



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

University Council

October 9, 2026

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2026-2027

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Mary Frances Early College of Education to terminate the Area of Emphasis in Early Childhood Education/Special Education General Curriculum P-5 under the major in Special Education (M.A.T.) will be an agenda item for the October 16, 2026, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Rodney Mauricio, Chair

cc: Interim Provost Ron Walcott

Dr. Marisa Anne Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR TERMINATION OF AN AREA OF EMPHASIS

Date: July 6, 2026

School/College: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department/Division: Communication Sciences and Special Education

Area of emphasis to be terminated: Early Childhood Education/Special Education General Curriculum P-5

Major(s) & degree(s) the area of emphasis is offered under? Special Education (M.A.T.)

Which campus(es) offer this area of emphasis? Athens

Proposed effective date: Spring 2027

Last date students will be admitted to this area of emphasis: N/A

Last date students will complete this area of emphasis: N/A

Program Abstract:

The Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Special Education with an Area of Emphasis in Early Childhood Education/Special Education General Curriculum P-5 is designed for individuals seeking initial certification who hold undergraduate degrees in other fields and who do not hold a teacher certification. The program provides rigorous preparation while meeting the needs of working adults including paraprofessionals and provisionally certified teachers.

The Area of Emphasis in Early Childhood Education/Special Education General Curriculum P-5 is for those interested in teaching students with mild disabilities who are following the general education curriculum. The age range of students also focuses on children from birth to age five in addition to elementary school years. Training in this emphasis area prepares teachers to work in inclusive and direct service models, including family support programs, while supporting students with learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, mild intellectual disabilities, and autism.

Because of changing workforce needs and sustained low enrollment for an in-person degree, this area of emphasis is being proposed for termination. In addition, the state Georgia Professional Standards Commission does not allow for the combined certification of Early Childhood Education and Special Education anymore.

1. Why is this area of emphasis being proposed for termination?

This area of emphasis is being proposed for termination due to sustained low enrollment and changing workforce trends in special education.

2. What will be done to ensure that termination of the area of emphasis does not weaken the major(s) under which it is offered?

Termination of this area of emphasis will not weaken the Special Education (M.A.T.) program because the curriculum and outcomes continue to be offered through the online variant of the M.A.T. program under the Area of Emphasis in Birth Through Five/Preschool Special Education. The online format provides an accessible pathway that better meets the needs of working professionals in the field. There are currently 10 students in the Birth Through Five option.

- 3. How will faculty and staff be notified of the termination? Will termination of the area of emphasis have any impact on the faculty and staff offering the area of emphasis?**

Faculty and staff will be notified of the termination through program communications from the Special Education program coordinator. Faculty involved with the program are already aware of and supportive of the transition to the online M.A.T. pathway. Termination of this area of emphasis will have no impact on faculty or staff assignments, as the curriculum continues to be offered under another area of emphasis through the online program and advising and coordination responsibilities will remain unchanged.

- 4. How will students be notified of the termination? How will students currently in the area of emphasis be advised to complete the requirements?**

There are no currently enrolled students in the campus-based program.

- 5. What plans, if any, are there for subsequent reactivation of the area of emphasis?**

There are no plans to reactivate the area of emphasis.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Proposal to terminate the Area of Emphasis in Early Childhood Education/Special Education General Curriculum P-5 under the major in Special Education (M.A.T.)

College: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department: Communication Sciences and Special Education

Proposed Effective Term: Spring 2027

School/College:

- Head of the Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education, Dr. Jennifer Brown, 7/6/2026
- Mary Frances Early College of Education Associate Dean, Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, 8/21/2026
- Mary Frances Early College of Education Dean, Dr. Denise Spangler, 7/6/2026
- Graduate School Interim Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 9/18/2026