

COHORT HANDBOOK
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

THE COHORT MODEL

Elementary Education teacher candidates begin a prescribed series of academic courses and clinical experiences during the final three semesters of their Elementary Education undergraduate program. Most students complete all three semesters in sequence within a supportive cohort. Each candidate is expected to function as a collaborative member of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) as evidenced by high levels of participation towards productive outcomes, both in class and in the field.

COHORT I ELEMENTARY EDUCATION COURSES

ED 3050 Foundations of Teaching and Learning (3 Credits) An introduction to the teaching profession. explores a variety of strategies and approaches for effective teaching. Topics include: diverse environments and student populations, lesson planning and reflection, state standards, learning styles, small group and whole class instruction, and assessment tools and strategies. Candidates become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of public-school teachers as well as the environment of public schools.

ED 3051 Designing Positive Learning Communities (3 Credits) Designed to assist prospective educators in promoting pro-social behaviors in the school. Emphasis is placed upon strategies to promote cooperation and address conflict. Strategies for dealing with more severe behavior conflicts are also presented.

ED 3052 Assessing Children in Schools (3 Credits) Studies the methods and techniques of educational measurement as well as evaluation, construction and consideration of teacher-made assessments. Selective uses and interpretation of standardized tests. Modification of teaching plans and instructional approaches.

RL 3050 Foundations of Reading and Language Arts (3 Credits). Examines the foundations of literacy instruction with an emphasis on curriculum, methods and materials for children in kindergarten through grade 3. Focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, core reading programs and stages of writing development in a balanced reading framework.

ED 3055 Foundations Teaching Practicum (1 Credit) Concurrent with Cohort I, students complete approximately 12 weekly visits to a K-8 placement. Students are supervised by on-site mentors as well as Cohort I faculty. Students gain meaningful experience and relate course content to best practices in educational settings. Pass/No Pass. Falls and Springs. Prerequisite(s): admission to Cohort I. Co-requisite(s): ED 3050, ED 3051, ED 3052, and RL 3050.

COHORT II ELEMENTARY EDUCATION COURSES

ED 3060 Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction (3 Credits) Focuses on social studies curriculum and instruction with the goal of promoting critical thinking skills and a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Social studies education incorporates 5 standard-based strands including knowledge of civics, geography, NH/US history, economics, and world history and contemporary issues. Candidates research instructional strategies and processes that incorporate a variety of resources, materials, and technologies.

ED 3090 Science Curriculum and Instruction (3 Credits) Focuses on science curriculum and instruction with the goal of promoting critical thinking skills and a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Emphasizes inquiry-based science methods and science experiences. Science education incorporates 4 standards-based strands including knowledge and proficiency in earth/space science, physical science, life science, and science process skills. Candidates research instructional strategies and processes that incorporate a variety of resources, materials, and technologies.

ED 3075 Knowing and Teaching Mathematics (3 Credits) Continues discovering the mathematical concept and pedagogical skills needed to become a successful teacher of mathematics in grades K-6. Actively involved in exploring how children learn mathematics and how to guide them in their learning of mathematics. Discusses content, methods, curriculum, assessment, national and state standards and grade level expectations and appropriate technology use in the classroom.

RL 3070 Language Arts and Reading in the Elementary School (3 Credits) Examines the integration of the language arts and reading for students in grades 1 through 6. Focuses on word study, content area reading and writing, study skills and literature study. Explores materials and methods for all learners in a balanced reading and writing program.

SE 3070 Classroom Applications in Inclusive Education (3 Credits) Broadens students' understanding and knowledge of the nature and needs of children with disabilities in traditional educational settings. Emphasis is on providing specific instructional strategies, diagnostic and academic interventions, effective programming and remediation for students with exceptionalities. Students work extensively with Individual Education Plans, 504 plans, behavior plans, as well as a variety of assessment instruments. Includes the use of direct instruction, curriculum-based assessment and systemic observations.

ED 3080 Teaching in the Content Areas Practicum (1 Credit) Students gain experience and relate course content to best practices in educational settings. Pass/No Pass. Falls and Springs.
Prerequisite(s): completion of all program requirements for certification by the start of the Cluster II semester. Co-requisite(s): ED 3060, ED 3090, MA 3070, RL 3070, and SE 3070.
Cohort III Elementary Education Courses: ED 4400 Internship (12 Credits) ED 4500 Childhood Studies Teaching Seminar (1 Credit)

GENERAL INFORMATION

REQUIRED HOURS

Clinical experiences provide multiple opportunities to apply educational theory in elementary classrooms with the support of a mentor teacher and boundary-spanning University faculty. Prior to student teaching, Elementary Education teacher candidates will be required to successfully complete 200 hours of clinical experience. During Cohort I, teacher candidates will complete 90 hours of clinical experience. During Cohort II, teacher candidates will complete 110 hours of clinical experience.

TRANSPORTATION

Placements at all sites will necessitate having transportation. Carpooling is feasible for Cohort I. Private transportation is needed for Cohort II and student teaching.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks are specific to each school district and must be completed prior to entering your host school.

ATTENDANCE

Teacher candidates are expected to attend ALL scheduled field experience days as outlined in each Cohort calendar. If you are ill on a scheduled field experience day, you must call the host school and your mentor teacher that morning, prior to the start of the school day. In addition to calling the host school, you must email the Practicum Coordinator that morning, as well. Reliability is a professional disposition that will be monitored closely.

If you are a student athlete and have a conflict due to a sanctioned athletic event, the mentor teacher and the Coordinator of Field Experiences must be informed prior to any absence. If an absence occurs, the teacher candidate must arrange a make-up day with the mentor teacher. Once this date is set, the teacher candidate will email this information to the Practicum Coordinator.

PROFESSIONALISM

Teacher candidates are expected to arrive in host classrooms at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day. Reliability is a professional disposition that will be assessed by the mentor teacher.

Teacher candidates will share the Cohort expectations with mentor teachers, and they will also seek constructive feedback.

Teacher candidates are expected to follow the dress code of the host school and to communicate professionally with school staff. Teacher candidates are also expected to keep cell phones off during the instructional day. Respect is a professional disposition that will be monitored closely through school-based feedback. Teacher candidates will maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students and follow confidentiality procedures. Teacher candidates will not interact with students on social media.

DESIGNING INSTRUCTION

Teacher candidates will be using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework when designing learning experiences. During Cohort I, candidates will learn about the UDL Framework in ED3050 and will use that knowledge to create lessons for their field work. Teacher Candidates During Cohort II methods courses, candidates will learn how to use the UDL Framework across content-areas and they will be expected to use this framework when planning their field lessons.

WHY USE UDL?

UDL recognizes that the way people learn is as unique as their fingerprints. Classrooms are highly diverse and curriculum needs to be designed to meet the needs of all learners from the very beginning. UDL minimizes barriers for students and maximizes learning. When teachers design learning for students who need supports or challenges, learning experiences are better for all students.

When planning instruction, teacher candidates will consider the following questions:

GOAL	What do I want students to learn? Unpack the standard, identify skills and concepts, and connect this goal to prior learning.
METHODS	What barriers exist that might interfere with my students achieving this goal? Know your learners through formative assessment. Use the UDL Principles as a guide to minimize barriers. How will I engage all learners in this learning experience? Identify the most appropriate instructional strategies that will engage learners.
MATERIALS	Which materials will I use to provide flexible paths for learning? Consider scaffolded support for vocabulary acquisition in all content areas, multiple media formats, and a variety of group settings.
ASSESSMENT	How will my students demonstrate understanding? Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding through action and expression. Provide clear models and targeted feedback to support progress toward the identified goal.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In addition to collaborating during class and in the field, teacher candidates are also encouraged to expand their Personal Learning Community via ASCD.

ASCD

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is a membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead. Teacher candidates are strongly encouraged to get involved in our campus chapter.

FOCUS PLAN

A Focus Plan is designed to help a teacher candidate meet field experience requirements while under the supervision of the mentor teacher and the Coordinator of Early Field Experiences. The teacher candidate must demonstrate significant progress in all areas of concern.

Field experience students may be removed from a placement at the request of their host site or for other reasons involving unprofessional behavior. This may result in students not receiving credit for their field experience. The Practicum Coordinator will determine the appropriate next steps, including reassignment to a new field experience placement, implementation of a Focus Plan, or a recommendation to discontinue in the Elementary Education licensure program.

COHORT I

What happens during the Cohort I Field Experience?

The Cohort I teacher candidate will actively participate in building a positive learning environment, support literacy development in the classroom, and develop ongoing reflective practices by participating in a co-teaching instructional planning cycle.

Build a Positive Learning Environment

Cohort I teacher candidates are encouraged to build positive relationships with students. They are expected to learn the names of the students and to actively participate in Morning Meeting and/or classroom discussions. Teacher candidates are expected to understand and reinforce classroom rules and expectations. Furthermore, teacher candidates will demonstrate a growth mindset when interacting with students and when communicating student progress.

Development

Cohort I teacher candidates are eased into an elementary classroom learning environment. They are expected to become familiar with the grade-level expectations through the review of competencies, standards, and curriculum resources, observe the mentor teacher in small group and large group settings, and analyze student work using scoring rubrics and/or competency scales. Teacher candidates are expected to assist students with technology tools and applications in support of personalized learning. Teacher candidates are expected to preview three ELA lessons and assist the mentor teacher with an individual student and/or small group during each of the three lessons.

COHORT II

What are teacher candidates expected to do during the Cohort II Clinical Experience?

The Cohort II teacher candidate will support student learning across all content areas through the use of effective instructional strategies and targeted feedback, actively reinforce the use of academic vocabulary, and refine reflective practices by closely analyzing student progress toward grade-level competencies.

Support Learning in all Content Areas

Cohort II teacher candidates are expected to become familiar with the grade-level expectations in all content areas through the review of competencies, standards, and curriculum resources. Teacher candidates will design and implement a small or large group learning experience in all four content areas (math, science, social studies, and language arts). The teacher candidates can also integrate content areas when designing lessons (PBL, Number Talks, etc.) Teacher candidates are also expected to assist students with technology tools, applications, and digital media, in order to support personalized learning and to enhance conceptual understanding. Furthermore, teacher candidates will demonstrate a growth mindset when interacting with students and when communicating student progress.

Support the Use of Academic Vocabulary

While facilitating collaborative discussions and/or providing content-specific feedback to students, Cohort II teacher candidates are expected to reinforce the use of academic vocabulary. Teacher candidates will intentionally scaffold vocabulary development in support of content area instruction.

LESSON APPROVAL PROCESS

Cohort II teacher candidates are required to design and teach four lessons during the field experience. Teacher candidates can use lessons from site-based curriculum resources, but the teacher candidate must provide UDL considerations in the margins of the lesson plan and submit the enhanced plan for review prior to teaching. Each lesson must be approved by the mentor teacher prior to teaching the lesson. The mentor teacher must receive the proposed lesson 1 week prior to the scheduled date for teaching. If a mentor teacher requires revisions to the lesson, those revisions must be completed and resubmitted 3 days prior to teaching. Content area professors are available to review lesson plans and provide feedback to the teacher candidates. If the teacher candidate does not demonstrate careful preparation, a focus plan will be put in place.

MENTOR FEEDBACK

The mentor teacher will observe the teacher candidate during each of the four lessons is encouraged to provide general feedback and also feedback related to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) considerations.

GENERAL FEEDBACK

Was the teacher candidate prepared to teach this lesson? What went well? What are some things to think about?

UDL CONSIDERATIONS**GOAL**

Did the teacher candidate share the learning goal with students? Did the teacher candidate connect this goal to prior learning?

METHODS

Were the students engaged in this learning experience? Why? Were barriers to learning removed? How?

MATERIALS

Did the selected materials support learners? How? Did intentional support exist to promote academic vocabulary acquisition?

ASSESSMENT

Did the teacher candidate provide clear examples?

Did the teacher candidate provide multiple avenues for students to demonstrate understanding?

Did the teacher candidate provide targeted feedback?

**Plymouth State University
Elementary Education**

Early Field Experiences

Teacher Candidate:	Cohort 1:	Cohort 2:
Evaluator:	Role:	
School:	Grade/Grade Band:	

Evaluators: If a teacher candidate EXCEEDS or DOES NOT MEET an expectation, please provide a comment that explains your rating. Your insights are used to inform University decisions.

Expectation	Exceeds	Meets	Approaching	Did Not Meet
1. Professionalism Consistently exhibits punctuality, attends all scheduled sessions, and follows the school's professional dress code.				
Comment:				
2. Preparedness Demonstrates an understanding of the grade level or grade band learning standards and competencies: Cohort I in ELA; Cohort II, in all content areas.				
Comment:				

3. Communication Demonstrates strong writing and oral communication skills. Consistently uses precise spelling and grammar with students, staff, and families.				
Comment:				
Expectation	Exceeds	Meets	Approaching	Did Not Meet
4. Attitude Demonstrates initiative through active participation in the learning community. Respects the diverse needs of all learners and promotes a growth mindset when providing student feedback and/or when discussing student performance.				
Comment:				
5. Reflective Practitioner Learns and adjusts from constructive feedback and reflection as evidenced by improvements in performance.				
Comment:				

Evaluator's Signature:

Date:

Teacher Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Mentor Teacher Comments: