

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Binghamton University
The State University of New York
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: February 9 - 11, 2005

The Summary of the Case is written by the auditors and approved by program faculty. The Summary reflects the auditors' understanding of the case the faculty are making for accreditation.

Authorship of the *Inquiry Brief*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by Beverly Rainforth in consultation with the faculty and Tama Mann, and was approved by faculty on May 12, 2004.

Introduction:

A core faculty of 15, accompanied by an adjunct staff of 25*, in the Division of Education of the School of Education and Human Development at the State University of New York at Binghamton (Binghamton University), is seeking accreditation for its teacher education graduate program. This graduate program offers two degrees (MAT and MEd) that lead to the initial and professional certificates in New York State as follows:

Master of Arts in Teaching, Grades 7-12 (MAT) (preservice)

- Biology Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- Chemistry Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- Earth Science Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- English Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- Mathematics Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- Physics Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12
- Social Studies Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12

Master of Science in Education (MEd)

- Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, in Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, English, Mathematics, Physics, and Social Studies (for teachers with initial certification in the same area)
- Childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (preservice)
- Childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in the same *or* another area)
- Inclusive Childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (preservice)
- Literacy Education, Birth-Grade 6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in another area)

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- Literacy Education, Grades 5-12 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in another area)
- Special Education, Childhood, Grades 1-6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in Childhood Education or an Adolescence content area)
- Special Education, Adolescence, Grades 7-12 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in Childhood Education or an Adolescence content area)

SUNY-Binghamton, originally a selective liberal arts college (Harpur College) was made one of the four “university centers” within the 64-campus SUNY system in 1965 and was assigned the missions of graduate education and research. Two years later in an effort to strengthen its ties to the community, the University established graduate professional programs in teaching that built on the Harpur College programs for liberal arts majors who wanted to enter teaching and for practicing teachers who already held teacher certification. The University program was gradually expanded to special education, early childhood/elementary education, and reading and secondary education.

The faculty makes six claims about the 100 or so students who graduate annually from the program:

- They understand the subject matter they will teach along with the associated liberal arts and sciences, and they have the skills of rhetoric, critical thinking, and qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
- They know how to convert their knowledge of subject matter into a curriculum which they can teach and assess for a wide range of students;
- They can act on their knowledge in a caring and professional manner that would lead to appropriate levels of achievement for all their students;
- They know how to learn important information on their own, can transfer what they learn to new contexts, and have acquired the dispositions and skills for life-long learning in their field;
- They understand the implications of gender, race, ethnic and culture, language, social class, sexual orientation, and other individual differences for education;
- They have acquired the basic technological tools used in education.

The faculty supports its six claims with the several sources of evidence with some admittedly having weaker connections to the program’s claims (e.g., the GRE and u/g grades) than others which by contrast have the

faculty's full confidence (e.g., samples of student work, grades, alumni and employer survey results).

The faculty principally relies on the following measures in support of its six claims:

1. Their evaluations of samples of student work embedded in courses (rated with traditional letter grades and/or point systems or their equivalents, sometimes simply pass or fail, and in a few instances ungraded work is presented as an *existence proof*).
2. The results of an alumni satisfaction survey of 40 items related to the program from 1999 to 2003.
3. A recently developed survey, the Employer Assessment of Program Graduates, which has 7 items (one for each claim and an overall normative item comparing program to other programs in the region from 40 supervisors of the graduates).
4. Evaluations by faculty and cooperating teachers of the program's students with a new 16-item rating scale of the six claims.
5. Student grades and GPA in the program.
6. They have acquired the basic technological tools used in education.

To a lesser extent the faculty relies on its students' prior undergraduate grades, pass rates and scaled scores on the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (LAST, ATS-W, and CST), scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and student ratings on the Binghamton Student Opinion of Teaching (SOOT), a course evaluation tool offered by the university, for all faculty, adjuncts. Some students have acquired Teach with Technology Certificate.

The *Brief* presents an analysis of the common threats to the reliability and validity of its educational measures and the analysis indicates that the measures are fairly robust against the common threats to validity from drop-outs, sample bias, selection issues, maturation, repeated measures, and instrumentation factors. The faculty operates in the tradition of qualitative research with its the triangulation of multiple data sources that best address the challenge of finding credible evidence to support the claims rather than psychometric properties of individual data sources.

On the whole, the quantitative evidence is of sufficient magnitude to support the claims with which they are associated. The faculty, however, are more persuaded by the qualitative evidence they have accumulated from a sample of about 100 (2003-2004) students (15% of the course enrollees) from the program's options, whose work ranged from low to high quality.

The faculty believes the qualitative and quantitative data presented in the *Brief*, collectively, demonstrate that the program's graduates are "competent, caring, and qualified" and that the program was influential in the process of their students' accomplishments with respect to the six claims.

Grades on average were above 3.0/4.0, GRE scores are higher for those admitted than those denied admission, only 1% to 15% of the alumni report dissatisfaction with some aspect of the program, employers found the graduates very good to outstanding on average, pass rates were between 93% and 100% on the state's license tests, and the samples of student work were generally rated highly by the faculty.

The Attachment A1 in the *Brief* represents the heart of the faculty's approach to the program because it describes a set of unusual cases that demonstrates the faculty's commitment to respecting and responding sensitively to individual differences and needs in five cases of unusual circumstances.

The faculty members have undertaken twelve successful collaborations and partnership projects with the local schools as evidence that they have met the special New York State accreditation standards.

With 13 students, randomly selected from 124 students enrolled in the program's areas and options in 2003, the faculty conducted an internal audit of some 28 points in their quality control system where they make a decision to improve the quality of some aspect of the program. On the whole the internal audit confirmed that the system was working as it was designed. With regard to the evidence of University's commitment to the graduate program in teacher education, the evidence was overwhelming that most items of comparison favored the program.

*Despite their relatively large number, the adjunct faculty members teach only 20% of each semester's courses in Education on average.

¹ The program includes options in the following areas and New York, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program's graduates:

*Fifteen options: Master of Arts in Teaching , Grades 7-12 (MAT) (preservice), Biology Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Chemistry Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Earth Science Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, English Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Mathematics Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Physics Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Social Studies Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, Master of Science in Education (MSEd), Adolescence Education, Grades 7-12, in Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, English, Mathematics, Physics, and Social Studies (for teachers with initial certification in the same area), childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (preservice), Childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in the same or another area), Inclusive Childhood Education, Grades 1-6 (preservice), Literacy Education, Birth-Grade 6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in another area), Literacy Education, Grades 5-12 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in another area), Special Education, Childhood, Grades 1-6 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in Childhood Education or an Adolescence content area), Special Education, Adolescence, Grades 7-12 (inservice, for teachers with initial certification in Childhood Education or an Adolescence content area)