

**TITLE: Approval of the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu's Special Education
Praxis Exam Transition and Program Alignment Review**

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) approves the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu's (UHWO) Special Education (SPED) Program to use the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Praxis Exam 5355: Special Education-Foundational Knowledge as the content knowledge assessment for their General SPED program.

The UHWO SPED program will continue to operate as a Generalist SPED licensure program. Should the program leadership choose to shift the program focus to a specialized area (e.g., mild/moderate or severe/profound), a formal HTSB program modification or new program application will be required for Board approval.

UHWO SPED staff had agreed to the requirements listed below at the in-person meeting.

- Provide evidence showing its alignment with the Praxis Exam 5355 and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Initial K–12 Standards (2020) such as:
 - A Curriculum Crosswalk aligning Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework with Praxis 5355 content areas.
 - A crosswalk aligning Praxis 5355 with the CEC Initial K–12 Standards (2020).
 - Supporting evidence and course syllabi for HTSB Board review and approval.
- Allow teacher candidates who previously passed Praxis 5354 to meet the SPED content knowledge requirement under HTSB's Recency Policy ([New Business Item 22-28](#)).
- Allow teacher candidates the option to take Praxis 5355 to meet the SPED content knowledge requirement.

HTSB staff requested a review of evidence from UHWO to verify alignment with the content of Praxis Exam 5355: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge and CEC standards; however, no evidence was provided for review. The crosswalk and one course syllabus were insufficient to assess alignment between course content and standards. Requests for supporting evidence (e.g., course syllabi, course assessments) were made, but none were submitted. In an email, UHWO staff "respectfully decline to provide materials".

Rationale/Background:

The ETS has discontinued its Praxis Exam 5354: Special Education-Core Knowledge and Applications. As a result, HTSB-approved EPPs that offer General Special

Education will need to transition using the Praxis Exam 5355: Special Education-Foundational Knowledge. UHWO was also given the option to submit a program modification application to change from its Special Education Generalist to a Special Education Mild/Moderate program.

In May 2025, HTSB staff met with UHWO SPED staff and ETS Director of Educational Partnerships, Jason Dietrich, to clarify the changes to the Praxis exams and address any questions regarding the transition from the Praxis Exam 5354: Special Education-Core Knowledge and Applications to Praxis Exam 5355: Special Education-Foundational Knowledge. Materials regarding this new exam were distributed in printed form and sent via email to UHWO SPED staff. As of September 2025, UHWO SPED staff have not submitted the requested evidence.

In September 2025, ETS began offering Praxis Exam 5355: Special Education-Foundational Knowledge. This exam consolidates the Special Education: Mild/Moderate and Generalist Special Education Praxis assessments and aligns with the CEC Initial K–12 Standards (2020).

Cost:

All costs are included in the current staff job duties/responsibilities.

Submitted by: Kristi Miyamae/Dondra Ozaki

Referred to: Teacher Education Committee



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February 20, 2026

Dear Members of the HTSB Teacher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the new business item (NBI) regarding the PRAXIS exam transition and program alignment review.

To provide some context, UHWO intentionally designates a 9-credit course, SPED 450 Sped Methods, as the single foundational content preparation course that candidates complete prior to sitting for the PRAXIS content knowledge exam (formerly 5354; now 5355). At UH West O'ahu, SPED 450 is the first course in the licensure pathway that candidates complete prior to taking the PRAXIS exam.

Taking and passing the PRAXIS is a required milestone in the program. There are no exceptions, waivers, or alternative options (such as additional coursework) in place of the PRAXIS requirement. UHWO strictly adheres to this policy as an early program benchmark that demonstrates candidates' commitment to the profession and readiness to complete the program successfully.

In addition to the SPED 450 syllabus and crosswalk provided upon request, candidate pass rates further support the content alignment between SPED 450 and the PRAXIS. In the past six academic years, all candidates have demonstrated consistent and strong first-attempt pass rates:

Praxis First-Attempt Pass Rates Following Completion of SPED 450

Academic Year	Number of Candidates	First-Attempt Pass Rate
2020–2021	3	100%
2021–2022	5	100%
2022–2023	12	100%
2023–2024	10	100%
2024–2025	14	100%
2025–2026	14	100%

Total	58	100%
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In 2025, when the new PRAXIS test form (5355) was implemented, 2 out of 12 candidates took the updated version, and both passed on their first attempt. While we have had strong performance with the 5354 form, we recognize that 2026-2027 will be the first full year in which all candidates sit for the 5355. We will continue to closely monitor performance data associated with the new test form

Based on our crosswalk, SPED 450 syllabus, and pass rate data, we believe our curriculum demonstrates strong alignment with assessed competencies and can assure you that we will continue to support candidates effectively through the exam transition process.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and for the opportunity to provide feedback in support of this new business item.

Sincerely,



Joy Mahiko
Associate Professor of Special Education
University of Hawai'i West O'ahu