15 credits. Please note that up to 3 credits previously applied to a degree program at another university may be transferred into a certificate program at Mason.

Also, only courses graded B or better will count toward your licensure program.

e) **To which program should I apply?**

Since many of the teacher licensure requirements overlap with the course requirements for the M.Ed., GMU recommends that you complete the programs simultaneously, unless you have already

completed your licensure requirements or have obtained a M.Ed. and do not wish to complete a second M.Ed. program.

If you intend to complete your M.Ed. in Special Education as well as your teacher licensure program, you should apply to the M.Ed. in Special Education program first (code: ED-MED-EDSE). Once admitted, and have submitted passing Praxis I (SAT/ACT) scores to GSE admissions, you can submit a Declaration of Secondary Program form (available on-line at <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/index.htm#academic>) to add the teacher licensure certificate program to your record.

If you only want the teacher licensure program, and do not intend to complete the M.Ed., submit your application for the area in which you will seek endorsement (i.e. ED/LD (code: ED-CERG-SPEL), ED/LD/MR (code: ED-CERG-SPLM), MR (code: ED-CERG-SPMR), SD (code: ED-CERG-SPSD, EC (code: Ed-CERG-SPEC)). **PLEASE NOTE:** If you return to GMU to complete your M.Ed. at a later date and did not apply to the M.Ed. program initially, only 12 credits from your licensure program will be applied toward the credits needed for your M.Ed. degree.

If you do not plan to seek endorsement through GMU for teacher licensure, apply only to the M.Ed. program in Special Education (code: EDSE).

**f) How does it affect the M.Ed. program if I have courses to transfer in from another institution, or from Extended Studies?**

Please keep in mind that you will need to complete the required courses for your program as well as meet minimum credit totals. To fulfill the M.Ed. program requirements, you must complete a minimum of 30 credits, of which at least 18 credits must be taken after admission to the program in order to fulfill GMU's residency requirements. All students must fulfill the 18 credit residency requirement. Courses transferred into your program will not count toward the 18 credit residency requirement. If you do not have enough remaining credits to complete the residency requirements once you have been admitted to the program, you will be required to take additional courses until the 18 credit minimum has been met. Because you are completing 2 programs, the M.Ed. and the licensure program, even if you have completed more than 12 credits in Extended Studies, you may still be able to complete the residency requirements without taking additional courses depending on how many credits you have remaining in the 2 programs combined. However, **to ensure you meet the residency requirement without having to take additional courses, GMU highly recommends that you submit your application no later than at the time you enroll in your 2<sup>nd</sup> course.**

**g) How does it affect the licensure program if I have courses to transfer in from another institution, or from Extended Studies?**

Since the licensure certificate programs require coursework totaling 30-36 credits, the majority of students will easily complete minimum 15 credits of licensure coursework required for licensure certificate programs, however, if you are requesting course waivers (not transfers) based on coursework done at another institution (e.g. as an undergraduate, or coursework taken through Extended Studies or another institution that exceeds the 12 hour limit for transfer), you will need to ensure that the courses you take at GMU plus any courses you are able to transfer into your program equal or exceed 15 credits.

**h) What are the admissions deadlines?**

Applications should be submitted according to the following deadlines to ensure timely admission:

Summer/Fall Enrollment	March 1
Spring Enrollment	November 1

However, the Special Education program has a rolling admissions policy and reviews applications year round. The Special Education program recommends students submit their applications as soon as possible. Admission will be granted for the subsequent semester.

- i) **Who must take PRAXIS I and what is the deadline for submitting passing PRAXIS I scores?**  
Anyone seeking teaching licensure who does not already have a Collegiate Professional License in Virginia, or a license in another state with 2 years documented teaching experience with that license, must submit official passing PRAXIS I scores in Reading, Writing and Math (PPST composite of 532, CPPST composite of 973) before being admitted to the licensure program (**PLEASE NOTE:** PRAXIS I is not required for admission to the M.Ed. program so you may be admitted to GMU, in the M.Ed. program, prior to submission of passing PRAXIS I scores.) In addition, passing PRAXIS scores (or SAT scores) must be on record before an internship will be approved.

Alternatively, the Virginia Department of Education has made provisions for the use of official SAT scores that meet the following conditions to be submitted in lieu of Praxis.

SAT tests taken:	Verbal	Math	Total
Prior to April 1, 1995	450	510	1000
After April 1, 1995	530	530	1100

- j) **If I don't have PRAXIS scores, or passing SAT scores, should I wait to submit my application?**  
No, applications to the M.Ed. can be processed without PRAXIS scores, so please submit your application and note your scheduled PRAXIS test date on the application form. You must complete the PRAXIS *as soon as possible*, however, as your admission to the licensure program will not be approved until passing PRAXIS scores are on file. When taking the PRAXIS be sure to include GMU's code on the ETS form so an official PRAXIS report will be sent directly to GMU. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you wait to submit your application, you will be in danger of exceeding the 12 credits you can transfer into your M.Ed. program from Extended Studies/non-degree status or other institution and may result in the For the M.Ed. you must earn 18 credit hours after admission to the graduate degree program.
- k) **Do we need to turn in our immunization information as directed in the acceptance letter?**  
Contact Health Services at GMU for questions related to this and other health issues (see the form you received with your letter for contact information).
- l) **Do extended studies credits count toward the M.Ed. of Education Degree (M.Ed.)?**  
Extended Studies status is the same as non-degree(ND), therefore, to count those credits toward your degree, you must request a "transfer of credit" after you've been admitted to GMU's graduate degree program on regular status (See transfer of credit info that follows).
- m) **What does it mean to "audit" a class?**  
Auditing a course requires the permission of the instructor of the course and completion of audit forms. The usual tuition and fees apply to audit status.

#### 4) **After admission: Academic forms and advising**

##### a) **Transfer of Credit**

- i) **How do we move Extended Studies/Non-degree credits (those credits earned prior to acceptance into the degree program at GMU) into our graduate program?**  
Academic forms are online at <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms>. Scroll down to the "Transfer of Credit Request" form; click and download form; complete it and fax, mail, or bring to your advisor for signature. If you have been admitted on provisional status (as noted in your acceptance letter), you may only transfer extended studies credits once you have satisfied the provisional acceptance conditions and have been awarded regular status.

**ii) How do we transfer credit taken prior to admission to the university?**

Use the same form and procedures as in #1 above (Transfer of Credit Request), plus, provide an official transcript showing the course you want to transfer, the catalog description of the course, and a copy of the syllabus for the course. Your advisor must approve the transfer.

**b) Can I take a course at another university while I am a GMU student?**

Yes you can, but it is discouraged. Our program is comprehensive and offers all of the coursework you need to complete your programs. If for some reason you need to take a course outside of Mason, you must first get permission to do so. The "Mason Request to Take Course Elsewhere" form must be completed prior to registering for a course from another university the student wishes to apply to his/her GSE program. The form is online at <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms>.

**c) What if I miss a semester or more of classes and want to return to the graduate program?**

There is nothing you need to do in advance, however, if you are out for two semesters or more, upon return you will need to complete a re-enrollment form and application for in-state tuition rates. Both forms are at <http://gse.gmu.edu> under Student Resources. PLEASE NOTE: admission into a program starts the six-year clock (the six years the student has to complete a degree program). That clock does not stop during the student's absence. Also, if you fail to complete the re-enrollment form upon your return, you will be enrolled in courses as an Extended Studies/Non-degree student which may result in the need for additional coursework to complete your M.Ed.

**d) How do I determine who my advisor is?**

You will be assigned an advisor upon acceptance into GMU's program. Your letter of acceptance will notify you as to who your advisor is. You can also determine your advisor by logging onto <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu>.

**5) Completing GMU licensure requirements and applying for a license**

**a) How will we know when our state licensure requirements are met before the M.Ed. Degree is completed?**

If you are in both the M.Ed. and a certificate program, you must view your degree progress separately for your primary (generally M.Ed.) and your secondary (generally licensure certificate) program to determine which course/credit requirements are remaining for each program. Your degree progress may be viewed on-line at <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu>. Your advisor can review your requirements with you.

**b) Does GMU or school division personnel apply to the state for endorsement/licensure?**

Only after you have completed the requirements for the licensure certificate program (see above), including two internships (unless one has been waived), will GMU verify that you have completed a state approved program. It is up to you to submit your licensure application to the state through your school HR department.

Alternatively, if you have **not completed** our state-approved teacher licensure program, you may submit through your school division an application to the state for your license. In this case, your coursework will be matched with state requirements for licensure and the state will determine if you have met state requirements or need to complete additional coursework. **PLEASE NOTE: GMU courses are not a one-to-one match with state requirements and the state may require you take additional courses if you have not completed the program in full.**

**c) How do we apply through GMU for a Collegiate Professional License to replace our conditional or provisional one?**

When all GMU requirements have been met, the student completes an application, including state mandated fees, and submits it to GSE for filing with the state. This form may be found at <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms> . You may also contact the GMU licensure specialist at 703-993-2094.

**6) Grades and Grading Procedures**

**a) What is the typical grading scale for special education graduate courses?**

A grading scale will be determined by faculty for each course and will be provided on the syllabus for that course. Most courses are graded with standard letter grades such as A, B, C, and F. It is at the discretion of the instructor to assign letter grades with + or -.

**b) What grade points are assigned to letter grades by the Graduate School of Education at GMU?**

The university-wide system is as follows:

Grade:	Grade Points	Graduate Courses
A+, A	4.0	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	3.0	Satisfactory/Passing
B-	2.67	Unsatisfactory/Passing
C	2.0	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	0.00	Unsatisfactory/Failing

The GPA calculation excludes all transfer courses and GMU Extended Studies credits that are not formally approved for the degree.

**c) How do I get my grades at the end of each course?**

Go to <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/> and login using your GMU identification number (G number) Instructions for obtaining your G number and PIN are on the same website.

**7) Internship Questions: (See Appendix A for internship purpose and objectives)**

**a) Where can I find the internship application and manual?**

Applications and manuals are available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/intpract/index.htm>.

**b) How does my PRAXIS I, VRA, and VCLA scores affect my ability to complete an internship?**

Taking PRAXIS I, VRA, and VCLA are a special education licensure certificate admissions requirement; you must have a passing composite score on all three tests before you will be approved for an internship, which is a requirement of the licensure certificate program. See Virginia passing scores below with the score differences reflecting the version of the test taken with the computerized format scores in the second column.

**Praxis I:**

	PPST	CPPST
Reading	178	326
Writing	176	324
Math	178	323
Composite	532	973

VRA: 235

VCLA: 235

**SAT AS A SUBSTITUTE TEST FOR PRAXIS I**

The Board of Education approved the use of the SAT® as a substitute test for PRAXIS I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) required for initial licensure. The board approved a score of 1000 on the SAT®, taken prior to April 1, 1995, with at least 450 on the verbal and 510 on the mathematics tests

or a score of 1100 on the SAT, taken after April 1, 1995, with at least 530 on the verbal and 530 on the mathematics tests as a substitute for PRAXIS I.

ACT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PRAXIS

The Board of Education approved the ACT® as a substitute for the Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) required for initial licensure. The Board approved a score of 24 with a minimum 22(Math)/46(English plus Reading) for tests taken after April 1, 1995 or a score of 21 with a minimum 21 (Math)/37 (English plus Reading) for test taken after September 1989 and before April 1, 1995.

**c) How many internships must I complete?**

The Virginia Department of Education (VADOE) has approved the GMU licensure certificate program. **This program requires the completion of two internship experiences.** In the ED/LD or the ED/LD/MR program, the internships must include teaching students with each disability area you are seeking endorsement. One of those internships must be completed at the elementary level and one at the secondary level. If you are currently working as a teacher or instructional assistant, teaching students with learning disabilities and/or emotional disabilities, one of your internship experiences may be completed “on-the job” which means your internship requirements may be fulfilled in your employment setting. In this case, the second internship must be completed at the opposite instructional level from your current teaching position.

If you also wish to pursue licensure in MR, at least one internship experience must include students with mental retardation. There are numerous ways this may be accomplished and you should consult your advisor for further information and assistance.

**d) Will I have to complete the internship requirements if I already have teaching experience?**

As stated above, VADOE has approved the GMU M.Ed./Teacher Licensure program of study. **Internship experiences are required components** of that approved program. In December 2004 the Department of Education granted an internship waiver request submitted by GMU. In doing so VADOE granted GMU the permission to waive one internship experience provided certain requirements were met. GMU will accept a student’s application for the waiver of one two-credit hour internship if the student has successfully completed two academic or calendar years teaching students with disabilities in a public school or accredited private school setting in the special education endorsement area(s) K-12 they are seeking. If a student taught from the first day of school to the last day of school in an academic year, their experience will be measured in academic years. If the student’s contract began after the start of the school year, their experience will be measured in calendar years. A student must fulfill the two year successful teaching requirement by June 30<sup>th</sup> if they are a May graduate and January 31<sup>st</sup> if they are a December graduate.

**The waiver is not automatic!** The student **must complete** one two credit-hour on the job internship coupled with additional observations at the opposite instructional level (elem/sec) in which they are teaching and seeking licensure. The second internship experience may be waived if the student meets all of the requirements and obtains approval from a GMU faculty advisor. A student must submit all required documentation with a substitution/waiver form that can be downloaded from <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms>. The required documentation templates can be found at <http://gse.gmu.edu/intpract/index.htm> . (The exact text of the waiver and all relevant procedures can be found in Appendix A) For further information please contact Amie Fulcher at [fulcher@gmu.edu](mailto:fulcher@gmu.edu) or Terry Werner at [twerner@gmu.edu](mailto:twerner@gmu.edu) .

**e) Will I need to complete two internships if I already have a permanent teaching license?**

If you already have a collegiate professional license (NOT CONDITIONAL NOR PROVISIONAL) in either ED K-12, LD K-12, or MR K-12 the internship experience in which you have a license can be waived by submitting a copy of your license and a substitution/waiver form (<http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/Substitution.pdf>) and requesting the waiver through your advisor. For the licensure certificate from GMU and verification that you completed a state approved teacher

preparation program, you need to complete at least one 2-hr. internship as part of your degree program at GMU; this could be in the form of an on-the-job internship.

**f) What is the difference between a waiver and an on the job internship?**

To complete an on the job internship, the student must complete an application, an on the job internship form, an enrollment (registration) form and pay tuition. The student will be assigned a university supervisor who will provide feedback during the internship period. When an internship is waived, a student is not required to enroll or participate in an internship course.

**g) How can I do my internships if I have a provisional teaching license and am currently teaching students with learning disabilities or emotional disabilities?**

You can apply to complete an on-the-job internship. You will need to have the permission and support of your building administrator and university advisor. You will be assigned a cooperating teacher from your school and a university supervisor. You will still be responsible for completing the university requirements associated with the internship, but you will be able to complete this internship experience while you work. The second internship may be completed during the summer in a variety of settings, which could include summer school in your local school division or opportunities at GMU CompuWrite “camp” that is held on the Fairfax GMU campus.

**h) What do I do for my internship if I am permanently licensed in either ED, LD and/or MR and in the M.Ed only program?**

For the M.Ed. only, you **do not** have to complete an internship.

**i) What are the deadlines for applications for internships?**

**Placement by GMU:**

**February 15** for Fall and Summer

**September 15** for Spring semester

**On the Job:**

**May 1** for Fall and Summer semesters

**December 1** for Spring semester

***LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!!! It is critical that these deadlines be met as GMU must be able to process applications and hire university supervisors.***

**j) If I'm not currently in a teaching position, how will I complete my internship?**

Internships may be completed during the summer months either through summer school teaching or through CompuWrite “camps” that are held on the Fairfax GMU campus. It may be possible to complete one internship each summer for two summers, however, it is difficult to find summer internship opportunities that provide enough hours of direct teaching to meet licensure requirements. Review these options with your advisor prior to Sept. 15 for the spring semester or prior to Feb. 15 for the summer or fall semesters.

**k) Tell me about the summer internship opportunities on the GMU campus in Fairfax.**

CompuWrite is a computer writing camp for students in grades 3 through 6. The primary focus of the camp is to work with students having difficulty in the writing process. The teacher/student ratio is typically 1:3. CompuWrite blends technology and writing! Students work on the five stages of writing by combining writing strategies with technology tools.

Brainstorming → Drafting → Revising → Editing → Production

Teachers of CompuWrite “make writing fun” by enhancing the writing process using technology. Information from parents and schools is taken prior to camp and decisions are made with parents about particular individual focus areas. We then apply the principles of writing using available

technology to facilitate the writing process. The available technology includes scanners, cameras, latest software, voice recognition and voice output software, and the Internet.

Internship dates: Typically the month of July

Hours: 9:00-3:45

Credits: This is a 1-2 credit internship depending on your program requirements (internship requirements are the **same** for both 1 and 2 credit placements). The internship can count for ED or LD, elementary as we serve students grades 3-6. In some cases this internship can count for MR endorsement depending on student enrollment.

Assignments: Depending on your internship needs, you will be matched with a small group of students in the morning and afternoon sessions of camp. You may have up to 3 students in each session, but may have less depending on student learning needs and staffing ratio. You are responsible for planning daily instruction for students and writing a final recommendation report at the end of camp for each student.

Training: Interns are required to attend a one-day orientation/ technology training session. Although the date is not confirmed, it is tentatively scheduled for either Saturday, June 11 or 25 from 10-3. Student assignments will be given at that time.

Applications are available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/>. Request that you want an on-campus internship for the CompuWrite camp. Confirmation letters will be sent in the spring; the letter will include the final arrangements for the orientation meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact the Kellar Institute for Human disabilities and ask to speak to the Camp Director. The office number is 703-993-3670.

**l) If I am teaching in a classroom for students with disabilities other than ED/LD/MR, how will I do an internship in ED, LD, or MR?**

Internships can be completed during the summer months either through teaching summer school or through teaching CompuWrite, a summer “camp” that is held on the Fairfax GMU campus. One summer you may enroll for an LD internship and the other summer you may enroll in an ED internship. You may also want explore options within your school division (e.g., release time) to complete an on-the-job internship by scheduling time to work with ED, LD and/or MR students. Review these options with your advisor prior to Sept 15 for the spring semester or prior to Feb. 15 for the summer or fall semesters.

**m) Will summer school internships provide sufficient contact hours?**

Careful attention must be paid for initial licensure to be certain that the 300 hours required by the state, of which 150 must be independent teaching, are obtained. Each two credit internship requires 75 hours planning and consultation and 75 direct teaching contact hours.

**n) Are we guaranteed to be hired in an ED,LD,MR teaching position to meet internship requirements if we apply for a summer school teaching position within our school division?**

No, while most school divisions attempt to work with the GMU/GSE program, this is determined by the school division in which you are working. GMU has no control over hiring decisions within local school divisions.

**o) If we are already a certified teacher in a non-special education area, is it necessary to complete internships in special education?**

If a teacher is licensed in a content area, such as chemistry, he/she still has to do internships with the population for which endorsement is sought. It could be that the chemistry teacher has LD or ED students in his/her chemistry class and thus, could complete an on the job internship for one level.

**p) If we are also going for MR endorsement, do we have an extra internship in that area as well?**

In order to receive endorsement in MR, you have to complete an internship with students with mental retardation. However, you may complete one internship in a classroom with ED/LD students

and one in a classroom with MR students. You may also teach in a classroom setting that has students with varying disabilities which include MR, ED and/or LD. You may also work with a student who is identified as MR/ED.

**q) What programs might be appropriate for an internship?**

The requirements for internships can be met through actual teaching in public and accredited private schools, during the school year or summer school, on campus opportunities as well as other settings that may be considered appropriate by your advisor.

**8) Mid-Point/Final Portfolio Questions: (see Appendix B for detailed course information)**

**a) Is Midpoint Portfolio a culmination of our course work/assignments?**

The midpoint portfolio is a one-credit hour course (15 contact hours) that initiates the documentation process of specific skills and knowledge required for special educators as determined by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and NCATE accreditation of GMU's special education program. These are the same competencies that GMU/GSE is committed to in its programs.

**b) What items should I keep for my mid-point and final portfolios? Everything?**

Yes. Keep a notebook or file for each course in which you put copies of all of your work for that course. You may discover something that will meet one of the competencies and can use in your portfolio. At the very minimum, keep major and graded assignments.

**c) How will I know how to select and organize materials for my portfolio?**

This will be addressed in the Midpoint portfolio course (EDSE 791). Generally, be sure to save any syllabi, exams and major projects completed for each course. Keep the notebook or file for each course as indicated above and you should not have any problems.

**d) Will we be behind with mid-point portfolio class if we have missed taking a course in our sequence?**

Midpoint requires submission of 5 artifacts. You should have completed at least 3 courses, prior to enrollment in the Midpoint Portfolio course to ensure you have enough coursework from previous classes to complete the Midpoint requirements. If you have missed a course in your sequence, you will not have examples of the work from that particular course to display in your portfolio for a particular competency but will later be able to include the product(s) from the course in your final portfolio.

**e) If I am not seeking endorsement (am only in the M.Ed. program) do I need to take the portfolio class?**

Yes, the portfolio courses are required for both the M.Ed. and for the licensure certificate, however, EDSE 782: Comprehensive Topics in Special Education (3 credits) can be substituted for the portfolio courses if no licensure certificate is sought. Please contact your advisor if you would like further information about this option.

**11) Graduation: What do I need to do?**

a) Students begin the graduation process by visiting the graduation webpage at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/gif/forms.html>.

**b) What are the steps a student must complete to apply for graduation?**

1. Go to graduation website: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/gif/cert.html>

2. Click on the link that corresponds to the programs you are graduating from:

Application for Graduation: Certificate Program <http://registrar.gmu.edu/gif/cert.html>

Application for Graduation: Graduate Programs <http://registrar.gmu.edu/gif/graduate.html>

**3. Click on the degree or certificate program that matches the semester you plan to graduate in (i.e. Spring, Summer or Fall)**

**PLEASE NOTE: If you are graduating from BOTH programs (licensure certificate and M.Ed programs you **must** complete a graduation application for each of the programs and submit a Graduation Intent Form (GIF) for **each** of the programs.**

Graduation deadlines are well in advance of degree conferral dates. When the graduation applications become available each semester, an e-mail will be sent via your GMU email account to students notifying them that the forms are online and providing application deadlines and instructions for filing. Follow the instructions provided in the e-mail and on the graduation site carefully and complete forms fully to ensure your paperwork is processed and your graduation is not denied. If you have any questions regarding eligibility for graduation, please contact Amie Fulcher at [afulcher@gmu.edu](mailto:afulcher@gmu.edu).

\*\*Responses are subject to revision as required by policy/procedural changes

## Appendix A

### INTERNSHIP PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

(Sections from the *Special Education Licensure Program Internship Manual*, 2006)

## INTERNSHIP PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

### Purpose of Internship

The primary purpose of the internship in special education is to integrate, apply and refine student competencies necessary for independent functioning as a special educator in a variety of settings. Expected competencies will vary according to the specific area of study within special education, licensure requirements, and professional goals of individual students. Students in each setting will apply effective techniques and procedures and will engage in activities, which contribute to the smooth functioning of the specific internship experience. Depending on the internship experience, students will be expected to demonstrate competencies from among the following: human relations, organization and preparation, assessment, communication skills, classroom management, subject matter knowledge, individual and group instructional skills, and self-monitoring.

### Internship Requirements

All students must complete two university-supervised internship experiences: one internship experience must be at the **elementary level** and the other at the secondary level which can be at either the **middle or high school** (4 credit hours total). One internship experience may be completed On the Job. Students pursuing ED/LD licensure are required to complete one internship experience that includes students with ED, and students with LD. This means students with both disabilities may be incorporated in one internship or they may be taught in two separate internships. Students pursuing ED/LD/MR licensure are required to complete at least one internship experience that includes working with students with MR. For students pursuing licensure in MR they must complete both of their internships with students with MR. In certain circumstances, students may qualify for a waiver. Please contact your advisor for more information.

### Time Requirements

Internships vary in length depending upon the number of credits to be earned, the type of internship, and the number of different settings required. The following guidelines are used to determine the length of licensure internships:

<b>1 credit hour</b> —75 contact hours	2.5-3 weeks full-time or its equivalent
<b>2 credit hours</b> —150 contact hours	4-5 weeks full-time or its equivalent
<b>3 credit hours</b> —225 contact hours	6-8 weeks full-time or its equivalent
<b>4 credit hours</b> —300 contact hours--	9-11 weeks full-time or its equivalent

The length of any internship may be extended if it is deemed advisable by the University Supervisor.

## INTERNSHIP ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

### Student Pre-Internship Responsibilities

1. Students must complete an internship application based on the type of internship they choose to complete. Students must submit both a **Special Education Application Form and an On the Job Application form if they are doing an on the job internship. If the student is being placed in an internship, they must submit a Special Education Application form only.** All applications must be signed by their academic advisor before submission to the Internship Coordinator. Applications are required for all on-campus and field-based placements. **Deadlines are as follows:**

**Placement**    February 15— Summer/Fall.....September 15—Spring  
**On the Job**    May 1—Summer/Fall.....December 1— Spring

**Note:** For students completing an On-the-Job internship, TB tests are not necessary as they are already on file with the county. For those students seeking an internship placement, a TB test is required. Results of a chest x-ray or TB skin test must be presented to the Office of Academic Affairs with the application for internship. Skin tests, valid for one year, may be obtained through Health Services at GMU, public health departments, or private physicians.

2. Each student is to prepare a **resume** and a **separate goals statement**. The goals statement should be limited to two typewritten pages and be signed by the student’s advisor. The Office of Student and Faculty Services submit five copies of these papers with the internship application for distribution to the university supervisor and cooperating teacher.

3. Interns are strongly encouraged to purchase professional liability insurance through membership in the GMU Student Education Association, the Council for Exceptional Children, or through a private carrier in case of civil legal action.

**\*Interns employed by a school division are encouraged to purchase additional coverage to supplement what is provided.**

**BEFORE YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR INTERNSHIP**

<p><b>Pre-Requisite Course/Curriculum Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must be enrolled or have completed <i>EDSE 628</i> before you are eligible to apply for the elementary internship. You must be enrolled or have completed <i>EDSE 629</i> before you are eligible to apply for the secondary internship.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must have a GPA of 3.0 or better in professional coursework and be in good standing according to CEHD criteria.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory evaluations in special education field experiences.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the student receives a grade of C in any licensure coursework, the CEHD cannot recommend the student for state licensure.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must have taken and passed the Praxis I, the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), and the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) prior to applying to take your internship experience.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

### Mid-Point and Final Portfolios

EDSE 791: Performance-Based Assessment of CEC Standards: Individual Portfolio Development: Midpoint Portfolio (1) When students have completed 4 to 6 EDSE courses, they must enroll in this course before enrolling in a 5th EDSE course (1 credit).

EDSE 792: Performance-Based Assessment of CEC Standards: Individual Portfolio Development: Final Portfolio (1) Students take this course when they are finishing their final coursework and internship (1 credit).

#### Course Description

This course provides an opportunity for students to develop their portfolio. This serves as the vehicle to assess whether they are meeting the standards of their professional organization, the Council for Exceptional Children.

#### Student Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will have:

- Completed either a midpoint or final performance-based portfolio that is organized by program specifications in alignment with the CEC core and specialty area standards.
- Presented this portfolio to program faculty and peers.
- Given GMU program feedback.

#### Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 791 and 792 are part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in Special Education. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by CEC, the major special education professional organization in the United States (see the CEC standards on the following web site: [http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/standards.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/standards.html)). This course addresses CEC/NCATE standards by meeting midpoint and end point evaluations.

Course Delivery: In-class or blackboard discussions on the nature of teacher preparation program portfolios, peer discussion, and cooperative learning.

#### Evaluation

- Class attendance and participation
- Portfolio development and presentation

#### Grading Criteria

- Satisfactory
- In Progress
- No Credit

### REPRESENTATIVE FORMAT FOR PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT ASSIGNMENT

Please include:

- Table of Contents that is reader-friendly, enabling readers to find materials easily. The Table of Contents should make it clear to a reader that you have organized materials carefully and logically.
- The Following Two Sections:
  - I. Introductory Narrative: Prepare a narrative to accompany your portfolio. Include a description of the approach you took to building your portfolio
    - Your rationale for the approach (with resources cited)
    - A brief summary of the portfolio contents
    - Your thoughts about developing your portfolio

- What was most surprising to you about the process?
- What was hard? What was easy?
- What did you learn in the process?

The major part of this section is a reflection on how your coursework at GMU relates to you as a learner, how you have met the CEC Content standards (what showed your skills/knowledge) and how you integrate the skills/knowledge you have gained to your future practice in Special Education.

- II. The actual 10 sections for CEC content standards, 1 for each standard in the portfolio with accompanying documents/artifact. By your final portfolio you will have at least three entries for each standard (see midpoint guidelines for minimal number needed for midpoint portfolio). On the entry form for each document/entry form there is a section on the reasoning behind use of this particular document/artifact. In that section put the necessary information to indicate why you selected this artifact, how it demonstrated competence/knowledge of the standard.
1. Foundations
  2. Characteristics of learners
  3. Individual learning differences
  4. Instructional strategies
  5. Learning environments
  6. Language
  7. Instructional planning
  8. Assessment
  9. Ethics and professional practice
  10. Collaboration
- Online Program Critique: Based on the information contained in your portfolio and your personal experiences, suggest changes you view as needed in your GMU program. Include components of your GMU program did you find helpful and that you would suggest as experiences for other students in your specialty area.

## Appendix C

### Important Websites for GMU Information & Forms

See requirements for special education M.Ed. and graduate certificate programs, at:

<http://gse.gmu.edu/indexNet.htm>

Special Education Program brochure:

<http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/descriptions/specialed.htm>

Academic Forms of all sorts:

<http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/index.htm#academic>

Internship Application forms/procedures: (note differences in on-the-job and regular)

<http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/index.htm#internship>

Special Education Internship Waiver Documents:

<http://gse.gmu.edu/intpract/index.htm#SpecialEd>

[Transfer of Credit Request](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/TransferCreditRequest.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/TransferCreditRequest.pdf>

request the transfer of GMU Extended Studies courses or coursework completed elsewhere into the student's GSE degree program

[Substitution/Waiver](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/Substitution.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/Substitution.pdf>

request the substitution of an approved GMU course for a required course OR request the approval of a program elective OR request the waiver of a program requirement

[Transcript Request](http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/academic/transcr-req.pdf) <http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/academic/transcr-req.pdf>

request GMU transcripts

[Graduate Reenrollment Form](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/GraduateReenrollmentForm.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/GraduateReenrollmentForm.pdf>

request to reactivate the student's enrollment in a program of study when the student has been out for more than two semesters.

[Tentative Evaluation of Transfer Credit](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/TentativeEvalTransferCredit.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/TentativeEvalTransferCredit.pdf>

for prospective students only: request the review of graduate courses taken elsewhere for possible application to a GSE degree program

[Declaration of Secondary Program](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/DeclarationSecondary.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/DeclarationSecondary.pdf>

request enrollment in a secondary program of study while completing the student's primary program; restrictions apply

[Change Primary Program](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/ChangePrimary.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/ChangePrimary.pdf>

request a change from the student's declared program of study to a different program of study in the Graduate School of Education; restrictions apply

[Program Extension Request](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/ProgramExtension.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/ProgramExtension.pdf>

request extension to the university's 6-year time limit for completion of the M.Ed.

[Course Audit](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/CourseAudit.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/CourseAudit.pdf>

change the grade status of a course from "Credit" to "Audit"; must be submitted to Registrar's office by the last day to drop

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[Special Registration Request](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/SpecialRegistrationRequest.pdf) <http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/SpecialRegistrationRequest.pdf>

request to remain active in the GMU system in the student's term of degree conferral without registering for a course

[GMU Request to Take Course Elsewhere](http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/GMURequestCrseElsewhere.pdf)

<http://gse.gmu.edu/forms/academic/GMURequestCrseElsewhere.pdf>

obtain permission before registering for a course at another institution the student wishes to apply to his/her GSE program of a program elective OR request the waiver of a program requirement.

## Appendix D

### Student Responsibilities Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete an application to GMU. Prior to admission to GMU's program, students may be enrolled in non-degree status. **PLEASE NOTE: Only 12 credits can be transferred into your program from non-degree status and/or other institutions.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit official, passing PRAXIS I scores to GSE admissions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit appropriate Transfer of Credit forms, Substitution/Waiver forms, Re-enrollment forms, etc. as required by GMU's College of Education and Human Development.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete a portfolio via courses EDSE 791 & EDSE 792 with coursework done throughout your program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete internship applications and have form reviewed and signed by your advisor in time to meet GMU's internship deadlines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Activate and regularly check your GMU e-mail account!!!!

## Appendix E

### Contact Information

Mason on-line directory – Search for faculty, staff, students, or departments

<http://www.gmu.edu/mlnavbar/finder/>

### **Special Education Program**

#### **Faculty/Advisors**

Michael Behrman, Ed.D.  
Special Education Program Coordinator  
[mbehrman@gmu.edu](mailto:mbehrman@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3670 Fax: (703)993-3681

Terry Werner, J.D.  
Special Education Outreach Coordinator  
[twerner@gmu.edu](mailto:twerner@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-2064 Fax: (703)993-3681

Margo Mastropieri, Ph.D.  
Professor of Education  
[mmastrop@gmu.edu](mailto:mmastrop@gmu.edu)  
Robinson B 441B  
(703)993-4136

Tom Scruggs, Ph.D.  
Professor of Education  
[tscruggs@gmu.edu](mailto:tscruggs@gmu.edu)  
Robinson A 253  
Phone: (703)993-4138

Peggy King-Sears, Ph.D.  
Professor of Education  
[mkingsea@gmu.edu](mailto:mkingsea@gmu.edu)  
Robinson B441A  
Phone: (703)993-3916

Jane Razeghi, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Education  
[jrazeghi@gmu.edu](mailto:jrazeghi@gmu.edu)  
Krug 105  
Phone: (703)993-2055 Fax: (703)993-3681

Rick Brigham, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Education  
[Fbrigham@gmu.edu](mailto:Fbrigham@gmu.edu)  
Robinson B 443  
Phone: (703)993-1667

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Lori Jackman, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor of Education  
[ljackman@gmu.edu](mailto:ljackman@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3881 Fax: (703)993-3681

Pam Baker, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor of Education  
[pbaker@gmu.edu](mailto:pbaker@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3881 Fax: (703)993-3681

Joe Gagnon, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Education  
[jgagnon@gmu.edu](mailto:jgagnon@gmu.edu)  
TH A110  
Phone: (703)993-2045

Carmen Rioux-Bailey, Ed.S.  
Instructor  
[criouxba@gmu.edu](mailto:criouxba@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703) 993-3670

Marci Kinas Jerome, M.Ed.  
Instructor  
[mkinas@gmu.edu](mailto:mkinas@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)994-0111

Amie Fulcher, M.Ed.  
Special Education Advisor  
[afulcher@gmu.edu](mailto:afulcher@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-2387 Fax: (703)993-3681

### **Administrative support**

Susan Miller  
Enrollment Services Coordinator  
[smilleb@gmu.edu](mailto:smilleb@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3670 Fax: (703)993-3681

Jancy Templeton  
Faculty Support  
[jtemple1@gmu.edu](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3670 Fax: (703)993-3681

Pam Vogel  
Faculty Support  
[pvogel@gmu.edu](mailto:pvogel@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3670 Fax: (703)993-3681

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Elaine Miller  
Business Manager  
[Emiller3@gmu.edu](mailto:Emiller3@gmu.edu)  
Krug 110A  
Phone: (703)993-3670 Fax: (703)993-3681

### **Graduate School of Education**

Dr. Mark Goor  
Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs  
[mgoor@gmu.edu](mailto:mgoor@gmu.edu)  
Robinson A307  
Phone: (703)993-2080

### **Admissions**

4400 University Drive, MS: 4D1  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Robinson A103  
[gseadmit@gmu.edu](mailto:gseadmit@gmu.edu)  
Phone: (703)993-2010 Fax: (703)993-2082

### **Internships**

**Amanda Cline**  
Internship Placement Coordinator  
Robinson A 338  
[acline2@gmu.edu](mailto:acline2@gmu.edu)  
Phone: (703) 993-2078 Fax: (703) 993-2082

### **Licensure**

**Joanna Bosik**  
Licensure Specialist  
Robinson A103  
[jbosik@gmu.edu](mailto:jbosik@gmu.edu)  
Phone: (703)993-2094 Fax: (703) 993-2082