



**Education Department
2026-2027**

Graduate Program Handbook

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Welcome

We are pleased you have chosen the Masters of Education Program at Nelson University. The faculty in the Education Program are dedicated to providing you with the best in teaching methods and technology. We strongly believe that education candidates should have experience in schools, and we strive to provide this opportunity in all phases of the Masters education program. Program Coordinators are also available to provide assistance to you throughout your studies.

The Teacher Education Graduate 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 in your journey as 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 state of Texas has established professional competencies required of all educators in Texas. These competencies are the basis for the exams required for certification in Texas (see appendix). Our goal is that every candidate who completes the Masters of Education Program at Nelson University will be able to meet and demonstrate these competencies. However, we also desire that our graduates incorporate a Biblical worldview as a part of their education ministry, which will enable them to influence their classroom, their school, and their community in an added dimension.

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." One goal of the Masters Education program is to train educators to change their world in the classroom, school building, and school district. In order to do that, professors have high expectations for each student that centers around motivation, participation, and attention to course work.

When you enter the course, you are entering a professional learning environment. Professionalism means regular and active participation in the Blackboard course, timely submission of work, and active participation in discussion boards, presentations, online meetings, etc. which are essential and expected in courses. Active participation means that you enter the learning environment fully prepared to share your knowledge and learning gained from readings and experiences. As you prepare, 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 Masters of 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 and provided in each course syllabus. Since our Masters program is online, you may also contact individual faculty to set an appointment at times other than the regular office hours.

Mission of the Teacher Education Department

The graduate education program prepares students as educators who will be spiritually, academically, professionally, and cross-culturally equipped to provide quality educational Christian service around the world.

Programs offered through Nelson University Graduate School include:

- M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction
 - Early Childhood Specialization
 - Curriculum Studies Specialization
 - History Studies Specialization
 - Special Education
- M.Ed. Educational Leadership
 - Public School Administration (pathway to Texas Principal certification)
 - Christian School Administration
- M.Ed. School Counseling (pathway to Texas School Counseling certification)
- Other non-degree programs include:
 - Alternative Certification (pathway to Texas Teacher certification)
 - Advanced Certification – Principal Track
 - Advanced Certification – School Counselor Track

For programs that are a pathway to Texas certification, candidates are eligible for certification with the Texas State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) upon completion of all program requirements, including certification testing. Each degree program is designed to allow candidates to take the exams prior to graduation. Although passing certification exams is not contingent on receiving a master's degree, it is strongly encouraged since candidates will not be certified until meeting all the TEA certification requirements. Candidates can find individual degree plans in the current Nelson University Graduate Catalog. This can be obtained from our university website under the catalog link.

Program Objectives

The goal of Nelson University's Masters of Education Program is to prepare educators to lead their educational organizations guided by Biblical principles.

Upon completion of the graduate program, the student will be expected to:

1. **Demonstrate** knowledge of advanced strategies in content related to the field of study,
2. **Design and implement** instructions, assessment, and administrative practices in the educational setting including dyslexia strategies,
3. **Demonstrate** the ability to create and evaluate positive, productive classroom environments utilizing formal and informal settings and appropriate classroom management strategies including mental health,
4. **Develop** advanced knowledge of digital literacy,
5. **Demonstrate** knowledge of professional roles and responsibilities, and
6. **Develop** an advanced understanding for teaching students of diverse cultures.

Candidates can find individual degree plans in the current Nelson University Graduate Catalog. This can be obtained from our university website under the catalog link.

Procedures and Checkpoints

To ensure the continuance of producing outstanding educators for public, charter, and private schools, a series of checkpoints have been developed and implemented in the Masters of Education Programs. 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.

Checkpoint #1: Admission to Nelson University Graduate School

Candidates will need to apply to Nelson University via our Graduate School. Information related to requirements for the Nelson University Graduate School (NGS) will be collected and recorded in the student's file by the Teacher Education Department. Documents required for admission to the Nelson University Graduate School for Educational Leadership Public School and School Counseling include the following:

- a copy of teaching certificate/license
- for principalship—teacher service records with signatures showing at least two years teaching experience in an accredited school
- all official transcripts
- all components of the Nelson University Graduate School application.

Documents required for **admission to the Nelson University Graduate School** include the following for ACP (seeking certification):

- cumulative overall GPA of 2.75 or higher
- results of TJTA
- and all components of the GRAD application.

Candidates who wish to start in the fall semester must be accepted into the Nelson University Graduate school no later than July 31 of each year. Candidates who wish to start in the spring semester must be accepted into the Nelson University Graduate School no later than October 31 of each year. A calendar is posted at <https://www.nelson.edu/campus-services/25live-master-calendar/>

Checkpoint #2: Admission to the Teacher Education Program

The next three checkpoint sections are specifically for students seeking a certification with Texas Education Agency (initial Certification through Alternative Certification, Principal, or School Counselor, and do not pertain to students pursuing a Masters in Christian School Administration or Curriculum Studies).

For Educational Leadership Public School Principal, School Counseling, and Alternative Certification, once candidates have been accepted into the NGS, additional steps must be completed in order to be accepted into the Teacher Education Program. A request for an interview will be sent to each candidate by email. After the interview, candidates will also receive a writing prompt to complete. Both the interview and essay will be scored using a rubric.

Candidates whose files are “Ready for Approval” will be considered for program approval by the Teacher Education Committee. This Committee meets three times a year to review graduate applications. The Committee will vote and decide acceptance or denial. Applicants will be notified by email of the Committee’s decision with an *Acceptance of Offer of Admittance to the Teacher Education Program*. This acceptance form must be signed and returned no later than seven days from the date of the letter. Program approval ensures that the student can begin taking course work.

Any applicant who is 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 and to the College of Education and Integrative Studies Dean within 7 calendar days. *Candidates must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher in order to remain in the Masters of Education program.*

Checkpoint #3: Admission to Internship or Practicum

Alternative Certification Program (ACP) Candidates will have a yearlong internship, and three-hour course each semester. ACP candidates are responsible for procuring employment as a teacher of record in the specific certification area in a Texas Accredited school district. ACP candidates must submit the requested documents from the Teacher Education Department when seeking employment.

Before a candidate can complete an internship in the ACP, a minimum of 50 hours of interactive field-based experience (FBE) with reflection must be submitted. These FBEs are embedded in the course work and submitted to the course professor.

The last criteria to be approved for internship or practicum is completion of required training. Those are: Dyslexia, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse, and Digital Literacy. Training is a requirement in the teacher education program and of the Texas Education Agency.

School Counseling and Principal Candidates will complete a one semester practicum. This practicum requires 160 hours of field-based experience. The candidate is responsible for finding appropriate placements and mentors.

The Teacher Education Department will assign a Nelson University Field Supervisor to each candidate. However, candidates in all programs will be responsible for procuring mentors. All mentors must be approved through the Nelson Teacher Education Department in conjunction with the hiring Independent School District.

Checkpoint #4: Recommendation for Certification

The final checkpoint in the Teacher Education Program will occur toward the end of a candidate’s practicum or internship experience. A student cannot graduate until successfully completing the practicum/internship. Students should contact the Director of Teacher Education if unsuccessful for options.

The candidate begins the process towards certification during the program. Part of the coursework involves demonstrating proficiency on applicable exams in the candidate’s field of study. Once candidates have demonstrated the minimum accepted standard determined by the Teacher Education Department, the candidate will be eligible to register to take the appropriate TExES exam. Contact the Testing Coordinator if instructions to register are needed.

ACP candidates: Students must complete all initial certification tests prior to the internship semester. Contact the Testing Coordinator if you have any questions. At the conclusion of the ACP internship, ACP interns are required to submit their teaching record signed by the ISD to the Certification Officer before official certification is finalized and granted.

Principal candidates: Candidates will complete the TExES Principal as Instructional Leader (268) exam to be completed in the EDU 5643 Principalship course and the Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL), to be in the EDU 5973 Internship course. An option to become T-TESS certified is given in the EDU 5143 Educational Leadership and Supervision for Public Schools course.

School Counseling candidates: Candidates will complete the TExES School Counselor exam. It is recommended that the exam be completed prior to the ESC 5126 Internship in School Counseling course.

When all required certification tests have been passed, the student is eligible to apply for the specific certification according to the program. After graduation, the Certification Officer will review the candidate's records and certify the candidate when all steps are completed.

Admission to the Masters of Education Program

Candidates in Educational Leadership for Public School, School Counseling, or Alternative Certification Program (ACP) are eligible for state certification and must be formally accepted into the Teacher Education program. Only those graduate students pursuing Texas certification need to be accepted into the Nelson University Teacher Education program.

Certification eligibility and Practicum or Internship is reserved for students who have met admissions requirements, made application, and have been approved into the Teacher Education Program (which is a separate process from admission to Nelson University Graduate School). Eligibility to the Program varies depending on the certification sought.

Alternative Certification Candidates:

1. Achieve a **cumulative** grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 or higher in an undergraduate program. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the graduate program.
2. Have a minimum of 12 hours in the content of certification seeking; 15 hours for math or science areas.
3. Receive a university counselor's recommendation based on results of the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA).
Note: The purpose of 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 may prescribe counseling which must be completed before admission to the Education program. The testing coordinator for the Education Department administers the TJTA, and a sign-off sheet is provided to the education department.
4. 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.
5. Submit a 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed Statement of Purpose essay describing reasons for desiring a profession in the teaching field.
6. Complete and submit "Application for Teacher Education Program"
7. Attach a photo (For identification purposes only, does not need to be a professional photo).
8. Submit a current copy of your driver's license.
9. Complete an interview with members of the Nelson University education committee. This interview is scored with a rubric and cut score.
10. Accept the written invitation to the education department within seven (7) calendar days.

Educational Leadership (Public School) and School Counseling Candidates:

1. Be accepted to the Nelson University Graduate School.
2. Achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75. Candidates must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 to complete the program and graduate.
3. Complete an interview with members of the Nelson University education committee. This interview is scored with a rubric and cut score.
4. Complete and return the writing prompts within five (5) days. This writing prompt is scored with a rubric and cut score by two individuals. (Writing prompts will be given immediately after the interview.)
5. Accept the written invitation to the education department within seven (7) calendar days.

The candidate is responsible for initiating the application; candidates may contact the Teacher Education Department at teachereducation@nelson.edu.

Once the application packet is complete, the Teacher Education Committee will review the applicant's file. After being admitted into the Teacher Education Program, the candidate will be placed in courses. In order to remain in the program, the candidate must continue to meet prescribed criteria as described in this handbook, as well as the Nelson University Graduate School requirements.

Certification Status Requirements

Applicants must hold a clear, unrestricted educator certificate (or equivalent) with no active notations, flags, or pending investigations. Certificates that carry a notation indicating the individual is under review by the Texas Education Agency Educator Investigations Division (or any similar notation from TEA or another state agency) will not be accepted. A certificate remains valid during an investigation; however, our program does not admit candidates whose certificates are currently under investigation or carry any related notation. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their certification status is free of such notations at the time of application and throughout the program. Any candidate whose certificate later receives a notation, or flag may be subject to removal from the program.

Deadlines are published in the academic calendar as well as published on the Nelson University Graduate web pages. In addition, the Teacher Education Office uses Nelson University e-mail addresses on file to send reminders concerning admission requirements and deadlines. It is the responsibility of the student to meet the announced deadlines.

Candidates can view individual education degrees in the current Nelson University Graduate Catalog. This can be obtained from our university website.

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.

Noteworthy:

Students who change degree plans from education into another degree area will be required to complete the approval process again if he/she wants to return to complete a teacher education degree program that requires certification. Program applicants who are denied admittance into the teacher education program or removed from the teacher education program, can reapply the following semester. However, candidates will not be granted application after two attempts.

Admission to Internship or Practicum

Internships and Practicums are the culminating experience for students in the Masters of Education Program at Nelson University. It is the final opportunity for a student to demonstrate skill and knowledge in education and the decision-making abilities of an entry-level educator or leader.

Requirements are given below for alternative certification, educational leadership, and school counseling candidates.

Alternative Certification Program:

Candidates in the ACP program will be required to complete the following:

1. Obtain a teaching position as teacher of record in the certification sought and approved
2. Complete the Internship Paperwork
3. Complete Internship Orientation online
4. Enroll in the appropriate internship course and successfully complete a one year full-day teaching position in an accredited school. The internship is from the 1st day with students to last day with students.

Principal or School Counselor:

A student seeking state certification in Principal as Instructional Leader or in School Counseling will be required to complete the following:

1. Complete all required coursework for respective program
2. Complete the Practicum Application stating the ISD for field experiences and providing the name and email of your qualified Mentor
3. Attend the mandatory Practicum Orientation
4. Enroll in the appropriate internship course and successfully complete a one semester practicum in an accredited school.

There are NO dual certifications for both the principal and school counselor in the same program.

Each degree program is unique to that certification. Candidates who want to obtain a certification in both should contact the Department of Education.

Noteworthy:

All candidates must complete a successful internship or practicum by earning proficiency statements from both the field supervisor and mentor or site supervisor. Internships are credit or no credit. In addition to the two proficiency statements, candidates must make acceptable progress toward and receive a 70% or higher in the internship course to receive a grade of credit.

Candidates who do not graduate within six months of the practicum or internship will lose credit and **MUST** repeat the course. Candidates who withdraw or are withdrawn from an internship/practicum assignment shall be reviewed by the Teacher Education Committee prior to consideration for an additional assignment. Candidates who withdraw from internship/practicum will be reviewed and considered for placement the following semester. However, two unsuccessful internship/practicum placements will result in removal from the Teacher Education program. *See the specific internship/practicum handbook for additional information.*

Applicants who are denied admittance into the Teacher Education Program can reapply. However, candidates will not be granted application after two attempts.

Dismissal from the Teacher Education program happens when students do not complete a successful probationary period. See Internship or Practicum Handbook for further information regarding dismissal or failure to successfully complete 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 Director of Teacher Education. The Teacher Education committee has the final decision regarding the status of program candidates.

Field-Based Experience (FBE)

Selected courses in the teacher education alternative certification program (ACP) have field-based experience requirements. These requirements are typically stated in terms of the number of hours students are to spend in assigned K-12 schools. 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.
4. An opportunity to reflect upon the teaching profession as an appropriate vocational choice.

Interactive FBEs are designed to move candidates through a continuum of involvement with students, teachers, and administrators. ACP candidates are responsible for scheduling field-based experiences with an accredited school – public or private. All candidates are responsible for finding a school (and classroom) in which to fulfill the interactive FBE hours. In the event that students have difficulty in this process, they should contact the course professor for assistance. If unsure if a school is accredited, please contact the Certification Officer for assistance in determining eligibility of the school for FBE.

Candidates who are engaging in FBEs are to assume the professional demeanor of teachers. Attendance is absolute, and even unavoidable absences must be made up. Candidates should respect the cultural milieu of the school in terms of appropriate 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.

FBEs are a wonderful privilege and provide opportunities for candidates 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.

Criminal Background Check:

School districts may require a Criminal Background Check to be completed before students can complete FBEs. It is the responsibility of each candidate to obtain information from each individual school district and complete the requirements.

ACP Candidates:

Students are responsible for completing the required 50 hours of interactive field-based experience. If students are unable to complete these required hours, they will not be allowed to complete the internship.

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. FBE hours must be interactive, and students must document interactive activities on the verification forms provided. The following courses contain FBEs:

Course Code	Course Title	FBE Hours Required	Fall (F), Spring (S), Summer (Su)
EDU 5733	Advanced Strategies in Reading	15	F, Su
EDU 5743	Advanced Strategies in Learning	15	S, Su
EDU 5713	Studies in Classroom Management	15	S, Su
EDU 5563	Special Issues and Populations	15	F, Su

Principal and School Counseling candidates:

Graduate students seeking certification are responsible for completing 160 hours of field-based experiences (FBE) in order to complete the practicum. Students will submit the FBE Log to the professor during practicum. It is important to follow all directions when completing FBEs. Students will also be required to write a reflection of their experiences. Failure to do so will result in not completing the requirements of the practicum and will result in non-certification and/or a “no credit” grade in the course. Principal and school counselors will complete 160 FBE hours in the one semester practicum course.

Field-Based Experience (FBE) Guidelines

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. **Schedule field experiences** with a TEA accredited school – public or private.
NOTE: ACP candidates in the Waxahachie area must contact the Field Experience Coordinator prior to scheduling observations in order to discuss district guidelines and restrictions. All other DE students are responsible for finding a school (and teacher) in which to fulfill their field experience hours. In the event that the student has difficulty in this process, contact the Certification Officer in the Education Office at (972.825.4759).
2. Be sure to **obtain permission** from the principal, or contact person, to observe in a school.
3. **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!
4. **In the event of serious illness or unavoidable emergency** that makes it impossible to fulfill your scheduled field experience, **notify the school/teacher you are observing.**
5. **ALWAYS SIGN IN** at the school office when you arrive **AND SIGN OUT** when leaving.
6. Know and follow the rules, regulations, policies, and **DRESS CODE** of both the school and the classroom you are visiting.
7. Always **exhibit courtesy and professionalism.**
8. **Assist** in any duties assigned as well as offering help when the opportunity arises. Focus on the students.
9. **Complete the Field-Based Experience Log** at the conclusion of every visit. **Before leaving the classroom, secure required signatures to verify the information.** Be sure to say thank you.
10. At the conclusion of the observations, the **original copy** of the **Field-Based Experience Log** should be submitted to the Certification Office for the Department of Education for placement in your permanent file in compliance with TEA requirements. You may send these via email to teachereducation@nelson.edu. In addition, follow instructions provided by instructors of each course to submit a copy of verification to instructors for fulfillment of individual course requirements.

Important Terminology

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

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

Field Experience Coordinator – the Nelson University staff member who acts as a placement coordinator for student teachers and serves as a link to keep cooperating teachers aware of important dates/activities during the student 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.

Internship – A paid supervised classroom teacher assignment for one full school year at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by the TEA for this purpose that may lead to completion of a standard certificate. Interns are assigned an intern mentor teacher.

Internship Certificate– The holder of an intern certificate must be a participant in good standing of an approved, Texas EPP serving in an acceptable, paid internship supervised by the EPP. The Intern certificate shall be valid for one 12-month period from the date of insurance. A candidate must meet the subject matter knowledge requirements for insurance by passing all appropriate Content pedagogy state exams.

Mentor Teacher – a certified educator assigned by the campus administrator who has completed mentor training; who guides, assists, and supports the beginning teacher in areas such as planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, district policies; and who reports the beginning teacher's progress to that teacher's educator preparation program.

Nelson University Field Supervisor – a qualified educator, hired by the educator preparation program, to observe candidates, monitor his or her performance, and provide constructive feedback to improve his or her professional performance.

Practicum--A supervised educator assignment at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by the TEA for this purpose that is in a school setting in the particular class for which a certificate in a class other than classroom teacher is sought.

Probationary certificate--A type of certificate as specified in §230.37 TAC (relating to Probationary Certificates) that is issued to a candidate who has passed all required certification examinations and is completing requirements for certification through an approved educator preparation program.

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

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.

T-PESS (Texas Principal Evaluation & Support System) -- Used in Texas public school and many charter schools as the approved instrument for appraising administrators

State Certification Information

Most states require a standardized test(s) for teacher licensure. In Texas, the Texas Examination for Educator Standards (TExES) is required for this purpose.

Because passing the TExES test(s) 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 are covered in all Education classes, and it is important that students take these competencies seriously from their very first education class and make every effort to understand and master each competency.

All candidates for teacher licensure are required to take two or more TExES exams. Candidates in this program must take a Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities TExES exam and the specific content related TExES exam for the intended level of licensure.

*Students meeting the requirements to take the TExES test should contact the Certification Officer for further instructions. **Permission from the Teacher Education Department is required in order to register.** For more information, please contact the Teacher Education Office at 972-825-4759.*

Nelson University Educator Certification Testing Policies

Certification exams are an essential component of the Teacher Education program. Our certification track 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 are determined by the certification they are seeking. In general, pre-service teachers take at least two exams, the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) and the content area exam. If you are unsure about your certification track, contact the Certification Officer.

For students seeking professional level certificates: School Counselors require one exam; and Principals require two exams (Principal as Instructional Leader (PIL), and ETS Performance Assessment for School Leader (PASL)).

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 times, that candidate is no longer permitted to take that exam.

Our goal in the 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 or ETS. 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. Student may demonstrate this by meeting one or more of the following benchmarks as required by program requirements:

- Successful completion of assigned program with a score of 80% or above
- Completion with a score of 70-79% -AND- Completion of Intervention Plan as assigned by TExES coordinator. Documentation of completion of the intervention plan will be required and detailed in the plan. Intervention plans 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 a 70% on their initial attempt in an assigned program, a study plan will be provided by the TExES 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 quiz 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 graduation.

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 TExES Coordinator is available for consultation and study planning in this event.

Students who graduate from the Nelson educator preparation program and do not complete the required Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) within five years of program completion may be required to complete additional coursework or training to be eligible for certification testing. Pursuant to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §230.21(a), candidates must perform satisfactorily on comprehensive examinations to obtain educator certification, ensuring they possess the necessary content and professional knowledge for an entry-level position in Texas public schools. Additionally, TAC §228.35(b) requires that educator preparation programs provide coursework and training aligned with current Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and certification standards. If a candidate's knowledge or skills are deemed outdated due to the lapse of time, the program may require updated training to meet these standards, as determined by the program director in accordance with TAC §228.33. Candidates are encouraged to contact the teacher education office to ensure compliance with all certification requirements.

NOTE:

Educator certificates will no longer be issued automatically and will only be issued after completion of the SEMARC check. SEMARC (Statewide Educator Misconduct and Accountability Clearinghouse) will be integrated with the DNHR (Do Not Hire Registry), with corresponding updates visible to LEAs in the DNHR upload results file. If a certificate is not issued after several days, candidates should contact Educator Fingerprinting at 512-936-8400 (option 3) or through the Fingerprinting Help Desk.

Texas Educator Standards

Exam standards can be found on the TEA website at: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/certification/educator-testing/new-educator-standards-and-test-frameworks>.

Educator Teaching Standards can be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) at: [https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?\\$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=06%2F10%2F2025&recordId=167791](https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=06%2F10%2F2025&recordId=167791).

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

Principal Standards can be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) at: <https://tea.texas.gov/laws-and-rules/sbec-rules-tac/sbec-tac-currently-effect/ch241.pdf>

School Counselor Standards can be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) at: <https://tea.texas.gov/laws-and-rules/sbec-rules-tac/sbec-tac-currently-effect/ch239a.pdf>.

The Texas **Educator Code of Ethics** can be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) at:

[https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?\\$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=06%2F10%2F2025&recordId=192646](https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=06%2F10%2F2025&recordId=192646)

Additional Information

Criminal Background Check

Prior to Internship and field-based experiences, students will undergo school district criminal history checks. The state of Texas also requires a criminal background check before an individual can receive a Texas teacher certification. Information regarding requirements for certification may be found on the TEA website at:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/investigations/preliminary-criminal-history-evaluation-faqs>

Pursuant to 19 TAC §227.1(d), regardless of whether you have been convicted of an offense, you are hereby notified of the following:

1. The potential ineligibility of an individual who has been convicted of an offense for issuance of a certificate upon completion of the Educator Preparation Program.
2. The current State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules on eligibility of persons with criminal history, as prescribed in 19 TAC §249.16 (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21). These rules can be reviewed at: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/sbec-rules-tac>.
3. Pursuant to Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 227, Subchapter B, 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: <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/texas-educators/certification/military-community-first-responders>

Information regarding Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans may be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) at https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?chapter=234&interface=VIEW_TAC&part=7&title=19

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, Nelson University 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. <https://www.nelson.edu/financial-aid/teacher-preparation-program-report/>

Website

Check the Nelson University Teacher Education Website for more information on handbooks, program calendars, military waivers, and other pertinent information. The Nelson University Teacher Education website has information related to the program calendar, background checks, supply and demand, EPP performance, and military and non-military course waivers. The Education page can be found at <https://www.nelson.edu/academics/college-of-education/>

Exit Policy for Dismissal of Candidates

In accordance with Texas Education Agency requirements [19 TAC §228.31(b)], Nelson University's Educator Preparation Program (EPP) maintains this published exit policy for the dismissal of candidates. This policy applies to all candidates admitted to the Teacher Education Program for pathways leading to Texas educator certification (including Teacher Education, Alternative Certification Program [ACP], Educational Leadership [Public School Principal], and School Counseling).

The Teacher Education Program at Nelson University is committed to supporting candidates in their spiritual, academic, and professional growth to become outstanding educators who integrate Christian principles into their service. Dismissal from the program is rare and not anticipated for candidates who meet program expectations, maintain professionalism, and demonstrate the dispositions required of Texas educators. However, candidates may be dismissed under the following circumstances:

- Failure to maintain the minimum required GPA (3.0).
- Violation of the Texas Educator Code of Ethics (19 TAC Chapter 247), university student conduct policies, or professional dispositions expected of educators.
- Failure to demonstrate required professional behaviors, ethical academic conduct (e.g., no cheating or plagiarism), or Christ-like attitudes in coursework, field-based experiences, or interactions.
- Removal from a field-based experience (FBE), practicum, internship, or other placement due to performance, conduct, or other issues that impair fitness to teach or lead.
- Unsuccessful completion of a probationary period following notification of deficiencies (as detailed in respective handbooks).
- Two unsuccessful attempts at internship, practicum, or related placements (as noted in program checkpoints and handbooks).
- Other serious breaches of program, university, state, or certification standards.

Inactivity Requirement: Consistent with 19 TAC §228.31(b), candidates will be dismissed if they become inactive for more than two (2) years. An inactive candidate is defined as one who is no longer completing coursework, training, and/or testing requirements with the EPP and has not completed the program. After two years of inactivity (e.g., no enrollment in required courses or progress toward certification requirements), the candidate will be notified in writing and dismissed from the EPP.

Candidates at risk of dismissal will typically receive written notice, an opportunity to address concerns (e.g., through a growth or probationary plan), and due process in accordance with Teacher Education Committee procedures and university policies.

Candidates who are dismissed may appeal in writing to the Teacher Education Committee (with a copy to the Director of Teacher Education) within seven (7) business days of receiving the dismissal notification. The Teacher

Education Committee renders the final decision on the candidate's status. For additional details on probation, placement failures, or related processes, refer to the respective handbook, or contact the Director of Teacher Education.

Candidate Acknowledgment

By signing below (or via electronic acknowledgment during the admission process), I confirm that I have received, reviewed, and understand the Nelson University Teacher Education Program's Exit Policy for Dismissal of Candidates as required by 19 TAC §228.31(b). I acknowledge that this policy applies upon my admission to the Teacher Education Program, and that dismissal may occur under the conditions described.

Candidate Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Degree Pathway: _____

This acknowledgment will be collected and retained in the candidate's file as part of Checkpoint #2: Admission to the Teacher Education Program (or equivalent admission step for certification-seeking candidates).

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in TEA rules or program requirements. For questions, contact the Department of Teacher Education at teachereducation@nelson.edu or 972-825-4759.

