

## Special Education leadership Funding Opportunity

### FAQs for Potential Applicants

**In a nutshell, what is this project designed to do? What is this funding opportunity?** *Simply put, this is a graduate student fellowship opportunity embedded in the existing Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The project tailors the existing Ed.D. program for those students seeking to become special education leaders and provides full-time funding and a stipend for five highly qualified students. Our intent is to “grow” a cadre of leaders who conceptualize special education as an inclusive and culturally-responsive system of tiered educational supports and who can implement research-based practices and policies that further this vision. Students will participate in the core leadership sequence within the Doctorate of Education degree program (Ed.D.) (e.g., courses in leadership, research methods, education policy, etc.) as well as a special education concentration designed to enhance their leadership in special education (e.g., courses and internship experiences related to special education law, finance, curriculum, service delivery, etc.). In addition, students will conduct applied research exploring relevant issues in special education leadership and organizational change.*

**What does the funding cover?** *The five students funded through this grant opportunity will receive tuition for a full-time course of study (e.g., 9 – 12 credits per semester) and a stipend of \$20,000 per year.*

**Is there a place online that describes the general project?** *Yes, UVM wrote a short news article about the funding opportunity which is located at this URL: <http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/>.*

**Should I be applying to the Ed.D. program and this funding opportunity, or just the Ed.D. program?** *For either option, you need to apply to the Ed.D. program. You should be looking at this funding opportunity if your career goals are a match and you see yourself on a relatively fast track to complete the program—you should want to complete the doctorate in a concentrated manner.*

**What are the application procedures?** *The application deadline is January 15, 2014. The application process is managed by the UVM Graduate College, with forms available on their website: <http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/>. As stated below, your statement of purpose needs to articulate your interest in this funding opportunity, your rationale for applying, and the reasons why you feel you are a good match for the fellowship.*

**What additional criteria do I need to address as part of my application?** *You have to meet the basic requirements for admission to the Ed.D. program, which are specified through the Ed.D. program website. In addition, qualified candidates will present evidence of the following:*

1. *Masters degree in Special Education or related field with a GPA of 3.5 or higher;*
2. *Three years of experience as a special education teacher, educational speech language pathologist, school psychologist, school counselor or reading coordinator/specialist.*
3. *GRE scores indicating performance at or above the 75%;*
4. *Three letters of recommendation indicating excellence and your potential for high quality leadership and applied research;*
5. *A personal statement with a clear articulation of your career goals in special education administration and/or leadership;*

6. *Within the personal statement, an articulation of your intent regarding professional or paid employment outside of this full time fellowship opportunity;*
7. *A writing sample that provides evidence of excellent skills in scholarly writing and the potential to conduct independent research; and*
8. *A willingness to satisfy the service obligation requirements (see below) of the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).*

**What is the Federal Service Obligation, and what will be my requirements upon graduation?** *This OSEP funding opportunity includes a federal service obligation. In essence, students who receive scholarship assistance from this project are required to complete a service obligation or repay all or part of the costs of their assistance. For each full-time academic year that you receive assistance you must maintain the equivalent of full time employment in a special education leadership position for the equivalent of two years. One year of funding equates to two years of a service obligation; however, the government provides for a five year grace period for fulfillment of the requirement. For example, if you receive the equivalent of two full-time years of funding, you will need to document four years of employment in a special education leadership role within a nine year period of time. For more information on the service obligation, please see the FAQ document at: <https://serviceobligations.ed.gov/2006faq.cfm>*

**If I am not selected for a fellowship, may I be considered for admission to the Ed.D. without funding?** *Admission to the Ed.D. program occurs first before funding decisions are made. And yes, if you are admitted to the program but are not offered funding, you may still participate in the curriculum with other Ed.D. and graduate students.*

**Is this a part-time or a full-time program?** *This fellowship opportunity is envisioned with full time students in mind. Our expectation is that you will complete between 9 and 12 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters, and 6 – 9 credit hours during the summer months. The fellowship also requires a 20 hour per week research commitment, the details of which will be finalized with the student's advisor.*

**May I continue to participate in my full-time profession while completing this program?** *We are not confident that students will be able to meet the requirements of the fellowship opportunity as well as continue professional work on a full time basis. Applicants to the program who work on less than a full time basis outside of the fellowship may be considered for this opportunity. A student who takes 9 credits per semester will be "in class" for approximately 9 hours per week and will be expected to complete assigned readings and writing outside of class time as well. Added to this course schedule will be a 20 hour per week research commitment. Please consider these experiences carefully and take the time to develop your options. We ask that if you intend to balance paid employment outside of this graduate student experience that you explain that balance in your statement of purpose. As best you can foretell, you should explain the how your work commitments will allow you the flexibility to pursue this doctoral program. If you have a negotiated arrangement in place with your employer, this should be explained in your statement of purpose.*

**Who can I contact to learn more?** *For more information, please contact one of the Co-Principal Investigators:*

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