**Department of Special and Early Education**
**Northern Illinois University**
**DeKalb, IL 60115**

**Certificate of Graduate Study / Director of Special Education**
**Checklist for the Director of Special Education Certificate of Graduate Study (CGS)**

A packet containing all admission materials should be sent to Dr. Leslie B. Hecht, Department of Special and Early Education, Gabel Hall 159, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Questions may be directed to Dr. Leslie B. Hecht in the Department of Special and Early Education.

Students may be allowed to take only the course work required by the State as indicated on a transcript evaluation and deficiency statement. Students may complete the application form to take course work in the program.

**Student check list**

Prior to starting course work toward the Director of Special Education Certificate of Graduate Study for the Director of Special Education Endorsement. A completed packet of all materials:

- Hold M.S. Degree from an accredited institution*
- Apply to the Graduate School as a student-at-large ([www.grad.niu.edu](http://www.grad.niu.edu)) or be part of a degree program at NIU.
- Apply to the Department of Special and Early Education for the Director of Special Education Certification of Graduate Study.
  - 3.2 GPA in most recent program. You must provide official transcripts to the Department of Special and Early Education.
  - Verification of your current license and endorsements.
  - Two or more years of teaching experience, in a special education setting.
  - Three letters of recommendation citing successful professional experience, positive dispositions, and potential for success as a director of special education. Someone with a Professional Educator license with an endorsement in Director of Special Education, Principal or Superintendent must write at least one of the letters.
  - Application essay addressing the program core values of ethical, visionary leadership.
- Basic Skills or Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP), (Basic Skills, ACT+writing or SAT) Information regarding this exams may be located at [www.il.nesinc.com](http://www.il.nesinc.com)

*Candidates who do not have an MS degree may be enrolled in a Masters program but will not be recommended for the endorsement until after they receive their degree.

** Candidates must have 2 years of full-time special education teaching, or serving as a school social worker, psychologist or speech language pathologist.
Completion of Program:

___ Meet Director of Special Education Content Area Standards as evidenced by meeting or exceeding requirements on all standards based assessments included in courses.
___ Receive “proficient” ratings on submitted portfolio.

To be recommended for the Director of Special Education Endorsement:

___ Print and complete the application materials for Director of Special Education endorsement and the Gender/Ethnicity form. Please return the forms to the Leslie Hecht, SEED, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.

Revised 6/17
Certificate of Graduate Study / Director of Special Education

I understand that I am **not** applying for admission to an academic degree program and that I will **not** be eligible for a graduate degree upon completion of this course of study. I further understand that I can simultaneously pursue a Certificate of Graduate Study / Director of Special Education and a graduate degree (masters’ or doctorate) in this department or another, but that requires an additional application process and my being admitted to, and having filed an approved plan of study, in the appropriate degree program. Courses taken to satisfy the PEL/endorsement requirement may or may not count toward the requirements of a particular degree program.

Date (MM/DD/YY)

Name (Last, First Middle Initial)  Social Security Number

Mailing Address  Home Telephone Number

City  State  Zip  Work Telephone Number

Email Address  Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY)

Highest Degree Held (list degree, major (specialization), date awarded, and name of institution).

M.S. Education

Certification/License held (subject to verification, * if your credentials are out-of-state additional information may be required).

IEIN

Signature of applicant  

Apr 2014
Department of Special and Early Education  
Attn: Leslie B. Hecht  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Certificate of Graduate Study / Director of Special Education

Letter of Recommendation to Supplement Application for Admission  
to the Certificate of Graduate Study Program in Director of Special  
Education

This section to be completed by the applicant before form is given to writer of  
recommendation:

Name of applicant: ______________________

Social Security # ______________________

Public Law 93-380 permits the applicant to inspect this recommendation if the following  
waiver is not signed. I voluntarily waive my right to access this recommendation under  
Public Law 93-380 so that it may be kept confidential.

__________________________________________________________________________  
Original signature of applicant

This form is to be filled out by some holding a General Administrative certification.  
Please rate the applicant. Compare with others of like experience and position. A  
letter may substitute for the portion of the form below, but should be attached to  
this form after the top portion is completed by the applicant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upper 5%</th>
<th>Upper 10%</th>
<th>Upper 25%</th>
<th>Upper 50%</th>
<th>Lower 50%</th>
<th>No Basis For Judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional ethics</td>
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<td>Visionary perspective</td>
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<td>Leadership skills</td>
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<td>Collaborative skills</td>
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<td>Communication skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Context in which I have known applicant: ________________________________

from __________________________ to ________________________________.
General assessment of overall academic ability: Of the approximately _______ persons at a comparable educational or professional level that I have known in recent years, I would rate this applicant in the upper ______ percent.

In addition, please write a statement below indicating your opinion of the applicant’s ability to achieve professional success as a Director of Special Education. Any pertinent information is valuable, but a specific evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is more helpful than general praise. Please use the space below and the reverse side if necessary.

Name: ________________________________

Original signature ________________________________

Position: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Department of Special and Early Education
Attn: Leslie B. Hecht
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115

Certificate of Graduate Study / Director of Special Education
Candidate Disposition Assessment Instrument

Instructions for Application Essay

Applicants to the Certificate of Graduate Study program in Director of Special Education must submit a letter of application that includes an essay. In (approximately) 500 words, discuss how you hope this program will empower you to become an ethical, visionary leader in the role of Director of Special Education. Describe the strengths and achievements you bring to becoming an ethical visionary leader. Also describe areas in which you can improve, and how you intend to make such improvements.

Director of Special Education Application Essay Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Leadership</td>
<td>Thoughtful statements on the importance of ethics in the role of Director of Special Education.</td>
<td>Lack of coherence in the importance of ethics in the role of Director of Special Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionary Leader</td>
<td>Thoughtful statements on how candidate views visionary leadership in the daily operations of providing services for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>Lack of clarity in how visionary leadership influences daily operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Thoughtful statements on how leaders effectively build and lead communities of learners.</td>
<td>Lack of clarity expressing the role of leadership in building communities of learners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department of Special and Early Education

Certificate of Graduate Study
Director of Special Education (20 hours)*

The following is a list of required courses for students seeking a Certification of Graduate Study in Director of Special Education. This course of study does not lead to a graduate degree, but does provide the necessary requirements to earn the NIU Certificate designation.

This Certificate of Graduate Study is designed to meet standard for the Director of Special Education Endorsement.

You are strongly advised to consult assigned faculty advisor for this Certificate early in your studies. This checklist and the Student Information Form must be on file in the Department of Special and Early Education no later than the end of your first semester of course work toward this certificate.

*The Certificate of Graduate Study at NIU requires 20 semesters hours of course work.

Course Checklist

Semester 1  ____ SESE 747, Advanced Seminar in Special Education (3)
*This is the first course completed toward the Director of Special Education and the prerequisite for subsequent course work.

  ____ LEEA 577, Admin and Supervision of Special Education (3)

Semester 2  ____ SESE 760, The Special Education Director (3)

  ____ SESE 765, Seminar: Professional Collaboration in Schools (3)

Semester 3  ____ LEEA 726, Special Education and the Law (3)

  ____ SESE 575X or LEEA 575, Special Education Finance (3)

  ____ SESE 786, Internship in Special Education (2)