

**MODEL ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHING (AAT) DEGREE
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: In September 2002, in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the University of Illinois formed a steering committee to develop Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models. Representatives of public universities, community colleges, and the three state education agencies came together to undertake this task. This collaboration has resulted in development of Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models in high need teaching disciplines. This item presents the proposed model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Special Education.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education accept and endorse the model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Special Education.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**MODEL ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHING (AAT) DEGREE
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Background

In September 2002, in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the University of Illinois formed a steering committee to develop Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models. Representatives of public universities, community colleges, and the three state education agencies came together to undertake this task. This collaboration has resulted in development of Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models in high need teaching disciplines.

At its December 9, 2003 meeting, the Illinois Board of Higher Education accepted and endorsed the following General Principles for model AAT degrees:

General Principles of Associate in Arts in Teaching Degree Models

1. A degree model provides a general framework within which community colleges may develop specific degrees in accordance with institutional policies and priorities.
2. For most teaching specialties, the IAI General Education Common Core with one additional mathematics course will be appropriate. For some teaching specialties, it may be necessary to identify specific courses within the general education core, or the core may need to be modified.
3. Core language arts standards and standards related to global diversity and multiculturalism should be met through the general education component of the degree. Core technology standards may be met with an educational technology course, or may be infused throughout the general education component. Every college will be responsible for addressing the core technology standards, whether through a specific course or infusion in the curriculum.
4. Passing the Enhanced Test of Basic Skills will be a requirement for program completion. It is recommended that the test be administered no later than the point at which students have accumulated 45 semester hours and that remediation be provided for students who are not successful in their first attempt to pass the test.

5. Alignment of Illinois State Board of Education and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education standards with AAT degree models will be done by groups of community college and university faculty.
6. Early field experiences need to begin in the first two years of a future teacher's preparation, regardless of whether a student begins at a community college or a university. It is strongly suggested that the field experiences be related to the student's selected specialty area.
7. Community colleges should adopt a process for admission to AAT programs for purposes of advising and career development.
8. It will be critical that close communication is maintained between community college and university teacher education programs in order to provide smooth articulation and address problems as they arise. Each institution should formally identify a contact person to ensure that there is a clear pathway for this communication to occur.

Special Education Working Group

The Special Education working met on June 21, 2004, Sept. 2, 2004, and Oct. 29, 2004 and consulted by e-mail as needed. This group reviewed Illinois standards for Professional Teaching, Core Language Arts, Core Technology, and Common Core Standards for Special Educators, as well as national standards from the Council for Exceptional Children, and related performance indicators. Based on that review, the working group identified the standards and related performance indicators that are appropriate for the freshman/sophomore level and indicated the professional education and content courses in which they should be included. It was agreed that, with rare exceptions, the standards would be introduced at a knowledge level.

According to the proposed model, each institution will determine the specific courses that meet the state standards for special education that have been identified as appropriate to the first two years of the student's education. Finally, successful completion of the Illinois Test of Basic Skills is a degree requirement.

The model degree was disseminated across the field for review by practitioners and is now being presented to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board for their endorsement. Once this step is completed, individual community colleges will develop programs, based on the model, and present them for approval.

The proposed model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Special Education is as follows:

Model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree Special Education

General Education Component* (40-44 semester credits)

- **Communication:** 9 semester credits
(two-course writing sequence and one course in oral communications)
- **Mathematics:** 6-9 semester credits
(mathematics for Elementary Teaching (MI 903) and one other course required)

- **Physical and Life Sciences: 7-8 semester credits** (one course from the life sciences and one course from the physical sciences, and at least one laboratory course)
- **Humanities and Fine Arts: 9 semester credits**** (at least one course selected from humanities and at least one course from the fine arts)
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences: 9 semester credits**** (courses selected from at least two disciplines, Introduction to Psychology and American Government, are recommended)

**A college may require a greater number of general education credits than the model suggests, but consideration should be given to the total number of hours in the degree and the possibility that additional hours may not be accepted in transfer.*

*** A non-Western course should be selected from humanities or social sciences.*

Note: Foreign language is a graduation requirement at some institutions. Consult your advisor.

Professional and Special Education Component (18 – 21 credits)

Required:

Introduction to Education (with a clinical component*)
 Educational Technology
 Students with Disabilities in School
 Educational Psychology
 Development (Colleges may use existing courses such as Child Development, Life Span Development, or Child or Adolescent Psychology, so long as the course includes the standards identified in the AAT Super Matrix and the model syllabus.)

One or two of the following courses may be selected:

Diversity in Schools
 Language Development
 Introduction to the Foundations of Reading

*The clinical component should include field experiences in a variety of school settings. For students intending to pursue an AAT in Special Education degree, it would be appropriate for half the number of hours to be spent in a special education environment. A variety of assignments and activities should be included, with artifacts and assessments documented. A minimum of 15 contact hours of field experience is required.

The required contact hours of field experience may be embedded in the Introduction to Education course, or may be part of a separate one credit hour field experience course. If the required contact hours of field experience are part of a separate field experience course, the student must be required to take the two courses concurrently and to document the assignments and activities with artifacts and assessments. Students should be aware that a one credit hour field experience course may not be transferable.

Please Note: Additional field experience hours may be incorporated into other professional education coursework.

Degree Requirements:

1. Successful completion of the Illinois Test of Basic Skills
2. Initiation of a standards-based portfolio that includes, at a minimum, evidence of successful early clinical experience in schools, evidence of demonstrated disposition for the profession, and personal philosophy of teaching.

Total semester credit hours for the degree:

61 – 62 semester credits

Recommendation

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education accepts and endorses the model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Special Education.