



Southern Methodist University

Dallas, Texas

Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development

Strong
Overall
Design

2010 OVERALL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM DESIGN

The overall design of this institution’s teacher preparation is among the strongest in the state, most notably in the preparation of elementary teacher candidates. Because some of the data that we collect is drawn from public sources, we always ask the institution to verify the accuracy and currency of what we have collected. Southern Methodist University graciously provided to us review and comment.

Admission Standards

1. Admits teacher candidates with strong academic records ●

+ Rationale + Methodology + State findings

The standards for admission either into the institution or its teacher preparation program should select teacher candidates from only the top half of the college population.

Southern Methodist University’s high rating for this standard is based on its classification by U.S. News and World Report as a “more selective” institution in its admissions, ensuring that teacher candidates have sufficiently strong academic credentials.

Elementary Teacher Program

2. Prepares teacher candidates to teach reading

- a. Extent to which the science of reading is covered ●

+ Rationale + Methodology + State findings

The research-based content proven to be necessary for teaching all children to read should be clearly evident in course materials such as lecture topics, assignments and textbooks.

This institution meets the standard because it offers comprehensive coverage of the science of reading. Although this program fully addresses the science of reading, we identified two required textbooks that did not support reading science.

- b. Adherence to science of reading throughout coursework ●

+ Rationale + Methodology + State findings

All of an institution’s required reading courses — not just some courses — should impart the research-based content that is necessary for teaching all children to read.

This institution meets the standard because the components of the science of reading are addressed in both reading courses.

3. Prepares teacher candidates to teach mathematics ○

+ Rationale + Methodology + State findings

Teacher candidates, even those who excel in math, generally require three semesters of coursework in order to progress from a procedural to a conceptual understanding of the essential mathematics topics taught in the elementary grades.

The institution only partially meets this standard because it simply does not require a sufficient number of courses to allow for adequate coverage of the essential topics.

★

Strong
Textbook

Ratings: ● Meets standard ● Nearly meets standard ● Partly meets standard ● Meets a small part of standard ○ Fails to meet standard
? Data insufficient for a final rating ○ Data withheld despite request NA Not applicable 2011 Evaluation pending NR Not rated

4. Educates teacher candidates in the broad content areas relevant to elementary teaching ○

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Because they cannot teach what they do not know, teacher candidates need to have a solid grasp of literature and composition; American history, world history, art history and music history; geography; and science.

The institution does not meet this standard because neither the institution nor its teacher preparation program ensures sufficient coverage in the content elementary teachers need (including world/American literature, children's literature, American history, world history, world geography, art history, music history and science).


5. Requires an area of concentration so that teacher candidates develop content expertise and have a second career option ●

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Teacher candidates should develop some expertise outside of their professional studies, not only to enrich their own academic experience, but also to serve as a fallback major in the event that the student teaching experience goes poorly.

The institution fully meets this standard because all of its elementary teacher candidates are required to complete an academic major independent of education.

6. Offers all required courses at least once a year ●

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

It must be possible to complete the requisite program in a timely manner.

The institution fully meets this standard because it offers all required courses each year.

7. Prepares teacher candidates for the profession ?

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

The well-documented ineffectiveness of first year teachers may be mitigated by professional preparation that includes coursework on classroom management, methods for teaching specific content and diverse learners, child development, assessment and data driven instruction, and how education policy challenges affect practice.

Our limited examination of course requirements, descriptions and some syllabi suggests that the institution potentially appears to give inadequate attention to a number of essential professional topics, most notably mathematics methods.

8. Student teaching effectively prepares teacher candidates for the challenges of the classroom 2011

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Although there are a number of characteristics that define a high quality student teaching program, at a minimum a full-time, full-semester clinical experience is necessary.

The institution meets this minimal standard as it offers a full semester of full-time student teaching.



Secondary Teacher Program

9. Prepares high school teacher candidates to teach their subject area(s) ●
- + Rationale + Methodology + State findings
- All children deserve to have teachers who are well versed in each and every one of the subjects they teach, regardless of teacher shortages.
While most of the course requirements in the certification areas for secondary teachers appear to be sound, the institution does not fully meet the standard because of an inadequate program design in social studies. Acknowledging that flawed state regulation is the principal culprit for the prevalence of poorly designed social studies preparation programs across the state, including here, the institution should not sanction a system that qualifies secondary teachers to teach multiple subject areas in social studies after having taken sufficient coursework in only two of these areas.
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10. Prepares middle school teacher candidates to teach their subject area(s) ●
- + Rationale + Methodology + State findings
- All children deserve to have teachers who are well versed in each and every one of the subjects they teach, regardless of teacher shortages.
While course requirements in other certification areas for middle school teachers appear to be sound, the institution only partially meets the standard because of a flawed program design for the "middle school subject specialist." The institution should not qualify a middle school teacher to teach science without requiring either a major in a social science discipline or a combination of courses equivalent to a major that would include at least a minor in one discipline.
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11. Offers all required courses (high school certification) at least once a year ●
- + Rationale + Methodology + State findings
- It must be possible to complete the requisite program in a timely manner.
The institution meets this standard because it offers all required courses each year.
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12. Prepares high school teacher candidates for the profession ?
- + Rationale + Methodology + State findings
- The well-documented ineffectiveness of first year teachers may be mitigated by professional preparation that includes coursework on classroom management, methods for teaching specific content and diverse learners, adolescent development, assessment and data driven instruction, and how education policy challenges affect practice.
Our limited examination of course requirements, descriptions and some syllabi suggests that the institution appears to give adequate attention to almost all essential professional topics with the exception of subject-specific methods in some subjects.
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13. Student teaching effectively prepares high school teacher candidates for the challenges of the classroom 2011
- + Rationale + Methodology + State findings
- Although there are a number of characteristics that define a high quality student teaching program, at a minimum a full-time, full-semester clinical experience is necessary.
The institution meets this minimal standard as it offers a full semester of full-time student teaching.

Ratings: ● Meets standard ● Nearly meets standard ● Partly meets standard ● Meets a small part of standard ○ Fails to meet standard
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Special Education Teacher Program

Because Southern Methodist University does not offer a program for special education certification, Standards #14-16 are not included.

Outcomes

17. Systematically seeks and uses feedback on graduates from school districts ?

18. Utilizes available data systems to monitor performance of graduates ?

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Mirroring a similar commitment now found in K-12 education, higher education institutions must embrace data driven decision making and accountability in preparing teachers.

The ratings for these standards are unclear. The Duncanville Independent School District did not respond to our survey to determine the institution's commitment to looking at data on its graduates.

Institutional Features

19. Assigns faculty to teach in their area of expertise ●

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Only the most extreme examples of unsuitable assignments are noted, such as an instructor teaching both reading and mathematics methods.

The institution meets this standard as we could find no evidence of faculty being inappropriately assigned.

20. Offers grade-span specific coursework as appropriate ●

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

A single class with curriculum addressing students from preschoolers to high school seniors cannot adequately prepare both elementary and secondary teacher candidates in areas such as classroom management or instructing students with disabilities.

The institution meets this standard as it appears that it designs separate classes for elementary and secondary candidates on topics benefiting from age-specific approaches.

21. Ensures that teacher candidates are prepared to teach in a global society NR

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

The world has shrunk. Recognition of that fact should pervade the campus.

Because this standard is still in a developmental phase, we do not provide an institutional rating and our findings should only be viewed as exploratory. We note that an unusually wide array of study abroad programs are offered during summer and inter-terms when teacher candidates might be most able to enroll, but we did not find coursework requirements regarding world geography or foreign language, nor do foreign students comprise a significant proportion of the institution's student



body.

Exit Standards

Either state licensure standards are adequate or the institution sets a higher standard for program completion than licensure requires

If the state fails to establish rigorous licensure requirements, institutions are still obligated to ensure that their graduates meet high standards. For example, if the state does not require a licensure test that measures candidates' knowledge of every subject taught, institutions must fill this vacuum.

22. Elementary (EC-4/EC-6)



[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

The institution does not meet this standard because it relies only on the state's licensing test, the TExES elementary generalist test, to determine if its elementary teacher candidates possess adequate knowledge of reading instruction, as well as content knowledge in four subject areas. This test is wholly inadequate—both because of its low level of rigor and the lack of separate cut-scores for each subject. Recognizing that action on the part of the state to remedy these deficiencies is needed, the institution could require a more meaningful test of reading instruction and insist that its teacher candidates pass assessments in each of four subject areas.

23. Middle School (Grades 4-8)



[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Acknowledging that flawed state regulation is the primary reason so many Texas institutions do not meet this standard, this institution only partially meets this standard because it qualifies middle school teacher candidates for certification in multiple subject areas (e.g., mathematics and science certification) with only a single licensing test upon completion. Because high scores on one portion of the test can make up for low scores on another, this test is inadequate. Recognizing that action on the part of the state to remedy these deficiencies is needed, the institution could insist that its teacher candidates independently pass assessments in each subject area.

24. Secondary (Grades 8-12)



[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

The institution nearly meets this standard. Acknowledging that flawed state regulation is the principal culprit for the prevalence of poor design of some secondary programs across the state, the institution should not qualify secondary teacher candidates to teach multiple subjects by means of a "composite subjects" certification (e.g., preparing a teacher to teach "science" instead of chemistry, biology, physics and/or earth science). The institution could remedy the state's regulatory deficiency by requiring candidates to pass content assessments in each subject for exit.

25. Special Education (EC-12)

NA

[+ Rationale](#) [+ Methodology](#) [+ State findings](#)

Ratings: ● Meets standard ● Nearly meets standard ● Partly meets standard ● Meets a small part of standard ○ Fails to meet standard
? Data insufficient for a final rating ⊘ Data withheld despite request NA Not applicable 2011 Evaluation pending NR Not rated

Accreditation:	NCATE	TEAC	None
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Number of Teachers (2009): **10** Very Low Producer

Data are from the Texas Education Agency.

Elementary:	9
Middle:	0
Secondary:	1
Special education:	0

[+ Statewide teacher production](#)

Opportunities for institution to respond: October 29, 2008; October 29, 2009; February 24, 2010

[+ More on communication](#)

Institution Comment: *The compass for SMU's Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development is set toward education reform and that includes finding the best ways to prepare teachers. We believe our faculty is strongly equipped to deliver effective programs, and we hope your evaluation bears that out, but we also recognize we have some weaknesses. We are prepared to delve into your report, consider your analyses and make changes that will strengthen our program and consequently, our students. We've been happy to participate in this evaluation. Transparency is an important aspect of the work we do. Please let us know if there's anything else we can provide and we await your results.*

[+ NCTQ responds to institution comments](#)
