**Program Summary**

**Notre Dame de Namur University**

**Education Specialist (MMSN and ESN) Credential Programs**

Founded in 1851, Notre Dame de Namur University is a private, Catholic, co-educational university which has been located in Belmont, CA since 1923. It is the third oldest college in California and the first college in the state authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees to women. Founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the Hallmarks <https://www.ndnu.edu/about-ndnu/> of the sisters form the foundation and values upon which our professionally oriented courses are built. The School of Education is grounded in the latest educational research and course work reflects the integration of this research and current best practices in the field of education.

The Education Specialist Credential Program offers two areas of study, mild to moderate support needs (MMSN**)** and extensive support needs (ESN). The two programs are part of the Education Department in the School of Education (SOE). The structure of leadership begins with the dean of the SOE, followed by the program directors for each credential program, placement coordinators, clinical field supervisors, and faculty, in partnership with cooperating teachers and administrators at K-12 schools. The cooperating teachers and administrators liaise with the clinical field supervisors and placement coordinators; part time and full-time faculty in the programs, placement coordinators and clinical field supervisors report to the program director; and the program director reports to the dean of the SOE. This occurs at regular monthly meetings within each program as well as monthly meetings with the entire SOE.

The executive assistant to the dean of the SOE sends out regular communication to faculty via email and to the students via a monthly SOE electronic newsletter. The Special Education program holds regular monthly meetings with the placement coordinator and clinical field supervisors to discuss the progress of students in placements. This information is then communicated with the dean and other program directors at regular monthly meetings with the entire SOE which includes all faculty and staff including the executive assistant to the dean and the credentials analyst. Program directors regularly communicate with the credential’s analyst in addition to department meetings as necessary. The dean attends regular meetings with the university president and her cabinet. The Faculty Governance Committee (FGC), which includes a representative from each school including SOE, meets regularly with the vice president of academic affairs as well as the university president to communicate about issues impacting SOE students and faculty.

The program director communicates on an ongoing basis throughout the school year with clinical field supervisors, placement coordinator, K-12 administrators, cooperating teachers/district liaisons, and the credentials analyst to ensure that placements are running smoothly. The credential program directors meets annually with faculty within each program at the end of the spring semester during Education Retreat to debrief the academic year, analyze data and adjust and plan for the upcoming school year. Additional outreach includes the Dean’s Advisory Council that meets twice a year and includes K-12 administrators and community partners to solicit feedback, share concerns, and work toward problem solving regarding common goals and interests. Each semester the SOE hosts a cooperating teacher/site provider/district liaison workshop for school partners supporting student teachers and intern teachers. SOE also provides additional “office hours” throughout the year so that cooperating teachers or district liaisons supporting interns have the ability to connect about questions or concerns on an ongoing basis.

Candidates are admitted to the program in fall, spring, and summer semesters. Most courses are in person, with some synchronous or asynchronous online instruction. The majority of courses are offered in a hybrid model: in person, with some synchronous or asynchronous online instruction. Both MMSN and ESN candidates take foundations courses with the general education credential candidates, then take the majority of their special education together. Candidates then take MMSN and ESN specific courses. During fall and spring semesters, courses are offered once a week in the evening [4:30-7:00P; 7:15-9:45P] 5 days a week during a 16-week semester. In summer courses are offered in two 7-week intensive format with courses meeting 2 nights per week {Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday] . The summer schedule is structured so Special Education candidates can complete up to 12 units. During the recruiting process, program directors meet with potential candidates to review the program, including CTC requirements, options for both full-time and part-time attendance in terms of course sequences, how they will be assessed/evaluated during the program, field practicum requirements, and requirements for credential recommendation. Following admission, candidates meet with their program director to complete a program plan with an initial timeline for program completion. Candidates meet with their program director at mid-term of each semester to review their program plan and make adjustments, as needed, prior to registering for their next semester. Most candidates elect to move through the program at a slower pace, especially those working full-time on intern credentials, and the program director works with candidates to design a program that provides for work/life balance.

Candidates complete evaluations of professors at the end of every course, as well as evaluations of cooperating teachers and clinical field supervisors at the end of each of two semesters of fieldwork. The program director communicates on an ongoing basis throughout the school year with clinical field supervisors, placement coordinators, K-12 administrators and cooperating teachers, and the credentials analyst to ensure that placements are running smoothly. The program director meets annually with the special education faculty at the end of the spring semester during Education Retreat to debrief the academic year, analyze data and adjust and plan for the upcoming school year. Additional outreach includes the Dean’s Advisory Council that meets twice a year and includes K-12 administrators and community partners to solicit feedback, share concerns, and work toward problem solving regarding common goals and interests. Each semester the SOE hosts a cooperating teacher/site provider workshop for school partners supporting student teachers and intern teachers. SOE also provides additional “office hours” throughout the year so that cooperating teachers or district liaisons supporting interns have the ability to connect about questions or concerns on an ongoing basis.

Coursework and Field Experience: Field experience provides opportunities for candidates to observe a variety of classrooms and settings and to select focus students for deeper observational study, including students who are dual language learners and who may exhibit typical/atypical behavior and have other types of learning needs. Fieldwork also provides opportunities for candidates to observe teachers using productive routines and effective transitions for students’ academic and socio-emotional growth and development. Education specialist credential candidates who do not have a general education credential are required to observe **50** hours in the general education program prior to entering the Education Specialist Program. The observation is in lieu of student teaching in the general education classroom and is required by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. This requirement ensures that the candidates are familiar with general education curricular requirements.

Candidates start the program with foundations courses which are theoretical and based on research in the education field. Prior to starting their Student/Intern Teaching seminars, candidates attend 4 evenings of workshops designed to prepare them for their practicum experience [see schedule in Fieldwork and Clinical Practice file]. Fieldwork occurs concurrently with seminar courses and curriculum courses which are practical and hands-on. During this time, the candidates apply what they learned in the foundations courses and refine their practice. Education specialist candidates must complete clinical experiences across the K-12 grade levels and across the range of special needs programs. The program director, in consultation with placement coordinator, meets on a regular basis to discuss potential candidates and individual assets and needs in relation to available cooperating teachers for the upcoming semester. The placements are made by the special education placement coordinator. At least one placement will be in a diverse, multicultural setting, with students of varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and which has English Learners (EL).

Assessment of candidates takes place in courses through specific assignments that link research and pedagogy with application in the classroom through classroom observations, tutoring requirements, and field practicum placements. During student/intern teaching all candidates are observed/provided feedback by a university supervisor a minimum of 6 times, as well as observed and provided mentoring/support from a cooperating teacher/district liaison. The candidate, university supervisor, and cooperating teacher/district liaison hold a 3-way conference at mid-term and the end of the semester to review the candidates progress to meeting the TPEs through an *Evaluation of Candidate* form.

At monthly meetings, supervisors review the progress of each of their candidates, based on their observations and feedback from cooperating teacher and/or district-employed intern support provider. If there are concerns, the program director checks with faculty who have the candidate in their seminars to establish a complete picture of the candidate’s progress, strengths and areas of support needed. If there are concerns about a candidate’s progress, supports are implemented. As the semester continues, and improvements are not observed, that candidate may be referred to the education committee.

The education committee is a group of experienced faculty members who meet regularly to review the progress of candidates in credential and master’s degree programs and to recommend next steps for those who have been identified as struggling to successfully meet requirements for a credential or degree. Candidates are recommended to the committee by the program director, advisor, course instructor, cooperating teacher, or field supervisor for the intern/student teaching experience. Candidates are discussed individually by the committee and supports are tailored to their individual needs on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates complete evaluations of faculty at the end of every course, as well as evaluations of cooperating teachers and clinical field supervisors at the end of each of two semesters of fieldwork. Candidates in their final semester engage in an exit interview as a group as well as complete an individual exit survey to provide feedback on the program as a whole. This data is shared at the Education Retreat to debrief the academic year and analyze data from student evaluations, feedback from cooperating teachers, K-12 administrators, and placement coordinators to determine adjustments necessary for the upcoming semester/school year.