



**Teacher Education Department  
2024-2025**

# **Undergraduate Program Handbook**

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# Welcome

We are pleased you have chosen the Teacher Education Program at Nelson University. The faculty and staff are dedicated to preparing candidates for careers in education with excellence. We strongly believe that teacher candidates should have frequent experiences in classrooms, and we strive to provide this opportunity in all phases of the teacher preparation program. Program Coordinators are also available to advise and assist you throughout your studies. The quality of our program is reflected in our success with placing graduates in educational positions.

The Teacher Education Undergraduate Program Handbook has been developed to fulfill several purposes:

1. To assist you in understanding the mission, goals, and expectations of the Teacher Education Program;
2. To guide you as you prepare to become an educator;
3. To serve as a source for important dates, deadlines, and activities in your preparation;
4. To provide you with information regarding the support and resources that are available to you;
5. To enable us to serve you better and to help you become an outstanding educator.

The Psalmist stated in Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." The primary goal of the Teacher Education program is to train pre-service teachers to become professional educators. Professors have high expectations for each student that centers around attendance, motivation, participation, and attention to course work.

When you enter the classroom or online course, you are entering a professional learning environment. Professionalism means full attendance, punctuality, timely submission of work, and active participation, which are essential and expected in every course. Active participation means that you come to each class fully prepared to share your knowledge and learning gained from readings and experiences. As you prepare for the field of education, you must demonstrate motivation by working diligently, persevere to complete the program curriculum, and demonstrate ethical academic conduct, e.g. no cheating, plagiarism, etc.

By examining the handbook thoroughly, you will pass through the stages of the Teacher Education Program more smoothly and efficiently, making your progress more enjoyable. May your life be blessed as you follow God's plan in the field of education!

## Location and Hours

The Teacher Education office is located in the Foster Center. The Education Department is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday except for Nelson University holidays. During the fall and spring semesters, the faculty maintain office hours, which are posted at each respective faculty office.

# Mission of the Teacher Education Department

The purpose of the Teacher Education Program is to prepare students spiritually, academically, and professionally in the field of education. Each program has been designed to align with Texas Education Agency requirements for Texas Educator certification.

The state of Texas has established professional competencies required of all certified teachers in Texas. These competencies define the Pedagogical and Professional Responsibilities required for teacher certification in Texas. Our goal is that every student who completes the Teacher Education Program at Nelson University will demonstrate these competencies.

We also desire that our graduates model faith-based principles as part of their teaching ministry, which will enable them to influence their classroom, their school, and their community in an added dimension.

Nelson University offers programs in Elementary, Secondary, and All Level Education. After completing all program requirements and passing the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) exams, graduates are eligible for certification with the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC). The following degree programs are subject to change based on the new certificate structure approved by the state of Texas:

- Elementary Certification (EC-6)

- Secondary Certifications (7-12):

  - English Language Arts and Reading

  - Mathematics

  - Social Studies/History

- All Level Certifications (EC-12):

  - Music

  - Theatre

  - Physical Education

- Supplemental Certifications:

  - English as a Second Language (ESL)

  - Special Education

# Program Objectives

Upon completion of the undergraduate degree programs, the student will demonstrate:

**1. Subject Matter Proficiency:**

- ◆ Assess student subject matter proficiency
- ◆ Discriminate textual materials
- ◆ Develop comprehensive learning objectives
- ◆ Determine and procure material and information needed to cover a subject matter area

**2. Instructional Planning:**

- ◆ Write behavioral objectives for various instructional time frames
- ◆ Adapt instructional planning to meet student needs such as ESL, GT, SPED, and Dyslexia
- ◆ Implement instruction aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

**3. Presentation Skills:**

- ◆ Develop activities and delivery systems appropriate to the above objectives
- ◆ Develop activities and delivery systems appropriate to individual students or classes
- ◆ Model teaching strategies for in class and online instruction

**4. Evaluation and Screening Procedures:**

- ◆ Administer and use information from norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests
- ◆ Establish a student's needs and proficiencies
- ◆ Evaluate a student's progress within a specific subject area
- ◆ Determine appropriate grade level academic competencies including reading ability

**5. Supervision and Management Skills:**

- ◆ Create classroom environments that maximize student engagement
- ◆ Implement strategies to manage student behavior

**6. Record Keeping:**

- ◆ Document course procedures and monitor individual student progress
- ◆ Document field experience in various classrooms

**7. Professional and Interpersonal Responsibilities:**

- ◆ Express legal, professional, and moral obligations to parents, students, colleagues, and employer
- ◆ Engage in professional development such as Mental Health, Dyslexia, and Digital Literacy

# Procedures and Checkpoints

To ensure the continuance of producing outstanding educators, a series of checkpoints have been developed and implemented in the Teacher Education Program (TEP). These checkpoints will assist in monitoring each candidate's progress toward becoming a professional educator. The checkpoints will also assist students in determining their potential for success in the teaching field.

Candidates can find individual degree plans in the current Nelson University Undergraduate Catalog. This can be obtained from the university website.

## **Checkpoint #1: Admission to Program**

The first course most students should take in the Teacher Education Department is the three-credit hour course "Foundations of Education." This class reviews criteria and processes for admission to the Teacher Education Program. This class will serve as the entry point and the first checkpoint for students seeking to enter the Teacher Education Program. As part of the course, students will begin field-based experiences in schools to gain a better understanding of whether education is an appropriate profession for them, and at which grade level and subject they would prefer to teach.

Information related to requirements for program approval will be collected and recorded in the student's file by the Teacher Education Department. This includes 1) current cumulative and content GPA; 2) grades in English and Algebra courses; 3) results of TJTA; 4) good standing in behavior and chapel attendance; and 5) scores on teacher dispositions. The Application, Statement of Purpose essay, and two Recommendation Forms will also be placed in the student's file. Additional requirements include a minimum of 60 credit hours earned and a minimum of 10 hours of documented Field Experience. When all criteria are met, students submit formal applications by the established deadline to be reviewed by the Teacher Education Committee. There is a program application fee that is added to the student's school bill.

## **Professionalism**

When you enter the classroom, you are entering a professional learning environment. Professionalism means full attendance, punctuality, timely submission of work, and active participation, which are essential and expected in this course. Active participation means that you come to each class fully prepared to share your knowledge and learning gained from readings and experiences.

While the use of electronic devices, such as laptops, iPads, etc., for in-class research and note-taking, will be encouraged, the use of cell phones will be at the discretion of the instructor. Texting and social media use during class are distractions and demonstrate a lack of attention and concern for others. Please put your cell phone away for the duration of the class time. If for any reason, i.e. a family emergency, you need to keep your phone turned on during class, please inform your instructor prior to class.

The Teacher Education Committee meets thrice a year to review undergraduate applications. The Committee will vote and decide whether to accept or deny. Applicants will be notified by email of the Committee's decision. If accepted, the candidate will receive an *Acceptance of Offer of Admittance to the Teacher Education Program*. This acceptance form must be signed and returned no later than seven (7) days from the date on the letter.

Any applicant denied acceptance will be given a clear statement of reasons for denial. Denial of admittance, for any reason, may be appealed in writing to the Teacher Education Committee. Appeal should be addressed and delivered to the Chair of the Committee in writing. Students may apply twice during their enrollment. Appeals to the Teacher Education Committee can be made in writing for a third application. The student may be required to appear before the Teacher Education Committee.

After being admitted into the Teacher Education Program, the student will be permitted to enroll in upper-level EDU-coded classes as needed according to the published degree pathway. In order to remain in the program, the candidate must continue to maintain a minimum 2.75 cumulative GPA and a minimum 2.75 professional GPA (EDU, EDP and content specific courses). Candidates who fall below the minimum GPA requirements will be placed on academic program probation for the following semester. Candidates who do not successfully raise their GPA by the end of the semester probation period, will be removed from the Teacher Education Program and will have to apply again once requirements are met. See the paragraph above for more information about program application restrictions.

### **Checkpoint #2: Admission to Clinical Teaching**

A second checkpoint will occur the semester prior to clinical teaching. Eligible students must complete and submit the “Application for Clinical Teaching” the semester preceding the clinical teaching assignment. This form must be submitted by the assigned date in the academic calendar. Applications may be obtained from the Teacher Education Office or the university website.

In addition to all previously stated requirements, the applicant must be in good standing in behavior and Chapel attendance, and have successfully completed a minimum of 50 hours of interactive field-based experience within the semester applying. Failure to complete those hours will result in a delay to clinical teaching.

Undergraduate students should have no more than 15 semester hours of course work to complete, including the 9-hour clinical teaching course. Students will not be permitted to take courses requiring field-based experience during clinical teaching. Students should be in contact with the Teacher Education Department to ensure courses are taken in a timely manner.

Another criterion to be approved to clinical teach is to have taken all required TExES exams determined by specialization. Although we are hopeful all students will pass these exams on the first try, there are times this is not the case. However, students *must have one attempt taken in order to be approved for Clinical Teaching*.

Candidates will show readiness for exams in content teaching course(s) and educator assessment course. Once students have demonstrated readiness as defined by the Teacher Education Department, student will be eligible to take designated TExES exams. Students will receive instructions on exam registration from the Teacher Education Testing Coordinator.

The last criteria to be approved for clinical teaching is completion of required trainings. These include: Dyslexia, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse, and Digital Literacy.

*The Teacher Education Committee will review all applications to determine eligibility for clinical teaching. Applicants will be notified in writing of the Committee’s decision. Appeals to a decision must be made in writing to the Teacher Education Committee and submitted to the Chair of the Teacher Education Committee within 10 working days of the notified decision date. Students who are denied clinical teaching, will be allowed to apply in the following semester. Students are only allowed to apply twice. If unsuccessful the second time, students will need to consider other options for graduation.*

Candidates who live within a 25-mile radius of Nelson University will be assigned to an accredited campus by the Teacher Education Department. Online candidates who live more than 25 miles from the Nelson University campus are responsible for finding an appropriate accredited school placement, as well as finding an appropriate field supervisor. Once that information is obtained, the student will email the Teacher Education Department Field Experience Coordinator who will verify correctness of placement.

### **Checkpoint #3: Recommendation for Certification**

The final checkpoint in the Teacher Education Program will occur toward the end of a candidate's clinical teaching experience. *A student cannot graduate until successfully completing Clinical Teaching.* Students should contact the Director of Teacher Education (DoTE) if unsuccessful in Clinical Teaching.

Once all coursework, including clinical teaching and required training mentioned above is completed and all certification required exams have been passed, the Teacher Education Department Certification Officer will send instructions on how to apply for certification.



# Admission to the Teacher Education Program

Admission to the Teacher Education Program is not automatic and is not synonymous with declaring a major in a field related to education. Admission is a formal and specific process that generally begins in the second semester of the sophomore year (or when a student has completed 60 semester hours). However, several of the requirements should be completed during the freshman year to eliminate unnecessary pressure. The process is governed by the requirements discussed below.

Professional education course work (upper-level EDU-coded courses) is reserved for students who have been approved into the Teacher Education Program. The following requirements must be met and submitted to the Department of Teacher Education before official acceptance into the Teacher Education Program:

1. Receive minimum grades in the following courses or have an equivalent in SAT, ACT, or TSI scores:

ENG 1113-Comp I and ENG 1123-Comp II with a combined GPA of 2.5 or higher

MTH 1123-College Algebra with a grade of C- or higher

*Students who fail to score the minimum grades listed above will be required to repeat the class until the minimum grades are obtained.*

2. Successful completion of a minimum of 12 hours in subject-matter content (15 hours for candidates seeking the Secondary Math degree).
3. Achieve a minimum cumulative *and* content grade point average (GPA) of 2.75.
4. Have a minimum of 10 hours in approved and documented Field Experience.
5. Have completed a minimum of 60 course credit hours.
6. Receive a recommendation based on results of the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA) from an appointed counselor.

**Note:** The purpose for taking the TJTA is to identify strengths possessed by the potential teacher. If the TJTA indicates areas which may need strengthening, the Teacher Education Committee or an appointed counselor may prescribe counseling which must be completed before admission to the Education program.

7. Submit two (2) "Recommendation for Approval to the Teacher Education Program" forms from individuals—*other than relatives, Nelson University faculty members, or fellow students*—who can verify moral character and child/youth related experience or other work experience.
8. Submit a 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed Statement of Purpose essay describing reasons for desiring a profession in the teaching field.

9. Complete and submit "Application for Teacher Education Program."
10. Attach a copy of school ID / photo (Necessary for identification purposes only, does not need to be a professional photo).
11. Submit a current copy of your driver's license.
12. And be in good standing in academics, behavior, and chapel attendance.

The candidate is responsible for initiating the application, which is available in the Office of Teacher Education or university website.

Once the application packet is complete, the Teacher Education Committee will review the applicant's file and interview all candidates. There is an application fee added to the student's school bill. After being admitted into the Teacher Education Program, the student will work with an Education advisor to ensure proper course work is taken. *In order to remain in the program, the candidate must continue to meet prescribed criteria as described in this Handbook.*

Deadlines are published in the academic calendar as well as posted on bulletin boards in the Foster Building. In addition, the Office of Teacher Education uses Nelson University email addresses to send reminders concerning admission requirements and deadlines. It is the responsibility of the student to meet the announced deadlines.

Candidates can find individual degree plans in the current Nelson University Undergraduate Catalog. This can be obtained from the university website.

Texas Administrative Code requires any candidates that has been the subject of an arrest that resulted in adjudication, probation or a conviction must disclose that information at time of application.

*In chapter 227 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) it states "the potential ineligibility of an individual who has been convicted of an offense for issuance of a certificate on completion" of the degree. Candidates have the right to request a criminal history evaluation at their own expense. See 19 TAC Chapter 227, Subchapter B for additional information.*

Students who change degree plans from teacher education into another degree area will be required to complete the application and approval process again if he/she wants to return to complete a teacher education degree program. This includes all teacher education degrees except Pre-professional.

Applicants who are denied admittance or removed from the Teacher Education Program, can reapply; however, candidates will not be granted application after two attempts. Students on probationary status are limited to six (6) hours of EDU courses.

Dismissal from the Teacher Education Program happens when students do not complete a successful probationary period. Candidates can appeal in writing to the Teacher Education Committee within seven (7) business days from the date of the dismissal letter and/or email. The candidate's written appeal letter should be sent to the Chair of Teacher Education Committee. The Teacher Education committee has the final decision regarding the status of program candidates.

# Admission to Clinical Teaching

Clinical Teaching is the culminating experience for students in the Teacher Education Program at Nelson University.

Eligible students must complete the application for Clinical Teaching by the assigned date in the academic calendar the semester preceding the clinical teaching assignment. Applications may be obtained from the Teacher Education Office or can be downloaded from the university website.

To be eligible for admission to clinical teaching, an undergraduate student must:

1. Have been admitted to the Teacher Education Program;
2. Have completed all prescribed coursework and required trainings;
3. Have a minimum cumulative and content GPA of 2.75;
4. Have successfully completed a minimum of 50 hours of interactive field-based observations when applying to clinical teaching or complete within the semester in which applying to clinical teach.
5. Have attempted required TExES exams.
6. Be in good standing in academics, behavior and chapel attendance.

The Teacher Education Committee will review all applications to determine eligibility for clinical teaching. *Admission to the Teacher Education Program does not necessarily ensure acceptance into Clinical Teaching.* Applicants will be notified in writing of the Committee's decision. Appeals to a decision must be made in writing to the Teacher Education Committee and written correspondence should be sent to the Chair of Teacher Education Committee.

Clinical Teaching is a privilege granted to the student through the courtesy of the school and/or district to which the clinical teacher is assigned. Prompt and regular attendance and complete cooperation with the cooperating teacher is required. Students are advised to become familiar with the Clinical Teaching Handbook prior to clinical teaching. *A mandatory clinical teaching orientation is scheduled prior to starting the clinical teaching placement.*

**Employment while Clinical Teaching:** Due to the time commitment necessary for clinical teaching, it is highly recommended that candidates not seek additional employment during the clinical teaching semester. If outside employment is necessary, candidates may be required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement detailing the possible conflicts and consequences. The Director of Teacher Education reserves the right to request a candidate to either reduce employment hours, or quit a position if employment interferes with clinical teaching success. Communication between the Field Supervisor and Cooperating Teacher helps to determine a student's success.

The only exception to this is those individuals employed as an Instructional Aide or those in a paid year-long internship. Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 19, Chapter 228, states that "Candidates employed as certified educational aides may satisfy their clinical teaching assignment requirements through their instructional duties." *However, this is on a case-by-case basis and not a guarantee of acceptance.* The Teacher Education Department will work with the independent school district to

determine if the instructional aide will be able to fulfill the Teacher Education clinical teaching requirements.

**Taking Classes while Clinical Teaching:** While clinical teaching, the academic load will be limited to a maximum of 15 credit hours. Candidates will be required to take the 3-hour credit course RDG 4513 Content and Disciplinary Literacy along with the 9-hour clinical teaching course (see individual degree plan for each course code). An additional 3-hour course may be taken if the course does not have field-based experience hours.

**Grading System for Clinical Teaching:** Clinical Teaching is credit or no credit. There are two steps to completing a successful clinical teaching practicum. The first is by receiving proficiency statements from both the field supervisor and cooperating teacher. In addition to the two proficiency statements, candidates must make acceptable progress towards and receive a 70% or higher in the clinical teaching course to receive a grade of credit.

Students who do not graduate within six months of clinical teaching will lose credit for the course and MUST repeat clinical teaching. Candidates who withdraw or are withdrawn from a clinical teaching assignment must be reviewed by the Teacher Education Committee prior to consideration for an additional clinical teaching assignment. Candidates withdrawn from clinical teaching will be reviewed and considered for clinical teaching the following semester. Candidates will be allowed to finish RDG 4513 Content and Disciplinary Literacy and if successful in that course, students will earn credit and therefore, not repeat the course during clinical teaching the following semester. However, two unsuccessful clinical teaching placements will result in removal from the Teacher Education program.

Additional policies such as dismissal from clinical teaching, professionalism, and training can be found in the Clinical Teaching Handbook. Some forms of dismissal could be subject for student conduct review.

# Field-Based Experience (FBE)

Selected courses in the teacher education program have field-based experience (FBE) requirements. These requirements are typically stated in terms of the number of hours students are to spend in assigned EC-12 classrooms. FBEs are included in these courses to provide:

1. An opportunity to observe and interact with diverse learners in grade level appropriate teaching/learning environments;
2. An opportunity to participate in activities which are an integral part of the work of teachers;
3. Early opportunities to view the craft of teaching from a teacher's perspective; and
4. An opportunity to reflect upon the teaching profession as an appropriate vocational choice.

FBEs are a wonderful privilege and provide opportunities for students to grow in the ability to become an effective teacher. Take full advantage of these opportunities and use them to facilitate your development as a teacher.

Students are responsible for completing the required hours of interactive field-based experience. If students are unable to complete the minimum required hours, they will not be allowed to clinical teach.

Students shall submit the FBE Log to the professor in each class with FBE requirements. It is important to follow all directions when completing FBEs. Students will also be required to write a reflection of their experiences. The following courses contain FBEs:

Course Code	Course Title	FE hrs. required	Subject area required	Fall or Spring
EDU 2253	Foundations of Education	10	5 Elementary (EC-6) 5 Sec (any subject, 7-12)	F, S
EDU 4263	Teaching English Language Arts	20	English (7-12)	F
EDU 4173	Curriculum I	15	Early Childhood – 6 <sup>th</sup>	F, S
EDU 4183	Curriculum II	15	Early Childhood – 6 <sup>th</sup>	F, S
EDU 4293	Curr & Instruction Elem Music	15	Elem music class (K-6)	F
EDU 4313	Curr & Instruction Sec Music	15	Middle/Sec choir/band (7-12)	S
EDU 4253	Special Issues and Populations	10	Elem - EC-6 <sup>th</sup> Sec - any subject 4-8; 8-12 in school rep cult diversity	F, S

EDU 4353	Teaching Theatre Arts	20	All Level Theatre	F
EDU 4363	Teaching Mathematics (Secondary)	20	7-12 Math	F
EDU 4273	Adv Strategies for Teaching	20	7-12 in content area	S
EDP 4613	Teaching Elementary Physical Ed	15	All Level PE	F
EDP 4623	Teaching Secondary Physical Ed	15	All Level PE	S
GEO 2223	Geography	10	Social Studies 7-12	S
RDG 3413	Foundations of Literacy Instruction	15	Elem – EC-6th	F
RDG 3423	Reading & Writing Across the Curr	15	Elem - EC-6th	S
RDG 3433	Literacy Assessment & Instruction	15	Elem - EC-6th	F
RDG 3153	Adolescent Literacy I	15	English 7-12	S

Interactive FBEs are designed to move candidates through a continuum of involvement with students, teachers, and administrators. Students engaging in FBEs are to assume the professional demeanor of teachers. Attendance is absolute, and even unavoidable absences must be made up. Students should respect the cultural milieu of the school in terms of appropriate business-casual dress, sign-in and reporting requirements, confidentiality, and collegial relationships with school personnel. In all FBE relations, a Christ-like attitude of service should be uppermost in the student's approach.

**On Campus Students:** FBEs will be arranged and assigned by the Teacher Education Field Experience Coordinator in cooperation with the local Independent School District (ISD). Students should not contact principals or teachers about arranging their own FBEs. School districts may require a Criminal Background Check to be completed before students can participate in the classroom. It is the responsibility of each candidate to complete the requirements. FBE assignments and instructions will be sent through NELSON UNIVERSITY email to students once all requirements are met.

**Distance Education (DE) Students:** FBEs are the responsibility of online students who do not take on campus courses. Candidates living in the Waxahachie area must contact the Teacher Education Field Experience Coordinator prior to scheduling observations to discuss district guidelines and restrictions. If you are unsure whether you fall within this category, please contact the coordinator first. Online students outside of the Waxahachie area are responsible for finding a TEA accredited school (and classroom) in which to fulfill the FBE hours required per individual courses. The Teacher Education Field Experience Coordinator is willing to help students during this process, if needed.

# Required Professional Development Trainings

Prior to graduation, students are required to complete five mandated professional development training sessions. The state of Texas requires specific training in the following areas: suicide prevention, mental health, substance abuse, dyslexia, and technology proficiency based on ISTE standards.

These assigned trainings are part of the following courses and should be completed during that time. Students who do not complete the required training will not be allowed to clinical teach.

Required Training	Course with Instruction
Digital Literacy Assessment	Instructional Technology
Suicide Prevention	Special Issues and Populations
Mental Health	Special Issues and Populations
Substance Abuse	Special Issues and Populations
Dyslexia	Advanced Strategies of Teaching (Secondary and All level majors) Literacy Assessment & Instruction (Elementary majors)

# FBE On-campus Student Role

Field experiences are a wonderful privilege and provide opportunities for students to grow in the ability to become an effective teacher. *Practice courtesy and thoughtfulness at all times.*

1. Look for the email sent by the Teacher Education Department which provides details to your specific placement.
2. Complete the Background check if required to do so.
3. Do NOT contact the individual school or teacher concerning FBE issues until directed to do so by the Teacher Education Department. All matters pertaining to FBE must go through the Field Coordinator (972-825-4756 or ext. 4756), and must be reported in a timely fashion.
4. Practice punctuality and regular attendance. It is vital that you arrive on time for the appointments you have made. You will be evaluated on your promptness and attendance. Remember that you are representing Nelson University!
5. Assist the classroom teacher in any duties assigned and offer help when the opportunity arises. Focus on the students. Document all activities you in which you participate on field experience verification sheet.
6. Wear your NELSON UNIVERSITY ID card as a nametag at all times while on a school campus.
7. ALWAYS SIGN IN at the school office when you arrive and SIGN OUT when you leave.
8. Know and follow the rules, regulations, policies, and DRESS CODE of NELSON UNIVERSITY, the school you are visiting, and the classroom you are in.
9. Always exhibit courtesy and professionalism.
10. Complete the Field Experience Verification Form each day prior to the conclusion of the classroom visit. Before leaving the classroom, secure the signature of the classroom teacher to verify the information and THANK the supervising teacher. Do NOT interrupt class to have the teacher sign the sheet.
11. At the conclusion of the FBEs, the original copy of the Field Experience Verification form(s) shall be submitted to the course professor for placement in your permanent file in compliance with TEA requirements.



# FBE Online Student Role

Field experiences are a wonderful privilege and provide opportunities for students to grow in the ability to become an effective teacher. Practice courtesy and thoughtfulness at all times.

1. Practice punctuality and regular attendance. It is vital that you arrive on time for the field experience appointments you set up. You will be evaluated on your promptness and attendance. Remember that you are representing NELSON UNIVERSITY!
2. In the event of serious illness or unavoidable emergency that make it impossible to fulfill your scheduled field experience, notify the teacher you are observing.
3. ALWAYS SIGN IN at the school office when you arrive AND SIGN OUT when leaving.
4. Know and follow the rules, regulations, policies, and DRESS CODE of both the school and the classroom you are visiting. Business casual is the appropriate attire.
5. Always exhibit courtesy and professionalism.
6. Assist the classroom teacher in any duties assigned as well as offering help when the opportunity arises. Focus on the students.
7. Complete the Verification of Field Experiences form prior to the conclusion of a classroom visit. Before leaving the classroom, secure the signature of the classroom teacher to verify the information and THANK the supervising teacher.
8. At the conclusion of the observations, the original copy of the Field Experience Verification form(s) shall be submitted to the Field Coordinator for placement in your permanent file in compliance with TEA requirements. The Field Coordinator will send verification of observation hours to the appropriate Nelson University instructor. The student may also be required to submit a copy of the field experience verification to the course professor to complete written assignment.

# Important Terminology

**Candidate**--An individual who has been formally or contingently admitted into an educator preparation program; also referred to as an enrollee or participant.

**Certification Officer** – makes recommendations, after the clinical teaching practicum, based upon satisfactory completion of all requirements pertaining to certification.

**Clinical Teacher** – a Nelson University student who has been assigned to a cooperating school by the Field Coordinator to acquire practical teaching experience during a specific period of time, under the direction of a Cooperating Teacher and the Nelson University Field Supervisor.

**Cooperating School** - a fully accredited public or private school that works cooperatively with Nelson University to direct the teaching activities of a clinical teacher.

**Cooperating Teacher** – a campus-based mentor for the clinical teacher.

**Department Chair (Teacher Education)** - Oversees all academic programs to ensure quality curriculum that reflects current research and best practice, approves all transfer credit, and ensures all departmental faculty are highly qualified.

**Director of Teacher Education** – Ensures that the EPP complies with TEA requirements for certification and program approval. Chair of the Teacher Education Committee. Oversees Clinical Teachers and Field Supervisors.

**Educator preparation program**--An entity that must be approved by the State Board for Educator Certification to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification classes.

**Field-Based Experiences** – Introductory experiences for a classroom teacher certification candidate involving, at the minimum, reflective observation of Early Childhood-Grade 12 students, teachers, and faculty/staff members engaging in educational activities in a school setting

**Field Coordinator** – the Nelson University staff member who acts as a placement coordinator for field-based experiences and clinical teaching placements. Also serves as a link to keep cooperating teachers aware of important dates/activities during the clinical teaching practicum.

**Good Standing** – Students in good standing have no outstanding financial responsibilities due to Nelson University, no behavior incidents or pending incidents, and must not have been removed from Clinical Teaching.

**Nelson University Field Supervisor** – a qualified educator, hired by the Educator Preparation Program, to observe clinical teachers, monitor his or her performance, and provide constructive feedback to improve his or her professional performance.

**School Principal** – the principal of the cooperating school who coordinates the clinical teaching program in his/her school or delegates it to a person on the staff.

**Testing Coordinator** – Works with professors and candidates to ensure each candidate's readiness to sit for certification exams. Provides final approval for candidates to test. Works with Director of Teacher Education and Certification Officer to ensure candidates have completed certification requirements. Administers and interprets Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis for program candidates.

**T-TESS (Texas Teacher Evaluation & Support System)** – Used in Texas public schools and many charter schools as the approved instrument for appraising teachers and identifying areas that would benefit from staff development.

# State Certification Information

The Texas Examination for Educator Standards (TExES) is required for teacher licensure. All candidates will be required to pass the designated TExES exams for the subject area and grade level they are pursuing certification in.

Nelson University offers four levels of licensure:

- Elementary -- Early Childhood through 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Secondary -- 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades
- All Level – Early Childhood through 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Supplemental: English as a Second Language (ESL) and Special Education

Because passing the TExES exams is essential for licensure, the Teacher Education Department has established procedures to give every teacher education student the best opportunity to be successful with the TExES. Competencies covered by the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TExES exam will be covered in all Education classes, and it is important that students take these competencies seriously and make every effort to understand and master each competency.

While enrolled, students will be given the opportunity to complete and submit a satisfactory score on 240 Tutoring. Students must score at least an 80% in order to be approved to register for the TExES exam(s). Students who do not pass after ***three attempts*** will be required to take a TExES Review Session or other remedial session before being allowed to take the representative form again.

Students meeting the requirements to take the TExES exam should contact the Teacher Education Testing Coordinator for further instructions. **Permission from the Teacher Education Certification Officer is required in order to register.**

# Teacher Certification Testing Policies

Teacher certification exams are an essential component of the Teacher Education Program. Our teacher education programs are designed to prepare students to be successful in the field of education; and, that success includes successful completion of the TExES certification exams.

The Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) is administered by Pearson on behalf of the Texas Education Agency. There are many different TExES exams, and which tests students take is determined by the certification they are seeking. In general, students take at least two exams, the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) and the content area exam for the subject and grade level they are seeking certification in. It is expected that students attempt these tests prior to clinical teaching.

The passing score on any of the TExES exams is a 240 out of a possible 300. Students register with Pearson for their exams for a cost of approximately \$120 per test. As of September 1, 2015, state law limits testing attempts to 5 times per exam. If an exam has not been passed after five attempts, that candidate is no longer permitted to take that exam.

Our goal as a Teacher Education Department is to help students be completely prepared to pass exams on the first attempt. We provide students with preparation materials and opportunities for practice before sending students to sit for exams with Pearson. All students must go through an approval process before registering for exams.

## **Approval for Exams**

Before approval can be given for any TExES exam, students must demonstrate proficiency in the subject area and readiness for the exam. Students may demonstrate this by meeting one or more of the following benchmarks as required by program requirements:

- Successful completion of appropriate representative form with a score of 80% or above
- Completion of representative form with a score of 70-79% -AND- Completion of Intervention.
  - Plan as assigned by TExES coordinator. Documentation of completion of intervention plan will be required and detailed in the plan. Intervention plan may include a requirement of online tutoring or live workshops from contracted sources that may require additional payment by the student.
- Completion of designated coursework and approval from Testing Coordinator
- Successful completion of online tutoring module including study materials and practice exams

If a student fails to achieve an 80% on their initial attempt on a representative form, a study plan will be provided by the testing coordinator. The plan may include a requirement of online tutoring or live workshops from contracted sources that may require additional payment by the student. After students have completed their study plan, with documentation, they will have the opportunity to retake the representative form prior to testing approval.

### **Academic Testing Year and Timing of Testing**

The goal of our program is for students to be finished with all certification requirements upon graduation. To that end, we strive to help students be finished with testing requirements prior to the student teaching semester.

The academic testing year for first-time test takers will begin on September 1 of each year and end on June 30. Students taking an exam with Pearson for the first time must test during the specified time frame. The time frame of July 1 – August 31 will be available for retesting in the event that a student does not pass an exam. If a student does not pass a TExES exam administered by Pearson, they must wait 30 days before retesting (state-mandated waiting period). Students are strongly encouraged to retest as soon as possible after the 30 day wait period. The testing Coordinator is available for consultation and study planning in this event.

# Texas Standards

## **Educator Testing: Test Registration and Test Preparation**

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/certification/educator-testing/test-registration-and-preparation>

## **Educator Teaching Standards** according to Texas Administrative Code (TAC)

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p\\_dir=&p\\_rloc=&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=&pg=1&p\\_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=149&rl=1001](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=149&rl=1001)

The standards are:

- 1: Instructional Planning and Delivery
- 2: Knowledge of Students and Student Learning
- 3: Content Knowledge and Expertise
- 4: Learning Environment
- 5: Data-Driven Practice
- 6: Professional Practices and Responsibilities

The **Texas Educator Code of Ethics** can be found on the TEA website at

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/investigations/educators-code-of-ethics>.

# Additional Information

## **Criminal Background Check**

Prior to Clinical Teaching and/or field-based experiences, students may be required by the school district to complete a criminal history check. The state of Texas also requires a criminal background check and be fingerprinted before an individual can receive Texas teacher certification.

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 227.101c) states that a person who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a State Board of Educator Certification-approved educator preparation program or planning to take a certification examination may request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter regarding the person's potential ineligibility for certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense. For more information about the Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation, go to the link: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/investigations/preliminary-criminal-history-evaluation-faqs>

## **Military and Non-Military Coursework and Training**

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(A), military service members or military veterans may be given credit for certain verified military service, training, or education toward the training, education, work experience or related requirements (other than certification examinations) for educator certification requirements, provided that the military service, train, or education is directly related to the certificate being sought. Contact the education department for additional information.

Effective September 1, 2015, the TEA waives certain fees for eligible military service members, military veterans, and military spouses. For more information, please see the TEA website at:

<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources>

Information regarding Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans may be found in the Texas Administrative Code 234 at

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=4&ti=19&pt=7&ch=234&rl=Y](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=19&pt=7&ch=234&rl=Y)

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(B), those who are not military service member or military veterans may be able to substitute prior or ongoing service, training or education, provided that the experience, education or training is not also counted as part to the internship, clinical teaching, or practicum requirements, and the aforementioned was provided by an approved EPP or an accredited institution of higher education within the last five years, and is directly related to the certificate being sought.

## **State and Federal Reports**

Recognized for its high quality, the Teacher Education Department graduates have achieved high ranking by the State of Texas for teacher certification. According to the national Title II report, which ranks universities by state, Nelson University achieved the highest rank possible by the federal government by scoring in the top quartile in the state of Texas, with its students passing state certification requirements.

## **Transfer to another EPP**

There might be a time when the candidate wants to transfer to another Education Preparation Program (EPP). The candidate must be in **good standing** with the Nelson University Teacher Education Program. Good standing means the candidate has:

- No outstanding financial responsibility due to Nelson University
- No poor conduct review or pending review
- Not been removed from Clinical Teaching

**Website**

Check the Teacher Education Department Website for more information on program calendars, military waivers, and other pertinent information. Each candidate will be given a clinical teaching handbook when the candidate enrolls in the appropriate clinical teaching course.

**Distribution of Nelson University Education Undergraduate Handbook**

All Teacher Education Majors will receive an electronic copy of this handbook in the first two weeks of the semester. The handbook will be reviewed during the first breakout chapel of the academic year.