

# *Educator as Professional*

The Conceptual Framework for the  
Professional Education Unit

Old Dominion University

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# Table of Contents

<b>VISION AND MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION AND UNIT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
VISION OF THE INSTITUTION .....	3
<b>MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VISION AND MISSION OF THE UNIT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>UNIT THEME – EDUCATOR AS PROFESSIONAL.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSES, AND GOALS OF THE UNIT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>UNIT PHILOSOPHY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>UNIT PURPOSE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>UNIT GOALS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE BASES (THEORIES, RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND POLICIES) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES ALIGNED WITH INSTITUTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND STATE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>General Education.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Early Field Experience.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Content Specialty .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Discipline-Specific Skills .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Practica/Internships .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Professional Educator.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Professional Dispositions.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Diverse Learners .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Learning Environment .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Professional Growth and Development.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Assessment.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<b>COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>COMMITMENT TO TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>UNIT’S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## The Conceptual Framework for the Professional Education Unit

**Old Dominion University**

**November 2009**

### *Educator as Professional*

The Conceptual Framework for the professional education unit at Old Dominion University is guided by the theme, *Educator as Professional*.

## **Vision and Mission of the Institution and Unit**

### *VISION OF THE INSTITUTION*

Old Dominion University will be recognized nationally and internationally as a forward-focused metropolitan university with a collaborative and innovative approach to education and research that spurs economic growth, focuses on student success, engages civic and community partners, and uses its connections with the military and maritime industries and its exceptional strengths and leadership in related areas to provide practical solutions to complex, real world problems.

### *MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION*

*Old Dominion University, located in the City of Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.*

The University's Mission Support describes, in detail the principles and practices that underlie the University's undergraduate and graduate teaching, research, and service missions: a sound general education program; critical thinking; diversity; academic freedom; serving the needs of the local, national, and international communities, including military members and their families; and collaborating with government, industry, and alumni. Finally, the Major Goals of the University are described in detail: Students; Faculty; Academic Programs; Teaching; Research, Scholarship, and Creativity; International Connections; Life-long Learning; Community Service; Campus Life; Alumni; and Quality. Both the core mission statement and the detailed support statements constitute the foundation of all aspects of the University's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. All documents related to the University's mission can be found on the first few pages of the current University Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs.

### *VISION AND MISSION OF THE UNIT*

Together, the Darden College of Education, the College of Arts and Letters, and the College of Sciences comprise the Unit and strive to prepare the highest quality school professionals, at all levels, capable of positively impacting the education of tomorrow's leaders, one student at a time.

The Unit's mission is to prepare professional educators to fulfill the needs of the education community, now and in the future. The vision and mission of the Unit are derived from those of the Darden College of Education.

The vision of the Darden College of Education is to become recognized as one of the top 50 colleges of education in the country and to increase its rankings in national opinion surveys by focusing its resources to achieve:

- **Collaboration** among departmental, College, and University colleagues with professional colleagues throughout the world;
- Adherence to the highest standards of **professionalism** and prominence in our professions; and,
- A reputation for **innovation** in teaching, research, and service in the preparation of teachers and other professionals, leaders, and scholars as we meet the needs of Hampton Roads, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world.

The College's mission is to provide excellence in teaching, scholarly activities, and service while meeting the needs of its community and maintaining national and international prominence. The mission is fulfilled through the Unit's undergraduate and graduate programs in the fields of education, counseling and human services, exercise science, sports management, recreation, training, fashion, speech-language disorders, instructional and occupational technology, as well as its many continuing education activities.

### ***UNIT THEME – EDUCATOR AS PROFESSIONAL***

The *Educator as Professional* theme embraced by the Unit is an expression of what candidates can expect to obtain from their academic experience. It reflects the culmination of the Unit's purpose, to prepare teachers, other school professionals (school counselors and speech professionals), and educational leaders who have knowledge of their teaching disciplines and the ability to provide state-of-the-art instruction to students of various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and who demonstrate attitudes which promote commitment to teaching and learning, as well as lifelong professional growth and development.

## **Philosophy, Purposes, and Goals of the Unit**

### ***UNIT PHILOSOPHY***

The Monarch Creed applies to all members of the University community and is inherent to all academic programs within the Unit and beyond. It reads:

**M**ake personal and academic integrity fundamental in all my endeavors.

**O**ffer service to the University and the community.

**N**urture a climate of care, concern, and civility to others.

**A**ccept responsibility for all my actions.

**R**espect the dignity, rights, and property of all people.

**C**ommit to the ongoing pursuit of intellectual and personal development.

**H**eighten my awareness of individual and cultural similarities and differences.

Additionally, the Darden College of Education emphasizes collaboration, professionalism, and innovation. The value-added activities of its 100-strong faculty support these beliefs through their work in undergraduate and graduate degree programs, continuing education opportunities, research, and service to the community.

### ***UNIT PURPOSE***

The Old Dominion University Professional Education Unit's purpose is to prepare teachers, other school professionals, and educational leaders who have knowledge of their teaching disciplines, with the ability to provide state-of-the-art instruction to students of various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and who demonstrate attitudes which promote commitment to teaching and learning, as well as lifelong professional growth and development. The Unit routinely works to make improvements and modifications that strengthen its purpose and reflect the changing environment of the profession.

### ***UNIT GOALS***

The Unit's goals are aligned with the goals of the University as stated in its Mission Support statement and Strategic Plan. Specifically, the Unit embraces the following goals:

- Provide candidates rich content experiences in each of the colleges to develop the required knowledge to effectively contribute to their specialization.
- Provide diverse opportunities for candidates to explore, understand, and become skilled in pedagogy.
- Provide a learning environment where appropriate professional dispositions are taught, modeled, and emphasized.
- Emphasize the importance of understanding and appreciating the various cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds of students from both rural and urban settings.
- Provide candidates the opportunity to experience and implement technology infused instruction.
- Emphasize the importance of a culture of examination, assessment, and reflection for the purpose of improving student learning.
- Provide opportunities for candidates to become familiar with, and engage in, professional organizations to emphasize the importance of lifelong professional growth, development, and service.

## **Knowledge Bases (Theories, Research, Practice, and Policies)**

A fundamental base for *Educator as Professional* is the accumulated experience of our faculty, our partners, and our students. Over the last 20 years, the philosophy of our programs, and those who work in them, has been to prepare our students at all levels to be educational professionals. In his article "Establishing Teaching as a Profession" Wise (2005) declares that we must move toward a profession of teaching. He observes the following:

*The foundation of a strong profession is a shared body of knowledge, based on research, and public confidence that professionals are fit to practice. Only a strong enough degree of consensus among practitioners and practitioner educators can build that confidence. With knowledge come skill and the application of professional judgment (p. 319).*

Further, Wise emphasizes that *to be effective, all prospective teachers need a deep understanding of the subject matter, child development, and language development and sophisticated strategies for teaching content to diverse learners, managing the classroom, and assessing both how children learn and what they are learning* (Mikuta & Wise, 2008, p. 58).

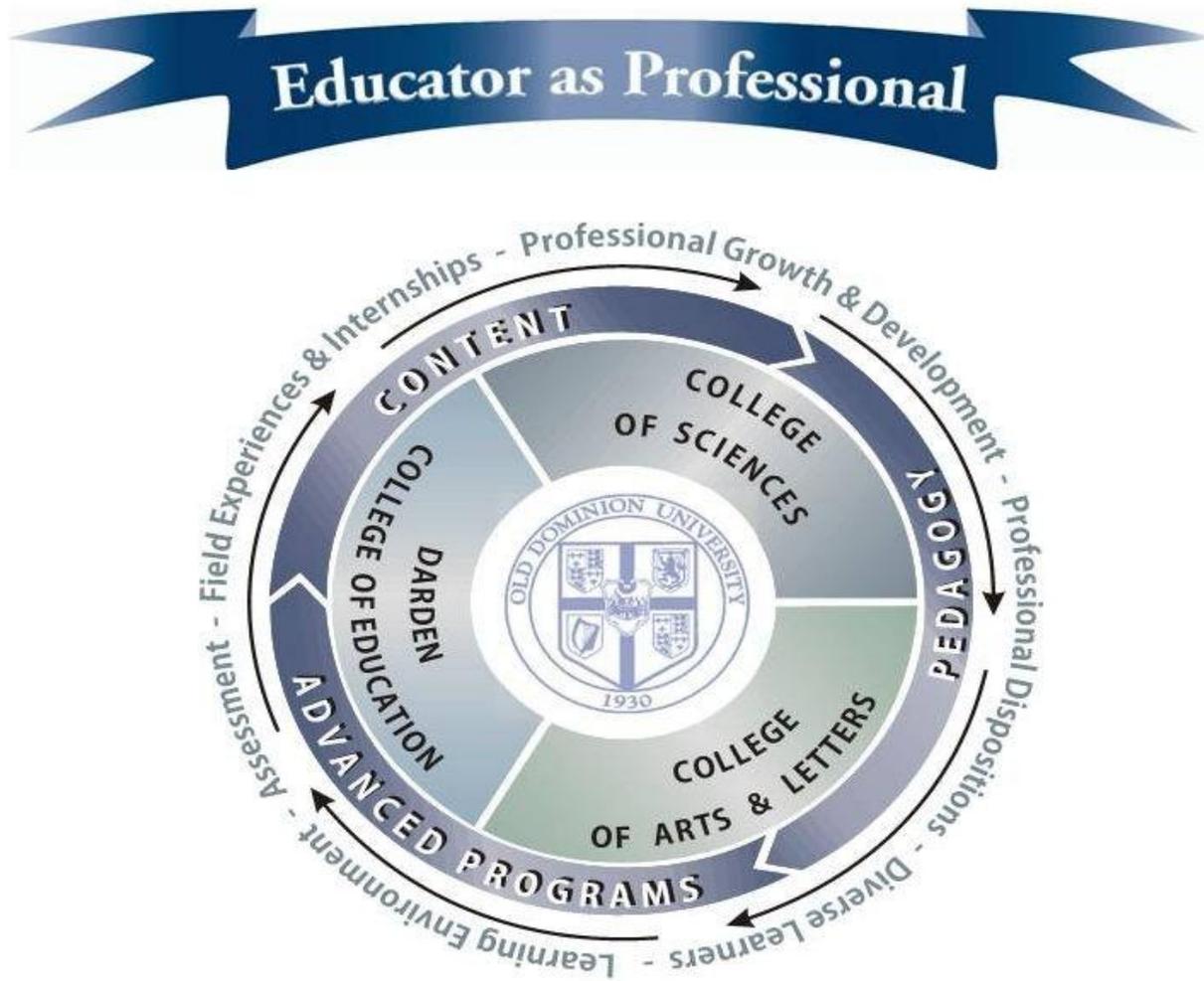
The work of the Unit educator preparation programs is guided by an integrated and coherent knowledge base including professional standards, best pedagogical practices, and scientifically-based research. First, approval of all educator preparation programs in Virginia is based on state standards which are closely aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and specialized professional association (SPA) standards. Unit programs have adopted SPA or other professional standards as candidate outcome standards and have aligned these standards with the conceptual framework performance outcomes. Candidates' knowledge skills, and dispositions are aligned with national, state, and university expectations. The state, INTASC, and SPA standards all have similar foci which are reflected in our conceptual framework outcomes: content and pedagogical content knowledge and skills, knowledge of diverse learners, knowledge of teaching and learning, assessment of student learning, management of the teaching and learning environments, professional dispositions, and professional growth and development. Recent professional literature strongly supports the concepts and operational practices of our teacher preparation programs. In their 2005 National Academy of Education report, *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teacher Our Children Deserve*, Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden outline a professional and scholarly consensus on what makes a good teacher. The implications for teacher preparation issued in the National Academy's report are based on research about what teachers need to know and be able to do and how they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Characteristics of the Unit's licensure programs with the theme of *Educator as Professional* closely match the Academy's set of implications. The Darden College of Education has embraced this perspective and has structured its Conceptual Framework around these beliefs.

### ***CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES ALIGNED WITH INSTITUTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND STATE STANDARDS***

Candidate proficiencies are aligned with institutional, professional, and state standards. Evidence of this alignment can be found in program review documents, course syllabi, and candidate assessments. Candidates must demonstrate specific skills and dispositions that reflect the constructs of the Conceptual Framework throughout their respective preparation programs. As indicated in the table, Alignment Matrix of Unit, state, and Professional Standards, these candidate proficiencies are aligned with the Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers and appropriate SPA standards.

The central elements of the Conceptual Framework are embodied in Figure 1.0. This figure reflects the Unit and the triad of colleges responsible for preparing *Educators as Professionals*. The Unit provides initial licensure programs, where students are immersed in content and pedagogy and advanced programs where students engage in advanced professional studies to become master practitioners capable of leading and nurturing others in the profession. Both program paths are infused with four mission critical student proficiencies: *professional dispositions, diverse learners, learning environments, and professional growth and development*. *Assessment* is threaded through all programs and activities of the Unit. Student-, candidate-, program-, and unit-level assessment is the foundation for performance, reflection, and improvement.

Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework



### ***CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY***

As each candidate prepares to become an *Educator as Professional* at the Initial Licensure, undergraduate level, they must complete a required general education program, an early field experience, content and pedagogy coursework specific to their discipline, and practica/internships.

### ***General Education***

The University has implemented a broad and rigorous general education program required of all undergraduate majors. This program is based on a set of five goals of undergraduate education as the minimum expectations of any baccalaureate graduate from the University:

- *Develop and demonstrate the effective use of language;*
- *Develop mathematical and computer literacy;*
- *Develop an understanding of science and technology and their contributions to human nature;*

- *Develop an understanding of human behavior, society, and culture, with specific attention to international perspectives and issues related to ethnicity, race, and gender; and,*
- *Integrate knowledge at the advanced levels.*

**These goals are achieved through a series of required and specifically designed courses designated as skills, perspectives, upper-level experiences, and technology.**

The ***academic skills*** areas are the traditional bases of academic work. They encompass composition, oral communication, foreign languages, mathematics, and computational skills. Because of the special importance attached to skills in written communication, an exit examination in writing proficiency is required. A passing grade on this test is a prerequisite for graduation. The ***academic perspectives*** are intended to expose candidates to the various modes of learning and perceiving reality represented by different academic disciplines or groups of disciplines. Candidates are required to take courses in each of the six perspective areas (natural science and technology, history, philosophy, literature, fine and performing arts, and social science). These courses are designed to introduce the candidate to the methodology particular to the discipline as much as to the subject matter. Each perspective area is also designed to help meet certain goals of general education. For example, the required literature course, in addition to developing perspectives on critical thinking, communication, and aesthetic appreciation, is designated as a course that concentrates on helping candidates understand and appreciate the perspectives of women and minorities, with readings chosen with that goal in mind. The ***upper-level experiences*** are intended to provide synthesis courses that involve higher-level intellectual skills and to reinforce the development of writing skills (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2006-2008, p.63). Candidates in professional programs must complete nine (9) hours of upper division electives from a group of focused study clusters or earn a minor of twelve (12) credit hours.

In terms of traditional categories of academic course work, the lower-division general education program requires that every candidate take four (4) courses in the humanities/fine arts group, one course in the social/behavioral sciences group, and four courses in the natural science/mathematics group. In addition, all candidates must take a computer technology course and a writing intensive course that is included in their major area of study. ***Technology***, in particular computer technology, is clearly an inherent part of everyday life. Its uses have enormous potential for teacher education in the preparation of present and future candidates.

### ***Early Field Experience***

The Unit requires an early field experience for every candidate who aspires to be a teacher. This ***exploratory experience*** enables candidates to ***observe*** classrooms and teachers in schools, as well as to ***participate*** in instructional activities. The experience is designed to assist candidates in beginning to develop an understanding of school cultures, elements of child growth and development, issues of classroom organization and management, instructional technology, as well as curriculum design.

## ***Content Specialty***

As depicted in Figure 1, the content specialization is provided with support from two other colleges, the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Sciences. The College of Arts and Letters comprises the departments of art, English, foreign language and literatures, history, music, philosophy, political science and geography, sociology and criminal justice, communication and theater arts, and women's studies. In addition, the College houses the Institute of Humanities; the Institute of Jewish and Interfaith Understanding; the Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity; Interdisciplinary Studies; the Computer-Based Laboratory for Instruction and Analysis; the Old Dominion University Community Music Academy; and the Social Science Research Center. The goals and functions of the College of Arts and Letters are to promote and advance the ideals of ***liberal arts*** by helping candidates explore the full range of human experience through the study of cultural heritage, forms of artistic and literary expression, patterns of social and political behavior, and methods of critical inquiry.

The College of Sciences comprises the departments of biological sciences; chemistry and biochemistry; computer sciences; ocean, earth, and atmospheric sciences; mathematics and statistics; physics; and psychology. The goals and functions of the College of Sciences are to assist candidates in acquiring and developing an understanding of the natural world, equip candidates with the intellectual methods of scientific inquiry, enable candidates to make reasoned judgments based upon scientific and technological considerations, lay broad foundations for specialized training in scientific fields of knowledge, and prepare candidates for careers in the ***sciences*** and education.

The Unit has determined that candidates must possess mastery of the disciplinary content they are preparing to teach. By completing degree requirements in their teaching disciplines, teacher education candidates acquire and develop requisite ***disciplinary knowledge***, skills, and dispositions appropriate to their chosen majors. As Shulman states in a recent interview, “a conception of good teaching also relies on whether teachers have a deep and flexible understanding of what they are teaching. When a teacher doesn't have a deep understanding for mathematics or science, for example, it's hard to imagine how that teacher will help students understand and get excited by these subjects” (Tell, 2001, p. 6). As a result, candidates develop readiness through ***scholarly habits of the mind*** to engage in the pedagogical studies associated with their teaching disciplines and national standards.

## ***Discipline-Specific Skills***

The content of ODU's pedagogical programs continues to be subjected to validation according to (1) critical review of available literature, (2) expert opinion of colleagues, (3) review by elementary and secondary teachers and administrators, and (4) congruence with national and state standards. Proven ***instructional theories and strategies*** (e.g., simulations, micro-teaching, mediated presentations, demonstrations, problem solving, project construction, role-playing, collaborative study, and case study methodology) have garnered more credibility over that of the traditional didactic instructional approach. While the program continues to include appropriate didactic instruction within live courses, as well as distance learning, it also focuses on the candidate becoming a skilled inquirer, evaluator, decision maker, problem solver, and collaborator.

Candidates acquire the knowledge, skills, and ability to transfer content and skills through a variety of instructional strategies and learning opportunities. This process reinforces the need for faculty in teacher education – in all disciplinary areas – to use a variety of instructional strategies and build classroom environments characterized by inquiry, interaction, and collaboration. Jere Brophy’s (1999) notions about “Active Learning” highlight the ways our candidates know how to teach all children through effective planning, differentiated instruction, and assessment technologies. ODU’s faculty seek to create such classroom environments in order to prepare aspiring teachers for creating similar ones in the schools. The Unit also recognizes the fact that technology is pervasive throughout society; therefore, candidates’ introduction to and use of *instructional technology* is intended to enhance the effective delivery of lessons to students. The processes and principles discussed above reflect concern for both content and process in teacher education.

A second dimension is introduced to further ensure the likelihood that prospective teachers will enter schools equipped to succeed. Graduated practice and generalization training are provided. That is, repeated teaching opportunities are coupled with corrective responses. Initially, simple instructional problems are introduced in university classrooms. Competency demonstrated across time is followed by the imposition of successively more complex problem-solving tasks. Then, exercises shift from the university to selected elementary and secondary classrooms locally, across the Commonwealth, and other distance learning sites. In this way, candidates accomplish a transfer of knowledge, skills, and instructional strategies learned in university classrooms.

Further, candidates must demonstrate a strong sense of caring about young people and of nurturing their growth. Candidates must become scholars of the processes of teaching and learning. They must demonstrate knowledge of current theories and scientifically based research about the nature of human development, age-appropriate pedagogical strategies, and special needs of all students they hope to teach. They must be able to use this knowledge in the practice of teaching. The need and goal for accountability requires candidates to employ and capitalize on a wide range of instructional approaches, assessments, materials, and technologies appropriate to their disciplines and their students (Shulman, 2007). Finally, they must have a strong sense of the expectations, purposes, ends, and values of American education, as well as an understanding of the diverse constituencies that schools serve.

The structure of learning tasks is changed from low to high inference, simple to complex, so as to more closely parallel successful teaching and learning. “The more complex and higher order the learning, the more it depends on reflection – looking back – and collaboration – working with others” (Shulman, 2004, p. 319). Achievement of such goals would not be possible without an understanding and appreciation of the complexities underlying progressive human development from social and emotional to linguistic and cognitive perspectives. This understanding and appreciation essentially contributes further to setting the stage for candidates’ readiness to teach the *Commonwealth of Virginia Standards of Learning*.

Finally, outcome measures are obtained by assessing the impact of instructional strategies on the classroom performance of students. This assessment is accomplished by portfolio review, classroom supervision, faculty designed assessment activities, mentor evaluation and knowledge of subject matter (Praxis II).

An instructional format that includes classroom demonstration, practice with feedback, and both university-based and field-based collaboration is provided. Candidates progress through each phase,

demonstrating mastery of subject matter knowledge and mastery of pedagogy. Such a program ensures that candidates are prepared for the next phase toward becoming Old Dominion University's professional education graduates.

### ***Practica/Internships***

This phase requires candidates to become fully acculturated to the ***social and cultural foundations*** of schools and their many complex and diverse populations. Opportunities to work with teachers and students in classrooms outside the university setting complement prospective candidates' studies of their teaching disciplines and of the teaching/learning process. Working in clinical settings is a crucial part – arguably the most crucial part – of a prospective teacher's preparation.

Revised teacher education programs continue to include early field experiences where candidates can observe and participate at elementary, middle, and secondary levels. During these experiences, candidates observe the operation of schools, analyze the implementation of curricula and instructional strategies, observe the ***growth and development*** of students, and assist with appropriate classroom and extra class activities. Candidates keep journals in which they record their activities, impressions, and reflections on field experiences. Reflecting on the classroom experience, candidates can apply reflections of the candidate, the students, and alternate teaching strategies to adjust instruction to the needs of the learner. This phase marks the beginning of a candidate's introduction to ***school cultures***.

When candidates enroll in their instructional strategies courses, usually during the semester immediately preceding teacher candidate internship and after the completion of course work in their teaching discipline, they are also involved in an upper-level practicum. Candidates must demonstrate academic skills by passing Praxis I before they are allowed to participate in a practicum. This practicum extends candidates' earlier field participation by involving them, more often and more deeply, in the art and science of teaching. Through their practica, candidates are able to practice ***instructional strategies***. They are able to analyze the relative effectiveness and appropriateness of various instructional strategies associated specifically with their teaching disciplines and levels.

In the senior year of undergraduate professional education programs, and in the last semester of graduate level professional education, candidates must complete a semester of supervised field experience in the endorsement area. All candidates are placed in a culturally diverse setting. While completing the supervised field experience, candidates are regularly monitored and evaluated regarding their progress. University supervisors visit candidates during their field experience to observe their development as professional educators. Conferences focus on the prospective educator's dispositions, instructional skills, management, planning, evaluation, and content knowledge within the context of the ***school curriculum***.

Four (4) separate processes evaluate candidates' teacher candidate internship. First, the cooperating teacher uses a weekly evaluation instrument to judge the quality of the candidate's performance. The cooperating teacher and candidate meet regularly to plan and discuss progress. Second, the university supervisor observes the candidate on a bi-weekly basis and provides written feedback regarding strengths and areas to address for the next observation. Third, the university supervisor

and clinical faculty jointly evaluate the candidate's progress at midterm and at the end. Lastly, the school-based administrator formally evaluates the candidate's progress. The unit evaluation forms used for assessments are based on the conceptual framework, as well as Commonwealth of Virginia, national, and institutional standards.

### ***Professional Educator***

Candidates preparing to teach in PreK-3 and PreK-6 must complete a four-year program that requires a B.S. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. A fifth year of study is required for licensure and the M.S. Ed. Historically, candidates preparing to teach special education had to complete a five-year program that required a B.A. or B.S. degree with licensure and a M. S. Ed. Degree through the fifth year of study. Beginning in 2009, candidates can now earn a B.S. degree with licensure in Special Education in four (4) years. Candidates preparing to teach in secondary schools must complete B.A. degree requirements in their chosen specialties: English, math, science (biology, chemistry, earth science, physics), or social studies. Candidates preparing to teach in K-12 specialty areas can choose to complete B.A. degree requirements in one of the following areas: art, music, foreign languages, dance education or theater education. Candidates preparing to teach health and physical education must complete B.S. degree requirements in that area; candidates preparing to teach marketing education or technology education must complete B.S. degree requirements in those areas. Candidates preparing to teach in middle schools must complete a five-year program that requires a B.A. or B.S. in a liberal arts or science degree and a M.S. Ed. degree through a fifth year of study.

Upon completion of their programs of study at the University, teacher education candidates are ready to assume entry-level roles as emerging professionals. They have achieved a ***mastery of content*** of the disciplines they will teach, they have attained a ***mastery of pedagogy*** associated with those disciplines, and they have learned the cultures of schools in which they have worked. They have acquired and will continue to develop ***professional involvement*** in order to deepen the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that define the emerging ***Educator as Professional***. Specifically, they will:

- *See themselves as emerging scholars in their fields;*
- *Possess a beginning philosophy and a theoretical background that enables them to articulate their belief systems;*
- *Know how to translate human development theory into practice;*
- *Possess a sense of the methodologies employed by scholars in their academic fields, as well as methodologies employed by teachers and researchers on teaching;*
- *Know of and be involved in the uses of resources available to them as beginning teachers—people, materials, technology, places and professional organizations of teachers;*
- *Know of and have practice in the art and science of professional inquiry, decision-making, problem-solving, collaboration, and classroom management processes in their fields; and,*
- *Posses a set of dispositions that will enable them to join and to become contributing members of a community of other professional educators.*

These emerging professional educators have acquired a sense of responsibility for promoting the goals and values of the schools, students, colleagues, parents, and communities they will serve. They have developed a critical understanding and an intellectually honest respect for these goals and values. They have acquired a sense of the ever-changing nature of their teaching disciplines, the pedagogy associated with those disciplines, the students whom schools serve, and the demands and expectations of schooling itself.

### ***ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES***

The Unit offers the M.S.Ed. in biology, chemistry, early childhood education, educational administration, elementary education, English, general secondary education, (covering several disciplines), guidance and counseling, mathematics, reading, library science, physical education, special education, and speech pathology and audiology and a M.S. in occupational and technical studies. It also offers an Educational Specialist degree in educational administration as well as guidance and counseling. In addition, the Unit offers the Ph.D. in education with 10 different concentrations and a Ph.D. in community college leadership.

An assumption of the Unit's faculty is that educators choose to engage in advanced professional studies because they wish to (1) develop further leadership qualities and potential in the field of education, (2) engage in further development of their theoretical constructs and educational philosophy through inquiry and research into educational problems and issues, and (3) enhance effectiveness and performance in their chosen educational fields. As a consequence of this assumption, programs of advanced studies within the Unit are aimed toward developing *leadership*, scientifically based *professional research* and inquiry, *theoretical knowledge and practices*, and a *career commitment* to education. Additionally, the Unit supports learners interested in becoming experts in other fields of study, e.g., reading, library science, and special education. These advanced program candidates desire the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to enter a new profession.

As Shulman has observed, "If teacher education research is to make a significant difference, we must make new scholarly commitments. Long-term programs of scholarship, regularly embedded in on-going teacher preparation, must become a norm, with ties to student learning established wherever and whenever possible" (2002b, p.253) The result is that graduate degree recipients leave their respective programs as skilled educators prepared to assume *professional leadership* positions in their fields and contribute to the solutions of educational problems and issues that will improve the effectiveness of schooling in all relevant dimensions and aspects.

The major outcome of the teacher education programs at Old Dominion University is excellent preparation of professional educators at the initial level. At the advanced level, the Unit prepares professionals who are master teachers, reading specialists, counselors, library media specialists, administrators, and educational leaders. In addition, the Unit is committed to the professional growth of all educators within the region, as well as at distance learning sites.

### ***CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES***

The Unit emphasizes five candidate proficiencies in both content and pedagogy at the initial licensure level and in advanced professional studies as it prepares professional educators. The

proficiencies emphasized include: professional dispositions, understanding diverse learners, developing learning environments, professional growth and development, and assessment.

### *Professional Dispositions*

As defined by the National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Education (NCATE), dispositions are professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.

The Darden College of Education has adopted the following as key dispositions and behaviors essential for each teacher candidate to demonstrate across his/her program of study:

- Attends functions when required;
- Maintains a professional appearance;
- Solicits feedback from others;
- Adjusts behavior based on professional feedback;
- Communicates effectively orally (articulate, animated, few grammatical errors);
- Communicates effectively in writing;
- Demonstrates sensitivity to others' feelings and opinions;
- Participates with others in a collaborative manner;
- Treats others with respect;
- Provides information to all constituents in a professional and timely manner;
- Demonstrates a commitment to remain current in knowledge of subject area content;
- Demonstrates knowledge about teaching subject area;
- Participates in professional development activities that represent subject area currently or in the near future;
- Enjoys working with diverse learners; and,
- Displays excitement about teaching subject area.

However, there was not a formal disposition policy and assessment procedure in place to assess candidates' dispositions as they progressed through their programs. Therefore, in late Fall 2008, the Teacher Education Council adopted new *Policies and Procedures for Assessing Teacher Candidate Dispositions at Old Dominion University*. Programs have identified the points in their program assessment systems when these unit-level disposition outcomes are assessed. A three-point assessment process has been developed and implemented to increase candidate awareness of the importance of developing these characteristics.

### *Diverse Learners*

Candidates are prepared to establish student-centered and differentiated instruction for students with special needs and individual learner needs. Candidates learn to honor individual differences among learners by utilizing multiple approaches to thinking and learning. Developing and implementing an integrated curriculum that focuses on the needs and interests of children are important candidate proficiencies.

The Unit prepares candidates to plan instructional activities appropriate to the needs of culturally, ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse students and those with exceptional learning

needs. Candidates must be able to use their knowledge of student diversity to affirm and support full participation of all students, and they must be able to use a variety of approaches to instruction in diverse settings and with students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and abilities.

### *Learning Environment*

There are several areas of emphasis involving the learning environment. Candidates are provided opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities in each area of emphasis. Evidence of their work, in this and all standards of the Unit, is provided in student portfolios and is applied during field experiences.

Upon program completion, candidates will know, understand, and use the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to the development of children and adolescents. They can effectively consider, accommodate, and integrate the cognitive, linguistic, physical, social, and emotional development characteristics of children and adolescents. In addition, candidates will plan and implement developmentally appropriate, responsive curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of individual children, the community, and curriculum goals and content.

Standards-based instruction, the knowledge and understanding of major concepts and principles of a candidate's teaching discipline(s) as defined by educational state and national standards, is a key component of preparing candidates to establish effective learning environments. Candidates are expected to relate plans and resources to professionally developed state and national standards.

Candidates must also be prepared to apply fundamental concepts of their content specialty. They must know, understand, and use the central concepts, structures of content, and tools of inquiry for students across the grades. In addition, candidates must know, understand, and use the connections among concepts, procedures, and applications from content areas to motivate students and build understandings.

Candidates are prepared to teach the basic concepts and skills of inquiry and communication as integral to all learning. The cultivation of students' ability to recognize and solve problems, as well as the development of students' lifelong habits of critical thinking and judgment are also emphasized as key objectives.

Not only are candidates expected to be able to engage Prek-12 students effectively in studies of the nature of science of their discipline, they must also define the values, beliefs, and assumptions inherent to the creation of knowledge within their respective disciplines, and contrast that knowledge to other ways of knowing. They must also emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge while drawing upon the resources inherent in separate subjects. Candidates become skilled at making connections across disciplines and helping students learn the power of multiple perspectives to understand complex issues.

Authentic learning experiences providing connection to human values and endeavors as well as the personalities, needs, and interests of the students is another key element of the learning environment. Candidates learn to encourage the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and ideas to real world issues. They become capable of helping students realize how knowledge, skills, and ideas relate to their lives and to other real-world situations. Candidates are also expected to know and understand the relationship of various disciplines to other human values and endeavors.

Technology integration and knowledge of media resources for instruction, classroom organization, and student learning are emphasized in the Unit's programs. Candidates become familiar with the idea that technology includes, but is not limited to, computers and computer software, calculators, interactive television, distance learning, electronic information resources, and relevant multimedia. Candidates are expected to use a variety of resources, including technology and non-print materials. They must understand and use appropriate technology to help students become capable technology users. In addition, they become skilled at developing the ability of the students to apply technological knowledge and skills. Lastly, candidates understand the importance of appropriately selecting instructional technologies to effectively teach all student populations.

Candidates must also develop an understanding of the principles of effective classroom management. Each candidate is prepared to use a range of strategies to promote positive relationships, cooperation, conflict resolution, and purposeful learning in the classroom. Creating learning communities, in which students assume responsibility for themselves and one another, participate in decision-making, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities are critical elements to success in this area. Candidates are trained to understand and use appropriate and effective interpersonal and small group communication techniques to create an effective learning environment.

#### *Professional Growth and Development*

The Unit strives to prepare candidates who exhibit professional dispositions, attributes, and habits of mind. They are prepared to use current research, field experiences, and self-reflection to make effective decisions and to create instruction. Candidates must understand the dynamics of the surrounding community, various school cultures, and school curricula. In addition, candidates learn the importance of accessing and effectively utilizing resources in the school and from the community in order to construct effective educational experiences for their students.

The importance of participation in professional education organizations, including those at the local, state, and national levels, is stressed. Candidates are encouraged to participate in organizations that unite members of their respective profession, and provide opportunities for professional growth. In addition, candidates are made aware of the importance of personal interests, talents, and related skills when shaping instruction. Candidates realize that personal interests and talents can serve as a valuable resource in the classroom.

Candidates understand the importance of effective communication and collaboration with students, parents, and community members to support student learning. They are encouraged to establish community partnerships that support cooperative ventures and reflect a commitment to the profession. In addition, candidates understand the importance of establishing relationships with becoming socially attuned to the needs of students, parents, and community members. The ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with other education professionals, particularly colleagues and administrators, for the purpose of supporting student learning and a positive learning environment is emphasized as an area for growth and development over time.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment of student learning is threaded through the content and pedagogy of all programs leading to *Educator as Professional*. From initial licensure to advanced programs, a culture of examination is encouraged.

Candidates are prepared to apply various formal and informal methods of assessment and evaluation of learners to inform instruction and learning. They learn to use assessment as an integral part of instruction and learning. Candidates are expected to be able to align their instructional and assessment practices and to use formative and summative methods to determine students' understanding and to monitor their own teaching effectiveness. Candidates are expected to have an understanding of and an ability to use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques (e.g., observation, portfolios of student work, teacher-made tests, performance tasks, projects, student self-assessments, peer assessment, and standardized tests).

As depicted in Figure 1, the unit encompasses four candidate proficiencies in all of its programs and at its core is assessment. Assessment strengthens the reflective nature of the Unit and its candidates.

In summary, the Unit's faculty, in both initial licensure and advanced programs, assist individuals in achieving professional success by providing experiences that develop each of the conceptual framework's proficiencies as portrayed in Figure 1. Thus, graduates emerge as *Educators as Professionals* with scholarship in their chosen disciplines, effective and professional dispositions, an ability to work with diverse learners, an ability to foster learning environments that are reflective in nature, and the desire to be life-long, inquiring learners and members of a professional community.

### ***COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY***

The Unit's commitment to diversity is emphasized in the core values and purposes expressed in the conceptual framework. The reality of meeting the values and purposes is expressed through program activities, such as courses, field experiences, and clinical practice for all programs at both initial and advanced levels. The Unit's adopted set of candidate outcomes and dispositions as expressed in the conceptual framework also reflects the commitment to diversity. The Unit has established performance standards (proficiencies) that all candidates are expected to develop and demonstrate through coursework, field, and clinical experiences. All candidates within the initial program have two diversity field experiences, including one urban opportunity and one classroom experience with exceptional learners. Our expected outcomes and dispositions also reflect our strong commitment to diversity, not only in words, but also in the actions of both our faculty and candidates.

### ***COMMITMENT TO TECHNOLOGY***

To become an *Educator as Professional* at Old Dominion University, candidates must be well versed in the use of technology both in the classroom and at the University. The Unit strives to meet the educational technology expectations set by the institution, its constituents, the state, and the federal government.

Faculty members at Old Dominion University are encouraged to apply new technology in the classroom. The University's Center for Learning Technology (CLT) was established to assist faculty with the appropriate use and integration of technology into the teaching and learning process. Services provided to faculty by CLT include one-on-one consultation, instructional design, course design and development, individual course management, course website development, workshops, and demonstration and evaluation of tools and technologies. This training better prepares faculty to instruct candidates on how best to integrate educational technology to help students learn.

The use of technology permeates the personal and professional lives of students, faculty, and staff at the University. First, all initial licensure candidates are required to demonstrate proficiency in the

Virginia standards that address technology. This demonstration is required at both the conceptual and application levels. Second, candidates in all programs are required to use various technologies for communication, completing class assignments, developing lesson plans and class presentations, portfolios, managing student data, and analyzing data, and delivering their lessons during field-based experiences.

The University employs various technologies to communicate with a variety of student populations, including students at a distance, and to facilitate learning, both on-campus in traditional classrooms and at a distance via multiple delivery technologies. Student information is available 24-7 via Leo Online, and live technical support is available to all students Monday through Saturday from morning to night.

Faculty may choose to manage courses using Blackboard. Students can view course materials, collect homework assignments, take exams, check grades, and participate in course discussions. In addition, the Unit launched LiveText in Fall 2008 to all students in initial licensure programs and advanced programs for the purpose of conducting assessments of key assignments, as well as managing student portfolios. Particularly important to the Unit's graduate and advanced programs are the services made available by the Library for students at a distance. Old Dominion University's students can utilize all resources available at the campus library remotely, from accessing electronic resources to using reference services to ordering materials for immediate delivery.

In addition to using technology during their academic experience, candidates are prepared for the use of technology in the classroom throughout the Unit's programs. Specifically, courses in instructional technology are provided. These courses are based on national and state technology standards and provide candidates the opportunity to utilize contemporary productivity tools and Internet resources to understand and apply a broad spectrum of instructional technology tools and associated, research-based instructional strategies to enhance the teaching/learning process.

## **Unit's Assessment System**

The Unit assessment system is an organizing framework and operations model that proves regular and comprehensive assessment of four essential domains: applicant and candidate qualifications, candidate proficiencies, graduate competence, and unit and program operations and quality. The Unit assessment system begins with admission to the institution. Candidates must first meet the basic requirements set forth by Old Dominion University. Once admitted to the University, candidates must apply to an approved teacher education program. To be admitted to an approved teacher education program, all candidates must pass the Praxis I exam or receive passing scores on the SAT or ACT as prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education. In addition, candidates must establish and maintain a minimum 2.75 GPA in their major content area, professional education courses, and overall. All grades in these areas must be a minimum of C-. In some programs, the minimum GPA has been established and approved by the Teacher Education Council as a 2.8, with a minimum passing grade of C.

Candidate performance is assessed at both the course and program levels. Key assessments are identified as indicators of performance in specific areas. Some key assessments include lesson plans, unit plans, impact on student learning activities, observation evaluations, reflection statements, and active research projects. With the full implementation of LiveText, faculty are now conducting several course assessments within the LiveText environment, making student expectations more clear and faculty feedback more specific. This environment also provides greater flexibility with

respect to course-by-course reporting for programmatic review of candidate learning outcomes in key assessment areas.

Candidates are also assessed on their progress toward meeting state licensure and performance standards at various points throughout the program. Specifically, candidates must pass all assessments prior to student teaching. These include Praxis II, the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA), and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), where applicable. These assessments are taken during the practicum seminar or the semester prior to student teaching, depending on the approved teacher education program.

Unit faculty review feedback from student teaching cooperating teachers' and school administrators' evaluations provided during early field experiences where candidates observe, participate, and explore teaching in a classroom. A Student Teaching Professional Attributes Assessment is completed for each candidate by cooperating teachers at two points during student teaching, mid-term and final. Additionally, the school administrator evaluates the candidate during student teaching.

As part of the student teaching experience, candidates evaluate their overall program experience in a standardized system, the Educational Benchmark Innovations (EBI). Over 95 percent of the student teachers participate. This evaluation has occurred each semester for seven years. It provides unit and program information regarding the perceived quality of faculty, instruction, advising, career services, student teaching, etc. The resulting information is provided in aggregate or by program area. It is then used by the program and, or, the Unit for data-driven improvement purposes.

The three primary purposes of the Unit's assessment system are to improve candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which result in optimal professional practice; to improve curriculum and assessment of professional education programs and to improve the Unit's program operations and quality. At the Unit level, aggregated data that apply to various areas are shared with appropriate groups in both the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Sciences as well as with the Teacher Education Council (TEC) for the purpose of improving programs across the Unit and enhancing the effectiveness of unit operations.

The University has an organization-wide assessment planning process that all colleges participate in by preparing assessment plans for each degree program. This system, WEAVE, provides a standardized process for collecting, analyzing, summarizing, and using meaningful information to make informed decisions about student learning and program performance. Teacher education programs, other school professional programs, and advanced programs have established student learning outcomes and associated performance measures that are tracked and reported annually. Program representatives are encouraged to align their WEAVE assessment report information to the requirements of their professional associations in order to streamline the reporting process and to permit the regular review of pertinent data that will encourage program improvement and growth over time.

Assessment data are being collected and stored in several systems: the Educator as Professional database, the University's Sunguard Banner ERP system, LiveText, Digital Measures, and WEAVE. Data analysis using these systems occurs at various levels from the University's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to individual departments across campus. The Unit utilizes these systems to collect information on candidate proficiencies that align unit and program curricula,

course requirements, and assessments with the Conceptual Framework, Commonwealth of Virginia standards, and professional (SPA) standards.

Lastly, the Unit participates in various state and national data reporting and assessment activities. These include Title II, U.S. News and World Report for Graduate Education Programs, AACTE – PEDS report, Virginia Biennium Report, and Virginia SCHEV Virginia Improves Teaching and Learning (VITAL).

## **Historical Development of the Conceptual Framework**

The Unit's Conceptual Framework Committee has as its charge the oversight and management of the Conceptual Framework. This committee reviews the Framework, considers modifications and updates, and approves any changes to the framework. The Committee consists of a representative group of both internal and external constituents. Additionally, the College meets with regional school divisions once each year to review the Unit's Conceptual Framework as well as a variety of other documents, including student teaching documentation. This group also discusses observations, issues, and concerns related to the performance of the Unit's candidates as well as the changing environment of education in the region. As a result, programmatic and process improvements are often identified that may positively affect the performance of teacher, other school professionals, and educational leader candidates.

The Unit's Conceptual Framework remains very much a living document and a work in progress. The Unit developed the Conceptual Framework theme of *Educator as Professional* nearly two decades ago to reflect the Unit's position on both content and pedagogy. Revisions to the Conceptual Framework were made in the late 1990s, 2001 and 2009. The most recent update reflects changes in the professional environment during the last eight years, but its fundamental tenets remain unchanged. The Unit has a single Conceptual Framework for initial and advanced preparation programs, aligned to national, state, and institutional professional standards. As a result, a coherent statement of the mission of the unit has continued to evolve. Its most recent revisions include the creation of a new graphic that represents the philosophy of the unit, while the previous graphic depicted the processes of the unit. Modifications have been made to address changes in technology, methodology and various Committee recommendations. The Conceptual Framework is circulated as a separate, stand-alone document and is available on the website of the Darden College of Education for use by the Unit's faculty, candidates, and partners in the public schools.

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APPENDIX A  
Alignment of Candidate Proficiencies with Institutional, State, and Professional Standards

Program	Level	Degree	Institutional Standards	State Standards	Professional Standards
Programs for Initial Teacher Licensure					
Visual Arts Education (K-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Art Education Association
Marketing Education (6-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Science	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Business Education Association
Communication Disorders	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	American Speech-Language Hearing Association
Elementary Education (PreK-6)	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	Association of Childhood Education International
English (6-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Council of Teachers of English
Foreign Language in French, Spanish, & German (PreK-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Health and Physical Education (PK-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Science	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance/National Association for Sport and Physical Education

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Dance Education (Prek-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	
Theatre Education (Prek-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Association of Schools of Theatre
Early Childhood Education (PreK-3)	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Association for the Education of Young Children
Technology Education (6-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Science	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	International Technology Education Association/Council on Technology Teacher Education
Mathematics (6-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Science	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Middle School	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Middle School Association
Music Education (PreK-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Music	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Association of Schools of Music
Science (6-12) Biology Chemistry Earth Science	Initial	Bachelor of Science	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Science Teachers Association

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Physics					
Social Studies (6-12)	Initial	Bachelor of Arts	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	National Council for the Social Studies
Special Education (k-12)	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	Council for Exceptional Children
English as a Second Language (PreK-12)	Initial	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
<b>Programs for Advanced Preparation of Teachers and Other School Personnel</b>					
Educational Leadership- Building Level	Advanced	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements		Educational Leadership Constituent Council
School Counseling (PreK-12)	Advanced	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements		Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs
Library media (PreK-12)	Advanced	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	American Library Association
Reading	Advanced	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia Standards of Learning	International Reading Association
Health and Physical Education (PreK-12)	Advanced	Master of Science in Education	Conceptual Framework Elements	Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers; Virginia	American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance/National Association

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Alignment of Candidate Proficiencies with Institutional, State, and Professional Standards

				Standards of Learning	for Sport and Physical Education
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