

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY



Education Department

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK

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## **SECTION ONE - Educator Preparation Program Overview**

### **St. Mary's University Mission Statement**

**St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.**

Our mission statement is a reflection of the Characteristics of Marianist Universities. There are five elements that characterize the Marianist approach to education:

- Educate for formation in faith
- Provide an excellent education
- Educate in the family spirit
- Educate for service, justice and peace
- Educate for adaptation and change

### **St. Mary's University Educator Preparation Program**

St. Mary's University's Educator Preparation Program aims to prepare teacher leaders who are knowledgeable of content area, as well as of pedagogy and the professional responsibilities of an educator; who are critical and reflective decision-makers; who value diversity; who have strong classroom management skills; and who are committed to educate for service, justice, peace, adaptation, and change.

In the state of Texas, educators are expected to meet high standards and be well-prepared to teach in the classrooms of this state. Educator Preparation Programs are expected to produce qualified educators who meet the needs of all learners in today's and tomorrow's Texas classrooms.

St. Mary's University's Educator Preparation Program has received the rating of "**ACCREDITED**" under the Texas Accountability System for Educator Preparation. This rating is issued by the State Board for Educator Certification under the authority of Section 21.045, Texas Education Code.

The United States Department of Education (Title II of the Higher Education Act) Educator Preparation Program Texas State Report can be obtained at <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx> .

### **Educator Preparation Program Mission Statement**

St. Mary's University's Education Department incorporates state-approved standards into its curricula and provides a quality preparation program whereby aspiring teachers, specialists, and administrators can attain State of Texas certification. The Department functions as a community of faith, and faculty and students are held to high standards of scholarship, service and professionalism.

### **Undergraduate Candidates**

At the undergraduate level, the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary English Language Arts & Reading prepares students for elementary (EC-6) teaching. Secondary certification (4-8, 6-12, and 7-12) and all-level certification (EC-12) candidates major in their intended teaching field.

Upon successful completion of all program requirements, applicable TExES examinations, and state requirements, the candidate will be eligible to apply for state certification.

### **Graduate Candidates**

At the graduate level, the Masters of Arts degree in Educational Leadership or Catholic School Leadership prepare students for school leadership positions. Certification is granted through a Post-Baccalaureate or an Alternative Certification Program (ACP).

### **Supply and Demand of Texas Teachers**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires Educator Preparation Programs to notify their candidates that teaching positions are more difficult to secure in districts along the I-35 corridor in Texas due to the number of teacher preparation programs providing candidates within those educational markets.

### **Educator Skills and Responsibilities**

The Educator Preparation Program at St. Mary's University follows the Teacher Standards that are defined in the TEA Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards (TAC §149.1001). The following teacher standards addressed throughout our program:

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

For a copy of TEA Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards (TAC §149.1001), go to the Appendix of this Student Handbook.

## SECTION TWO - Admission Procedures

### Admission Requirements to the Educator Preparation Program

In order to register for the first education course (professional development), a student must meet the following requirements:

1. Follow an approved course of study.
2. Complete at least 60 semester hours (junior standing). Adviser will verify that 60 semester hours are completed prior to semester in which first education course is taken.
3. Achieve overall 2.6 grade point average (GPA) on all courses applied toward graduation.
4. Demonstrate college-level skills in reading, writing, math, oral communication, and critical thinking by meeting the following requirements:
  - a. Reading\*: minimum score of 260 is required; if below 260 but at 250 or above, student must verify ongoing training in reading comprehension and improve reading score or proficiency to a level deemed acceptable by the Education Department
  - b. Writing\*: minimum score of 220 is required
  - c. Math\*: minimum score of 240 is required; if below 240 but at 230 or above, student must verify ongoing training in math comprehension and improve math score or proficiency to a level deemed acceptable by the Education Department
  - d. Oral communication: successfully complete a departmental admissions interview
  - e. Critical thinking: minimum GPA of 2.6 in Core Curriculum coursework is required  
*\* as determined by Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) exam*
5. Earn a grade of "C" or better in the following courses:
  - a. EN 1311-Rhetoric and Composition
  - b. MT 1303-College Algebra *or* MT 1411-College Algebra and Trigonometry (for degree plans that require college algebra)

The above requirements will be reviewed, and if approved, students may then register for the first professional development course. Any education course taken before all requirements are met will be for elective credit until all requirements are met.

*Per TEA, the St. Mary's University EPP may use a combination of the following for its admission requirements:*

*Rule §4.54(6) A student who has previously attended any institution and has been determined to have met readiness standards by that institution.*

*Rule §227.10 (b) An EPP may adopt requirements in addition to and not in conflict with those required in this section.*

## **Admission Requirements for Post-Baccalaureate Students**

### **1. All post-baccalaureate students must:**

- a) Have earned a bachelor's degree with a minimum GPA of 2.6 from an accredited institution
- b) Have a minimum 2.6 GPA in course work applicable to teaching field(s)
- c) Demonstrate college-level skills in reading, writing, math, oral communication, and critical thinking by meeting the following requirements:
  - a. Reading\*: minimum score of 260 is required; if below 260 but at 250 or above, student must verify ongoing training in reading comprehension and improve reading score or proficiency to a level deemed acceptable by the Education Department
  - b. Writing\*: minimum score of 220 is required
  - c. Math\*: minimum score of 240 is required; if below 240 but at 230 or above, student must verify ongoing training in math comprehension and improve math score or proficiency to a level deemed acceptable by the Education Department
  - d. Oral communication: successfully complete a departmental admissions interview
  - e. Critical thinking: minimum GPA of 2.6 in Core Curriculum coursework is required  
\*As determined by Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) exam
- d) Earn a minimum 2.6 GPA in all required teacher education courses taken during first semester enrolled
- e) Submit faculty recommendation(s) from teacher ed. (and from professors in teaching field(s) if accessible) verifying fitness for the teaching profession
- f) Submit completed application form for admission into the Educator Preparation Program to the Certification Officer
- g) Receive formal acceptance into the Program

**2. Students who earned their undergraduate degree from St. Mary's more than five (5) years prior to the date of application will have to successfully complete a minimum of three (3) semester hours in their teaching field(s) as prescribed by the Certification Officer.**

**3. Students who earned their undergraduate degree from an institution other than St. Mary's will have to successfully complete a minimum of three-to-nine (3-9) semester hours in their teaching field(s) as prescribed by the Certification Officer.**

**Note: All post-baccalaureate students must meet the same requirements that apply to undergraduate students before being eligible for clinical teaching.**

*Per TEA, the St. Mary's University EPP may use a combination of the following for its admission requirements:*

*Rule §4.54(6) A student who has previously attended any institution and has been determined to have met readiness standards by that institution.*

*Rule §227.10 (b) An EPP may adopt requirements in addition to and not in conflict with those required in this section.*

## **Approved Certificate Areas for St. Mary's University**

Art (Grades EC-12)	Master Reading Teacher (Grades EC-12)
Business Education (Grades 6-12)	Mathematics (Grades 4-8)
Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	Mathematics (Grades 7-12)
Computer Science (Grades 8-12)	Music (Grades EC-12)
Core Subjects (Grades 4-8)	Physical Education (Grades EC-12)
Core Subjects (Grades EC-6)	Physical Science (Grades 6-12)
English Language Arts and Reading (Grades 4-8)	Principal (Grades EC-12)
English Language Arts and Reading (Grades 7-12)	Reading Specialist (Grades EC-12)
History (Grades 7-12)	Science (Grades 4-8)
Languages Other Than English - Spanish (Grades EC-12)	Social Studies (Grades 4-8)
Life Science (Grades 7-12)	Social Studies (Grades 7-12)
	Speech (Grades 7-12)

## **Transfers**

The admission committee evaluates transfer applications based on all academic work attempted at the college or university level.

## **SECTION THREE - Field Experience**

### **Overview of Field Experience**

**Field experience courses** provide the teacher candidate with opportunities to observe classrooms in approved public and private schools and/or begin developing teaching skills. As listed in the course catalog, the following courses require field experience: ED 3301, ED 3302, ED 3316, ED 3330, ED 3361, and SS 3300. **Field-based experience** courses provide the teacher candidate with opportunities to work directly with students in approved public and private schools and are intended to prepare teacher candidates for the next phase of their professional development: clinical teaching. Teacher candidates in these courses spend anywhere from 10-40 hours a semester in fieldwork in assigned schools. Teacher candidates prepare and teach lessons, tutor students one-on-one, develop classroom management skills, and participate in the school activities as much as possible. In addition, these field-based courses require students to spend a significant amount of time interacting with students in schools. As listed in the course catalog, the following courses require field-based experience: ED 3340, ED 3341, ED 3350, ED 3362, ED 4351, ED 4360, ED 4639, and ED 4689. It is important that teacher candidates take note of courses with a field experience assignment as this may impact scheduling of other courses in a semester.

### **Field Experience Policy**

Teacher candidates in courses with fieldwork must complete their fieldwork assignments in a timely and professional manner. Missed field placement hours may be made up with special permission from the instructor and the mentor teacher. Teacher candidates are required to undergo and pass a criminal history background check to be able to conduct fieldwork for their courses and complete their clinical teaching semester.

Teacher candidates must remain in the assigned placement throughout the semester or as required by the instructor. This means that teacher candidates must complete their required hours weekly for the duration of the semester or for the duration of the placement as described by the instructor.

Teacher candidates may not choose their own field placements. All field placements are assigned by the course instructor. Teacher candidates begin fieldwork when they receive the approval from the instructor and clearance from the school district.

#### Attendance

1. Regular, prompt attendance is expected.
2. If you know you will be absent, email your mentor teacher and professor prior to the absence.
3. If absent, you must develop a plan to make up the hours missed and have it approved by your mentor teacher and instructor.
4. Excessive absences may result in a lower grade or withdrawal from the course.

#### Failure to Complete Hours as Instructed

Teacher candidates who do not complete the required field experience hours may receive a lowered grade or be withdrawn from that course.

## **SECTION FOUR - Clinical Teaching**

### **Overview of Clinical Teaching**

**Clinical teaching**, formerly known as “student-teaching,” is the capstone experience of the Educator Preparation Program. It is a semester-long opportunity to practice teaching skills under the supervision of a supervising (cooperating) teacher and a university supervisor. Teacher candidates are placed in a classroom for a minimum of 14 weeks, five days a week, where they gradually assume the duties and responsibilities of a classroom teacher. The clinical-teaching semester is a unique opportunity to develop and strengthen teaching skills and dispositions and become familiar with the professional responsibilities of the teacher.

### **Criteria for Acceptance into Clinical Teaching**

**The following requirements must be met before a student will be eligible for clinical teaching:**

1. Be admitted to the Educator Preparation Program
2. Maintain a minimum overall 2.6 GPA (includes grades earned at St. Mary’s and transfer grades used toward graduation)
3. Maintain a minimum 2.6 GPA in all required education courses
4. Maintain a minimum 2.6 GPA in teaching field(s) or interdisciplinary field
  - a) EC-6 must have a minimum 2.6 GPA in:
    - i. Combination of Subjects
    - ii. Area of Specialization
    - iii. Professional Development
  - b) Secondary applicants must have a minimum 2.6 GPA in
    - i. Content area
    - ii. Professional Development
5. Successfully complete required field-experience hours
6. Submit completed clinical teaching application forms (including Criminal History Information Form and TB Test Clearance) by prescribed deadlines
7. Receive Education Department Recommendation
8. Receive approval for clinical teaching from the Faculty Committee on Teacher Education

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

The normal course load during the semester when one student teaches is nine (9) semester hours; this includes six (6) semester hours of clinical teaching and three (3) semester hours of Professional Development Seminar: ED 4338 (Elementary) or ED 4388 (Secondary). In order to apply for fall or spring clinical teaching, a prospective applicant must need no more than three (3) additional semester hours to graduate, (student teaching, professional development seminar, plus three hours) by the end of the semester in which the clinical teaching application is submitted.

A student must have a minimum 2.6 GPA in all required areas at the time of application in order to be considered. Clinical teaching is offered only during the fall and spring semesters. Students are responsible for meeting all application deadlines.

### **Process for Applying for Clinical Teaching**

Students who have met the requirements for and intend to complete clinical teaching must attend one information session conducted by the Certification Officer. The sessions are held during the first month of each fall and spring semester. The candidates for clinical teaching must attend a meeting one semester prior to the clinical teaching semester. Those applying for fall clinical teaching must submit an

application by January. Those applying for spring clinical teaching must submit an application by September.

### **Placing Candidates**

St. Mary's works with the human resources departments of most school districts in the San Antonio area to place clinical teachers. Placements are available in approved private and public schools in Bexar County. At the information meeting, candidates will be given a list of available school districts and asked to indicate school district preference.

The field supervisor will contact clinical teachers during the first three weeks of the clinical teacher's assignment. Clinical teaching placement information, including the name of the assigned school and supervising (cooperating) teacher, will be provided. An announcement of the time and place of the meeting will be posted in the Education Department.

Candidates must pass a criminal background check conducted by the school district. Candidates who experience rejection by the school districts due to their criminal history may not be able to complete the program.

### **Expectations of Clinical Teachers**

The clinical teaching semester is a full-time, 14-week commitment. Clinical teachers are urged to limit work or other commitments during the semester of clinical teaching. Clinical teachers are expected to be available during school hours, approximately from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Whenever possible, clinical teachers may be expected to attend evening events such as PTA meetings, open houses, or school-sponsored activities.

## SECTION FIVE - Teacher Certification

### Required TExES Exams for Teacher Certification

Initial teacher certification candidates must take and pass two exams: the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam and a content area exam. Candidates adding professional certification (Master Reading Teacher, Principal, and Reading Specialist) must take and pass the corresponding exams below. Below is information regarding the specific exams related to each certification area:

Art (Grades EC-12)	TExES Art EC-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Business Education (Grades 6-12)	TExES Business Education 6-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	TExES Chemistry 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Computer Science (Grades 8-12)	TExES Computer Science 8-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Core Subjects (Grades 4-8)	TExES Core Subjects 4-8 TExES PPR EC-12
Core Subjects (Grades EC-6)	TExES Core Subjects EC-6 TExES PPR EC-12
English Language Arts and Reading (Grades 4-8)	TExES ELAR 4-8 TExES PPR EC-12
English Language Arts and Reading (Grades 7-12)	TExES ELAR 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
History (Grades 7-12)	TExES History 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Languages Other Than English - Spanish (Grades EC-12)	TExES LOTE-Spanish EC-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Life Science (Grades 7-12)	TExES Life Science 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Master Reading Teacher (Grades EC-12)	TExMAT Reading Teacher
Mathematics (Grades 4-8)	TExES Math 4-8 TExES PPR EC-12
Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	TExES Math 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Music (Grades EC-12)	TExES Music EC-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Physical Education (Grades EC-12)	TExES PE EC-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Physical Science (Grades 6-12)	TExES Physical Science 6-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Principal (Grades EC-12)	TExES Principal
Reading Specialist (Grades EC-12)	TExES Reading Specialist
Science (Grades 4-8)	TExES Science 4-8 TExES PPR EC-12
Social Studies (Grades 4-8)	TExES Social Studies 4-8 TExES PPR EC-12
Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	TExES Social Studies 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12
Speech (Grades 7-12)	TExES Speech 7-12 TExES PPR EC-12

## **Criteria to Determine Readiness to Test**

For both PPR and content exam, the student must do the following: take a minimum of two practice tests and earn a passing score of at least 70 and attend a minimum of two debriefing sessions.

When the practice test and review requirements have been met, teacher candidates will acquire a completed “approval to test” form from one of the department instructors. The teacher candidate will submit it to the Certification Officer in order to register for the state exam.

## **State Exam Registration**

Teacher candidates will meet with the Certification Officer to acquire a Texas Education Agency Login (TEAL).

### **Logging onto TEAL for the First Time**

1. Click on ECOS for Educators at the top of the page.
2. Click on Login to TEAL.
3. Select “Educator” as your Organization Type on the TEAL New User Registration form. TEAL will prompt you to enter your Social Security Number.
4. After you have created your TEAL user account, you will receive an email with your new user name and password. Follow the link in this email to login, using your new user name and password.
5. After changing your password and establishing your security questions, you will be redirected to the TEAL landing page, where you can access the ECOS for Educators application by clicking on the link.

## **Exam Approval Status**

1. To check exam approval status, go to the TEA Website and login to TEAL. Click on “View Examinations”.
2. “Approval to test” will only be granted to teacher candidates that have successfully completed St. Mary’s University eligibility requirements prior to submitting the Eligibility Form.

## **Online Registration**

1. Visit the ETS Website to register for a TExES State Exam.
2. Follow the “Quick Start” directions to set-up a new account.
3. You will need your TEA ID Number each time you register for a TExES State Exam.
4. Print a copy of your admission ticket.
5. A copy of your admission ticket and a valid and acceptable identification document(s) with a name, signature and photo is required to be permitted to take a State Exam. For more details, see TExES – On The Day of The Test for more information.

## **Process for Taking the TExES Exams**

### **Five Times Rule for All Exams**

All teacher certification and professional certification candidates may only take the same state exam for a total of five times. The five attempts include the first attempt to pass the exam and four retakes.

## **Five Times Rule for Core Subjects (EC-6 & 4-8) Exams**

St. Mary's University encourages its Core Subjects candidates to be fully aware of the retest policy and that they **do not use up all of their attempts by taking individual subtests (800-level tests)**. Even though the ETS system will allow candidates to sign up for the 800-level subtests after they take the whole Core Subjects test, **they should NOT do so unless they are down to only one test left to pass**. Candidates may skip through the sections of the test they have already passed by clicking next, next, next, and so on until they get to the sections that they still need to pass. Candidates do not need to answer a single question in the sections that they have already passed. Again, the only time a candidate should sign up for an individual subtest is when that is the last test the candidate needs to pass. Candidates who have inadvertently registered for individual subtests may call ETS at (800) 205-2626 to reschedule those exams into the appropriate Core Subjects exam.

## **TExES Retake Policy**

Teacher candidates will be required to undergo additional test preparation before being approved to retake a required state exam. The Certification Officer will require a new "approval to test" before authorizing registration for the re-take of the exam.

## **Process for Applying for Certification**

### **A. Applying for Your Initial Certification**

Applications for all Texas Educator Certificates are made online at the [Texas Education Agency](#) website.

1. At the website, click on "Educator Login/Account Set Up" and follow the directions. You must first set up an account if you have not done so previously. You are applying for a **STANDARD** certificate, and the recommending entity is Saint Mary's University - **UNIVERSITY BASED** (not Master Teacher).
2. When you have completed the process, St. Mary's University will receive notification that you have applied for your certificate. If you are eligible, St. Mary's University will complete the recommendation and you will be notified by email that you have been recommended.

### **B. Eligibility for Recommendation for Certification**

Clinical teachers may be recommended by the Certification Officer upon the completion of the following conditions:

- Successful completion of clinical teaching.
- Your final grades have been posted.
- You have passed all required TExES state exams.
- The required degree has been awarded.

#### **\*Alternative (Post-Baccalaureate and Graduate)**

- Successful completion of clinical teaching.
- Applied for recommendation and paid all fees.
- Passed both state exams.

Please note, however, that you will not be officially certified until TEA has:

1. received and paid the required fee
2. received your fingerprint card (if applicable) and
3. completed and passed a criminal history background check.

## **SECTION SIX – Teacher and Principal Evaluation**

### **Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System**

All undergraduate and graduate students seeking initial teacher certification in the Educator Preparation Program will be given instruction on the state's teacher evaluation system, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). Information on the T-TESS can be found at:

[http://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Educators/Educator\\_Evaluation\\_and\\_Support\\_System/Texas\\_Teacher\\_Evaluation\\_and\\_Support\\_System/](http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Educator_Evaluation_and_Support_System/Texas_Teacher_Evaluation_and_Support_System/).

### **Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System**

In addition to the T-TESS, all graduate students in the Principal Preparation Program will be given instruction on the state's principal evaluation system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). Information on the T-PESS can be found at: <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=25769810649>.

The Principal Standards can be found at: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter149/ch149bb.html>.

## **SECTION SEVEN – EPP Dismissal Policy**

Any candidate or staff who violates the Educators' Code of Ethics is liable for dismissal from the EPP. See Section Eight for the complete Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

## **SECTION EIGHT - APPENDIX**

### **Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators**

#### Enforceable Standards.

##### (1) Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.

(A) Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

(B) Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

(C) Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

(D) Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

(E) Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

(F) Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

(G) Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

(H) Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

(I) Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

(J) Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

(K) Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

(L) Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

(M) Standard 1.13. The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

##### (2) Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues.

(A) Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

(C) Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

(D) Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

(E) Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

(F) Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to

influence professional decisions or colleagues.

(G) Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

(3) Ethical Conduct Toward Students.

(A) Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

(C) Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

(D) Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

(E) Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

(F) Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

(G) Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

(H) Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

(I) Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

(i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;

(ii) the subject matter of the communication;

(iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

(iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

(v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

(vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

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**Source Note:** The provisions of this §247.2 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective August 22, 2002, 27 TexReg 7530; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242

## **Criminal Background Check and Fieldwork Policy**

Teacher candidates are required to undergo and pass a criminal history background check to be able to conduct fieldwork for their courses and complete their clinical teaching semester. St. Mary's University does not conduct these background checks. Rather, each school district is responsible for conducting these background checks and clearing St. Mary's University teacher candidates for field experience. Teacher candidates who do not have a clear criminal history may not be allowed to complete courses that require fieldwork. This may impact a teacher candidate's ability to complete the program. Depending on the severity of the offense discovered through the criminal background check, teacher candidates may be dismissed from the teacher preparation program. If a student experiences rejection from a school district for fieldwork due to criminal history, the department will attempt to place the student, if possible, in a different district. No more than two attempts for placement of a student will occur. For fingerprinting/background check, candidates need to show a state-issued ID, which is either a driver's license or a DPS issued state ID. In order to take the TExES exam for certification, candidates who indicate non-U.S. citizenship have to provide a passport from their country of origin. Consular, diplomatic, or embassy IDs are not sufficient.

# ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

## Purpose

St. Mary's University is committed to a policy of treating all members of the University Community fairly in regard to their personal and professional concerns.

The primary objective of a student grievance procedure is to insure that concerns are promptly dealt with and resolutions reached in a fair and just manner. It is essential that each student be given adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems to the attention of university administration with the assurance that each will be given fair treatment. As such, any student at St. Mary's University may file a grievance through this student grievance procedure.

## Definitions

A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction occurring when a student believes that any decision, act, or condition affecting him or her is illegal, unjust, or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances may concern, but are not limited to, the following academic problems; mistreatment by any university employee, wrongful assessment of fees; records and registration errors; and student employment.

**Complaints covered by policies already in place (i.e. discrimination, sexual harassment, grade issues, financial aid, etc.) are excluded from this policy.**

The term "student" includes all persons taking courses at St. Mary's University, both full—time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, law or professional studies and those who attend post-secondary institutions other than St. Mary's University and/or who reside in St. Mary's University resident halls. Persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with St. Mary's University are considered students.

## Grievance Procedure

Prior to invoking the procedures described below, the student is strongly encouraged to discuss his or her grievance with the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. The Discussion should be held as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or condition that is the basis of the grievance. Additionally, or in the alternative, the student may wish to present his or her grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. In either case, the person alleged to have caused the grievance must respond to the student either orally or in writing. However, any St. Mary's University student who believes that he/she has not been treated fairly may make use of the student grievance procedure within ten (10) working days of the incident. Student grievances which are filed after more than ten (10) working days from the initial incident will not be accepted and are deemed to be waived.

### A. Level One: Initial Review

If a student decides not to present his or her grievance to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance, or if the student is not satisfied with the response, he or she may present the grievance in writing to the next level supervisor within ten (10) working days of the incident.

The grievant must file a written request for a hearing along with a complete written statement of the alleged grievance. The statement should include the name of the University official to whom the grievance is directed, and the remedy sought. If a student needs assistance regarding the

initiation or presentation of a grievance, they may contact the following St. Mary's University officers for assistance:

Elsa Ybanez, Human Resources Office, StLH x3725

Dr. Tim Bessler, Dean of Students, UC x3714

The next level supervisor will conduct an informal investigation as warranted to resolve any factual disputes. The supervisor may appoint a fact-finding panel of no more than three persons from the University community to conduct a formal investigation. The supervisor must state the terms and conditions of the investigation in a memorandum appointing the fact-finding panel. A fact-finding panel appointed hereunder shall have no authority to make recommendations or impose final action. The panel shall be limited to determining and presenting facts to the supervisor.

The supervisor's disposition of the grievance shall be based on a hearing. The supervisor will act as the chair of the grievance hearing, unless the grievant objects on the basis that the supervisor is not an impartial decision-maker. In such case, the Vice President for the respective division will appoint another chair for the hearing.

The following procedures will be observed in the hearing:

- i. The hearing will be conducted in private. Indications of irresponsible discussion of the grievance outside of the formal hearing may become the basis for allegations that due process has been violated. All parties to the hearing are cautioned against irresponsible discussion. The parties will make no public statements about the case during the course of the hearing.
- ii. During the proceedings, all parties will be permitted to have an advisor present. All parties to the grievance will have the right to obtain witnesses and present evidence. The University will cooperate with all parties in securing witnesses and making available documentary and other evidence to the extent permitted by law.
- iii. All parties have the right to question witnesses, **however, the accused and the accuser may not question each other**. When a witness has made a written statement and cannot or will not appear, but the chair determines that the interests of justice require admission of that statement, the Chair will identify the witness, disclose the statement, and if possible provide for interrogatories. The Chair will also grant appropriate continuances to enable either party to investigate evidence, or for any other appropriate reason.
- iv. In all cases, the burden of proof shall be on the grievant. However, the Chair will not be bound by strict rules of legal evidence. The decision will take the form of findings of fact, conclusions, and recommended disposition of the grievance. The findings of fact, conclusions and recommended disposition must be based solely on the hearings' record, pertinent University procedures set forth in this statement, and the laws of the State of Texas and the United States of America.

The supervisor's disposition of the grievance shall be reported to the student in writing and shall inform the student of the right to seek review by the appropriate Vice President upon written appeal by the student. The supervisor's response should be transmitted to the student within ten (10) working days from the date the written grievance was received by the supervisor. If the disposition extends beyond the ten (10) working days the supervisor should inform the student of the delay and the expected response date.

**Regardless of the disposition of the grievance, no member of the University community may harass or retaliate against a student who has filed a grievance under the University grievance procedure. Such actions of harassment or retaliation are explicitly proscribed by the University.**

## **B. Level Two: Grievance Appeal Procedure**

The Vice President's action will be limited to a review of the basis for the supervisor's disposition and will not involve a de novo factual investigation. Notwithstanding the above, the Vice President may, but is not required to, direct that further facts be gathered or that additional remedial action be taken. The Vice President's decision should be transmitted to the student within ten (10) working days the Vice President should inform the student of the delay and the expected response date.

In the event that a grievance is filed against a Vice President, the supervisor is the President of the University, and the appeal review will be conducted by the Chancellor, whose decision shall constitute final agency action. In the event that a grievance is filed against the President, the supervisor is the Chancellor, whose decision shall constitute final agency action.

After the candidate has exhausted all attempts at the program level to resolve a complaint that occurred within the past two years and has not received the relief sought, information on how to file a complaint with TEA can be secured from the EPP by information posted at their physical facility, on their website or, upon request, in writing.

The official TEA complaint process can be found at [www.tea.texas.gov](http://www.tea.texas.gov) in the banner located at the bottom of the page and then select "Educator Preparation Programs".

# Texas Beginning Teacher Standards

## Chapter 149. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards Subchapter AA. Teacher Standards

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### §149.1001. Teacher Standards.

(a) Purpose. The standards identified in this section are performance standards to be used to inform the training, appraisal, and professional development of teachers.

(b) Standards.

(1) Standard 1--Instructional Planning and Delivery. Teachers demonstrate their understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students, makes appropriate use of technology, and makes learning relevant for today's learners.

(A) Teachers design clear, well organized, sequential lessons that build on students' prior knowledge.

(i) Teachers develop lessons that build coherently toward objectives based on course content, curriculum scope and sequence, and expected student outcomes.

(ii) Teachers effectively communicate goals, expectations, and objectives to help all students reach high levels of achievement.

(iii) Teachers connect students' prior understanding and real-world experiences to new content and contexts, maximizing learning opportunities.

(B) Teachers design developmentally appropriate, standards-driven lessons that reflect evidence-based best practices.

(i) Teachers plan instruction that is developmentally appropriate, is standards driven, and motivates students to learn.

(ii) Teachers use a range of instructional strategies, appropriate to the content area, to make subject matter accessible to all students.

(iii) Teachers use and adapt resources, technologies, and standards-aligned instructional materials to promote student success in meeting learning goals.

(C) Teachers design lessons to meet the needs of diverse learners, adapting methods when appropriate.

(i) Teachers differentiate instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs, including acceleration, remediation, and implementation of individual education plans.

(ii) Teachers plan student groupings, including pairings and individualized and small-group instruction, to facilitate student learning.

(iii) Teachers integrate the use of oral, written, graphic, kinesthetic, and/or tactile methods to teach key concepts.

(D) Teachers communicate clearly and accurately and engage students in a manner that encourages students' persistence and best efforts.

(i) Teachers ensure that the learning environment features a high degree of student engagement by facilitating discussion and student-centered activities as well as leading direct instruction.

(ii) Teachers validate each student's comments and questions, utilizing them to advance learning for all students.

(iii) Teachers encourage all students to overcome obstacles and remain persistent in the face of challenges, providing them with support in achieving their goals.

(E) Teachers promote complex, higher-order thinking, leading class discussions and activities that provide opportunities for deeper learning.

- (i) Teachers set high expectations and create challenging learning experiences for students, encouraging them to apply disciplinary and cross-disciplinary knowledge to real-world problems.
  - (ii) Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in individual and collaborative critical thinking and problem solving.
  - (iii) Teachers incorporate technology that allows students to interact with the curriculum in more significant and effective ways, helping them reach mastery.
- (F) Teachers consistently check for understanding, give immediate feedback, and make lesson adjustments as necessary.
- (i) Teachers monitor and assess student progress to ensure that their lessons meet students' needs.
  - (ii) Teachers provide immediate feedback to students in order to reinforce their learning and ensure that they understand key concepts.
  - (iii) Teachers adjust content delivery in response to student progress through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that maximize student engagement.
- (2) Standard 2--Knowledge of Students and Student Learning. Teachers work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student's educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student's needs.
- (A) Teachers demonstrate the belief that all students have the potential to achieve at high levels and support all students in their pursuit of social-emotional learning and academic success.
- (i) Teachers purposefully utilize learners' individual strengths as a basis for academic and social-emotional growth.
  - (ii) Teachers create a community of learners in an inclusive environment that views differences in learning and background as educational assets.
  - (iii) Teachers accept responsibility for the growth of all of their students, persisting in their efforts to ensure high levels of growth on the part of each learner.
- (B) Teachers acquire, analyze, and use background information (familial, cultural, educational, linguistic, and developmental characteristics) to engage students in learning.
- (i) Teachers connect learning, content, and expectations to students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in meaningful contexts.
  - (ii) Teachers understand the unique qualities of students with exceptional needs, including disabilities and giftedness, and know how to effectively address these needs through instructional strategies and resources.
  - (iii) Teachers understand the role of language and culture in learning and know how to modify their practices to support language acquisition so that language is comprehensible and instruction is fully accessible.
- (C) Teachers facilitate each student's learning by employing evidence-based practices and concepts related to learning and social-emotional development.
- (i) Teachers understand how learning occurs and how learners develop, construct meaning, and acquire knowledge and skills.
  - (ii) Teachers identify readiness for learning and understand how development in one area may affect students' performance in other areas.
  - (iii) Teachers apply evidence-based strategies to address individual student learning needs and differences, adjust their instruction, and support the learning needs of each student.
- (3) Standard 3--Content Knowledge and Expertise. Teachers exhibit a comprehensive understanding of their content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and their ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards.

(A) Teachers understand the major concepts, key themes, multiple perspectives, assumptions, processes of inquiry, structure, and real-world applications of their grade-level and subject-area content.

(i) Teachers have expertise in how their content vertically and horizontally aligns with the grade-level/subject-area continuum, leading to an integrated curriculum across grade levels and content areas.

(ii) Teachers identify gaps in students' knowledge of subject matter and communicate with their leaders and colleagues to ensure that these gaps are adequately addressed across grade levels and subject areas.

(iii) Teachers keep current with developments, new content, new approaches, and changing methods of instructional delivery within their discipline.

(B) Teachers design and execute quality lessons that are consistent with the concepts of their specific discipline, are aligned to state standards, and demonstrate their content expertise.

(i) Teachers organize curriculum to facilitate student understanding of the subject matter.

(ii) Teachers understand, actively anticipate, and adapt instruction to address common misunderstandings and preconceptions.

(iii) Teachers promote literacy and the academic language within the discipline and make discipline-specific language accessible to all learners.

(C) Teachers demonstrate content-specific pedagogy that meets the needs of diverse learners, utilizing engaging instructional materials to connect prior content knowledge to new learning.

(i) Teachers teach both the key content knowledge and the key skills of the discipline.

(ii) Teachers make appropriate and authentic connections across disciplines, subjects, and students' real-world experiences.

(4) Standard 4--Learning Environment. Teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning.

(A) Teachers create a mutually respectful, collaborative, and safe community of learners by using knowledge of students' development and backgrounds.

(i) Teachers embrace students' backgrounds and experiences as an asset in their learning environment.

(ii) Teachers maintain and facilitate respectful, supportive, positive, and productive interactions with and among students.

(iii) Teachers establish and sustain learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and respond to students' needs, strengths, and personal experiences.

(B) Teachers organize their classrooms in a safe and accessible manner that maximizes learning.

(i) Teachers arrange the physical environment to maximize student learning and to ensure that all students have access to resources.

(ii) Teachers create a physical classroom set-up that is flexible and accommodates the different learning needs of students.

(C) Teachers establish, implement, and communicate consistent routines for effective classroom management, including clear expectations for student behavior.

(i) Teachers implement behavior management systems to maintain an environment where all students can learn effectively.

(ii) Teachers maintain a strong culture of individual and group accountability for class expectations.

- (iii) Teachers cultivate student ownership in developing classroom culture and norms.
- (D) Teachers lead and maintain classrooms where students are actively engaged in learning as indicated by their level of motivation and on-task behavior.
  - (i) Teachers maintain a culture that is based on high expectations for student performance and encourages students to be self-motivated, taking responsibility for their own learning.
  - (ii) Teachers maximize instructional time, including managing transitions.
  - (iii) Teachers manage and facilitate groupings in order to maximize student collaboration, participation, and achievement.
  - (iv) Teachers communicate regularly, clearly, and appropriately with parents and families about student progress, providing detailed and constructive feedback and partnering with families in furthering their students' achievement goals.
- (5) Standard 5--Data-Driven Practice. Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed.
  - (A) Teachers implement both formal and informal methods of measuring student progress.
    - (i) Teachers gauge student progress and ensure student mastery of content knowledge and skills by providing assessments aligned to instructional objectives and outcomes that are accurate measures of student learning.
    - (ii) Teachers vary methods of assessing learning to accommodate students' learning needs, linguistic differences, and/or varying levels of background knowledge.
  - (B) Teachers set individual and group learning goals for students by using preliminary data and communicate these goals with students and families to ensure mutual understanding of expectations.
    - (i) Teachers develop learning plans and set academic as well as social-emotional learning goals for each student in response to previous outcomes from formal and informal assessments.
    - (ii) Teachers involve all students in self-assessment, goal setting, and monitoring progress.
    - (iii) Teachers communicate with students and families regularly about the importance of collecting data and monitoring progress of student outcomes, sharing timely and comprehensible feedback so they understand students' goals and progress.
  - (C) Teachers regularly collect, review, and analyze data to monitor student progress.
    - (i) Teachers analyze and review data in a timely, thorough, accurate, and appropriate manner, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning.
    - (ii) Teachers combine results from different measures to develop a holistic picture of students' strengths and learning needs.
  - (D) Teachers utilize the data they collect and analyze to inform their instructional strategies and adjust short- and long-term plans accordingly.
    - (i) Teachers design instruction, change strategies, and differentiate their teaching practices to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.
    - (ii) Teachers regularly compare their curriculum scope and sequence with student data to ensure they are on track and make adjustments as needed.
- (6) Standard 6--Professional Practices and Responsibilities. Teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, pursue leadership opportunities, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders,

maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity.

- (A) Teachers reflect on their teaching practice to improve their instructional effectiveness and engage in continuous professional learning to gain knowledge and skills and refine professional judgment.
  - (i) Teachers reflect on their own strengths and professional learning needs, using this information to develop action plans for improvement.
  - (ii) Teachers establish and strive to achieve professional goals to strengthen their instructional effectiveness and better meet students' needs.
  - (iii) Teachers engage in relevant, targeted professional learning opportunities that align with their professional growth goals and their students' academic and social-emotional needs.
- (B) Teachers collaborate with their colleagues, are self-aware in their interpersonal interactions, and are open to constructive feedback from peers and administrators.
  - (i) Teachers seek out feedback from supervisors, coaches, and peers and take advantage of opportunities for job-embedded professional development.
  - (ii) Teachers actively participate in professional learning communities organized to improve instructional practices and student learning.
- (C) Teachers seek out opportunities to lead students, other educators, and community members within and beyond their classrooms.
  - (i) Teachers clearly communicate the mission, vision, and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families, and other community members.
  - (ii) Teachers seek to lead other adults on campus through professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team leadership, committee membership, or other opportunities.
- (D) Teachers model ethical and respectful behavior and demonstrate integrity in all situations.
  - (i) Teachers adhere to the educators' code of ethics in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators), including following policies and procedures at their specific school placement(s).
  - (ii) Teachers communicate consistently, clearly, and respectfully with all members of the campus community, including students, parents and families, colleagues, administrators, and staff.
  - (iii) Teachers serve as advocates for their students, focusing attention on students' needs and concerns and maintaining thorough and accurate student records.

*Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §149.1001 issued under the Texas Education Code, §21.351.*

*Source: The provisions of this §149.1001 adopted to be effective June 30, 2014, 39 TexReg 4955.*