

O.S.U. Extension Guidelines for Educator Specialization

Rationale

The purpose of Educator specialization is to improve Extension programs by (1) providing expertise close to the clientele; (2) increasing efficiency since Educators will not need to devote teaching preparation time to all subject matter specialty areas; and (3) strengthening program and interdisciplinary team's ability to address pressing issues.

Guidelines

Educator Role –

All Extension Educators will have an identified area of specialization that is consistent with local and state needs. Educators are expected to devote up to 25% of their time working in that specialty area. The remaining 75% is to be devoted to their broader program responsibilities.

In some circumstances Educators may spend more than 25% of their time in a specialty area. In these cases agreement should be reached between the appropriate Assistant Director and the individual's immediate supervisor.

Educators with dual program responsibilities need to identify only one area of specialization which requires up to 25% of their time. In these cases, Educators should contact the appropriate Assistant Director(s) to discuss their area of specialization. Agreement should be reached between the appropriate Assistant Director and the individual's immediate supervisor.

How to Identify Specialization -

Educators should identify their area of specialization based on a combination of competence developed through academic course work, professional development in-service, applied research, personal interests', clientele and needs within the geographic area. A strong research base should exist for the identified area of specialization.

Areas of specialization should be selected from the appropriate academic disciplines of the respective program areas. Some areas may require special certification or credentials. This should be clarified with the appropriate Assistant Director when selecting or revising an area of specialization.

Specialization areas may also include the content areas such as evaluation, leadership, marketing, diversity, communication, program planning and development, or grant writing. Within these types of areas of specialization, Educators should clearly articulate if they are expanding this base of knowledge or if they are developing an expertise around this area to expand/enhance program area responsibilities.

Selection of an area of specialization will take place between the Educator and the appropriate Assistant Director by the end of an Educator's first eighteen months of employment. A specialization plan should be developed (outline attached) and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Director and immediate supervisor. Moreover, this plan is to be reviewed with the Educator's immediate supervisor during annual performance review. Educators should work with the appropriate Assistant Director to change their area of specialization.

Expectations

Extension Educators specializing in a certain area are expected to read, receive and seek extra training, teach, contribute to team efforts, and develop creative and scholarly works in their specialty area.

Educators should link with appropriate university faculty in and out of state who work in the same or similar area to strengthen their knowledge.

Specialization provides an opportunity for Educators to share their expertise in the region; with adjoining counties and centers; and also with program area and interdisciplinary teams. Several ways an individual's expertise can be shared include:

- **INFORMATION:** Ohio peers call or contact Educator seeking help in answering questions or developing teaching materials.
- **TEACHING MATERIALS & CURRICULUM:** Educators share masters or copies of peer reviewed handouts, teaching outlines, visual aids, etc. with other Educators. Newsletter items or news releases can be used by Educators in other counties with credit to author. Curriculum developed as a part of the specialization is adopted by others.
- **TEACHING ASSISTANCE:** Educators teach in other counties or at a regional, state, national, or professional meeting/conference on a topic related to the specialty area.
- **APPLIED RESEARCH:** Faculty Educators participate in applied research projects within their area of specialty.
- **MULTI-COUNTY PROGRAM:** Educators work with other Educators or teams to plan and present programs in their area of specialty to an audience drawn from several counties.
- **CENTER, PROGRAM AND INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS:** Educators' expertise is utilized to enhance educational efforts of an Extension team(s) in addressing a critical issue or theme.

Specialization impact needs to be clearly documented in the Educator's URS.

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EDUCATOR SPECIALIZATION OUTLINE & PLAN

NAME _____ COUNTY _____

TITLE _____

Years in Extension _____ Years Professional Experience Elsewhere _____

Date Initially Submitted _____ Date Updated _____

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION _____

FOCUS AREA WITHIN SPECIALIZATION _____ (Key Words) –
(Clarify or explain, if necessary)

CURRENT LEVEL OF EXPERTISE – (1 paragraph explanation of academic training, experience)

LEVEL OF EXPERTISE YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE (within the next 4-5 years) – (1-2 paragraph explanation)

POSSIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE TO STRENGTHEN THE IDENTIFIED AREA OF SPECIALIZATION – (Listing of possibilities)

PROVIDE SPECIFIC WAYS YOU ARE, OR WILL BE APPLYING, YOUR EXPERTISE (i.e. teams, themes, initiatives).

Extension Educator

Immediate Supervisor

Assistant Director