

## **Purpose Statement**

The School Library Media Educational Specialist's program in the Department of Media and Instructional Technology in the College of Education at the University of West Georgia is an advanced program of study designed for students who wish to expand the knowledge acquired in the Master's program and add skills in leadership and emerging technologies. The curriculum emphasizes research, leadership, collaboration, and technology skills, so that students who complete this program can assume leadership roles in their systems by acting as mentors, consultants, models of effective technology and media practices, and trainers in a variety of professional development areas. Students must also be able to design and carry out a research study that will contribute to the profession.

## **Program Requirements**

All students are required to attend the Media and Instructional Technology student orientation and meet with their advisors prior to initial registration. A proposed program of study will be developed by the student and advisor, and must be filed with the department and Graduate School during the first semester of study. A sample program sheet is included in the Appendices.

The Specialist in Education degree in Media, School Library Media track requires 27 semester hours of approved course work beyond the master's degree. All work required for the degree must be completed within a seven-year period that begins with the first class taken towards the degree. The curriculum includes:

**Area I:** 3 semester hours (1 course) in Educational Psychology (CEPD 8102)

**Area II:** 18 semester hours (4 required courses, 2 electives) in Media & Technology

**Area III:** 6 semester hours (2 courses) in Research (MEDT 8484 and MEDT 8480).

The required courses in Area II, Media and Technology, include MEDT 8461 Diffusion of Innovation, MEDT 8463 Issues in Instructional Technology, MEDT 7469 Supervision of School Library Media Programs, and MEDT 8464 Issues in School Library Media. These courses follow a loosely prescribed sequence, that is MEDT 8461 and MEDT 8463 must be taken in the first two semesters a student is enrolled in classes. The remaining courses required courses and the two electives are generally taken following the required courses, but may be taken concurrently depending on scheduling requirements. Advisors work closely with students to assure courses are taken in the appropriate order.

Area III Research courses also follow a required sequence. MEDT 8484 Research Seminar can be taken anywhere during a student's course of study, but must precede MEDT 8480 Program Evaluation which must be taken during a student's final semester of study.

Students must also complete an electronic program portfolio documenting their achievement of program objectives and satisfactorily complete a departmental comprehensive exam during the semester MEDT 8480 is taken. Students must maintain a “B” average throughout the program. If a student earns a “C” in any course in the program, the Graduate School and the Media and Instructional Technology Department will review the student’s status in the program. The Media and Instructional Technology department will determine whether the student is eligible to continue with the M.Ed. program. A grade of “C” in a second course will automatically result in a one year suspension from the program.

## **Important Procedures**

### **Advisement Information**

All students must meet with their assigned advisor prior to the first semester they are enrolled in the program to make sure they take courses in the right sequence and when available.

- All students must have a signed program sheet by the end of the first semester. The Graduate School checks the program sheet for completion of required courses when a student applies for graduation.
- All students should immediately contact his/ her advisor when program questions develop so they can be answered in a timely fashion.
- All new students must attend a student orientation meeting prior to their first

semester to learn about the program and various distance technologies that are utilized in the program, as well as meet the MIT faculty.

- All students must prepare an electronic portfolio during the program and present this at the Portfolio Presentation at the conclusion of Practicum. The portfolio is to consist of projects completed throughout the program and linked to the UWG conceptual framework and national standards.
- Students are encouraged to take no more than two (2) courses during any semester. Summer session is only six (6) weeks in duration. Course content during summer session is not lightened.
- All students must complete required Field Experience hours within courses.
- All students must register to graduate two semesters before graduation. Contact the Graduate Office for the appropriate paperwork (678) 839-6419.
- All students are encouraged to register on *Banweb* at <http://banweb.westga.edu> and follow the fee payment guidelines.
- When a student has completed his/ her course work they should submit their certification papers to the Certification Office in the College of Education (678.839.6570) to be completed.

## **Registration and Related Information**

Registration for fall semester is generally held in April and July, spring semester registration takes place in November, and summer registration is in April. New students can also register immediately preceding the beginning of the semester. Fees are due at the end of the registration period. Late registration is held concurrently with the drop/add period during the first week of classes, however students who complete their initial registration during this time must pay a late registration fee. Dropping or adding courses to an existing schedule does not incur an additional charge. The specific dates for registration, late registration, and drop/add are published in the *University Calendar* and the *Scoop*, both of which are available online at the UWG Office of the Registrar and at this site -- <http://www.westga.edu/~registra/>

Before registering, students should consult the program plan that was developed with their advisor. If a student wishes to register for courses other than those agreed upon during the initial advisement, or wishes to resequence the courses, the advisor should be consulted to determine if this will have an adverse effect on the timely completion of the program. Students who are working are advised to register for no more than two courses each semester.

Students can register via the Internet (*Banweb*), in person at the Registrar's office, or by mail/ fax.

### **Registration using the Internet (*Banweb*)**

- Students can register using Banweb from any computer with Netscape 3.0 or higher or in any computer lab on campus. *Banweb* is accessed at --

<http://banweb.westga.edu>

To register, or adjust schedules, the Secured Access entry must be used. This requires a logon and password (which you received with your admission materials). Once a student has logged in, guidance is provided to complete the required task.

- The registration and schedule adjustment functions on *Banweb* are available during the announced registration periods.

*Banweb* undergoes system maintenance between 11:30 pm and 4:30 am and is generally unavailable during this time.

- The Public Access component of *Banweb* is always available. Course schedules and offerings for current and upcoming semester(s) are posted under the *Class Bulletin* link.
- After registering, students should print a copy of their schedule and bill and confirm the accuracy of each. The University will not mail bills to students online. Students are responsible for submitting payment on time.
- Fees must be paid by the date noted, or classes will be dropped.

### **Registration in Person**

- The Registrar's Office will process in-person registrations between 9:00 am and 4:45 pm (excluding Wednesdays) during the registration periods noted in the *Scoop*.
- Fees must be paid by the date noted, or classes will be dropped.

### **Registration by Mail/Fax** (Fully Admitted Students Only)

- Students can register by mail/fax by providing full name, student ID number or social security number, current address, phone number where s/he can be reached 8 am – 5 pm, and for each course, the CRN, course subject, course number, and section number.
- The requested information should be mailed to the Registrar's Office, Parker Hall, Carrollton, GA 30118 or faxed to the Registrar's Office at 678.839.6439. There is no guarantee that courses will be open and available when the registration is processed.
- Students will be mailed a schedule confirmation and bill and should check the accuracy of each.
- Fees must be paid by the date noted, or classes will be dropped.

### **Fee Payment**

Fees must be paid by the date noted on the schedule confirmation and bill or classes will be dropped.

Fees may be paid by cash, check, or credit card, Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm at the Cashier's Window in Aycock Hall. After 4:30 pm, checks may be deposited in the Night Depository in Aycock Hall. Students may also pay their fees using a credit card via *Banweb* or by mailing the bill and credit card authorization to:

Office of the Controller  
ATTN: Student Financial Services  
University of West Georgia  
Carrollton GA 30118-4220.

### **Drop/Add**

The drop/add period during which students may drop or add courses from their schedule without penalty is published each semester in the *University Calendar* and the *Scoop*, both of which are available online at the UWG Office of the Registrar –

<http://www.westga.edu/~registra/>

Generally, the drop/add period coincides with the first week of classes. Dropped courses are removed from the student's class schedule and will not appear on the student's transcript. Faculty have the authority to drop students who do not attend the first class meeting. However, all faculty members do not automatically drop such students. If you do not intend to remain in a course, you must drop the course before the end of the drop/add period. Failure to drop the course may result in a grade of F and tuition/fees will not be refunded. If you drop a course during the drop/add period, and you are entitled to a refund, contact the Student Financial Services Office in Aycock Hall (678) 839-4737 to find out when your refund will be disbursed. Refunds are

disbursed to the student's West Georgia HigherOne card. Tuition is forfeited when courses are dropped after the drop/add period.

### **Withdrawal from a Course**

Students who wish to withdraw from a course after drop/add are encouraged to contact the course instructor to discuss possible options before withdrawing. Depending on the circumstances, but particularly in situations involving personal or family health issues, instructors may be able to negotiate a revised course schedule rather than requiring a student to withdraw and forfeit tuition. Students may withdraw on *Banweb* or go to the Registrar's Office in Parker Hall and withdraw in person. There is no refund for withdrawing from a course.

If a student withdraws before the midpoint of a term (a withdrawal equals a grade of W), a W will appear on the student transcript, but will not affect the student's GPA. If a student withdraws after the midpoint of a term (a withdrawal equals a grade of WF), a WF will appear on the student transcript, and will count the same as an F in the computation of GPA.

### **Withdrawal from the University**

If a student decides not to attend UWG for a semester for which s/he has registered and paid fees, the student must drop or withdraw from all courses on *Banweb*, or call (678) 839-6438, or go to the Registrar's office in Parker Hall in person to withdraw. Student Financial Services, (678) 839-4737, will determine the amount of refund due based on a pro-rata percentage determined by dividing the number of calendar days in the semester that the student completed by the total number of calendar days in a semester. Students who

withdraw after 60% of the semester has been completed are not entitled to a refund of charges. Refunds are issued to the student's West Georgia Higher One card.

A student may be administratively withdrawn from the University when in the judgment of the Vice President for Student Services, in consultation, when appropriate, with the student's parents or spouse, the Director of the Student Development Center, and the University Physician, it is determined that the student suffers from a physical, mental, emotional or psychological health condition which

- poses a significant danger or threat of physical harm to the student or to the person or property of others, or
- causes the student to interfere with the rights of other members of the university community or with the exercise of any proper activities or functions of the University or its personnel, or
- causes the student to be unable to meet institutional requirements for admission and continued enrollment, as defined in the Student Conduct Code and other publications of the University.

Except in emergency situations, a student shall, upon request, be accorded an appropriate hearing prior to a final decision concerning continued enrollment at the University.

### **The West Georgia HigherOne Card**

The West Georgia HigherOne card is a MasterCard Debit Card. It can serve as a primary bank account while allowing cardholders to get cash from ATMs, write checks, send and receive money electronically,

and monitor accounts online. Students also receive their financial aid refunds electronically through this system.

Students receive their HigherOne cash card in the mail approximately 10 days after Registration. The card must be activated to receive financial aid balance refunds, refunds from dropped classes, refunds from early withdrawals from the university, scholarships, and other refunds. On campus, the card can be used at the University Bookstore, to pay fees at the Business Office, and all campus food locations.

### **Transfer Credit**

In any graduate program, a maximum of six (6) semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred from another accredited institution subject to the following conditions:

- Work already applied toward another degree cannot be accepted;
- Work must have been completed within the seven-year period allowed for the completion of COE degree requirements;
- Work must have been applicable toward a graduate degree at the institution where the credit was earned;
- Work offered for transfer must have the approval of the student's advisor, the chair of the Media and Instructional Technology Department, and the Dean of the Graduate School;
- Acceptance of the transfer credit does not reduce the residency requirement;

- Under no circumstances may credit earned through correspondence work be applied toward satisfaction of degree requirements. Students seeking to earn credit through another online program must secure department approval in advance.

### **Change of Program**

To transfer from one graduate degree program to another, the student must submit his or her request in writing to the Graduate Office. This request must then be approved by the new major department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **Electronic Portfolio Assistance and Information**

### **Technical Instructions for Preparing Electronic Portfolio**

The Electronic Portfolio is an ongoing and in-depth project. Because the project is a technically sophisticated one, the advice found below should be carefully followed. Your attention to details will ensure your electronic portfolio is professionally submitted and will allow you to work without frustration.

- Candidates should create a folder in *My Documents* or on their computer desktop.
- Download this document into the folder that you created --  
[http://coe.westga.edu/mit/eport/EDS\\_MeDIA\\_ElectronicPortfolio.pdf](http://coe.westga.edu/mit/eport/EDS_MeDIA_ElectronicPortfolio.pdf)
- Keep all projects, related documents, files, images from courses in electronic format and stored in the folder. Doing this will make the creation of your electronic portfolio easier for you.
- Keep a backup of your folder on an external storage device such as: CD, flash drive, external hard drive. It is highly recommended that you keep copies of your work in two places in addition to your normal hard drive.
- Attend an electronic portfolio workshop to be held early in each semester. Your attendance at one of these workshops will assist you with the knowledge you need to produce a successful electronic portfolio and save you time and frustration at the end of your program.

Additional information for the electronic portfolio development will be provided during a workshop presented by the faculty.

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### **Procedures for Comprehensive Written Examination**

All Specialist candidates must complete a comprehensive written examination. At the beginning of the semester prior to the semester a candidate plans to graduate, the candidate must contact her/his advisor and follow the procedures outlined here:

- Complete the appropriate paperwork including the Application for Candidacy or Graduation. On that form, list your Advisor as the Chair of this Committee with two (2) other members of the MIT Department as Committee members.

Written Exam Questions

The oral examination questions will be distributed in the Program Evaluation course at least two (2) weeks in advance of the due date. The number of questions the candidate will be asked will vary.

Provide an Electronic Portfolio

One (1) week before the portfolio presentation, the candidate will provide the advisor (chair of the committee) with an electronic portfolio for the committee to review prior to the actual presentation.

Share the Electronic Portfolio

The portfolio presentation should be based on the candidate's course work and on the job experience.

A question and answer session will follow the candidate's presentation.

Oral feedback on the candidate's portfolio will be given by the committee members.

An electronic copy of the written exam questions and answer should be included in the electronic portfolio, and a printed copy of the written exam should be turned in to the advisor on the day of the portfolio presentation.

After the written examination has been completed, the candidate will be asked to complete and return to the Department

Chair a departmental evaluation survey form referred to as the "Program Outcomes Survey" to provide feedback regarding the degree to which candidates believe program outcomes have been met.

**Procedures for Candidates Who Do Not Pass the Comprehensive Examination**

If a candidate exhibits a weakness or weaknesses on the comprehensive exam and does not pass, several forms of remediation may be required depending on the situation.

Under the direction of his or her advisor or an appointed mentor, the student may be required to:

- Enroll and successfully complete an additional approved course
- Prepare a paper on an assigned topic
- Participate in a specially designed mentoring program with an assigned mentor (i.e., media specialist, media or technology faculty member in the department) to improve an area or areas of weakness

Complete other assigned projects

- At the completion of the remediation, the candidate will respond to additional written/oral questions or prompts



## **Being a Successful Online Learner**

### **What You Need to Know**

Welcome to online learning with the Department of Media and Instructional Technology. Let us first commend you on your choice of an online program. Our faculty have extensive experience teaching in the online environment, and we know you will find our programs to be a challenging as well as a rewarding experience. Before you embark on your new educational adventure, there are some things you need to know.

### **What is online learning?**

Online learning is much more than simply separating the learner and the instructor in space and time. Our courses go far beyond the traditional correspondence course, with the read-this-chapter and answer-these-questions format. In our classes, you will be expected to be actively engaged in the learning process. We strive to include dynamic and authentic learning activities that will demand you think “outside of the box” and apply what you learn in real world contexts.

### **Understanding the difference between schedule and pace**

You may have heard that online learning allows you to work on your own schedule at your own pace. Well, yes and no. Online classes follow the same schedule as regular campus-based classes, have a specific time frame (including some scheduled face-to-face meetings), and specific due dates. You must pay attention to when all assignments are due and meet those deadlines. However, within the

confines of the class schedule, you can generally work at your own *pace*. This means that you can complete the work at any time convenient to you as long as it is done by the posted due date.

### **Before you begin**

Before you take your first class, there are a few things you should do to prepare yourself.

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***Familiarize yourself with WebCT Vista.***

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*WebCT Vista* is the learning management system that UWG uses to deliver online courses. If you have never worked in *WebCT Vista* before, you need to complete the tutorials and read through the available resources *before your first class*. *WebCT Vista* resources are accessible at --

<http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/webct2/students/>

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***Have consistent access to a recent computer and high-speed internet.***

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Enrolling in an online program means having access to the necessary equipment needed to be successful. While you can potentially get by with dial-up internet service and/or an older computer (more than 4 years), you are *strongly encouraged* to update your available equipment. The online learning experience will be much more enjoyable if you invest in the necessary resources.

***Find your quiet place.***

Despite rumors to the contrary, online learning is not easier than traditional classroom learning and, in fact, most distance learners report that it is often more rigorous and takes much more time. You will need to enlist the understanding of family, friends, and co-workers in helping you find the time and the place to work in peace. Procrastination is the biggest enemy for online learners. Success in this learning environment is directly tied to prioritizing your time to make sure you keep up with the class and complete all work in a timely fashion.

**After the class starts**

Once your coursework has begun, here are some tips to make sure you have an enjoyable and productive learning experience.

***Communication and participation.***

Online courses live and die by communication and participation. Much of the communication in a virtual classroom will be written. It is very important that you read all instructions and pay careful attention to detail. A significant percentage of “poor” grades can be traced back to students not reading and following directions carefully. So, when in doubt, ask questions.

You should also be comfortable and able to express yourself in written form. Different classes will have different requirements and expectations when it comes to written communications but, in general, communication in this environment requires that you

commit to being an active participant in a sustained dialogue.

Active means adding something meaningful to the conversation. One of the greatest things about asynchronous communication in online classes is that it allows introverts to express themselves freely. If you are the type to stay quiet in a regular classroom, now is your chance to have the time you need to reflect on topics and to add some-thing significant to the debate. Many students comment that the most engaging and important aspect of their classes revolves around the sharing of opinions and experiences in the discussion forums.

As with most things in life, civility is paramount with online communications. The learning environment should remain positive and supportive. For that to happen, everyone should remain polite to and respectful of others. Remember, there is a big difference between “attacking” an idea and attacking a person.

***Stay on top of the work.***

For most students, there is an online learning curve. It is not uncommon for students to feel lost and stressed out as they begin an online program. One of the most important things you can do to help yourself is to set goals, stay on top of the work, and not get behind. While online learning provides for great freedom and flexibility, it also demands maturity, good time management skills, and a high level of commitment and discipline. Perhaps, the single most important thing you can do to help ensure you do not fall behind is to make the commitment to log into the course everyday — even if

only for a few minutes. At the very least, strive for 4-5 times a week.

***Take the initiative.***

Much research has been done about the characteristics of good online learners. In general, good online learners have a positive self image, a strong work ethic, self-determination, self-discipline, self-motivation and basic technology skills (Kachel, Henry, & Keller, 2005). So, in short, good online learners take the self-initiative needed to complete tasks and to be successful at a distance even in the face of what they may see as “unclear” direction. Given the nature of technological advances, we often tell students that the single biggest skill a media or educational technology professional can cultivate is the ability to adapt, to change, and to learn on one’s own.

***If you are having problems, speak up!***

Even though you are expected to be self-motivated, you are not alone “out there.” In this program, you will find faculty to be very approachable and receptive of your questions and concerns. Do not be afraid to approach your professor with your concerns, issues or ideas. Remember, your professors and fellow students are not mind readers. So much can be lost in the predominantly asynchronous communication of online courses. We are not able to read your body language to know if you are happy, confused, bored, angry, etc. Likewise, if you do not understand what the professor

means on an assignment or in a discussion or email, please let him or her know. We want to help address any difficulties you may be having, but we cannot do so unless you communicate with us clearly.

**After the class ends**

***Take the time to reflect on what you have learned and complete all assessments for the course.***

Your professors very much value your opinion, and we take our class evaluations very seriously. Good online courses should always be in a constant state of revision. Your input helps guide the redesign of the course to better meet the needs of future students.

***Be a proud advocate for the program and for online learning.***

There is much in the way of bad press concerning online learning. Advocate for the merits of online learning to your friends, family and co-workers. We need people who can go forth and explain that high quality learning can indeed be had in the virtual classroom. As you work through your program, we hope you come to believe as we do that good distance courses can even surpass good face-to-face courses in quality. The growth of our program largely depends on word of mouth, so we depend on you.

## **University and College Resources**

### **The Ingram Library**

(678) 839-6435

The Ingram Library may be accessed directly at –

<http://www.westga.edu/~library/>.

The library has an extensive collection of resources for students in the MIT department.

You may use this portal to search the GALILEO databases that are available to the university system. If you need the GALILEO password (it changes approximately every 90 days to 180 days), you may call the facility or email utilizing the links on the home page of the library. Ingram Library participates in the GALILEO Interconnected Libraries (GIL) which includes all thirty-three libraries and public libraries with membership in PINES.

### **Teaching Materials Center**

(678) 839-6574

The Teaching Materials Center (TMC) is located in the Education Center. This is an excellent resource for you to use during your program. They have a wide variety of resources and equipment available to faculty and students. They are also open on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. To view their home page and/ or contact the TMC, you may access the website at --

<http://tmc.ed.westga.edu/>

### **Student Information Technology Services**

(678) 839-6587

SITS is the technology services available to students for software needs and computer services. Their website that is complete with directions to their offices and what services are available is accessible at –

<http://www.westga.edu/~sits/>.

### **Distance & Distributed Education**

(678) 839-6248

UWG is an accredited institution with specific requirements for degree-seeking students. Students enrolling in distance learning courses must first be admitted through the graduate school. As a student in the MIT department, most of your courses are delivered 85% to 100% online. The Distance Learning website can be accessed at –

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/>.

For help with technology problems in accessing WebCT courses, links are available for students after logging into the system. For assistance, call (678) 839-6248.

**Educational Technology Services**

(678) 839-6009

ETS is the main technology support for the College of Education. On their home page you will find information about the Computer Labs that are available for student use. The computer labs are located in Education Center rooms 201, 203, 204 and 205. The ETS website can be accessed at –

<http://coe.westga.edu/ets/default.asp>

If you view the menu, you will find a link to the computer labs. Also, you will find an FAQ file, user policies and other important information.

## Services for Students at UWG

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### **MIT Department**

<http://coe.westga.edu/mit/>  
(678) 839-6558

### **Graduate School**

<http://www.westga.edu/~gradsch/>  
(678) 839-6419

### **College of Education**

<http://coe.westga.edu> (Includes link to TMC)

### **Registrar's Office**

<http://www.westga.edu/~registra/>  
(678) 839-6438

### **College of Education Scholarships**

<http://coe.westga.edu/mit/scholarship.html>  
<http://coe.westga.edu/Students/Common/Scholarship.asp#Grad>

### **Financial Aid**

<http://www.westga.edu/~finaid/>  
(678) 839-6421

### **Bursar's Office**

<http://www.bf.westga.edu/Bursar/>  
(678) 839-4737

### **Office of Teacher Certification**

<http://coe.westga.edu/Students/TCFP/Certification.asp>  
(678) 839-6109

## **Research and Support Contacts**

### **WebCT Vista Homepage**

<http://webct.westga.edu>

### **WebCT Vista Help & Troubleshooting**

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/help/>  
(678) 839-6248 daytime  
(800) 855-3238 evenings and weekends

### **Ingram Library**

<http://www.westga.edu/~library/>

### **Ingram Library Distance Learning Services**

<http://westga.edu/~library/depts/offcampus/>

### **Student Services**

<http://www.westga.edu/~stusrv/>

### **Distance and Distributed Education**

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance>

## **General Academic Policies**

### **Course Loads and Course Overloads**

Since most MIT Graduate students are employed, the Department recommends that no more than two (2) courses be taken each semester, including summer. The University considers nine (9) credit hours (3 courses) to be a full-load, but this option should only be pursued by non-working students.

### **Grading System**

The quality of work of most courses taken in a graduate program is indicated by the grades A, B, C, and F; however, the quality of work on theses, practica, and internships is indicated by the grades S and U. Listed below are the standard requirements for each of these grades:

**A** — Excellent, with four quality points for each credit hour

**B** — Good, with three quality points for each credit hour

**C** — Poor, with two quality points for each credit hour (passing, subject to Academic Standards below)

**F** — Failing

**S** — Satisfactory

**U** — Unsatisfactory

**I** — This symbol indicates that a student was doing satisfactory work but, for non-academic reasons beyond his/her control, was unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Such a grade must be removed

by the completion of work within one calendar year or the I will become an F.

**W** — This symbol indicates that a student was permitted to withdraw without penalty. Withdrawals without penalty will not be permitted after the midpoint of the semester except in cases of hardship that are approved by the appropriate college dean.

**WF** — Withdrew, Failing

**WM** — This symbol indicates a student was permitted to withdraw under the Board of Regents policy for military ser-vicere refunds. The use of this symbol indicates that this student was permitted to withdraw without penalty at any time during the term.

**V** — This symbol indicates that a student was given permission to audit the course. Students may not transfer from audit to credit status or vice versa.

The institution grade point average is calculated by dividing the number of hours scheduled in courses attempted in which a grade of A, B, C, F, or WF was received into the number of grade points earned on those hours scheduled. A grade of WF counts as an F.

### **Academic Standards**

Graduate students must meet the following academic standards:

- To be eligible for admission to candidacy and graduation, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on all

graduate and undergraduate courses. No grade below **C** will be accepted as part of a program of study for a graduate degree.

- The Graduate School will place students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters on academic probation. Then, they must make a 3.0 or higher semester GPA each succeeding semester that their overall cumulative GPA is below 3.0. These students are no longer on probation when their cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above. If they fail to make a 3.0 semester GPA while on probation, they are dismissed from the Graduate School. Students on academic probation may not apply for candidacy, take comprehensive examinations, nor may they obtain a graduate degree.
- In addition to these minimum academic standards, students must also meet all academic standards and retention policies that have been adopted by the department and reported to the Graduate School. Please see individual departments and programs for their specific academic requirements.

### **Scholarship Opportunities**

#### **Annie Bell Weaver Scholarship**

*Provides an annual award to a student pursuing a Master's or Specialist degree.*

Students are encouraged to research other scholarship opportunities in the College of Education.

### **Academic Honor**

At West Georgia, the student is expected to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and excellence. Not only does academic honesty preserve the integrity of both the student and the institution, but it is also essential in gaining a true education. The West Georgia student, therefore, pledges not to lie, cheat, plagiarize, or steal in the pursuit of his or her studies and is encouraged to report those who do. See *Connection and Student Handbook*, Appendix E, Academic Dishonesty. The Pledge follows:

#### **Pledge**

*Having read the Honor Code for UWG, I understand and accept my responsibility to uphold the values of the Institution in such a way as to respect the rights of all UWG community members. As a West Georgia student, I will represent myself truthfully and complete all academic assignments honestly. I understand that if I violate this code, I will accept the penalties imposed, should I be found guilty of violations through processes due me as a university community member. These penalties may include expulsion from the University. I also recognize that my responsibility includes willingness to confront members of the University community if I feel there has been a violation of the Honor Code.*

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism



occurs when a student uses or purchases ghostwritten papers or projects. It also occurs when a student utilizes the ideas of or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in the *UWG Student Handbook*, *Undergraduate Catalog*, and *Graduate Catalog*. Disciplinary procedures described in the latest *University of West Georgia Student Handbook* will be followed when violations take place. Infractions may include cheating, plagiarism, disruptive behavior, and disorderly conduct.

### **Academic Expectations**

It is important that students take written assignments very seriously. In addition to the specific criteria delineated in every course syllabus and rubric, structural, grammatical and/or mechanical errors will result in a loss of points. Papers or projects with numerous structural, grammatical or mechanical errors

will NOT pass. It might be necessary to find a writing tutor or helper to proofread papers. If there is a concern about writing proficiency, make use of the UWG Writing Center or a personal tutor.

### **Disabilities Pledge**

I pledge to do my best to work with the University to provide all students with equal access to my classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the American Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please make these known to me, either directly, or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. This is not only my personal commitment, it is your right, and it is the law!

## **Graduation Procedures**

Early in the semester preceding the semester a student plans to graduate (for instance, early fall semester for spring semester graduation), degree-seeking students must complete and submit the forms required to apply for graduation. The specific deadline for graduation application is published in the *University Calendar* in *Banweb* and on the Graduate School's Graduation Requirements webpage accessible at <http://www.westga.edu/~gradsch/grad/>.

Master's degree students must complete and submit four forms (found in the Appendices):

- Graduate Student Application for Graduation Form
- Graduate Information Form
- Proposed Plan of Study (Non-Thesis) Form
- Application for Admission to Candidacy Form

The Graduate Student Application for Graduation form, the Graduate Information form, and a check for \$15 made payable to the University of West Georgia should be submitted to the Graduate School, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA 30118-4160. The Proposed Plan of Study (Non-Thesis) form, and the Application for Admission to Candidacy form should be submitted to the student's advisor who will approve the forms and forward them on through the approval process.

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## **Certification Procedures**

Students must successfully complete both sections of the GACE exam for school library media to receive Georgia certification.

The Office of Teacher Certification processes all necessary paperwork for candidates who are applying for initial certification or adding additional fields to existing certification in Georgia, as well as processes applications for candidates who are applying for out-of-state educator positions. The following questions and answers are designed to assist candidates who have completed, or are nearing completion of, their teacher, service, or

leadership programs at the University of West Georgia.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do I apply for my first Georgia teaching certificate?**

At the end of each student teaching semester (fall and spring semesters) a Final Student Teaching Meeting is held. Certification applications are completed at that time, as a group, in order to ensure accuracy and expedite processing. This meeting is mandatory for all students completing student teaching the semester the meeting is held.

**I currently hold a non-renewable teaching/service certificate. How do I apply to convert my non-renewable teaching/service certificate to a clear renewable teaching/service certificate?**

Below are the guidelines for applying for your clear renewable certificate:

**Certification Application Guidelines**

At or near the completion of your program, visit the following link at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission website for a Certification Application Package –

<http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherCertification/CertificationFormsandApplications.asp>

Choose the following options and print these forms –

- Application for Certification
- Approved Program Recommendation Form
- Employer Assurance Form

**Georgia PSC Certification Application**

You will complete this form (2 pages) **IN FULL**.

1. Page 1, Question 3 -- Check “Add a New Clear Renewable Certificate Field.” Under “Field,” list Media Specialist.

*Notes: If this is your first Georgia certificate, check “Clear Renewable Certificate.” If you currently hold a Non-Renewable Certificate in Media Specialist, check “Convert Non-Renewable Certificate to Clear Renewable Status.”*

Beside “Fee submitted,” if you are currently employed in a Georgia school system/agency or if this is your first Georgia certificate, you are fee exempt and should write in “n/a” on this line.

2. Page 2 -- Academic Record -- list all colleges/universities you have attended. If the PSC already has transcripts on file, check “transcript on file.” For your UWG transcript, check “transcript attached.” Once all grades have been posted, we will request an official transcript from UWG that we will attach to your certification package.
3. Page 2 -- Assessment Record - write “Praxis II” or “GACE Content Assessment” and re-cord the date you passed the assessment.

**You must attach copies of all pages of your content assessment.**

*Note: If this is your first clear renewable Georgia certificate, under Assessment Record you also must write “Praxis I” or “GACE Basic Skills Assessment” and record the date you passed the assessment. You **must** attach copies of all pages of your basic skills assessment. If you exempted the basic skills assessment, write “exempt” and the test you exempted with (i.e., “SAT”, “ACT”, “GRE”).*

**Georgia PSC Approved Program Recommendation Form**

Complete **ONLY** the upper portion of this form — name, social security number, and date of birth. The remainder of this form will be completed by UWG.

*Note: If you are only upgrading your certificate in the same field and NOT adding the new field of Media Specialist, you will NOT have to complete this form.*

### **Georgia PSC Employer Assurance Form**

Complete ONLY the upper portion of this form — name, social security number, and date of birth. The remainder of this form will be completed by your employing school system.

### **Submission of forms**

You may send the entire packet of forms to the Certification Official at UWG (see address below) after completing your portion. Once we complete the Approved Program Recommendation Form and attach an official transcript, we will send the entire package to your school system (as indicated on Question 2 of the Application) to complete the Employer Assurance Form. Your school system will send the entire completed package to the Professional Standards Commission.

*Note: If you are only upgrading your certificate in the same field and NOT adding the new field of Media Specialist, you should send the Application, Employer Assurance Form, and an official transcript directly to your school system.*

### **Other**

If you completed a non-degree program, you **must** attach a copy of your program sheet to your paperwork. This program sheet must include your signature, the signature of your advisor, and any approved course substitutions documented on the program sheet by your

advisor. If this is your first clear renewable certificate, you **must** attach official documented proof of your completion of the Special Georgia Technology Requirement (e.g., *InTech* training). If you met the requirement by completing MEDT 6401, this course will appear on your UWG transcript and additional documentation will not be necessary.

Please note that the AssessOnline test-out option is not acceptable for meeting this requirement within your program.

### **How long does the process take?**

For **first time certificates** in Georgia, the process is usually between 4 to 6 weeks from start to finish. Applications cannot be processed until after graduation of the semester of program completion because all grades and degree statements (when applicable) must be posted on the official transcripts. Official transcripts are attached to the certification applications before forwarding to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC). Once the applications are processed at the PSC, certificates are mailed directly to you at the address you indicated on the application form.

### **How long is my certificate valid?**

Clear, renewable Georgia teaching certificates are valid for five years.

### **How do I check on the status of my application?**

You may contact Mrs. Kathy Jones, Certification Official, at (678) 839-6109 or by e-mail at [kjones@westga.edu](mailto:kjones@westga.edu). If your application has already been forwarded to the PSC, you may check for the status at their website at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/certification/lookup.asp>

**What requirements, other than my coursework as prescribed on my program sheet/plan of study, must be met in order to obtain my first clear renewable Georgia certificate?**

- Passing GACE Basic Skills Assessment scores (formerly Praxis I) or exemption
- Passing GACE Content Assessment scores (formerly Praxis II)

(Note: Applicants for Speech-Language Pathology and Educational Leadership still take the Praxis II exam)

- Special Technology Requirement (see <http://www.gapsc.com/ApprovedPrograms/EducationProgram.asp> for PSC approved courses). Note: The AssessOnline test-out option is not an acceptable means for meeting this requirement within our initial certification programs at UWG.

**I just got my master's. How do I apply for an upgrade?**

To upgrade an existing Georgia certificate, an Approved Program Recommendation Form is **not** required (except for Speech-Language Pathology majors) if you are employed by a Georgia public school system. Please provide your school system's central office with the completed Application and an official transcript. Your central office will process the Application and forward it to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Please do not send it to the Office of Teacher

Certification, as this will only delay receipt of your updated certificate.

**Where can I obtain a certification application packet?**

You can download the Certification Application Package from the PSC website at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherCertification/CertificationFormsandApplications.asp>.

If you do not have access to the internet, internet access is available at most local libraries and various locations around campus.

**My certificate has expired. What do I need to do to renew my certificate?**

You would need to contact the Georgia Professional Standards Commission at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/AboutPSC/Contactinfo.asp>.

Related information can be found at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/application/howtorenew.asp>.

**I'm certified in another state. What do I need to do to become certified in Georgia?**

You would need to contact the Georgia Professional Standards Commission at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/AboutPSC/Contactinfo.asp>.

Related information can be found at –

<http://www.gapsc.com/application/reciprocityvet.asp>.

**Who can I contact for answers to my questions that were not addressed here?**

You may contact Mrs. Kathy Jones, Certification Official, at (678) 839-6109 or by e-mail at [kjones@westga.edu](mailto:kjones@westga.edu).

**Appendix**

**Electronic Portfolio Requirements and Rubric**

<b>Portfolio Criteria</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
1. Portfolio is in an electronic format (CD, DVD, web pages – all links should function on any computer)		
2. Information is organized in a Word document, PowerPoint presentation, or web page and links the student’s work completed during the program		
3. Documents in the portfolio do not have spelling or grammatical errors.		
4. Portfolio is submitted on time (e.g., Add-on and initial certification students submit the portfolio before final exams of their last semester, M.Ed. students submit the portfolio a minimum of a week before the presentation date in the final semester of the program).		
5. Portfolio utilizes good communication and navigational design principles.		
6. Contains information on how the viewer is to review the portfolio, if applicable.		
7. Contains an introduction to the students (e.g., name, degree/certification earned, contact information).		
8. Contains a statement of the purpose of the electronic portfolio.		
9. Contains a table of contents that organizes the information in the portfolio.		
10. Contains an up-to-date resume.		
11. Contains a PowerPoint presentation on the role of the school library media specialist.		
12. Portfolio contains student projects that reflect the standards (e.g., AASL or ISTE NETS, NBPTS, CoE Conceptual Framework).		
13. Contains selected resources that are of value to the student (e.g., websites, books, organizations, software).		