

The Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders (SECD) is now requiring masters degree students to complete the national *Praxis II Exam* as part of their exit requirements. This national exam should be completed the same term that the student completes their Comprehensive Examination.

Rationale:

The Division of Special Education in SECD Department has decided to require the *Praxis II Exam* for two reasons.

1. Many school districts in Nebraska and elsewhere will consider a passing score on the *Praxis II Exam* to be a pre-requisite for hiring new teachers. Federal *No Child Left Behind* regulations require that 100% of the teachers employed by a school district must be "Highly Qualified". In the United States, being a highly qualified teacher is a desirable attribute. It is our belief that you will be well-prepared for the field and prepared to complete the *Praxis II Exam* successfully by the time you finish your masters degree in Special Education from UNL. Therefore, we suggest you look at this examination as an opportunity to document for employers that you are a highly qualified teacher.

Please note, that being highly qualified in Nebraska does not mean you will be considered highly qualified in another state. Anyone interested in a state other than Nebraska will be required to comply with certification rules and NCLB requirements for that state. Having the *Praxis II Exam* completed will not be held against you however and may be the requirement of your state.

2. An objective assessment of basic knowledge of special education has been a component of the comprehensive exams for masters degree students in SECD for many decades. We believe it complements the subjective narrative portion of the exam, and provides a fair opportunity for students to show their exit knowledge. Since the *Praxis II Exam* is now readily available for students on and off campus, is viewed as a index of teachers being "highly qualified," and covers much of the same content we traditionally asked in our multiple-choice/T-F exam, we thought it most efficient to require it for our graduating students.

Registering for Praxis II Exam

1. You must register online by the deadline noted for an intended test date.

Go to <http://www.ets.org/praxis> .

2. Register for the **Exam #0353: Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge**.

3. Indicate that scores should be sent to: **UNL test score recipient code # 0173**

You may take the test at the listed UNL site on the dates posted or any other ETS testing site/date.

It takes 6-8 weeks for the scores to arrive at UNL, so **plan accordingly**. Results are needed at UNL no later than four (4) weeks prior to your intended graduation date.

4. Pay the fee. The exam fee is \$115.00 (as of Spring 09) regardless of where you take it.

ATTENTION ECSE majors pursuing an Initial Teaching Certificate in Preschool Disabilities (birth to K):

You may be asked by future employers if you took the appropriate *Praxis II Exam*. You must, like all SECD-Special Education masters degree students take the *Praxis II Exam # 0353* as part of your exit requirements for comprehensive exams. But note the position from NDE about your

Preschool Disabilities (birth to K) endorsement, NCLB requirements and your need for any other Praxis exam:

Earlier this spring we revisited the requirement that individuals seeking the Preschool Disabilities endorsement take the Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment test (EECIA). In the early stages of NCLB's highly qualified teacher implementation, we believed that Nebraska's preschool teachers would be included in the requirements. We have since learned that NCLB requirements apply ONLY to K-12 teachers. (Rule 11 guides the qualifications of Nebraska's preschool teachers.) Since information available to NDE indicates that is highly unlikely that a person with this endorsement would be hired or assigned to a kindergarten class, we are advising teacher preparation institutions offering the endorsement that they do NOT need to require that the Preschool Disabilities candidates take the EECIA. Candidates should be advised, however, if they have intentions of seeking a kindergarten level position, it is in their best interest to take the EECIA, or they may be required to do so as a condition of employment as a kindergarten teacher.

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