

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**  
**Consent**

**AGENDA ITEM: 5 – B (2)**  
**DATE: April 2-3, 2025**

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**SUBJECT**

**New Graduate Certificate Request – NSU – Gifted Education**

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

[BOR Policy 2.3.2](#) – New Programs, Program Modifications, and Inactivation/Termination

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

Northern State University (NSU) requests authorization to offer a graduate certificate in Gifted Education. The proposed certificate will prepare educators with advanced skills and knowledge to support gifted learners in K-12 settings. This program focuses on the academic field of gifted education, which examines the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of gifted children, and provides specialized strategies for curriculum development, teaching, and fostering creativity. Through this certificate, educators gain expertise in identifying and nurturing exceptional talents, addressing the unique educational needs of gifted students.

**IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed certificate will be offered on campus, online, and through HyFlex delivery. NSU does not request new resources. No new courses will be required.

Board office staff recommends approval.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – New Certificate Request Form: NSU – Gifted Education

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**DRAFT MOTION 20250402\_5-B(2):**

I move to authorize NSU to offer a graduate certificate in Gifted Education, as presented.



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

## New Certificate

Use this form to propose a certificate program at either the undergraduate or graduate level. A certificate program is a sequence, pattern, or group of academic credit courses that focus upon an area of specialized knowledge or information and develop a specific skill set. Certificate programs typically are a subset of the curriculum offered in degree programs, include previously approved courses, and involve 9-12 credit hours including prerequisites. In some cases, standards for licensure will state explicit requirements leading to certificate programs requiring more than 12 credit hours (in such cases, exceptions to course or credit requirements must be justified and approved). The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information about the proposal. After the university President approves the proposal, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the system Chief Academic Officer. Only post the New Certificate Form to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

<b>UNIVERSITY:</b>	NSU
<b>TITLE OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATE:</b>	Gifted Education
<b>INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:</b>	Fall 2025
<b>PROPOSED CIP CODE:</b>	13.1004
<b>UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:</b>	Special Education
<b>BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:</b>	NSPE
<b>UNIVERSITY DIVISION:</b>	Millicent Atkins School of Education
<b>BANNER DIVISION CODE:</b>	5E

**Please check this box to confirm that:**

- The individual preparing this request has read [AAC Guideline 2.3.2.2.C](#), which pertains to new certificate requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
- This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

### University Approval

*To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.*

*Michael Wanous*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Institutional Approval Signature  
*President or Chief Academic Officer of the University*

2/5/2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: In the responses below, references to external sources, including data sources, should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

**1. Is this a graduate-level certificate or undergraduate-level certificate (place an “X” in the appropriate box)?**

Undergraduate Certificate  Graduate Certificate

**2. What is the nature/ purpose of the proposed certificate? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this certificate.**

The graduate certificate in gifted education prepares educators with advanced skills and knowledge to support gifted learners in K-12 settings. This program focuses on the academic field of gifted education, which examines the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of gifted children, and provides specialized strategies for curriculum development, teaching, and fostering creativity. Through this certificate, educators gain expertise in identifying and nurturing exceptional talents, addressing the unique educational needs of gifted students.

**3. If you do not have a major in this field, explain how the proposed certificate relates to your university mission and strategic plan, and to the current Board of Regents Strategic Plan 2014-2020.**

*Links to the applicable State statute, Board Policy, and the Board of Regents Strategic Plan are listed below for each campus.*

BHSU:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-59</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.1</a>
DSU:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-59</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.2</a>
NSU:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-59</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.3</a>
SDSMT:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-60</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.4</a>
SDSU:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-58</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.5</a>
USD:	<a href="#">SDCL § 13-57</a>	<a href="#">BOR Policy 1.2.6</a>
	<a href="#">Board of Regents Strategic Plan</a>	

The graduate certificate in gifted education, though not offered as a major, aligns well with Northern State University’s mission to “provide quality programs” that support “excellence in teaching and learning” and serve diverse student needs. This certificate complements NSU’s existing master’s degree in special education, expanding the scope of inclusive education to ensure that gifted students, like students with other unique needs, receive specialized support.

Aligned with NSU’s strategic plan, which emphasizes “academic excellence” and “student-centered learning experiences,” NSU’s graduate certificate in gifted education provides educators with targeted skills to create engaging, differentiated learning environments that meet the unique needs of gifted students. The certificate furthers NSU’s commitment to fostering “personal and intellectual growth” for all students by equipping educators to help gifted learners reach their full potential through specialized instruction and curriculum development.

The certificate also responds to priorities outlined in the BOR Strategic Plan. The BOR emphasizes increasing the quality of educational outcomes and meeting statewide workforce needs, particularly in K-12 education. The certificate’s focus on gifted education addresses a specific workforce need for educators trained to serve all levels of student ability, ensuring South Dakota schools have teachers who can foster high-achieving students’ intellectual growth. This aligns with BOR’s goal of “enhancing the learning experience to better prepare graduates” for diverse educational settings, and it reflects the Board’s commitment to supporting “educational

excellence” across South Dakota’s schools by increasing the qualifications of its teaching workforce.

- 4. Provide a justification for the certificate program, including the potential benefits to students and potential workforce demand for those who graduate with the credential.** *For workforce related information, please provide data and examples. Data may include, but are not limited to the South Dakota Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Regental system dashboards, etc. Please cite any sources in a footnote.*

NSU’s graduate certificate in gifted education offers substantial benefits for students and addresses a growing workforce demand in both gifted and special education. For graduate students, this certificate provides a unique credential that enhances their qualifications, making them more competitive in roles that require specialized knowledge in supporting diverse learners, including those who are gifted. As South Dakota schools and districts increasingly prioritize inclusive and differentiated learning, educators trained in gifted education are well-positioned to meet these evolving demands.

There is significant workforce demand for educators skilled in supporting students with specialized learning needs. The South Dakota Department of Labor projects steady demand for special education teachers in the state (5.36%)<sup>1</sup> from 2022-2032 driven by efforts to address diverse learner needs and improve educational outcomes. Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts a 4% growth rate for special education teachers from 2021 to 2031<sup>2</sup>, driven by rising enrollment and an increased focus on individualized instruction, particularly in rural and underserved areas where demand for qualified teachers is even higher.

While specific data on gifted education teachers are limited, school districts increasingly seek teachers with expertise in both special and gifted education as part of a holistic approach to individualized learning. This trend is particularly relevant in South Dakota, where smaller districts require educators with a broad skill set to address the full range of student needs. Educators with this certificate are prepared to create enriching learning environments that help retain and challenge high-ability students, which aligns with state educational priorities and supports workforce demands for versatile, multi-skilled teachers.

Graduate students in NSU’s graduate certificate in gifted education will gain marketable skills that address both gifted and special education needs, which are increasingly valued in today’s K-12 settings. This versatility makes graduates attractive candidates for a variety of roles, including specialized teaching, gifted and talented program coordination, and differentiated instruction roles within inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, graduates can bring immediate value to their schools by helping meet the specific needs of gifted learners, potentially improving retention rates and learning outcomes for this student group, which are key areas of focus for South Dakota’s educational strategy. Finally, the curriculum included in the graduate certificate specifically aligns with what is required to obtain the gifted education endorsement through the SD Department of Education.

<sup>1</sup>[https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu\\_projections.aspx](https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_projections.aspx)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/special-education-teachers.htm#tab-6>

**5. Who is the intended audience for the certificate program (including but not limited to the majors/degree programs from which students are expected)?**

The intended audience for the graduate certificate in gifted education is in-service (licensed) teachers seeking to expand their expertise in supporting gifted learners within their current roles. This certificate is designed to complement the credentials of licensed teachers across various fields, allowing them to enhance their instructional skills. It is particularly valuable for educators with backgrounds in special education, elementary or secondary education, and those working in roles where they support diverse learners.

Additionally, educators aiming to assume leadership positions, such as gifted program coordinators or specialists in differentiated instruction, may find this certificate enhances their professional profile. This flexibility allows teachers from any educational background to gain specialized skills in gifted education, broadening their impact in K-12 educational settings.

**6. Certificate Design**

**A. Is the certificate designed as a stand-alone education credential option for students not seeking additional credentials (i.e., a bachelor's or master's degree)? If so, what areas of high workforce demand or specialized body of knowledge will be addressed through this certificate?**

The graduate certificate in gifted education is designed as a stand-alone credential for educators who are not necessarily seeking an additional degree. Instead, this certificate leads directly to an endorsement in gifted education, equipping educators with specialized knowledge and skills to address the unique needs of gifted students, a growing area of focus in education.

This stand-alone option responds to areas of high workforce demand, as districts increasingly seek educators with expertise in differentiated instruction for diverse learners, including those who are gifted. By completing this certificate, educators can enhance their qualifications to meet state and district demands for specialized instructional support, particularly in rural and under-resourced schools where teachers often need additional credentials to serve a wide range of abilities in one classroom. This endorsement strengthens educators' ability to create enriched, student-centered learning environments, supporting educational goals at both state and national levels for inclusive, individualized education.

**B. Is the certificate a value added credential that supplements a student's major field of study? If so, list the majors/programs from which students would most benefit from adding the certificate.**

Yes, the graduate certificate in gifted education serves as a valuable, supplemental credential that enhances a student's primary field of study, particularly within teacher education. This certificate is especially beneficial for graduate students currently working in special education or pursuing a master's in special education, where the added focus on gifted learners broadens their expertise in supporting students with diverse learning needs. Additionally, graduate students currently working in elementary and secondary education or pursuing a master's in education would benefit, as this credential equips teachers with skills to

differentiate instruction effectively, addressing a wide range of abilities within inclusive classrooms.

Graduate students already in educational leadership roles or currently in master's programs for educational leadership or those aspiring to roles such as gifted program coordinators, curriculum specialists, or instructional coaches may also find this certificate valuable, as it prepares them to guide and implement programming tailored to high-ability students.

The endorsement in gifted education adds significant value to a teacher's qualifications across multiple educational settings, supporting workforce demand for versatile educators prepared to address specialized needs in K-12 schools.

**C. Is the certificate a stackable credential with credits that apply to a higher level credential (i.e., associate, bachelor's, or master's degree)? If so, indicate the program(s) to which the certificate stacks and the number of credits from the certificate that can be applied to the program.**

Yes, the graduate certificate in gifted education is a stackable credential, with all nine credits eligible for transfer toward the Master of Science in Education (MSEd) in Special Education at Northern State University. This stackable certification allows educators to apply their coursework toward a higher degree, providing a seamless pathway for those who wish to further specialize in supporting diverse learners.

- 7. List the courses required for completion of the certificate in the table below (if any new courses are proposed for the certificate, please attach the new course requests to this form). Certificate programs by design are limited in the number of credit hours required for completion. Certificate programs consist of nine (9) to twelve (12) credit hours, including prerequisite courses. In addition, certificates typically involve existing courses. If the curriculum consists of more than twelve (12) credit hours (including prerequisites) or includes new courses, please provide explanation and justification below.**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b> <i>(add or delete rows as needed)</i>	<b>Prerequisites for Course</b> <i>Include credits for prerequisites in subtotal below.</i>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>New (yes, no)</b>
SPED	550	Gifted and Talented		3	No
SPED	551	Curriculum and Instruction in Gifted Education		3	No
SPED	552	Nature of Creativity and Assessment		3	No
Subtotal				9	

**8. Student Outcome and Demonstration of Individual Achievement.**

*Board Policy 2:23 requires certificate programs to "have specifically defined student learning outcomes.*

**A. What specific knowledge and competencies, including technology competencies, will all students demonstrate before graduation?** *The knowledge and competencies should be specific to the program and not routinely expected of all university graduates.*

- Identify and analyze the unique cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics of gifted and talented students.
- Design and implement differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of gifted students.
- Evaluate and apply assessment methods for identifying gifted students and measuring their growth and learning outcomes.
- Examine and foster creativity in gifted learners by applying theories and strategies that promote creative thinking.
- Critically assess and adapt teaching methods to create inclusive and supportive environments that challenge and engage gifted students.

**B. Complete the table below to list specific learning outcomes – knowledge and competencies – for courses in the proposed program in each row.** *Label each column heading with a course prefix and number. Indicate required courses with an asterisk (\*). Indicate with an X in the corresponding table cell for any student outcomes that will be met by the courses included. All students should acquire the program knowledge and competencies regardless of the electives selected. Modify the table as necessary to provide the requested information for the proposed program.*

<b>Individual Student Outcome</b> (Same as in the text of the proposal)	<i>EXAMPLE</i> SPCM 101	SPED 550	SPED 551	SPED 552
<i>EXAMPLE:</i> Demonstrate effective oral and written communication	X			
Identify and analyze the unique cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics of gifted and talented students.		X		
Design and implement differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of gifted students.			X	
Evaluate and apply assessment methods for identifying gifted students and measuring their growth and learning outcomes.				X
Examine and foster creativity in gifted learners by applying theories and strategies that promote creative thinking.				X
Critically assess and adapt teaching methods to create inclusive and supportive environments that challenge and engage gifted students.			X	

*Modify the table as necessary to include all student outcomes. Outcomes in this table are to be the same ones identified in the text.*

**9. Delivery Location.**

*Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.*

**A. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off campus location (e.g., USD Community**

College for Sioux Falls, Black Hills State University-Rapid City, Capital City Campus, etc.) or deliver the entire program through distance technology (e.g., as an on-line program)?

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On campus	Yes	Fall 2025

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off campus	No		Choose an item. Choose an item.

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 2.4.3.B.</i>	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	X02 HyFlex, X15 Online asynchronous	Fall 2025
Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?	No	If yes, identify institutions:	

**B. Complete the following chart to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver more than 50% but less than 100% of the certificate through distance learning (e.g., as an on-line program)? This question responds to HLC definitions for distance delivery.**

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	X02 HyFlex, X15 Online asynchronous	Fall 2025

**10. Additional Information:** *Additional information is optional. Use this space to provide pertinent information not requested above. Limit the number and length of additional attachments. Identify all attachments with capital letters. Letters of support are not necessary and are rarely included with Board materials. The University may include responses to questions from the Board or the Executive Director as appendices to the original proposal where applicable. Delete this item if not used.*