



DEC 12 2017

December 6, 2017

James D. Fielder, Jr., PhD  
Secretary  
Maryland Higher Education Commission  
6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Dr. Fielder:

On behalf of Provost Sunil Kumar, Dean Christopher Morpew, and our School of Education, I write to request your review and endorsement of the enclosed proposal. The School of Education proposes to substantially modify the existing **PBC in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders (HEGIS 0820-07, CIP 13.1013)** for online delivery.

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders certificate program offers specialized training for special educators and other professionals and will serve to advance knowledge and address societal needs by preparing teachers (and families) to understand and meet the growing needs of students with autism and other related disorders. The move to a distance education format will assist educators and professionals across the state and nationally in their advocacy and support for students identified with ASD. .

The proposed program is consistent with the Johns Hopkins mission and the State of Maryland's Plan for Postsecondary Education. The proposal is fully endorsed by The Johns Hopkins University.

A business check for the review of this proposal has been sent to the Commission. Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Lopez at (410) 516- 6430 or alo@jhu.edu. Thank you for your continuing support of Johns Hopkins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Simon Schreck".

Janet Simon Schreck, PhD  
Assistant Vice Provost for Education

cc: Dr. Sunil Kumar  
Dr. Christopher Morpew  
Dr. Ratna Sarkar  
Mr. James Brailer  
Mr. Thomas Black  
Ms. Natalie Lopez  
Mr. Tom McDermott

Enclosures

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
**ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

**PROPOSAL FOR:**

NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM  
 SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION/MAJOR  
 MODIFICATION  COOPERATIVE DEGREE  
 PROGRAM  
 WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES or  REQUIRING NEW RESOURCES


*(For each proposed program, attach a separate cover page. For example, two cover pages would accompany a proposal for a degree program and a certificate program.)*

The Johns Hopkins University

Institution Submitting Proposal

Fall, 2018

Projected Implementation Date

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate	Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders	
Award to be Offered	Title of Proposed Program	
0820-07	13.1013	
Suggested HEGIS Code	Suggested CIP Code	
School of Education	Christopher Morpew, Dean	
Department of Proposed Program	Name of Department Head	
Natalie Lopez	<a href="mailto:nlopez13@jhu.edu">nlopez13@jhu.edu</a>	410-516-6430
Contact Name	Contact E-mail Address	Contact Phone Number
 11/1/2017	President/Chief Executive Approval	
Signature and Date		
n/a	Date Endorsed/Approved by Governing Board	
Date		

**1. The title of the program and the degree or certificate to be awarded**

***Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders***

The Johns Hopkins School of Education (SOE) is proposing to modify its existing 18-credit post-baccalaureate certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders. The requested change is to switch the delivery mode of the program from its existing face-to-face format to a fully online distance education delivery mode.

The goal of the new online format for this certificate program is to reach a wider audience within the State of Maryland, as well as nationally, to provide specialized training in evidence-based practices (EBPs) to support the growing number of students identified with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

**2. The resource requirements for the program and the source of funds to support the program for the first 2 years of program implementation**

The resource requirements involved in switching the program's delivery mode are minimal. SOE has already allocated funding in this year's budget to convert the existing face-to-face courses to an online format. No additional faculty hires are necessary to deliver the program online. The following full-time SOE faculty will teach in and serve as advisors to students in the program:

Laurie U. deBettencourt, Ph.D. (Special Education), Professor

Tamara Marder, Ph.D., BCBA-D (School Psychology), Associate Professor

Linda A. Tsantis, Ed.D. (Special Education), Associate Professor

In addition, SOE is able to draw on a highly qualified and experienced pool of adjunct faculty to support the delivery of the program, many of whom have taught for many years in the existing face-to-face version. Many of the current adjunct faculty work at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, whose school programs serve students with special needs (e.g., ASD) from school districts throughout Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and Virginia. Many other adjunct faculty work in public school settings throughout Maryland and practice the application of EBPs for students with ASD. Given the extensive expertise available to SOE among its pool of full-time and adjunct faculty in delivering specialized ASD training, SOE is confident that it possesses the requisite faculty resources to successfully deliver this program online.

SOE anticipates recruiting a minimum of 20 students annually, which would be sufficient to ensure the program's financial viability without the need to draw on additional SOE resources.

See Appendix A for further details regarding the program's projected revenues and expenditures.

**3. The need and demand for the program in terms of:**

a. Specific local, regional and State need for graduates

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders certificate program offers specialized training for special educators and other professionals and will serve to advance knowledge and address societal needs by preparing teachers (and families) to understand and meet the growing needs of students with autism and other related disorders. The move to a distance education format will assist educators and professionals across the state and nationally in their advocacy and support for students identified with ASD. Mayton, Menendez, Wheeler, and Zhang (2010) provide the following as rationales for the increased need for training on evidence based practices (EBPs) for students with ASD: (a) the increasing prevalence rate of students with ASD in schools, (b) the risks associated with unsuccessful outcomes for students with ASD and for their families, and (c) the history of unsubstantiated interventions that have been made available to the public. To address the significant and growing needs of students with ASD, it is imperative to provide educators and families with firsthand knowledge of EBPs and train them with the skills necessary to implement such practices to minimize the gaps between research and practice. SOE's Autism certificate addresses these needs.

The complex instructional needs of students with ASD and related disorders have resulted in a list of research-based interventions. In 2009, the National Autism Center (NAC) completed the National Standards Project, in which it reviewed 775 research studies to identify effective treatments for individuals with ASD. The NAC identified 11 established treatments that resulted in beneficial outcomes; 22 emerging treatments that have some evidence of effectiveness; and five unestablished treatments that did not have any evidence to support effectiveness (NAC, 2009). More recently, The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC on ASD; Wong et al., 2014) reviewed numerous research studies and identified 27 EBPs for students with ASD to date. Unfortunately, the identification of such practices and interventions does not guarantee that special educators have received training in these specific interventions. According to the Maryland Commission in Autism (2012), there is no comprehensive system to educate and train a workforce that is knowledgeable about working with individuals with ASD across the lifespan.

The research cited above suggests providing teachers with specific training in ASD-related treatments results in positive student outcomes (Browder, Trela, & Jimenez, 2007), perceived reduction in challenging student behaviors, and reduction in teacher stress levels (Probst & Leppert, 2008). Given the concerns related to the increase in ASD diagnosis and the shortages of special education teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to work with this population, SOE believes that delivering an online teacher

preparation program with a focus autism spectrum disorders is warranted.

According to Ludlow, Keramidas, and Landers (2007), autism spectrum disorders are the fastest growing disability category receiving special education services in schools, however the number of highly trained educators who can address the specific needs of students with ASD is insufficient. In 2014–15, the number of children and youth served under the federal IDEA was 6.6 million, or 13 percent of total public school enrollment, and students with ASD accounted for 9 percent of those students under IDEA ([https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgg.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp)). Between 2005 and 2014, the percentage of the resident population ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, that was reported under the category of autism increased from 0.3 percent to 0.8 percent (see Annual Report to Congress available from: <https://ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html>).

In Maryland, the overall estimated prevalence of ASD is 11.3 per 1000 or one in eighty-eight (Maryland Commission on Autism, 2012). According to *Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Maryland Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities*, the Maryland rates of special education students who are coded with autism have increased over a period of ten years (retrieved from [http://www.marylandcoc.com/uploads/FINAL\\_OGSHCN\\_ASD\\_DD\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_September\\_2012.pdf](http://www.marylandcoc.com/uploads/FINAL_OGSHCN_ASD_DD_Needs_Assessment_September_2012.pdf)). Specifically, from 2000 to 2010, the rates in Maryland of special education students aged 3 to 21 years coded with autism has increased from 2,304 to 8,828. As of 2010, this represents 8.6% of the total number of children receiving special education and related services. Statewide, the rate of students with autism has quadrupled, from around 2% (2,304 students) to almost 9% (8,828 students) over this ten-year period.

Similarly, each region in the state of Maryland displayed their highest rates in 2010, with the capital region having the highest percentage of special education students coded with autism, with 9.6% (3,467) students receiving services. Western Maryland consistently falls below the state average for students coded with autism. However, this region has experienced a significant growth in the number of children coded with autism receiving special education services over the last ten years. In 2010, the region had its highest rate (6.4%). The Eastern Shore of Maryland has also seen an increase in the past 10 years of students coded with Autism, with 1.2% in 2000 and 5.8% in 2010, and almost 5% increase. Given the current rates of ASD, there is a greater need for general and specialized special education teacher preparation programs that provide training to meet the unique needs of these students. There is a particular need for training in the underserved outlying counties, including Eastern Shore counties and western Maryland. Online programming allows educators to receive the training even when the commute to a JHU campus is not feasible.

b. Job opportunities that are available to those who complete the program

Many schools districts in Maryland and across the nation are in need of teachers who understand how to work with the large numbers of students identified with ASD. A

recent report from the US Department of Education highlighted the general shortage of special education teachers nationally (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/teacheshortageareasreport2017.pdf>). School districts struggle in particular to find properly trained teachers who are knowledgeable in the instructional needs of the increasing number of children with the diagnosis of ASD and related developmental disabilities. It is estimated that only 50-60% of teachers remain in the field of special education for more than five years (Governor's P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland, 2008). These shortages in special education are due to: 1) a limited number of qualified professionals to fill the open and available positions and 2) deficits in state funding that have prevented public schools from hiring new teachers to meet the growing demands for students identified with ASD (<http://specialedshortages.org/>).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/special-education-teachers.htm#tab-7>), there were almost 11,000 special education teachers employed in Maryland in 2014, and nationwide there were approximately 450,000. In the period 2014-2024, the number of special education teachers is projected to grow by 6% nationally. In targeting special educators seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills, SOE is confident that there is a market for this program and that the employment prospects for graduates of this program will be enhanced. Additionally, while the Autism certificate is primarily aimed at special education teachers, SOE believes that the certificate could attract educators in other fields. For example, According to the Maryland Teacher Staffing Report 2016-2018 (<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DEE/ProgramApproval/MarylandTeacherStaffingReport20162018.pdf>), there were almost 60,000 teachers employed in Maryland public schools in 2014-15, many of whom teach students with ASD and who could benefit from taking the certificate.

- c. Evidence of market demand through supporting data, including results of survey's that have recently been conducted

SOE has partnered with various Maryland school districts in the past to deliver the certificate program on a closed cohort basis to school district personnel. The School would like to engage with other Maryland school districts to deliver the program, and the Maryland State Department of Education is supportive of this. However, offering face-to-face evening classes is not convenient for many prospective students, particularly those based in Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where the need for this program is perhaps the greatest and whom SOE would like to serve. Hence, the proposal to move this certificate program online.

#### **4. If a similar program is offered within the State, a description of the other program:**

- a. Area of specialization

There are currently no distance education programs focused on autism offered by other institutions in Maryland institutions. Towson University offers a 16-credit face-to-face post-baccalaureate certificate in Autism Studies, which focuses on contemporary issues in ASD, working with families, and special topics in the field. In contrast, though it also addresses contemporary issues and working with families, SOE's program focuses more on teaching specifics and encompasses much more depth in terms of the application of EBPs that teachers should be implementing with students identified with ASD. For example, SOE's classroom programming course emphasizes EBPs to directly address the needs of teachers who are instructing students with ASD; the teaching communication and social skills course specifically trains teachers on the evidence-based strategies for improving a student's communication skills and social skills, the two major skill deficits of students with ASD; and the inclusive practices course focuses on addressing effective teaching strategies for an inclusive setting, which is currently the most common method of serving students with special needs in public schools. In addition, the program covers legal issues and includes a course on augmentative technology, which often is critical when working with students on the autism spectrum.

SOE's Autism certificate also has the benefit of being able to draw on adjunct faculty employed by the Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI), an internationally recognized institution dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with pediatric developmental disabilities and disorders of the brain, spinal cord and musculoskeletal system, through patient care, special education, research, and professional training. Many of our graduate students complete their internships at one of the KKI schools within Baltimore and Montgomery County. SOE also employs as adjuncts educators from public school settings throughout Maryland who practice the application of EBPs for students with ASD on a daily basis.

Furthermore, Dr. Tamara Marder, the faculty member who will serve as the program coordinator, is affiliated with the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities, which promotes research and education regarding the origins, detection, measurement and prevention of conditions that affect behavioral, socioemotional and/or cognitive development, as well as evaluation of services and policies that support optimal development of affected children and their families. The center unifies and expands research and education efforts at the Bloomberg School of Public Health focused on autism and developmental disabilities. It consolidates previously unlinked programs including the Wendy Klag Scholars Program, the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology (CADDE), and multiple investigator and student-driven projects. These affiliations with KKI and the Wendy Klag Center allow SOE to bring a unique set of resources and expertise to bear on the program.

#### b. Specific academic content of the program

The overarching educational objective and student learning outcomes of the online certificate program will remain unchanged from the face-to-face version. The primary educational objective of the program is to prepare candidates to become effective

educators or professionals in area of ASD within their schools and communities. The specific learning outcomes associated with the certificate are:

- i. Candidates will define, identify, and implement EBPs to address the educational needs of students with ASD within an educational setting (pre-k through 12th grade).
- ii. Candidates will utilize research methods to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of intervention and instructional procedures within an educational setting (pre-k through 12th grade).
- iii. Candidates will design, implement and evaluate an instructional program based on assessment results to increase a desired behavior/skill and decrease undesired behaviors for an individual students or a group of students in an educational setting (pre-k through 12th grade).

The curriculum is outlined in the table below:

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
877.551 Survey of Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders (3 credits)	Providing a comprehensive review of current information about autism and other pervasive developmental disorders, this course draws on research findings and clinical experience from a number of related disciplines, including psychiatry, psychology, neurobiology, and pediatrics. In addition to exploring theories of causation, developmental aspects, descriptive and diagnostic characteristics, and legal and social issues, students are introduced to the primary therapeutic and intervention strategies employed with students who have autism. The theoretical basis of, and empirical evidence for, the diverse traditional and nontraditional therapies that have been proposed for persons with autism are also explored.
877.553 Classroom Programming for Students with Autism (3 credits)	Students examine the design and implementation of effective classroom programs for students with autism who differ in age and level of functioning. The course topics include classroom structure and organization, group instruction strategies, educational assessment and IEP development, data collection, curriculum, instructional activities and materials, parent involvement, and staffing and support services.
877.555 Teaching Communication and Social Skills (3 credits)	This course examines the assessment and instructional strategies that have been shown to be effective in promoting the development of cognitive, language, and social skills by students who have severe disabilities, including those diagnosed with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, or other pervasive developmental disorders. Participants examine the instructional adaptations needed to promote the development of cognitive, communicative, and social skills in students with severe disabilities, and review the relevant empirical literature.
877.513 Education of Students with Severe Disabilities: Augmentative Communication Systems (3 credits)	Students examine the design of augmentative communication systems that include use of graphic symbols for individuals with severe disabilities. Participants design and construct communication aids and develop strategies for integrating augmentative communication into the curriculum.
871.510 Legal Aspects, Service Systems, and Current Issues in Special Education (3 credits)	This course reviews litigated and legislated standards for special education and related services for persons with disabilities. Students explore current issues in the provision of services for persons with disabilities, including inclusion, the response to intervention (RTI), and regulations for eligibility.
877.550 Inclusive	This course examines the legal mandates for inclusive practices in public schools and



Practices for Autism Spectrum Disorders (3 credits)	barriers to successful inclusion for students with autism. Students will identify the process for determining the most appropriate educational environment and learn the critical steps in preparing students and teachers for inclusion. Models of inclusion and instructional modifications for the general education classroom will be reviewed. Students will learn to define the varying applications of inclusive settings, plan goals and objectives that reflect the inclusion goals, and implement strategies that lead toward inclusion.
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**5. A description of the method of instructional delivery**

The proposed certificate will be delivered online using Blackboard, which is a platform that allows for synchronous and asynchronous instruction and interaction between faculty and students. Instruction will primarily be delivered through media presentations, readings, group activities, and discussions. In addition, SOE faculty will also be available for instruction, communication and mentoring via email, Adobe Connect, VoIP, IM, and the telephone.

Full-time faculty who are disciplinary experts, primarily Drs. deBettencourt and Marder, will work with a design team from SOE’s Office of Accreditation, Assessment and Technology (OAAT), who have expertise in distance education, to design the online course offerings. The content and learning objectives of these online courses will be the same as for their face-to-face counterparts, except for new updated references and resources.

**6. A brief description of the academic oversight, quality control and student services to be provided.**

As with all SOE programs, student learning outcomes in the proposed online Autism certificate will be assessed according to the individual rubrics that are developed for specific courses and/or assessments. These data on student performance are stored in Tk20, which is SOE’s program assessment tool. Tk20 enables the School of Education to design assessments, compare them against specified learning outcomes, and generate data reports for program analysis and improvement purposes. In accordance with SOE standard practice, the program director, with input from the school’s OAAT design team, will analyze assessment data every semester, and, based on these data, modify (as necessary) any rubrics, assessments, and so on, to ensure that student learning outcomes are being appropriately assessed in the program.

Similarly, every semester the program director and OAAT design team will analyze feedback from students and faculty (via, for example, course evaluations) and other stakeholders to measure student and faculty satisfaction and to determine if the program is meeting its goals and objectives. Based on this feedback, and where necessary, the program director, in conjunction with the design team, will make modifications to the program in relation to the assessments used to measure student learning outcomes, the curriculum, the technology used to deliver the course content, and so on.

The OAAT design team, with input from SOE full-time faculty, will ensure that the program is delivered using technology that best enhances the content delivery and student interaction with each other, with faculty, and with the learning management system (Blackboard). The technology chosen is designed to support the learning outcomes for each specific course.

Once the program launches, the faculty program director and OAAT design team will continually monitor the technology used, and make adjustments as necessary, to ensure that the program meets its objectives.

The School of Education is able to provide a full range of student services to students in distance education programs. Many of these services are accessible to all students (whether enrolled in a face-to-face or online academic program) via SOE's website. This online resource contains information on all the student services available to students, including registration, financial aid, tuition and billing, student affairs, and disability services.

More specifically:

- i. **Academic Advising.** Students are assigned a faculty advisor when accepted into a program. Students work individually with the advisor to develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the program and the career goals of the student. The advisor regularly contacts the students to check on progress and answer questions.
- ii. **Library Services.** Students have online access to the Milton S. Eisenhower Library on the Homewood campus, ranked as one of the nation's foremost facilities for research and scholarship. The interlibrary loan department allows students access to resources at any other university in the nation. The library also provides easy access to a wide selection of electronic information resources, including the library's online catalog, and numerous electronic abstracting and indexing tools. Many of the databases are accessible remotely. Librarians are available to assist students remotely and the library maintains an extensive web site to take visitors through all its services and materials.
- iii. **Services with Students with Disabilities.** The Johns Hopkins University is committed to making all academic programs, support services, and facilities accessible to qualified individuals. Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations can contact SOE's disabilities services coordinator.
- iv. **Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program.** The Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program (JHSAP) is a professional counseling service that can assist students with managing problems of daily living. Stress, personal problems, family conflict, and life challenges can affect the academic progress of students. JHSAP focuses on problem solving through short-term counseling. Accessing the service is a simple matter of a phone call to arrange an appointment with a counselor. Online students may call a phone number for consultation and will be directed to the appropriate resource or office. JHSAP services are completely confidential. The program operates under State and Federal confidentiality legislation and is HIPAA compliant.
- v. **Transcript Access.** Official transcripts will be mailed by SOE's Registrar's Office upon written request of the student at no charge.

- vi. **Student ID JCard.** The JCard serves as the student's University identification card. This card is mailed to the home address of every registered student. The JCard acts as the university library card, which enables students to check out books from the Homewood Eisenhower Library or at any of the campus center libraries, and provides access to many computer laboratories.

7. **Evidence that addresses the Principles of Good Practice (pdf) (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.22C).**

See Appendix B.

**Appendix A**

<b>TABLE 1: RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Resource Categories</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
1. Reallocated Funds		
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c + g below)	\$308,520	\$314,640
a. Number of F/T Students		
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate		
c. Total F/T Revenue (a x b)		
d. Number of P/T Students	20	20
e. Credit Hour Rate	\$857	\$874
f. Annual Number of Credit Hours	18	18
g. Total P/T Revenue (d x e x f)	\$308,520	\$314,640
3. Grants, Contracts & Other External Sources		
4. Other Sources		
<b>TOTAL (Add 1 – 4)</b>	<b>\$308,520</b>	<b>\$314,640</b>

**Resources Narrative**

1. Reallocated Funds: No funds will be reallocated from existing campus resources.
2. Tuition and Fee Revenue: We project enrolling a new cohort of 20 students each year during the first two years of the program. SOE’s standard tuition rate for online courses in Year 1 is projected to be \$857 per credit and we anticipate a 2% tuition rate increase the following year.
3. Grants and Contracts: It is unknown at this time when any grants, contracts, or external funding sources will become available during the next two years.
4. Other Sources: No additional funds have been designated for this program.

<b>TABLE 2: EXPENDITURES</b>		
<b>Expenditure Categories</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
1. Faculty (b + c below)	\$29,082	\$29,665
a. # FTE	.25	.25
b. Total Salary	\$26,928	\$27,468
c. Total Benefits	\$2,154	\$2,197
2. Admin. Staff (b + c below)		
a. # FTE		
b. Total Salary		
c. Total Benefits		
3. Support Staff (b + c below)	\$3,015	\$3,090
a. # FTE	.05	.05
b. Total Salary	\$2,250	\$2,306
c. Total Benefits	\$765	\$784
4. Equipment		
5. Library		
6. New or Renovated Space		
7. Other Expenses	\$16,000	
<b>TOTAL (Add 1 – 7)</b>	<b>\$48,097</b>	<b>\$32,755</b>

**Expenditures Narrative**

1. Faculty: A portion of current faculty time will be allocated to manage and teach in the program but no new faculty will be needed under current conditions.
2. Administrative: N/A
3. Support Staff: A portion of current support staff time will be allocated but no new support staff will be needed under current conditions.

4. Equipment: No equipment expenditures beyond those currently provided to the School of Education have been requested at this time.
5. Library: No library expenditures beyond those currently provided to the School of Education have been requested at this time.
6. New or Renovated Space: Since this a fully online program that does not require any physical infrastructure to deliver it, no special facilities are being requested.
7. Other Expenses: We are allocating funds for course development during Year 1.

**Appendix B**  
**Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education**

**(a) Curriculum and Instruction.**

**(i) A distance education program shall be established and overseen by qualified faculty.**

The post-baccalaureate certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders has been offered at SOE for over 10 years. It is currently and overseen by two faculty in the Special Education program area: Drs. Laurie deBettencourt and Tamara Marder (see qualifications below). The distance education option will also be overseen by these two faculty.

Laurie deBettencourt, Ph.D., Professor, serves as the program lead for the Special Education program area at SOE. As program lead, she oversees all Special Education master's and certificate programs within the school. In addition, she is principle investigator on state funded grant programs supporting special educators in the area of applied behavior analysis. She has served as the coordinator for a preservice training partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (SET-IT) for the past eleven years. She serves as the Editor of *Teacher Education and Special Education* (The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children). She currently serves as Past-President of the Division of Learning Disabilities. Dr. deBettencourt is also serving as Chair for AERA SIG in Special Education. She has co-authored several textbooks and written numerous articles related to instruction of students with mild to moderate disabilities. She is a member of the American Educational Research Association, the Council for Exceptional Children, Teacher Education Division, Division for Research, Learning Disabilities Association, and Higher Education Consortium of Special Educators.

Tamara Marder, Ph.D, BCBA-D, serves as the program coordinator for the applied behavior analysis, autism, and severe disabilities programs within SOE's Special Education program area. A licensed psychologist and a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D), she has worked in the field of applied behavior analysis since 1994 and has extensive experience working with children with developmental disabilities and families in a variety of settings, including schools, homes and hospitals. Her research interests include improving learning outcomes for students with developmental disabilities and autism through effective training and preparation of educators and professionals who provide educational services. This includes training educators on implementing evidence-based practices (EBPs) with fidelity, and preparing special educators in the field of applied behavior analysis ABA. In 2015, she received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Johns Hopkins University Alumni Association.

**(ii) A program's curriculum shall be coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.**

The curriculum is coherent, cohesive and comparable in academic rigor to other post-baccalaureate certificate programs that SOE offers in traditional instructional formats. (See section 4 above for further details about the program's curriculum.)

**(iii) A program shall result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the program.**

This format, rigor and breadth of the autism certificate is comparable to other post-baccalaureate certificate programs offered at SOE. The primary learning outcomes of the program are:

- a. Candidates will define, identify, and implement EBPs to address the educational needs of students with ASD within an educational setting (pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).
- b. Candidates will utilize research methods to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of intervention and instructional procedures within an educational setting (pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).
- c. Candidates will design, implement and evaluate an instructional program based on assessment results to increase a desired behavior/skill and decrease undesired behaviors for an individual students or a group of students in an educational setting (pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

**(iv) A program shall provide for appropriate real-time or delayed interaction between faculty and students.**

The proposed certificate will be delivered using Blackboard, which is a platform that allows for synchronous and asynchronous instruction and interaction between faculty and students. Instruction will primarily be delivered through media presentations, readings, group activities, and discussions. In addition, SOE faculty will also be available for instruction, communication and mentoring via email, Adobe Connect, VoIP, IM, and the telephone.

**(v) Faculty members in appropriate disciplines in collaboration with other institutional personnel shall participate in the design of courses offered through a distance education program.**

As full-time faculty who are disciplinary experts, Drs. deBettencourt and Marder will work with a design team from SOE's Office of Accreditation, Assessment and Technology (OAAT), who have expertise in distance education, to design the online course offerings. The content and learning objectives of these online courses will be the same as for their face-to-face counterparts, except for new updated references and resources.

**(b) Role and Mission.**

**(i) A distance education program shall be consistent with the institution's mission.**

Providing coursework that results in educators and professionals who are knowledgeable about providing appropriate instruction and intervention in the classroom for students with ASD will increase the number of professionals who are trained specifically in teaching students with autism and other related disorders. This goal is fully consistent with Johns Hopkins University's mission "to educate its students and cultivate their capacity for life-long learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world."

**(ii) Review and approval processes shall ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet a program's objectives.**



The OAAT design team, with input from SOE full-time faculty, will ensure that the program is delivered using technology that best enhances the content delivery and student interaction with each other, with faculty, and with the learning management system (Blackboard). The technology chosen is designed to support the learning outcomes for each specific course. Once the program launches, the faculty program director and design team will continually monitor the technology used, and make adjustments as necessary, to ensure that the program meets its objectives.

**(c) Faculty Support.**

**(i) An institution shall provide for training for faculty who teach with the use of technology in a distance education format, including training in the learning management system and the pedagogy of distance education.**

SOE has successfully delivered numerous online courses and programs in the past five years as the school's distance education footprint has expanded. Many instructors (both full-time and adjunct faculty) have prior experience in teaching online courses. SOE requires instructors to undertake training in how to teach an online course prior to teaching one. SOE offers a three-week, facilitated, online training course (How to Teach Online) for faculty to learn how to use the technology involved with the learning management system. The course, which is customized as needed for specific programs, also trains faculty on how to teach online and how to effectively manage the course—for example, how to oversee an online discussion. In addition, SOE also develops and offers (on an as needed basis) other self-paced training modules for faculty on specific technologies and processes, and faculty have access to a growing online bank of resources related to online instruction, including policies, forms, tutorials, library resources, and technology resources.

**(ii) Principles of best practice for teaching in a distance education format shall be developed and maintained by the faculty.**

OAAT has developed its own best practices for teaching online. These practices are drawn from many sources, including research by our own faculty. SOE always endeavors to ensure that the faculty are introduced to these best practices during training and that they are followed when designing and managing courses. Courses are evaluated every semester to ensure that they continue to align with distance education best practices.

**(iii) An institution shall provide faculty support services specifically related to teaching through a distance education format.**

As outlined above, OAAT provides support and training to faculty in both the design and delivery phases of distance education programs and courses. As well as providing mentoring and technical support in-house, SOE has also contracted with an outside vendor to provide additional 24/7 technical support to faculty (and students) when SOE support personnel are unavailable.

**(d) An institution shall ensure that appropriate learning resources are available to students including appropriate and adequate library services and resources.**

The JHU Sheridan Libraries have a history of strong and continued support for the School of Education, especially in the area of distance education, where SOE has greatly expanded its

online program offerings in recent years. Significant resources are allocated to build collections and provide academic liaison services that support the research and teaching of the faculty and help students with the knowledge they need to become effective educators. In addition to more than 3.7 million books, 211,000 maps, 15,000 DVDs, the libraries provide 24/7 access to a rich collection of electronic resources, including over 171,000 print and e-journals, and more than 900,000 e-books. Included in the Libraries' special collections are rare books, manuscripts, digital collections, and archival materials. The library's materials and services reflect the development and increasing diversification of resources used for teaching, research, and scholarship.

SOE is served by four academic liaison librarians with subject area expertise who provide research consultation and instructional services to faculty and students, and who help build electronic and print collections to support the teaching and research needs of the university.

Distance education students have online access to the Milton S. Eisenhower Library on the Homewood campus, ranked as one of the nation's foremost facilities for research and scholarship. The interlibrary loan department allows students access to resources at any other university in the nation. The library also provides easy access to a wide selection of electronic information resources, including the library's online catalog, and numerous electronic abstracting and indexing tools. Many of the databases are accessible remotely. Librarians are available to assist students remotely and the library maintains an extensive web site to take visitors through all its services and materials.

**(e) Students and Student Services.**

**(i) A distance education program shall provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.**

SOE will provide students enrolled in the proposed post-baccalaureate certificate in Education of Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders with clear, complete, and timely information. SOE offers self-paced online training and orientation modules to all students in distance education programs. The orientation module, which is mandatory for students to take and is tracked for successful completion, can be customized (as needed) for specific programs. All online orientation modules include a program overview detailing the curriculum and program requirements, orientation on the use of all technologies involved (such Blackboard and SIS, the university's student information system), and information about the entire range of student services available to students, including registration, financial aid and student accounts. In addition, SOE offers online training modules for students on conducting library searches, formatting papers and references, and understanding and avoiding plagiarism, among other topics.

**(ii) Enrolled students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services to support their distance education activities.**

The School of Education provides a full range of student services to students in distance education programs. Many of these services are accessible to all students (whether enrolled in a face-to-face or online academic program) via SOE's website. This online resource contains information on all the student services available to students, including registration, financial aid, tuition and billing, student affairs, and disability services. More specifically:

- a. **Academic Advising.** Students are assigned a faculty advisor when accepted into a program. Students work individually with the advisor to develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the program and the career goals of the student. The advisor regularly contacts the students to check on progress and answer questions.
- b. **Library Services.** Students have online access to the Milton S. Eisenhower Library on the Homewood campus, ranked as one of the nation's foremost facilities for research and scholarship. The interlibrary loan department allows students access to resources at any other university in the nation. The library also provides easy access to a wide selection of electronic information resources, including the library's online catalog, and numerous electronic abstracting and indexing tools. Many of the databases are accessible remotely. Librarians are available to assist students remotely and the library maintains an extensive web site to take visitors through all its services and materials.
- c. **Services with Students with Disabilities.** The Johns Hopkins University is committed to making all academic programs, support services, and facilities accessible to qualified individuals. Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations can contact SOE's disabilities services coordinator.
- d. **Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program.** The Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program (JHSAP) is a professional counseling service that can assist students with managing problems of daily living. Stress, personal problems, family conflict, and life challenges can affect the academic progress of students. JHSAP focuses on problem solving through short-term counseling. Accessing the service is a simple matter of a phone call to arrange an appointment with a counselor. Online students may call a phone number for consultation and will be directed to the appropriate resource or office. JHSAP services are completely confidential. The program operates under State and Federal confidentiality legislation and is HIPAA compliant.
- e. **Transcript Access.** Official transcripts will be mailed by SOE's Registrar's Office upon written request of the student at no charge.
- f. **Student ID JCard.** The JCard serves as the student's University identification card. This card is mailed to the home address of every registered student. The JCard acts as the university library card, which enables students to check out books from the Homewood Eisenhower Library or at any of the campus center libraries, and provides access to many computer laboratories.

**(iii) Accepted students shall have the background, knowledge, and technical skills needed to undertake a distance education program.**

Through a rigorous application process, SOE will ensure that only candidates who have the appropriate background, knowledge, and technical skills to undertake a distance education program will be admitted into the proposed Autism certificate. The program will be targeted at certified special educators and professionals from related disciplines. In order to be admitted to the program, candidates will be required to demonstrate (among other things) strong academic credentials and provide two letters of reference. Once enrolled in the program, students will undertake a mandatory online program orientation to familiarize them with the requirements of the program. In addition, students have the option to take further online training modules to help them navigate through the program.

**(iv) Advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials shall clearly and accurately represent the program and the services available.**

SOE regularly reviews its advertising, recruiting and admissions materials to ensure they clearly and accurately represent the program and services available.

**(f) Commitment to Support.**

**(i) Policies for faculty evaluation shall include appropriate consideration of teaching and scholarly activities related to distance education programs.**

SOE evaluates faculty regularly as part of their annual performance review. Faculty who are directly involved in distance education programs are evaluated on the basis of both their effectiveness in teaching online courses and their scholarship in this field.

**(ii) An institution shall demonstrate a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to continuation of a program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree or certificate.**

Per the resources outlined in Appendix A, SOE is committed to providing ongoing financial and technical support to enable students to continue and complete this certificate program.

**(g) Evaluation and Assessment.**

**(i) An institution shall evaluate a distance education program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, student and faculty satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.**

The program's evaluation and assessment process will be guided by the reiterative assessment cycle laid out in SOE's Comprehensive Assessment Plan. Student learning and learning outcomes will be assessed using a range of assessment types, including individual course exams, projects, papers, discussions, and collaborative work. The educational effectiveness of the proposed online Autism certificate will be continually evaluated following its launch. Every semester, the program director and OAAT design team will analyze feedback from students and faculty (via, for example, course evaluations) and other stakeholders to measure student and faculty satisfaction and to determine if the program is meeting its goals and objectives. Based on this feedback, and where necessary, the program director, in conjunction with the design team, will make modifications to the program in relation to the assessments used to measure student learning outcomes, the curriculum, the technology used to deliver the course content, and so on.

With regards to student retention, SOE is able to run regular reports detailing student retention data for its programs. More importantly, the faculty advisor will serve as the first point-of-contact for students should any problems (whether academic or non-academic) arise, and can direct their advisees to appropriate student support services as needed.

As part of the program's development, SOE has determined (as outlined in Appendix A) that the proposed program will be cost effective. The program's revenues and expenses will be monitored closely in the future to ensure that the program is being delivered in a cost effective manner. For example, should newer, cheaper, and more effective technologies emerge that would enhance program quality, they will be adopted.

**(ii) An institution shall demonstrate an evidence-based approach to best online teaching practices.**

The School of Education has long embraced an evidence-based approach to online teaching. SOE uses existing research from the field, as well as its own internal research, to guide the design and implementation of our distance education courses and programs. For example, SOE conducts semester-end summative course evaluations, the results of which are then analyzed to determine if changes to the course content or course delivery mechanisms are necessary.

**(iii) An institution shall provide for assessment and documentation of student achievement of learning outcomes in a distance education program.**

As with all SOE programs, student learning outcomes in the proposed online Autism certificate will be assessed according to the individual rubrics that are developed for specific courses and/or assessments. These data on student performance are stored in Tk20, which is SOE's program assessment tool. Tk20 enables the School of Education to design assessments, compare them against specified learning outcomes, and generate data reports for program analysis and improvement purposes. In accordance with SOE standard practice, the program director, with input from the school's OAAT design team, will analyze assessment data every semester, and, based on these data, modify (as necessary) any rubrics, assessments, and so on, to ensure that student learning outcomes are being appropriately assessed in the program.