

Program Description Middle School Education University of Georgia

The initial teacher preparation program in Middle School Education (EDMS), approved by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and NCATE, at The University of Georgia is based on a number of foundational ideas about the preparation of teachers. The program is a collaboration among College of Education faculty, Arts and Sciences faculty, and middle grades (grades 5-8) teachers and administrators from area schools. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for teacher candidates who successfully complete the program include: (a) knowledge of the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional developmental characteristics young adolescents and implications for curriculum and instruction, (b) depth of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in two subject areas selected from language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, (c) understanding of how diverse young adolescents are and how to design curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of each student, and (d) ability to reflect on classroom practice and see learning to teach as a life-long process.

The program is based on national curriculum documents and guidelines from NMSA and from the subject matter fields of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These national guidelines were used over a period of several years as the EDMS undergraduate program was revised for the transition from quarters to semesters in Fall 1998. From 1993-1996, the Middle School Advisory Council developed a description of the kind of teacher we want graduating from our program and the basic structure of the program. This was based partly on national guidelines from NMSA and the subject matter fields and partly on lengthy discussions among the Middle School faculty, faculty from Language Education, Mathematics Education, Reading Education, Science Education, and Social Science Education, faculty from Arts and Sciences, and area teachers and administrators. During 1997-1998, a group of teacher liaisons from 10 area middle schools collaborated closely with the Middle School faculty to design the specific courses and field experiences for the new program. This group, called the Middle School Co-Reform Team, has continued to collaborate with the EDMS faculty to improve the program.

In addition, the Middle School Education Content Faculty, consisting of the five EDMS faculty in the Department of Elementary Education and representatives from the School of Teacher Education and Arts and Sciences for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, have collaborated on the design and structure of the program and the specific policies for admission of teacher candidates and evaluation of teacher candidates throughout their course of study. New research and related knowledge from projects, grants, and contracts, such as Contextual Teaching and Learning, have impacted the development of course work. The Middle School Education Content Faculty was created when the program was first developed during the 1970s and has continued up to the present.

In the Middle school undergraduate program, in addition to Core Courses, students take courses to satisfy Area F (Courses related to program of study such as EFND 2030 Foundations of Education; EPSY 2020 Learning and Development in Education; SPED 2000 Survey of Special Education; one course in specialization 1 and one course in specialization 2). During their junior and senior years, students select two specialization areas from Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Science, or Science. Students also take a writing across the curriculum course as well as a reading course. Students complete their undergraduate program with a 15-week student teaching experience in their major area of concentration.