

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The Unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

Field experiences are a vital component of all educator preparation programs at SFASU. The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) requires all candidates seeking initial teacher certification in Texas to be highly qualified by holding a bachelor's degree; passing all applicable certification exams; and, completing a student teaching experience in an accredited P-12 school. Through internships, student teaching, and clinical practice, all candidates are provided opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a variety of diverse settings appropriate to the content and level of their program.

Element 1: Collaboration Between Unit and School Partners

SFASU is a leader in Texas in the development of collaboratively designed field based programs. In 1995, SFASU was in the first group of institutions granted state approval for a collaboratively designed field based program (*History College of Education 1923-2001*, pg. 178-Hard Copy Exhibit Room). Though the program has grown and changed over time, the collaborative design is maintained through advisory councils, the use of site coordinators as liaisons to the P-12 campuses, orientation sessions, shared professional development, focus groups and surveys for program evaluations, and shared evaluation of field experiences.

Initial Preparation Programs

Candidates in initial teacher preparation programs at SFASU complete a number of field experiences including a one or two semester internship and a 12-week student teaching experience in a public P-12 classroom. Initial field experiences, including internships, are completed in local school districts under the supervision of university faculty and classroom mentors with an optional international field experience for EC-4 candidates in [Germany](#). SFASU has a partnership with three independent school districts in the area for placement of candidates for initial field experiences: [Nacogdoches Independent School District \(NISD\)](#), [Lufkin Independent School District \(LISD\)](#), and [Huntington Independent School District \(HISD\)](#). The Unit places pre-service candidates in these three districts in observational, practicum, and internship roles, as well as student teaching. The partnership arrangement includes a total of 19 schools in these districts: 12 elementary, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools. For student teaching, the unit has established field placement agreements with [84 independent school districts](#) in Texas and with multiple international private schools in the Central American nation of Costa Rica.

Collaborative Relationships

The unit maintains a close working relationship with partnership schools through a variety of collaborative arrangements. A unique example of unit collaboration is the [NISD/SFASU Charter School Campus](#). The NISD/SFASU Charter Campus is a collaborative arrangement between Nacogdoches Independent School District (NISD) and SFASU. The partnership is based on the twin goals of improving public education and enhancing educator preparation. The charter

campus was designed to provide an educational choice for students and parents within the district, to extend the existing [SFASU Early Childhood \(ECH\) Lab School](#) model for teacher preparation to the fifth grade, and provide a more diverse population within the model school to better prepare teachers to meet the needs of the diverse population of Texas. The campus, located on the grounds of the university, is a part of NISD and the Dean of the College of Education and the Superintendent of NISD share the leadership of the [Charter School Governance Council](#). The governance council meets quarterly to determine policy and discuss issues related to the charter school partnership.

Another vehicle SFASU utilizes to maintain a collaborative relationship with partner schools is advisory councils. The unit's PK-12 Council, formerly known as the Center for Educator Partnerships (CPDT documents, Hard Copy Exhibit Room), is a council designed to encourage communication between the COE and public school partners in the area. Through the council, the unit maintains an ongoing dialogue with school partners about teacher preparation programs and critical issues facing new teachers and public schools. The council also reviews and provides input on any proposed course or program changes that affect the performance of candidates in P-12 classrooms. In May 2006, the unit and representatives from the local public school partners met to establish a [Professional Development School Advisory Council](#). The group decided to reorganize the PK-12 Council to form the Advisory Council and established a framework for future action. The immediate goal is to strengthen the partnership between the unit and partner districts and to collaboratively design a PDS model that will meet the needs of the partner schools and the unit.

The [Consortium for Excellence in Rural Teacher Preparation \(CERT-Prep\)](#) is another example of the unit's ability to initiate one-on-one communication with superintendents and other central office personnel from area partnering school districts. A primary purpose for scheduled meetings is to discuss ways to more effectively prepare candidates to better address district needs. To accommodate this goal, SFASU faculty, working with the Office of Educator Certification in the student teaching experience, act as conduits to bring information from our public school partners to the unit.

The [Office of Educator Certification](#), administered by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, is the liaison between the unit and partner schools for all field placements. The associate dean is responsible for fostering and maintaining collaborative relationships with partner school districts, school administrators, mentor teachers, and university mentor personnel. The associate dean and the Coordinator of Field Experiences interact collaboratively with all partnership schools to ensure that each candidate is placed in an appropriate student teaching experience. Candidates are assigned to schools through cooperation with district superintendents, human resource directors, principals, and mentors in each of the 84 districts where students are placed for Student Teaching experiences. The Office of Educator Certification provides [orientation sessions](#) for university mentors prior to the beginning of each semester. These sessions focus on candidate evaluation and assessment and include consistency training on the use of the assessment tools as well as program improvement discussions. In 2006-2007, the Office of Educator Certification placed 312 SFASU candidates in public schools in Texas for student teaching and 11 candidates in Costa Rica.

The Office of Educator Certification coordinates field experiences for the unit. This office is responsible for disseminating and collecting all field experience evaluations as well as conducting [follow-up surveys of employers](#) and [alumni](#). Candidates are assigned a university mentor based on the desired certification. University mentors visit classrooms a minimum of four times during the 12 week student teaching experience. The university mentor works closely with the assigned mentor teacher to ensure that each candidate has the appropriate classroom experiences to demonstrate their acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become a professional educator. The university mentor and the district mentor collaboratively complete [final evaluations](#). Each classroom mentor completes a [program evaluation](#) to help SFASU determine the strengths and needs of current programs. Candidates also complete program evaluations identifying the strengths and needs of the program. The evaluation results from employers, mentors, candidates, and alumni are stored in the unit database and results are distributed to programs for annual review. Results are used to make decisions about the design and evaluation of the student teaching experience and other program areas.

Professional education faculty and P-12 public school personnel collaborate to design, implement, and evaluate SFASU internship experiences in the initial teacher preparation programs. Each of the 19 schools in the local partnership arrangement with NISD, LISD, and HISD is assigned a site coordinator for internship experiences (*see Table 3.2*). The Site Coordinator is an SFASU faculty member from the [Department of Elementary Education](#) or the [Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership](#) depending on the program of the candidates assigned to the campus. The site coordinator works with campus administrators, curriculum coordinators, classroom mentors, and other university faculty assigned to the campus (Site Professors) in order to design and articulate curricula, develop and implement assessment instruments, and engage candidates in a broad array of thoughtfully planned and professionally supervised experiences.

Internship candidates are placed in classrooms with experienced mentor teachers. The site administrator and the site coordinator select mentor teachers collaboratively. Mentor teachers must be experienced, certified teachers who exhibit a desire to foster the professional development of a pre-service teacher candidate. The mentor teacher and the university mentor jointly evaluate candidate progress. Unit faculty, primarily those faculty members serving as site coordinators or site professors, offer training and professional development opportunities at partnership sites on a regular basis. Training activities tend to focus on mentoring and supervision of interns, while professional development activities are undertaken via collaborative discussions with public school partners in order to develop topics deemed relevant and necessary to enhance teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Throughout the internship process university faculty work closely with their school partners to ensure that the field experience is meeting the needs and expectations of the partner school mentor, the site professor, and the P-12 students in the mentor's classroom. Partner mentors facilitate university course assignments and confer on an ongoing basis with the site coordinator and site professors to assess candidate progress and growth. Mentors model appropriate teaching strategies and interaction prior to candidate implementation of instruction. Successful mentors are often hired as adjunct faculty to teach methods classes. This practice provides SFASU with another avenue for collaboration to design meaningful field experiences for all candidates. A [candidate work sample](#) is collected during the internship and includes one or more teaching

segments facilitated by the mentor teacher and conducted in the mentor classroom. At the conclusion of the internship, partner mentors complete a [Program Evaluation](#) and an [Intern Evaluation](#) to provide feedback for continuous program development and improvement.

Advanced Degree Programs

Graduate programs offered within the unit include programs for advanced teacher preparation and other school personnel. The advanced teacher preparation programs include: Master of Education (MEd) degrees for Early Childhood Specialist; All-Level Professional Reading Specialist; Standard Graduate Elementary Program and Content Emphasis with Graduate Program; Special Education; Special Education with a concentration in Visual Impairment; and Secondary Teaching. Advanced programs for other school personnel include the Master of Arts Degree (MA) in School Psychology and in Counseling. In addition, the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership offers a Master's and a Doctor's Degree in Educational Leadership.

SFASU also offers non-degree certification programs at the advanced level including: Standard Principal Certification, Standard Superintendent Certification, Educational Diagnostician (candidate must hold a master's degree), Visual Impairment, Bilingual Education, English as a Second Language, Master Reading Teacher and Master Math. Post Baccalaureate Initial Certification Programs (PBIC) for Elementary and Secondary Education are taught at the graduate level. Coursework within each program requires field experiences.

Advanced Teacher Preparation

Field experiences for advanced teacher programs are collaboratively designed with candidates, who are current practitioners. Using the individual classroom of the graduate candidate provides an authentic setting for gathering information and data to guide the development of appropriate teaching or remediation strategies to improve P-12 learning. The nature of the various field experiences is determined by the individual needs of the candidate and the required course assignments and unit documentation. The objective of the candidate's field experience is to impact student learning positively. Campus level administrators and curriculum specialists assist university professors in evaluating candidate success.

Other School Personnel

The unit values field experiences for all programs. Programs that prepare other school personnel design their field experiences to meet the standards of the profession and the unit. University faculty collaborate with school partners to design and supervise internship, practica (integrated field experiences), and clinical practice experiences in appropriate mentoring situations. Collaboration with school constituents provides quality, meaningful, and successful experiences for graduate candidates throughout their chosen program. The advanced programs benefit from having many layers of collaboration. For example:

- [Educational Leadership](#) has established the Principal Preparation Advisory Group (Advisory Group Minutes Example, Hard Copy Exhibit Room). This group, comprised of acting principals, assistant principals, and superintendents, has provided suggestions that led to the formation of a new internship course within the Educational Leadership program.

- Candidates seeking certification as [Educational Diagnosticians](#) must complete a documented 60-hour diagnostic practicum experience in the public school setting under the supervision of a certified diagnostician. This certified diagnostician serves as the candidate's mentor and report reviewer throughout the semester. The university professor in turn interacts with the mentor diagnostician to confirm candidate growth and progress. At the end of the practicum experience, the cooperating diagnostician completes an [evaluation form](#) on the candidate's performance.
- Candidates seeking a Master of Arts in School Counseling must complete a post-practicum field placement requiring 600 hours of supervised counseling experience (Hard copy evidence located in the NCATE office, room 357). University faculty collaborate extensively with practicing professionals in the field in order to arrange meaningful and appropriate practicum experiences.

Post Baccalaureate Initial Certification

PBIC candidates, both elementary and secondary level, have two field experience options. Option 1: Student teaching: a minimum 13-week full time assignment in a partner school district. PBIC candidates participate in a traditional one semester student teaching experience. A university mentor and the district mentor provide supervision and evaluate the candidate. Option 2: Internship: One year (two complete semesters) as a full time teacher in an accredited school district. This option requires that you are teaching within the grade level and content area of your target certification. An approved university mentor, the mentor teacher, and the campus principal share responsibility for supervision of the internship. Interns receive from three to five visits per semester from their assigned university mentors. [Final field experience evaluation](#) is a collaborative process among university mentors and campus personnel and includes evaluation of the [PBIC program](#).

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Element 2: Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit utilizes multiple designs across programs for placing candidates in productive, educational field experiences and clinical practice in P–12 schools. Candidate experiences are structured to facilitate the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that reflect the unit's [mission and core values](#) while meeting [state and national standards](#). A variety of field experiences on multiple P-12 campuses provide teacher candidates with sequential placements and clear opportunities for increasing levels of professional responsibility and practice. [Table 3.2](#) provides an overview of the field experiences and clinical practice required in each program.

Initial Preparation Programs: Undergraduate and PBIC

All programs for the initial preparation of teachers include field experiences completed in P-12 schools. Candidates are placed in diverse settings with experienced mentors. Throughout the program candidates have multiple opportunities to implement, reflect, modify and evaluate their own practice, as they become professional educators who positively impact the learning of *all* students.

At the undergraduate level, candidates participate in field-based observations, practica, internships and student teaching. These experiences are developmental and cumulative as they build on previous learning acquired in content area courses and teacher preparation courses. Field experiences are designed to ensure that all candidates develop awareness, understanding, and ultimately, proficiency in the standards for effective teaching practice addressed by the [Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities](#) (PPR) test of the Texas Examination Educator Standards (TEXES). All field experiences are grounded in reflective processes that provide candidates opportunities to analyze interactions with students and teaching practice to improve instructional delivery.

Elementary Education

Field experiences for the EC-4 and 4-8 programs include observations, tutoring, two internship semesters and student teaching. Each field experience is sequentially designed to place an increasing level of responsibility on the candidate. All elementary candidates begin observations in the reading course sequence and complete the program with a 12-week student teaching placement. EC-4 and the 4-8 candidates are placed in different grade levels for each internship and at distinct campuses to provide a variety of experiences in [diverse settings](#).

Early Childhood-4th Grade Program

[EC-4](#) program candidates begin field experiences with the first specialization course in the sequence (HMS 241). These early field experiences are completed in the SFASU Early Childhood Laboratory and continue in the NISD/SFASU Charter School. This setting provides field experiences with children six weeks of age through fifth grade. The Early Childhood Lab and the Charter School provide a model for effective teaching practice based on the philosophy of the unit. Candidates complete approximately 53 field hours with young children before reaching the first internship. Candidates are required to plan, implement and assess lessons approved by university faculty and mentor teachers. Throughout the early field experiences, candidates learn to work with individuals and small and large groups

EC-4 program candidates complete two field-based internships. In the first EC-4 internship, candidates plan and implement approximately 25 guided reading lessons. In Internship II candidates plan and implement approximately 20 math lessons, 2 science lessons, and 2 social studies lessons. All activities are supervised and evaluated by the classroom mentor and the site professor. (See the Internship Packets in the Exhibit Room)

EC-4 Completer Program

Candidates participating in the web-based EC-4 Completer Teacher Preparation Program (See Hard Copy Exhibit) participate in two internship field experiences. These candidates are working paraprofessionals who are seeking a degree and certification. Candidates that have worked in the field of education as paraprofessionals for two years may substitute 9 hours of the clinical practice block with coursework. During the internship semesters, the candidates come to campus for observation and implementation of lessons designed to facilitate learning of interaction and teaching strategies. EC-4 completer program candidates observe teaching at the Early Childhood Lab and the NISD/SFASU Charter campus. Field assignments are implemented in the classrooms where the candidate works. Evaluation is by the assigned mentor and through the submission of assignments, including video lessons, graded by the university professor.

Middle Level Grades (4-8)

Elementary candidates seeking [middle level grades](#) (4-8) certification complete approximately 10 field hours with adolescents in middle school settings before reaching the internship semester. The first 4-8 internship places candidates in a classroom for a total of 168 clock hours. Candidates tutor and work with small and large groups under the direction and supervision of classroom mentors and university site professors. During the second internship, candidates accrue 196 clock hours of experience gradually taking on more assessment and planning responsibilities. During this part of the preparation program, candidates complete the work sample assignment (see Hard Copy exhibits in the Exhibit Room).

The clinical experience for all programs requires a minimum of 12 weeks in PK-4 or 4-8 classrooms. EC-4 candidates have a split assignment providing experience with PK or K students as well as students in grades 1-4. University mentors and mentor teachers offer constructive feedback and advice throughout the clinical experience. Ongoing [evaluation](#) and reflective conferences provide each candidate with a high level of support to enhance the transformational process of this capstone field experience.

Secondary Education

The [Secondary Education Program](#) provides general education preparation courses for students seeking 8-12 and EC-12 certification. Candidates seeking secondary certification major in the content area of the selected certification and complete an internship and student teaching.

Each course in the secondary sequence contains an integrated field-based component beginning with basic observation and moving to student-teacher contact and interaction. The secondary program has one internship experience requiring 10 weeks and 100 hours of intern responsibilities involving increased levels of participation, interaction, tutoring, lesson planning, and student-focused assignments. Candidates conduct research utilizing technology, make multiple instructional presentations, engage in reflective discussions in whole group format, and interact with secondary students and faculty. The internship seeks to prepare the candidate for a successful, effective student teaching experience.

Secondary intern candidates evaluate their mentor teachers, each other, their site professor, and the internship courses. Candidates are evaluated by university professors and participate in formative and a summative assessment by the mentor teacher. (See Hard Copy in Exhibit Room)

Human Services

The Department of Human Services offers areas of study leading to [teacher certification](#) in: special education and deaf and hard of hearing. Candidates complete a practicum course and complete one internship and student teaching. The undergraduate practicum course in special education (SPE 461) requires all candidates to complete a documented 45 hour experience in a public school. The candidate's cooperating teacher at the partner site receives a letter from the university professor supervising the practicum. This letter details the candidate's course requirements and must be signed and returned to the professor. The cooperating teacher completes an evaluation instrument focusing upon candidate performance. (See Hard Copy in Exhibit Room)

Special education candidates complete the secondary education internship and student teaching. Student teaching is 12 weeks and is supervised by a university mentor and district mentor.

Post Baccalaureate Initial Certification

The PBIC programs, elementary and secondary, have integrated field experiences in each course leading to certification. All coursework is delivered on-line. Via electronic communication, course instructors guide and supervise candidates' initial field experiences. At the conclusion of the PBIC course of study, candidates choose an internship or a [student teaching experience](#). The PBIC internship consists of the candidate's first year on the job as a professional teacher working with a provisional teaching certificate. The candidate receives supervision from a university mentor and also receives support from an assigned site-based mentor teacher. The candidate is also enrolled in the on-line seminar course.

Learning through Field Experiences

Candidates in the program have the opportunity to observe and participate in small group teaching, tutoring, implementing whole class lessons, and assisting teachers. As candidates progress through the program they gradually assume full responsibility for the classroom as they complete the student teaching experience. Candidates apply their [knowledge](#) of content and [pedagogy](#) through a carefully designed sequence of assignments and experiences. Candidates are placed on campuses with diverse [faculty](#) and [student populations \(2\)](#). Candidates complete internships and student teaching on different campuses to ensure that they have an opportunity to work with many types of diversity. [Unit assessments](#) require candidates to assess, plan and reflect on the impact on student learning and to document learning. The [work sample](#) assignment during the internship allows candidates to demonstrate how they positively impact the learning of all students. Candidates provide documentation of reflection and modification of teaching to meet the needs of all learners in the group ([work sample assignment](#)).

Technology Use in the Field Experiences

Technology is an integral component in all field experience activities. Processes inherent in teacher preparation require the use of technology: candidates register for classes on-line; all candidates are provided a campus e-mail account; candidates are required to develop on-line research and communication skills; candidates prepare and submit many of their course assignments electronically; candidates communicate with public school mentors and students via e-mail for course-related activities; and candidates evaluate course instructors electronically.

Candidates in elementary preparation programs complete a technology course to learn how to implement technology into instruction. All candidates have opportunities to develop units of study and plan lessons based on information gained through web research. Candidates use technology to share pictures, create games and activities and provide content background for units and prepared lessons through the supervision of the university professor and the classroom mentor. Candidates are evaluated on their ability to use technology by classroom mentors and university mentors through candidate and program evaluations. Teacher preparation candidates are required to use technology to document student learning in unit assessments. The [work sample](#) assessment, completed during the internship sequence, is one example of the infusion of technology into assessing and teaching (See Hard Copy in Exhibit Room).

Clinical Faculty

District mentors. Clinical faculty are selected based on their experience and desire to prepare preservice teacher candidates. Mentor teachers are selected as part of a collaborative arrangement between the university site professor and a public school administrator. The mentor teachers who have demonstrated effective practice, have a minimum of three years of successful teaching, articulate a desire and a willingness to work with pre-service teachers, and are certified in the required teaching field are selected to participate in the program. Mentor teachers complete mentor training before candidates are placed in the classroom. All mentor teacher selections require the approval of both the public school administrator and the university site professor. For those mentors working with student teachers, the Office of Educator Certification and the administration work together to select appropriate mentors that meet the same criteria as other mentor teachers.

Mentor Training

Formal mentor training is conducted at the beginning of each school year or each semester at the various internship sites. At the elementary education internship sites, training is conducted collaboratively by the university site professor and the site liaison or the administrator. Mentor training occurs yearly in the form of on-site workshops. Ad hoc training takes place as requested by mentor participants. Within the secondary education internship experience, mentor training occurs at the beginning of each semester. All mentor teachers receive a mentor packet in addition to an initial mentor meeting. (See Hard Copy exhibit)

Evaluation of Mentors

Mentor teachers are evaluated by interns or student teachers as well as site professors and university mentors. For example, the secondary education internship candidates complete a formative mentor evaluation at mid-term and a summative [mentor evaluation](#) at the end of the semester. These evaluations are reviewed by the university site professor/coordinator. In the elementary internships, candidates complete a [mentor evaluation survey](#) at the end of each semester. Completed surveys are routed to the office of the program chair where they are reviewed and, if deemed necessary, acted upon to ensure continued mentor effectiveness.

University Clinical Faculty. University mentors are experienced educators with teaching and/or administrative experience. The university mentors provide support and supervision for candidates in student teaching. The mentors participate in training at the beginning of each semester to ensure that they are supporting the values of the unit and understand the unit

assessment for field experiences. University mentor qualifications may be reviewed by selecting the [clinical faculty link](#) in Standard 5. At the beginning of each semester, an [orientation session](#) is conducted with the university mentors to review assessment instruments, forms, the CF, the [Student Teaching Handbook](#) and for [consistency training](#) as needed. (See Hard Copy Exhibit-Credentials of Clinical Faculty)

Evaluation of Field Experiences

Candidates receive support and feedback throughout their program from peers, faculty, instructors, site professors, mentor teachers, field-site liaison personnel and administrators. At the undergraduate level, candidates in internships, practica, and student teaching receive guidance, reinforcement, and feedback from their assigned mentor teachers daily and from site professors or university mentors weekly. All candidate work, including lesson planning, assignments, research, student interaction, and instructional activity are discussed, and evaluated by the mentor teacher and/or the university mentor. In the elementary education internships, faculty conduct a one hour weekly seminar with all interns for the purpose of reviewing candidate progress, linking theory to practice, engaging in reflective discussions about candidate experiences and performance, and assessing student learning. Candidates in secondary internship receive formative as well as summative assessments from their mentor teachers and evaluation of assignments from the site professor. (See Hard Copy Exhibits)

Evaluation and assessment occur throughout each field experience. During the student teaching experience, candidates are evaluated on two or more occasions by the mentor teacher and the university mentor using the [field experience assessment](#). All evaluation processes are followed by reflective conferences with the candidate and the evaluator(s). The final field experience evaluation form is jointly completed by the district mentor and the university mentor. Mentor teachers also complete a [program evaluation](#).

Advanced Programs and Programs for Other School Personnel

The COE offers advanced preparation programs for teaching in the fields of elementary education, secondary education, and special education. Candidates in advanced preparation programs are prepared to meet the professional standards of the national accrediting agencies for their teaching subjects and fields. Coursework for advanced programs are aligned with the respective SPAs. All programs require appropriate [field experiences](#) that enable candidates to obtain experience in the application of professional skills. [Unit assessments](#) as well as SPA specific assessments document candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions for the profession.

Candidates in programs for other school personnel also complete appropriate field experience. For example, the principal certification candidates receive on-the-job training from successful, experienced, practicing public school administrators. To maximize this process, the university mentor forms a collaborative relationship with the mentoring principal and the candidate for planning, performance, and evaluation purposes. Candidates seeking certification as an Educational Diagnostician complete a 60 hour practicum experience with a certified diagnostician who serves as the candidate's mentor and reviews all candidate reports and co-signs all assessment findings conducted by the candidate. Candidates seeking licensure as licensed specialists in School Psychology complete a practicum experience in a public school

prior to their internship. During the practicum, candidates observe and team with field-based school psychologists, special educators, educational diagnosticians, and related special education and psychological services personnel. All reports generated by the candidate are reviewed by class cohorts, university professors, and supervising psychologists.

Element 3: Candidates' Development and Demonstration of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions to Help All Students Learn

All candidates enrolled in teacher preparation or certification programs, initial and advanced, are required to demonstrate knowledge of subject matter, pedagogical skills and appropriate dispositions in order to facilitate learning for all students. The comprehensive unit assessment system measures [candidate performance](#) in the areas of knowledge, skills, dispositions and P-12 student learning. The unit [assessment system](#) reflects the vision, mission, and goals of the university and the college of education as well as the state standards for teacher certification. Four benchmarks serve as data collection points for candidate performance information. All candidates for initial certification must be admitted to [Teacher Education](#) prior to field experiences. Benchmark II – Field Experience/Clinical Practice and Benchmark III-Program Exit assessments measure the quality of candidate performance in the field.

The Office of Educator Certification collects information and screens students for admission to the educator certification program and verifies continued eligibility each semester. A key responsibility of this office is the coordination of field experience placements with partner schools, including student teaching and PBIC teaching internships and evaluations of field experience. Student teaching (clinical practice) participation and success for the past 3 years is reflected in [Table 3.3 Student Teaching Participation](#).

Initial Field Experience Assessments

Benchmark II – Field Experience/Clinical Practice

All candidates experience one or more internship experiences in their preparation programs. Assessment at this point includes those designed to measure the quality of candidate performance in the field. Candidates in field experiences participate in meaningful and appropriate assignments throughout the internships and complete written reflections each week and participate in reflective discussions. Formative assessment of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and P-12 effect on student performance are measured through GPA requirements, candidate work samples, and departmental diagnostic or proficiency exams. Candidates must maintain a 2.5 GPA to continue in the program and successfully complete the [diagnostic or proficiency exams](#) (content mastery) before completing the program.

Candidate work sample. Teacher candidates in Benchmark II work in public school classrooms in internship experiences. The unit requires all candidates to complete a [work sample](#) during this part of their preparation program. Candidates apply their knowledge, skills and dispositions to plan and implement an [instructional plan](#). These [data](#) demonstrates that candidates can successfully apply their knowledge of content to plan and deliver appropriate lessons that positively impact student learning at this point in the program.

Benchmark III-Program Exit

Student teachers complete a 13-week clinical experience. Throughout the student teaching experience each candidate is evaluated on an ongoing, formative basis by the mentor teacher. Additional formative assessment of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and P-12 effect on student performance are measured through the [final field evaluation](#), [dispositions checklist](#) and the [mentor program evaluation](#).

Each mentor teacher, with the university mentor, conducts a minimum of two [formal candidate evaluations](#). After each formal evaluation, the candidate meets with the mentor teacher and the university mentor in a reflective review of the evaluation process and outcome. At the completion of the student teaching experience, all candidates complete a final dispositions checklist. Candidates are further evaluated by Texas certification exams. Throughout the student teaching experience, all candidates are enrolled in either an on-line Student Teaching Seminar (elementary) or an on-line Synthesis Seminar (secondary). These two capstone seminar courses focus on facilitating the performance of student teachers in a professional learning community while presenting an overview of program content. Both seminar courses enhance the candidate's preparation for successful teaching.

Advanced Programs

A key program goal for all field experiences is that candidates engage in the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in each course through field experiences. All programs in the unit assess candidate application of appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions through the unit field experience assessments. In addition to the [unit assessments](#), advanced programs for teachers and other school personnel design and administer other course assignments including: a standards-based portfolio (Ed leadership), comprehensive exams and presentations to showcase knowledge of learners and the profession. The summary documents for work sample, field experience and dispositions (Standard 1) demonstrate that all advanced candidates, teachers and other school personnel demonstrate the professional knowledge necessary for success in the education profession.

Summary

A continuous process of assessment is applied across all program areas to monitor candidate progress throughout the program. As candidates progress through their coursework and field experiences, they successfully complete a broad array of assignments, activities, and examinations that demonstrate their increasing ability to help all students learn. The variety of field experiences and field placements offered in the programs at SFASU ensures that all candidates complete the degree program and the [certification requirements](#) with the capacity to [positively impact the learning of all students](#).