Certification Program for Teaching Gifted and Outstanding Students

Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education

**Rationale**

The goals of the Certification Program for Teaching Gifted and Outstanding Students are to train individuals to promote and lead a culture where academic excellence is a central value, and to nurture values of personal and moral excellence, transcendence, and leadership, while remaining committed and sensitive to the society at large. Educating gifted students requires developing a learning environment that is emotionally supportive, flexible and dynamic; an environment where it is possible to conduct challenging discourse and generate new knowledge.

These principles translate into policies and work programs that, when put into action, give direction to the educational activities and facilitates a broad platform of academic initiatives for gifted and outstanding students that calls for a different type of teacher-student communication. Such communication involves teachers and students collaborating in the process of generating new knowledge and new contexts for existing knowledge. It fosters both academic excellence and emotional support for gifted students and their families.

This program at the Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education offers participants a unique opportunity to specialize in the field of gifted education. The program is designed to increase awareness among teachers and educators of the special needs of gifted students, and to develop a dynamic program model for working with these students. The program will provide participants with the knowledge, tools and skills for working in this field; program graduates will be capable of nurturing and guiding gifted and outstanding students in centers for gifted education, in schools, at home, and in society at large.

The Certification Program for Teaching Gifted and Outstanding Students is aligned with the Ministry of Education’s policy that, in the future, only teachers with specialized training will work with gifted and outstanding students. This program provides the infrastructure for cultivating the field of gifted education as its own subspecialty, in Israel and around the world. The program fuses theory with practical application – giving teachers hands-on experience with the teaching methods exclusive to gifted education. It will include topics such as: definitions of what is a gifted student, an outstanding and capable student, and a student with creative potential; the characteristics of the gifted child; the gifted student’s environment; assessing the creative potential of gifted students; methods of teaching gifted students; different approaches to nurturing gifted and outstanding students; special populations among gifted students, and more. The program both empowers participants and models the learning environment that will be created in their own classrooms. Participants complete projects and assignments over the course of the year and at the end of the schoolyear, implementing what they have learned.

Cultivating awareness and deepening theoretical knowledge, strengthening the commitment and professional know-how of educators in the field of nurturing gifted and outstanding students. Program studies will empower participants and model for them how their classrooms and learning environments should function. Throughout the year, and upon completion of their studies, participants will complete projects that apply the material covered in the program.

Graduates are expected to work with gifted and outstanding students who excel in the areas of philosophy, science, technology, art, literature, law, and business among other things. Beyond this, though, we have additional expectations of our graduates: We expect them to be determined and diligent, creative and original, curious, and intellectually brazen. We expect them to have intellectual and artistic integrity, as well as the ability and drive to continually learn and develop. We expect them to think clearly in situations of uncertainty, to think out of the box, to use information effectively, to see things from a broader perspective, and to be aware of moral implications.

**Program Goals**

This program seeks to deepen professional expertise and develop the subspecialty of education for gifted and outstanding students by:

* Promoting a deep understanding of the unique characteristics and needs of gifted and outstanding students
* Developing a holistic approach to educating this student population, by understanding and addressing their unique cognitive, emotional, and social needs
* Promoting familiarity and hands-on experience with the pedagogic tools geared towards this student population
* Gaining familiarity and experience with the diagnostic tools that are used to identify gifted and outstanding students
* Endowing participants with the ability to lead a program or independent project for gifted and outstanding students
* Familiarizing participants with symposiums and researchers that explore the field of gifted education, as well as becoming familiar with gifted students themselves, offering an inside look at the prevalent global approach towards gifted education

**Target Audience**

* Homeroom teachers, specialty teachers, and program coordinators who seek to promote education for gifted students
* Teachers, school guidance counselors and school principals in schools and educational frameworks that cater to gifted students
* Those who plan to teach gifted students in the future

**Admission Requirements**

* Candidates must have a bachelor’s degree and a teaching certificate (also eligible for the program are professionals who currently teach at formal and informal centers for gifted education who hold a bachelor’s degree but not a teaching certificate)
* Candidates are required to come for a personal interview (a CV and letter of recommendation should be brought to the interview)
* Candidates must have the intention to teach gifted students (in as far as they currently work with this population or plan to begin teaching gifted students in the coming year)

**Certification**

* Students who successfully complete the course of study will receive a certificate that attests that they have completed the program for gifted education at the Al-Qasami Academic College of Education.

**Course of Study**

This two-year program is spread over three semesters and includes a total of 360 hours of supplementary training – 120 hours per semester – with grades given for coursework. Progression from one semester to the next is contingent upon approval from the program coordinators. Participants who complete the two-year course of study (with a grade average of 80 or higher) will receive certification.

**Field Trips**

The program will include three educational field trips to centers for gifted education in Israel, as well as one field trip abroad to visit a center for gifted education in a different country.

**Curriculum**

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| **Number** | **Modules** | **Semester** | **Number of Hours** |
| 1 | Introduction to gifted students, academic excellence and creativity | A | 30 |
| 2 | Identifying gifted students, outstanding students and students with creative potential | A | 45 |
| 3 | Planning and evaluation of programs for gifted education | A | 45 |
| **Total number of hours in Semester A** | | | **120** |
| 4 | Seminar – Contemporary issues in educating gifted and outstanding students | B | 30 |
| 5 | Twice Exceptional –  Gifted students and special talents: Gifted students and learning disabilities | B | 20 |
| 6 | Productive Thinking –  Twenty-first century skills, pedagogic skills for teaching gifted and outstanding students | B | 50 |
| 7 | Teaching gifted and outstanding students in the virtual world | B | 20 |
| **Total number of hours in Semester B** | | | **120** |
| 8 | Practicum in centers for gifted education, classes for gifted students, and schools for gifted education | C | 70 |
| 9 | Creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship | C | 30 |
| 10 | Emotional development of gifted students, guidance and parenting of gifted and outstanding students | C | 20 |
| **Total number of hours in Semester C** | | | **120** |
| **Total number of program hours** | | | **360** |

**Detailed Curriculum Description**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Module Topic** | **Module Subtopics** | **Number of Hours** |
| 1 | Introduction to gifted students, academic excellence and creativity | * Definitions:   Gifted intelligence, outstanding student, creative student, innovative student, etc.   * Historical development of ‘gifted intelligence’ and the nature of giftedness * People’s perceptions of gifted and outstanding students, including within the Arab sector in Israel * Gifted education and education of outstanding students around the world and in Israel in particular * The challenges of identifying gifted and outstanding students * Renzulli model for identifying gifted students * Giftedness and motivation – Growth mindset pattern | 30 |
| 2 | Identifying gifted students, outstanding students and students with creative potential | * Historical development of diagnosing and identifying gifted and outstanding students * Different models for diagnosing and detecting gifted and outstanding students * Identifying the creative potential of gifted and outstanding students (EPoC) | 45 |
| 3 | Planning and evaluation of programs for gifted education | * Exploring programs for gifted and outstanding students at different grade levels * Overview of the components of programs for gifted and outstanding students and their unique characteristics. * Planning a program for gifted and outstanding students * Evaluating a program for gifted and outstanding students | 45 |
| 4 | Seminar – Contemporary issues in educating gifted and outstanding students | The seminar will focus on contemporary aspects of the following topics:   * New models for educating gifted and outstanding students * Identifying and diagnosing gifted and outstanding students * Characteristics of gifted and outstanding students * Methods for teaching and methods of pedagogy that are geared to gifted and outstanding students * Gifted and outstanding students in the virtual world * Emotional aspects of gifted and outstanding students * Developing unique programs for gifted and outstanding students. | 30 |
| 5 | Twice Exceptional –  Gifted students and special talents: Gifted students and learning disabilities | * Identifying students with gifted intelligence and learning disabilities * Strategies for helping gifted students with learning disabilities or multiple learning issues | 20 |
| 6 | Productive Thinking –  Twenty-first century skills, pedagogic and didactic skills for teaching gifted and outstanding students | * Development of creative thinking among gifted and outstanding students * Integrating productive thinking skills into activities and lessons for gifted and outstanding students * Teaching methods that develop productive and innovative thinking, creative thinking and critical thinking | 50 |
| 7 | Teaching gifted and outstanding students in the virtual world | * Renzulli’s online learning system for gifted and outstanding students * Development of a virtual learning environment for gifted and outstanding students | 20 |
| 8 | Practicum in centers for gifted education, classes for gifted students, and schools for gifted education | * Observing activities for gifted and outstanding students that are conducted in centers for gifted education * Teaching classes and conducting activities in school-based classes for gifted students * Field trips in Israel * Field trips abroad | 70 |
| 9 | Creativity, leadership and entrepreneurship | * Defining creativity, leadership and entrepreneurship * Gifted intelligence and leadership * Gifted intelligence and creativity * Gifted intelligence and entrepreneurship | 30 |
| 10 | Emotional development of gifted students, guiding and parenting of gifted and outstanding students | * Emotional aspects of gifted intelligence * Gifted intelligence and emotional intelligence * Gifted intelligence and motivation | 20 |

**Composition of Final Grade:**

**30%** of the final grade will be based on assessments by the course instructors, based on a variety of assignments.

**20%** of the final grade will be based on a student portfolio documenting hands-on classroom experience and field trips.

**50%** of the final grade will be based on the final project.

**Passing grade**: 80

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