

The Teacher Education Program

Mission

The mission of the School of Education is to prepare teacher candidates 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 the 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.

The teacher education program can be described as having three major domains:

Domain I: General Education: To help teacher candidates acquire a broadly-based liberal arts education needed to function as informed members of our society and within the teaching profession.

Domain II: Specialty Studies: To prepare teacher candidates who possess strong backgrounds within each subject area they will teach.

Domain III: Professional Studies: To prepare teacher candidates 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 outlined in the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Many of the decisions educators make relate to the teacher candidate's efforts to: (1) plan, (2) implement, (3) evaluate, and (4) reflect upon what they know and are able to do. These components of the VCSU conceptual framework are emphasized throughout the program and the teacher candidates' field experiences.

Plan

While planning, the teacher candidates must make decisions regarding areas such as, goals and objectives, the degree of background building required, connections to standards and curriculum, specific materials and methods to use. The planning of instruction is based upon knowledge of the subject matter, the students in the classroom, and the curriculum goals.

Implement

The implementation function requires the teacher candidates to carry out the plans that have been made. During the actual teaching phase, numerous decisions need to be made, often quickly, as the teacher candidates respond to students' reactions, comments, and instructional needs. Teacher candidates 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, and teacher flexibility to come to the surface. As a result, modification of prepared plans becomes the rule rather than the exception.

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 formal and informal 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. Evaluation information must be recorded to identify student strengths and monitor progressive student growth.

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.



VCSU School of Education Learning Objectives and Standards

The following objectives provide direction for the design of the teacher education program and alignment with the Interstate Teacher Assessment Support and Assessment Consortium (InTASC). The program is designed to prepare teacher candidates who:

1. Supports students' learning and development while recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary among individuals (InTASC Standard 1).
2. Utilizes awareness of individual differences and diverse communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that allow each learner to reach his/her full potential. (InTASC 2)
3. Works 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. (InTASC 3)
4. Effectively teach subject matter. (InTASC 4)
5. Possess an understanding of the main ideas used in facilitating student higher-level thinking and creating learning experiences that allow learners to apply problem-solving skills. (InTASC 5)
6. Connect concepts and uses differing perspectives to engage learners in critical/creative thinking and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues. (InTASC 5)
7. 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. (InTASC 6)
8. 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. (InTASC 6, 7, and 8)
9. Integrate technology effectively to enhance learning. (InTASC 7 and 8)
10. Apply 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. (InTASC 8)
11. Utilize effective communication skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. (InTASC 8)
12. 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. (InTASC 9)
13. Collaborate and communicate with students, families, colleagues, other professionals, and community members to share responsibility for student growth and development, learning, and well-being. (InTASC 10)

Exhibit the professional and personal characteristics of effective teachers such as responsibility, fairness, enthusiasm, cooperativeness, and ethical behavior. (InTASC 9 and 10)

Delivery of Curriculum

The program provides an opportunity for teacher candidates to acquire entry-level teaching knowledge and skills through university courses and field-based experiences. Some of the field-based experiences take place

in university classrooms, but most of the field-based experiences occur in grades K-12 public school classrooms.

Field-based experiences commence with an Introduction to Education course and continue through the senior year. Student teaching, a twelve-week experience, is completed during the senior year and is the apex of the entire teacher preparation program.

Courses and field experiences are organized into three broad areas-- foundation studies, specialty studies, and professional studies. The preparation of teacher candidates is closely guided by the university faculty and cooperating public school classroom teachers. A carefully designed method to provide instruction and experiences includes a multi-method system to provide feedback to and evaluation of teacher candidates learning and performance.

Admission to Teacher Education

Teacher Candidates are admitted to study at Valley City State University based on 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. Teacher Candidates 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 School of Education Dean (SOE) and the Teacher Education Committee.

Criteria for Admission to Teacher Education

The teacher candidate who intends to pursue a program in teacher education must apply to the Teacher Education Committee and be approved for admission to the program. The teacher candidate 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 appeal (see appeal procedure and policy on page 16 of the Teacher Education Handbook).
2. Satisfactory academic performance with a "C" or better in Comp I: ENG 110, 210, or equivalent
3. Satisfactory academic performance with a "C" or better in Comp II: ENG 120, 125, or equivalent.
4. Satisfactory academic performance with a "C" or better in EDUC 250: Introduction to Education.
5. Successful completion of a speech screening test.
6. Written recommendation from the advisor,
7. Written recommendations from two School of Education faculty.
8. Meet state standards on North Dakota required tests to measure prospective teacher's content knowledge in reading, writing, and mathematics. See www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements (<http://www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements/>) for test requirements.
9. Demonstrate proper dispositions necessary to teach for learning.

The Teacher Education Committee will review the documentation and make a recommendation to the School of Education (SOE) Dean to accept or deny

the application for admission to the program. If the teacher candidate is denied admission due to a condition that can be corrected, the teacher candidate may reapply when the deficiency is removed.

Continuance in Teacher Education

To continue in the Teacher Education program, the teacher candidate must:

1. continue to maintain cumulative grade point average requirements set forth in Criteria for Admission to Teacher Education.
2. demonstrate proper disposition and evidence of good conduct, physical and mental health (Mental health is **defined** as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.); and
3. continue to obtain satisfactory recommendations from faculty, staff, and field-based 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 SOE Dean who will make the final decision. Any such action would be reflected in a letter from the SOE Dean to the teacher candidate and the advisor.

Student Teaching

Student teaching is the culminating experience of the Teacher Education Program. During this time, Teacher Candidates 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.

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 a representative of Student Affairs and the appropriate department/school chair will be reviewed.
2. Completion of the professional education sequence before student teaching. The Director of Student Teaching 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 Student Teaching 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 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 Student Teaching. Students who request to take more than three semester hours of credit during the 12 weeks of student teaching, will need approval from the SOE Dean. Any requests for exceptions must be presented in writing to the Director of Student Teaching. 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 to approve or deny the application for admission to student teaching.

Criteria for Licensure Recommendation

In order to be recommended for Teacher Licensure, 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 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

PETITION AND APPEAL PROCESS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

A teacher candidate seeking admission to Teacher Education with a cumulative GPA between 2.50 and 2.74 may appeal to be considered for approval to Teacher Education by the Teacher Education Committee. The candidate must have 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.

Teacher candidates 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 teacher candidates may appeal, include requirements regarding the grade point average and/or record of good conduct;

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 School of Education Dean who will render a final decision in a timely manner.

Teacher candidates wishing to appeal any recommendation of the Teacher Education Appeals Committee or a decision of the School of Education Dean should consult the Student Handbook, which details final appeals procedures under the University Hearings and Appeals Board.

VCSU APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR Teaching for Learning Capstone or Portfolio

All teacher education graduates must complete an approved digital portfolio to be recommended for certification. Any student with an unapproved digital portfolio will have his/her file reviewed by an ad hoc appeal committee consisting of faculty selected by the School of Education Dean.