

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors establish a new undergraduate certificate program, Adapted Physical Education in the College of Education, effective Fall 2025.

Background

The approval of a new undergraduate certificate in Adapted Physical Education (APE) is critical to meet the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), which guarantees children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education, including APE, when needed. Both IDEA and state regulations require that highly qualified teachers deliver APE services. Only individuals with an APE endorsement are permitted to teach students who need APE in Michigan. The development of the APE certificate program is essential for addressing these legal and professional requirements while also tackling the severe teacher shortages in this field. The 2022–2023 Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Teacher Shortage Study (Kilbride et al., 2023) highlights that Michigan schools have long reported significant shortages of teachers who have endorsements in special education, including APE.

Program Description

In Michigan, candidates must first be certified in Health and Physical Education (HPE) or Special Education (SPED) before adding an APE endorsement to their teaching certificate. The traditional pathway (open to teachers of HPE or SPED) involves completing a 21-credit course sequence over two years. After fulfilling the credit requirements, completers can apply for the APE endorsement to be added to their teaching certificates. The accelerated pathway (open only to teachers of HPE) consists of four APE-specific courses, each with embedded clinical experiences. Cohorts will complete this sequence within one year and, upon completion, will sit for the APENS (Adapted Physical Education National Standards) exam. After successfully passing the exam and completing their clinical hours, completers will be eligible to apply for the APE endorsement. The primary audience for this certificate includes teachers already endorsed in HPE and who wish to add the APE endorsement. The program will be marketed to teachers from our partner districts, including Detroit Public School Community District and Dearborn Public Schools, as well as eligible teachers in other districts.

Admissions Requirements

The program is open to undergraduate students who have completed at least 60 credit hours, have a GPA of 2.0, and are in a program leading to certification in HPE or SPED, or students who have earned a bachelor's degree at WSU or another accredited institution and teacher certification in the areas of HPE or SPED. Only HPE applicants may qualify for the accelerated route.

Curriculum Requirements

The proposed certificate will include the two pathways as previously mentioned:

- A. Traditional Route: Completion of 21 credit hours in APE coursework.
- B. Accelerated Route (APENS Accreditation and only open to teachers certified in HPE):

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Completion of 12 credit hours in APE coursework and 200 supervised internship hours, and a passing score on the APENS exam (to earn the teaching APE endorsement).

Graduation Requirements

Students must complete the required credit hours outlined above through the traditional (21 credits) or accelerated (12 credits) pathways. A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required to earn the undergraduate certificate, and no grade below a C will be accepted for any course. The traditional pathway is designed to be completed over 2 years, while the accelerated pathway is intended to be finished within 1 year.

Program Administration

The HPE program coordinator and faculty in the Division of Kinesiology, Health, and Sport Studies in the College of Education will oversee admissions, advising, data collection, and analysis for program effectiveness, while the program's two administrative assistants will manage clerical support.

Federal Student Aid Eligibility

The program is seeking Title IV federal student aid eligibility on the basis that the program meets current gainful employment guidelines from the US Department of Education.

Budget and Resource Requirements

The program will leverage existing faculty, facilities, and resources within the College of Education without requiring new additions. No new courses are needed for the program. Additionally, a multi-year U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (325 D) grant funds coursework for a limited number of individuals to meet the high demand for APE teachers.

Accreditation

The program has existing approval from MDE to offer both the traditional and accelerated APE pathways, and the teacher certification programs in the College of Education are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Approvals

The proposal was approved by the faculty and Assistant Dean of the Division of Kinesiology, Health and Sport Studies (KHS), the Dean of the College of Education, and the Provost.