Results Summary

**Unit name:** Special Education MEd

**College/School:** School of Leadership & Education Science

**Assessment Overview**
Six learning outcomes are threaded throughout the special education MEd program of study. Each “signature assignment” is embedded in a specific required course. The course identified for each SA is chosen because the course content and required field-based practice are aligned with the California state standards for a preliminary education specialist credential. A unique 5-point rubric for each signature assignment provides observable and measurable criteria for analyzing a candidate’s level of competency across knowledge, understanding and skills aligned with the embedded learning outcome. Each embedded assignment is designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate rigorous master degree level scholarship, an ability to select, combine and put into practice evidence-based practices in actual K-22 field-based practicum assignments. The sequence of courses in the cadre based program of study allows for continuous monitoring of a candidates emerging level of teaching and scholarship competency across four semesters of study. Prior to a third semester formal student teaching placement, university faculty and practicing special educators conduct an interview to determine the student’s ability to understand and put into practice evidence based practices demonstrated by their responses to real-scenario case study examples. In the second year of study each candidate designs, conducts, analyzes and prepares a graduate level research paper based on an action research project carried out in their teaching assignment.

**Results & Actions**
Based on the analysis of the six learning outcomes from 2013-2014 changes in alignment of field practice and embedded signature assignments with specific courses were revised in 2014-2015 academic year. The assessment rubrics were revised to a 5-point level of performance competency to address student, instructor and field supervisor recommendations. In 2015-2016 we have completed a cadre of students and are in the first year of a new special education cadre. All candidates scored “at meets expectations” or better on all learning outcome measurements. The learning outcomes aligned with the three courses listed here are the best indicators of both candidate levels of competency and the efficacy of the design and delivery of the program of study.

The case study conducted in EDSP 370P/570P Assessment Identification to Transition in Special Education is an example embedded signature assignment. Students prior to 2015-2016 were performing at a 2.9 level of competency based on a four-point scale. Revisions to embedded signature assignments and linkage of assignment to actual field placement increased student competency levels to 4.2 on a five-point scale. The collapse of multiple assignments into a single case study project provided students and faculty with a clearer understanding of the integrated relationship between a learner’s IEP goals, assessed performance and design of more effective academic goals.

In EDUC 375P/575P Inclusive Curricula for Learners 5-22 the focus is on an ability to teach, manage and assess a class-as-a-whole and individual learning in an inclusive setting through the use of universal design for learning and co-teaching practices. A candidate’s level of knowledge, understanding and skills as a future special educator are demonstrated in the planning, delivery and assessment of a unit of lessons aligned with the California Common Core Curriculum. In this embedded signature assignment, a graduate student puts into practice evidence based practices which incorporate the unique abilities and needs of English language learners, high achievers, individuals with an IEP as well as the individual needs of every student in classroom learning and instruction. A noted improvement in the ability to design and teach
lessons aligned with specific grade appropriate common core standard specific domains embedded assignment criteria was noted by a 4 or better evaluation for all special education candidates. This shows how spending more classroom focus on specific subject matter curriculum and engaging field master teachers in assisting candidates in design and reflection of lesson plans resulted in better self-reflection and future lesson planning.

In EDSP 375P/575P Evidence Based Inclusive Practices Mild to Moderate k-22 the focus criteria in the embedded signature assignment is on demonstrating an ability to assess the abilities and needs of a student with an IEP in an inclusive classroom. This ESA requires candidates to demonstrate their abilities as a special education case manager and a cooperating teaching in the multiple settings were a special needs student receives serves to actively engage in learning. Requiring alignment of IEP curriculum goals with assessment planning with formal and informal ongoing inclusive class performance of special education students resulted in more specific and evidence-based integration into lesson plans. All candidates performed at 4.4 or better on the five-point assessment rubric.

The distribution of the embedded signature assignments throughout the two year graduate program of study afforded multiple opportunities to analyze the efficacy of the design and delivery of the special education program of study. By incorporating university field supervisors and master teachers of practice in the assessment process, a credibility factor keeps instruction dynamic. The emphasis on self-reflection by the special education candidates adds to the ability to check the pulse of the program and make changes to keep abreast with the rapidly evolving practices and expectations to meet the needs of a culturally and learning diverse population of K-12 students.

No additional revisions to the program are required at this time. Emphasis will be put on the continued implementation and analysis of present program design and delivery.