

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER M.A.T. IN EDUCATION AT
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

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I. SUMMARY

This action item requests initial retroactive approval for a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree in Education at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). This proposed graduate program is for teachers who are currently licensed in Colorado and are returning for graduate level work to increase their applied and practical knowledge. State Board of Education approval is not required because the teacher education programs that fall under this degree will not be used for the initial preparation and endorsement of new teachers.

II. BACKGROUND

UNC started offering this degree during the 2007-2008 academic year without CCHE approval. In an attempt to streamline their offerings, faculty at UNC chose to stop offering their M.A.T. in Elementary Education and begin offering an M.A.T. in Education within which Elementary Education would be an emphasis area, as would Linguistically Diverse Education, English Education, and Curriculum Studies. The faculty had good intentions and thought they were making a simple curricular change; they did not realize they were in fact offering a new degree program that required CCHE approval. This oversight was recently caught in a review of approved teacher education programs throughout the state. Faculty and administrators in UNC's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences now understand the distinction between insubstantial curricular changes within programs, which do not require CCHE approval, and the formation of new degree offerings, which does require CCHE approval. The old M.A.T. Elementary Education degree will be closed in the SURDS database and the new M.A.T. Education degree entered so that UNC can accurately report enrollment in this new degree program. Retroactive approval is being sought to ensure compliance with statute and CCHE policy.

The following is summarized from UNC's proposal.

DESCRIPTION:

The Master of Arts in Teaching Education Degree includes emphasis in Elementary Education, Linguistically Diverse Education, English Education, and Curriculum Studies. The M.A.T. Education degree will have a broader focus on advanced general theory and practice of learning and teaching, principles of educational psychology, the art of teaching, and the social foundations of education across all grade levels rather than just a focus on elementary content.

In addition, the four emphasis areas in the proposed M.A.T. in Education degree have many general pedagogy core courses that were being duplicated by several programs. The new M.A.T. in Education degree allows the university to more systematically and efficiently organize programs under one degree heading that are all related to advanced teaching.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT:

The role and mission of the University of Northern Colorado requires that the university shall be the primary institution for undergraduate and graduate degree programs for educational personnel preparation in the state of Colorado. The university shall offer masters and doctoral programs primarily in the field of education (C.R.S. §23-40-101). This proposed degree program supports this mission by providing professional development to Colorado's teachers.

ADMISSION AND GRADUATION STANDARDS:

Applicants must currently hold a bachelor of arts and have a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of their university credit or GRE scores above 900. An online application, a statement of purpose and three letters of recommendation are also required. Graduation requirements include completing all coursework with an average of at least a 3.0 GPA, successfully completing comprehensive examinations, and completion of one year of teaching experience or the equivalent. Admission is open to in-service teachers.

PROGRAM FACULTY:

The degree is currently offered through the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences and the English Department in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The program has no negative impact on current resources. It is expected there will be approximately 150 students enrolled in the degree each year.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

The Department staff has reviewed this proposed program and letters of assurances from academic administrators to ensure that the degree program meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. §23-5-129.6. The program meets all performance measures set forth by the state.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission retroactively approve the Master of Arts in Education degree submitted by the University of Northern Colorado.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant statute and policy are on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-5-129.6