

The Teacher Education Program

Mission

The mission of the School of Education is to prepare preservice students to become competent teachers capable of making sound decisions in the areas of elementary education, secondary education, middle school, early childhood, reading, English language learners, special education, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Graduates need to be skilled in teaching and guiding students from varying backgrounds who possess a multitude of unique experiences, strengths, and needs. The School's program is built upon the belief that competent teachers are knowledge-based decision makers. This is reflected in the program's goals and objectives.

Accreditation and Program Approval

The Teacher Education Program has a long standing history of national accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) since 1954. NCATE has transitioned into Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Higher Education Accreditation (CAEP).

CAEP is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to accredit programs for the preparation of teachers and other professional school personnel. The CAEP Standards focus on the following five areas:

- Content and Pedagogical Knowledge
- Clinical Partnerships and Practice
- Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity
- Program Impact
- Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

The Teacher Education Program at Valley City State University is also approved by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB).

Program Learning Outcomes

Content majors will demonstrate learning outcomes defined by their course of study and the teacher education learning outcomes:

1. Teacher candidates apply knowledge and skills to **plan** a unit that meets the needs of students in a P-12 classroom.
2. Teacher candidates apply knowledge and skills to **implement** a unit that meets the needs of students in a P-12 classroom.
3. Teacher candidates apply knowledge and skills to **evaluate** student learning during a unit taught to students in a P-12 classroom.
4. Teacher candidates apply knowledge and skills to **reflect** on student learning and their own practice as a teacher during a unit of teaching students in a P-12 classroom.

Domain I: General Education:

To help preservice teachers acquire a broadly-based liberal arts education needed in order to function as informed members of our society and within the teaching profession.

Domain II: Specialty Studies:

To prepare preservice teachers who possess strong backgrounds within each subject area they will teach.

Domain III: Professional Studies:

To prepare preservice teachers who are able to function in a variety of educational settings and with students of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and needs.

Goals

The broad goals of the teacher education program at Valley City State University are to prepare entry-level teachers who:

1. Plan — Make decisions regarding goals and objectives, the degree of background building required, connections to standards and curriculum, specific materials and instructional strategies. The planning of instruction is based upon knowledge of the subject matter, the learners in the classroom and the curriculum goals.
2. Implement — The implementation function requires the teacher to carry out the plan. During the actual teaching phase, numerous decisions are made, often quickly, as the teacher responds to students' reactions, comments, and instructional needs. Teachers learn to value the development of their students' critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. At times, these skills require a variety of instructional strategies, questioning skills, classroom management skills, use of technology, and teacher flexibility to come to the surface. As a result, modification of prepared plans becomes the rule rather than the exception.
3. Evaluate — During the evaluation phase of decision making, the teacher needs to determine the degree to which the instructional objectives were attained. Teachers must apply ongoing informal and formal assessment strategies to identify what and to whom re-teaching is required, and to what level of understanding the students have learned the skill or content from the experience. Formative assessment strategies are applied to provide students with timely, descriptive feedback to promote learning, support, and guidance.
4. Reflect— Planning, implementation, and evaluation are done by using feedback in a reflective manner. During the entire process, it is essential the decision maker realizes that professional growth and development is continuous.

The teacher education program can be described as having three major domains. The overall goal of each is as follows:

Objectives

The following thirteen objectives provide direction for the design of the teacher education program. The program is designed to prepare teacher candidates who:

1. Possess an understanding of how children learn and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually
2. Use understanding of individual differences and diverse communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that allow each learner to reach his/her full potential.

3. Work with learners to create environments that support individual learning, encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation as well as possessing the knowledge and skills to manage a classroom effectively.
4. Possess an understanding of the main ideas used in facilitating student higher level thinking and creating learning experience that allow learners to apply problem solving skills.
5. Connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical/creative thinking and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
6. Use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to document learner progress, and to inform the teacher's ongoing planning and instruction.
7. Draw upon knowledge of content areas, cross-disciplinary skills, learners, the community and pedagogy to plan, implement and evaluate instruction that supports every learner in meeting rigorous learning goals.
8. Use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to access and appropriately apply information.
9. Are reflective practitioners who use evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, families, and other professionals in the learning community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
10. Collaborate and communicate with students, families, colleagues, other professionals, and community members to share responsibility for student growth and development, learning, and well-being.
11. Are competent in the communication skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
12. Exhibit the professional and personal characteristics of effective teachers such as responsibility, fairness, enthusiasm, cooperativeness, and ethical behavior.
13. Integrate technology effectively to enhance learning.

Delivery of Curriculum

The program provides an opportunity for enrollees to acquire entry-level teaching knowledge and skills through university courses and field experiences. The field experiences and student teaching take place in K-12 school classrooms.

Field experiences commence during the sophomore year and continue through the senior year. Student teaching is the apex of the entire teacher preparation program completed during the senior year.

The preparation of preservice teachers is closely guided by the university faculty and cooperating K-12 teachers. A carefully designed program provides instruction and experiences which include a multi-mode system to provide feedback to evaluate the preservice teachers' learning and performance.

Admission to Teacher Education

Applicants are admitted to study at Valley City State University on the basis of academic and personal qualifications, consistent with the admissions policies established for all public colleges and universities in the state. The admittance and continuance requirements of the Teacher Education Program go beyond those of the institution. Students are typically admitted into teacher education during their sophomore year or the beginning of

the junior year. While enrolled in EDUC 250 Introduction to Education, the introductory course to Teacher Education, the VCSU Teacher Education Program Handbook is reviewed online. Enrollees are given application forms to complete and submit to the Dean and the Teacher Education Committee.

Criteria for Admission to Teacher Education

The student who intends to pursue a program in teacher education must apply to the Teacher Education Committee and be approved for admission to the program. A student must meet the following criteria to be considered for admission:

1. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75. A teacher candidate seeking admission to Teacher Education with a cumulative GPA between 2.50 and 2.74 may be considered for approval to Teacher Education by the Teacher Education Committee if the candidate has a 2.75 GPA in the candidate's education major(s) or a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 in the past two semesters. The teacher candidate must also have acceptable dispositions and field experience evaluations.
2. Satisfactory academic performance with a "C" or better in the general education composition requirement and successful completion of a speech screening test.
3. Written recommendations from the advisor, a School of Education instructor, and any other related professionals.
4. Meet state standards on North Dakota required tests to measure prospective teacher's content knowledge in reading, writing, and mathematics. See <http://www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements> for test requirements.
5. Demonstrate proper dispositions necessary to teach for learning.
6. Satisfactory academic performance with a "C" or better in EDUC 250 Introduction to Education: Introduction to Education.

The Teacher Education Committee will review the documentation and make a recommendation to the School of Education Dean to accept or deny the application for admission to the program. If the applicant is denied admission due to a condition that can be corrected, the applicant may reapply when the deficiency is removed.

Continuance in Teacher Education

In order to continue in the Teacher Education program, the student must:

- continue to maintain cumulative grade point average requirements set forth in Criteria for Admission to Teacher Education.
- demonstrate proper disposition and evidence of good conduct, physical and mental health; and
- continue to obtain satisfactory recommendations from faculty, staff, and field experience supervisors.

If requirements for continuance are not maintained, the Teacher Education Committee may recommend suspension from the program. The Committee will forward its recommendation to the Dean who will make the final decision. Any such action would be reflected in a letter from the School of Education Dean to the student and the advisor.

Student Teaching

Student teaching is the culminating experience of the Teacher Education Program. During this time, preservice teachers apply what they have learned

about theory and methodology through their university coursework and earlier field experiences. Student teaching provides an opportunity to plan and implement interesting, relevant lessons, as well as use a variety of assessment techniques to determine both the effectiveness of instructional strategies and the level of student learning. Teacher candidates will utilize the Teaching for Learning Capstone (TLC) unit model to plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect on one unit of instruction during their student teaching experience. Student teaching experiences allow for application of the VCSU conceptual framework, adaptations for diversity, appropriate uses of technology, assessment of student learning, and reflection on teaching practice. Skills in decision making, various instructional strategies, classroom management procedures, and questioning are further enhanced.

Student Teaching requires at least 12 full-time consecutive weeks. VCSU promotes co-teaching strategies to make optimal use of teacher candidate and cooperating teacher efforts to enhance student learning opportunities in the classroom.

Additional information about student teaching is included in the VCSU Handbook for Student Teaching.

Criteria for Admission to Student Teaching

A student must meet the following criteria to be considered for admission to student teaching:

1. Senior standing with continued satisfactory performance on all criteria for admission and retention in the teacher education program. Recommendations by the Vice President for Student Affairs Office and the appropriate department/school chair will be reviewed.
2. Completion of the professional education sequence before student teaching. The Director of Field Experiences in consultation with the School of Education Dean may make exceptions to this criterion if circumstances warrant.
3. Submission of student teaching application to the Director of Field Experiences during the semester preceding the semester of student teaching.

Requirements to Student Teach

1. Agreement to provide evidence of personal liability insurance by joining the Student North Dakota United (SNDU) or by a private insurance policy. The student will present proof of such insurance on or prior to the first day of the semester of student teaching.
2. A criminal background investigation including the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Federal Bureau of Investigation must be completed prior to student teaching.
3. Submission of Praxis II test scores or a confirmation number of registration for the Praxis II tests (content and Principles of Teaching & Learning [PLT]). See www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements (<http://www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements>) for test requirements.
4. Meet state standards on North Dakota required tests to measure prospective teacher's content knowledge in reading, writing, and mathematics.
5. During student teaching, students will not be allowed to take any semester hours of credit during the 12 weeks of student teaching without approval of the Director of Field Experiences. Students who request to take more than three semester hours of credit during the

12 weeks of student teaching, will need approval from the Dean of Education. Any requests for exceptions must be presented in writing to the Director of Field Experiences. Classes cannot be taken during the daily full time student teaching assignment block.

Valley City State University reserves the right to have the student meet additional requirements that the School of Education may establish. The Teacher Education Committee will review the application and recommend to the Dean of the School of Education to approve or deny the application for admission to student teaching.

Criteria for Licensure Recommendation

The Dean of the School of Education makes the recommendation for Teacher Licensure. In order to be recommended, a student must meet the following requirements:

1. Satisfactory completion of all program requirements, as described in the University Catalog and the Teacher Education Program Handbook.
2. Successful student teaching experience.
3. Successful completion of TLC unit and presentation of a digital portfolio.
4. Successful completion of all licensure requirements.

The School of Education & Graduate Studies responds to requests for information from the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board for issuance of a teaching license.

Out-of-State Licensure

Valley City State University's nationally accredited education programs meet requirements for North Dakota teacher licensure. Although most states accept our teacher education program graduates for licensure, VCSU cannot confirm nor advise that education programs meet requirements for every state. Students seeking licensure in states other than North Dakota should contact the appropriate licensing board in the state in which they are pursuing licensure.

Appeal and Petition Process for Teacher Education

Students seeking an exception to policies, regulations, or academic requirements of the Teacher Education Program may submit a written petition requesting exemption to the Teacher Education Appeals Committee. Items which students may appeal, include requirements regarding the grade point average; competency in reading, writing, mathematics, and speech; record of good conduct; scores of the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) or the Core Academic Skills for Educators Test (CORE); and other items as they relate to the Teacher Education program. The burden of proof for demonstrating the appropriateness of the request rests with the student.

The Teacher Education Appeals Committee, comprised of three faculty members from the Teacher Education Program, will consider the evidence and make a recommendation in the matter. All recommendations and actions of this committee are advisory in nature to the Dean who will render a final decision in a timely manner.

Students wishing to appeal any recommendation of the Teacher Education Appeals Committee or a decision of the department chair should consult



the Student Handbook, which details final appeals procedures under the University Hearings and Appeals Board.