

University of St. Thomas

Houston, Texas

School of Education



2010 OVERALL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM DESIGN

Both because we suspended our attempts to obtain data due to the institution's low teacher production numbers and because there is a lack of specificity in descriptions of some requirements, we are unable to provide a broad assessment of the overall design of this institution. 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. The University of St. Thomas declined to 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.

The University of St. Thomas' 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.

No analysis could be conducted because we suspended our attempts to obtain materials due to the program's small production of teachers.

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.

No analysis could be conducted because we suspended our attempts to obtain materials due to the program's small production of teachers.

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 fails to meet this standard because of the poor design of its existing mathematics coursework, failing to sufficiently distinguish between the need for adequate content coursework, which will lead elementary teachers to mastery, and adequate methods coursework, which will enable them to teach the content successfully.

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. <i>The rating for this standard is unclear because we were unable to determine coursework requirements and the institution declined to provide them to us.</i>	
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. <i>The rating for this standard is unclear because we were unable to determine coursework requirements.</i>	
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. <i>We were unable to rate the institution on this standard because we could not get public access to course schedules for 2008-2009.</i>	
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. <i>Because we could only gain access to course descriptions for this standard rather than syllabi, we did not rate this standard. However, we cannot even comment on professional preparation because we were unable to determine coursework requirements and the institution declined to provide them to us.</i>	
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. <i>It is unclear whether the institution meets this minimal standard because we were unable to determine coursework requirements and the institution declined to provide them to us.</i>	



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.

The rating for this standard is unclear because we were unable to determine coursework requirements.

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.

The rating for this standard is unclear because we were unable to determine coursework requirements.

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.

We were unable to rate the institution on this standard because we could not get public access to course schedules for 2008-2009 and the institution declined to provide them to us.

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.

Because we could only gain access to course descriptions for this standard rather than syllabi, we did not rate this standard. However, we cannot even comment on professional preparation because we were unable to determine coursework requirements and the institution declined to provide them to us.

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.

It is unclear whether the institution meets this minimal standard because we were unable to determine coursework requirements and the institution declined to provide them to us.

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

Special Education Teacher Program

14. Prepares teacher candidates to teach early reading ?

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

All special education teachers, regardless of whether they are teaching toddlers or teenagers, need coursework in the research-based strategies shown to dramatically reduce the number of children needing remediation in reading. *No analysis could be conducted because we suspended our attempts to obtain materials due to the program's small production of teachers.*

15. Prepares teacher candidates to teach elementary mathematics ○

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

Special education teachers, regardless of whether they are teaching toddlers or teenagers, generally need three semesters of coursework in order to progress from a procedural to a conceptual understanding of fundamental mathematics topics. *The institution fails to meet this standard because of the poor design of its existing mathematics coursework, failing to sufficiently distinguish between the need for adequate content coursework, which will lead elementary teachers to mastery, and adequate methods coursework, which will enable them to teach the content successfully.*

16. 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. *We were unable to rate the institution on this standard because we could not get public access to course schedules for 2008-2009 and the institution declined to provide them to us.*

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. Relying on survey data of local school districts to determine an institution's commitment to looking at data on its graduates, we were unable to locate any local school district that routinely hired the institution's 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 rating for this institution is unclear as the institution declined to provide course assignments for faculty.*

**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. *We were unable to rate the institution on this standard because we could not get public access to course schedules for 2008-2009 and the institution declined to provide them to us.*

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 teacher candidates are required to take six credit hours of foreign language coursework, but could not ascertain coursework requirements regarding world geography, nor did we find education-focused study abroad programs or that 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](#)

The institution does not meet this standard because it qualifies middle school teacher candidates by virtue of passing the middle school generalist licensing test. This test is inadequate because of its lack of separate cut-scores for reading and four core subjects. 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 independently pass assessments in each subject area.

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

