

Education Program Information

The Education Preparation Program

The Education Preparation Program at Southwestern Adventist University provides teacher training for elementary education, content area subjects in 7th grade through 12th grade, and K - 12 (music and physical education) certification. Students may obtain a Master of Education in Educational Leadership or Curriculum and Instruction with Literacy emphasis.

The Education program is designed to prepare students for certification in the State of Texas and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Preparation is accomplished through a combination of campus and field-based delivery systems.

Degrees are awarded by Southwestern Adventist University, while certification is awarded by the State of Texas and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. A student may seek Texas certification upon completion of a state-approved teacher certification program, and the receipt of a satisfactory score on the TExES examinations. To be recommended for certification by Southwestern Adventist University, a minimum of 12 successful semester hours in residence is required.

The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) establishes the teacher certification standards. Any change in these standards must be reflected in Southwestern Adventist University's certification requirements; therefore, any modification in the state law affecting our certification requirements takes precedence over statements in the Bulletin.

Seventh-day Adventist teacher certification may be acquired simultaneously by meeting the requirements as outlined in the North American Division Office of Education Certification Requirements, K-12 Handbook, as revised in 2020.

Admission to the Education Preparation Program (EPP)

Admission to the University and admission to the Education Preparation Program (EPP) are separate processes. Admission to the Educator Preparation Program occurs after the successful completion of 60 credit hours and the requirements listed below. Admission to EPP is required for enrollment in upper-division education courses.

Requirements for Admission to the EPP:

1. Show evidence of an acceptable Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) score. Required THEA scores: reading 230, math 230, and writing 220. *Exemption from THEA is an SAT minimum score (550 math & 550 verbal) OR an ACT composite of 21 with at least 19 in math and language.* Assessment (THEA) exam. THEA exam is offered multiple times a year at the SWAU Counseling and Testing center.
2. Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours, or currently enrolled in the semester that will complete 60 hours.
3. Have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher.
4. Have a C or higher in Applied Math, College Algebra, Freshman Composition, and Research Writing.
5. Secondary majors must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 or higher.
6. Provide a personal statement and two letters of recommendation.

Application Process

Students are responsible for initiating the application to the EPP. Information and forms are available in the Office of Education located in Pechro Hall. All applicants must complete the following:

1. Submit a completed application to the Education Department one semester prior to enrollment in upper-division education courses (typically at the end of the sophomore year).

2. Submit a criminal background check (\$30 fee required, completed online). Students may request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding the potential ineligibility for certification due to a previous conviction, deferred adjudication, or misdemeanor offense. Previous convictions may prevent eligibility to receive a Texas certification.
3. Submit a one-page typed essay describing reasons for pursuing the teaching profession.
4. Submit contact information for two letters of recommendation, preferably from a former educator, supervisor, pastor, or other person in leadership (no relatives).
5. Read and accept the Texas Code of Ethics for Educators.
6. Interview with the department faculty for full acceptance into the EPP. See Technical Standard in the Pre-Service Teacher Candidate Handbook. *All documents must be provided to the department administrative assistant in a timely manner. All documents are required for eligibility to interview.*

Education Continuation and Progression Policies

Degree Plan

After admission, candidates will develop a degree plan with an advisor. Secondary and K-12 certification candidates will be assigned an advisor in the education department in addition to their content area advisor. Coordination between the content area advisor and education advisor is necessary throughout the program. A matrix designed for elementary and secondary is available in the education department.

Retention in the EPP

To remain in the program students must:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (Elementary Education)
2. Secondary and K-12 (music and physical education) candidates must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75.
3. Continue to develop professional knowledge and dispositions in coursework and field experience.
4. Contribute to the program through positive and professional interactions with peers and faculty.
5. Demonstrate professional ethics as outlined in the TEA Code of Ethics.
6. Complete all education courses within a six-year timeframe.
7. Complete all TExES review components in EDUC495/496 as outlined in the matrices.
8. In order to support student success, education graduates are required to complete TEA state testing within 24 months of graduation. Graduates who fail to meet this deadline must complete an approved test review program prior to testing approval from the Education Department. Remediation costs are the responsibility of the graduate.

At the end of the third year, the teacher education faculty will review each student's progress and advise each according to the findings. A student found in violation of any of the above criteria will be placed on probation for the following semester. Each semester thereafter, progress will be evaluated for continuance in the program.

Student Learning Outcomes for Education Preparation Program

- 1) Students demonstrate an understanding of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, as they seek to integrate faith into teaching and learning in the classroom.
- 2) Students acquire critical content and concepts of the curriculum in their field of study; they practice their teaching craft throughout the program.
- 3) Students use a variety of pedagogical approaches for instruction to assist all students in the mastery of the concepts in their field of study with the goal of creating life-long learners.
- 4) Students demonstrate skillful teaching dispositions based on current research, including pedagogical knowledge in their area of specialization.

- 5) Students work with others to create a positive climate that supports individual and collaborative learning; they encourage positive social interaction and active engagement in learning.
- 6) Students understand how to use multiple forms of assessment to inform instructional decisions and to engage learners to take responsibility for their learning.
- 7) Students recognize and demonstrate respect for diversity by employing effective strategies in diverse settings.
- 8) Students show a commitment to professional development, they make connections between theory and practice and strive to become reflective practitioners.
- 9) Students demonstrate a commitment to service as they participate in outreach activities organized by the department.

Clinical Teaching

Clinical teaching is a 14-week immersive teaching experience. Students are placed in local public schools and/or Seventh-day Adventist schools for clinical teaching placements. Each candidate will complete two seven-week placements for a total of 14 weeks. Candidates must apply for placement one semester prior to the start of clinical teaching. A clinical teaching orientation is required for candidates prior to the start date. Clinical teaching requirements are outlined in the clinical teacher handbook. Consult with the student teaching coordinator for additional information.

The Texas Education Agency mandates specific requirements for clinical teaching. Substitute teaching and paraprofessional work cannot be used towards completing the clinical teaching requirement. See the eligibility requirements noted below.

Clinical teaching is completed during the final semester (except in cases of August graduation). Clinical teaching requires full-day attendance in the assigned school for a minimum of 14 consecutive weeks (70 days) in accordance with the school calendar. Students may not take classes at the university during the hours they are scheduled to student teach, and they are limited to 12 credit hours during the student teaching semester. Exceptions require a written request to the department chair of education.

Students who do not graduate within six months of student teaching may lose credit for the course and may need to repeat student teaching. The Teacher Education Committee must review candidates who withdraw or are withdrawn from a student teaching assignment.

Application to Offer Out-of-State/U. S. Territory Field-Based Experiences, Internship, Student Teaching, Clinical Teaching

Texas Administrative Code §228.35 (d) (4)

Subject to all the requirements of this section, TEA may approve a school that is not a public school accredited by the TEA as a site for field-based experience, internship, student teaching, clinical teaching, and/or practicum. (A) All Department of Defense Education Activity (DUDE) schools, wherever located, and all schools accredited by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) are approved by the TEA for purposes of field-based experience, internship, student teaching, clinical teaching, and/or practicum. (B) An educator preparation program may file an application with the TEA for approval subject, to periodic review, of a public school, a private school, or a school system located within any state or territory of the United States, as a site for field-based experience, or for video or other technology-based depiction of a school setting. The application shall be in a form developed by the TEA staff and shall include, at a minimum, evidence showing that the instructional standards of the school or school system align with those of the applicable Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) certification standards. An application fee is required at the time of submission. To prevent unnecessary duplication of such applications, the TEA shall maintain a list of the schools, school systems, videos, and other technology-based transmissions that have been approved by the TEA for the field-based experience. (C) An educator preparation program may file an application with the TEA for approval, subject to periodic review, of a public or private school located within any state or territory of the United States, as a site for an internship, student teaching, clinical teaching, and/or practicum required by this chapter. The application shall be in a

form developed by the TEA staff and shall include at a minimum: (i) the accreditation(s) held by the school; (ii) a crosswalk comparison of the alignment of the instructional standards of the school with those of the applicable TEKS and SBEC certification standards; (iii) the certification, credentials, and training of the field supervisor(s) who will supervise candidates in the school; and (iv) the measure that will be taken by the educator preparation program to ensure that the candidate's experience will be equivalent to that of a candidate in a Texas public school accredited by the TEA. (D) An undergraduate university educator preparation program may file an application with the TEA for approval, subject to periodic review, of a public or private school located outside the United States, as a site for student teaching required by this chapter. The application shall be in a form developed by the TEA staff and shall include at a minimum, the same elements required in subparagraph (C) of this paragraph for schools located within any state or territory of the United States.

Admission to Clinical Teaching

To be eligible for clinical teaching, students must:

1. File an application for student teaching one semester prior to directed teaching. A valid graduation contract from the Registrar's Office must be in the student's file prior to student teaching placement.
2. Be unconditionally admitted to the Education Preparation Program (EPP) and approved for student teaching status by the Teacher Education Committee.
3. Maintain a grade of C or better in courses in the teaching field(s), or academic specialization area, with an overall grade point average of not less than 3.0.
4. Secondary Education and K-12 (music and physical education) certification candidates must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 in their major courses.
5. Complete a minimum of 30 clock hours in field experience prior to student teaching and after acceptance into the EPP.
6. Complete all required methods courses and have senior status.
7. Demonstrate a commitment to moral and ethical standards, as defined by the SWAU Bulletin and TEA Educators' Code of Ethics.
8. Students seeking a Seventh-day Adventist certification from the North American Division Office of Education (NADOE) must complete at least one seven-week student teaching placement in an SDA school, preferably in a combination or multigrade classroom.
9. Complete one of the official Texas credentialing exams (PPR, Core Subjects, STR - Elementary; PPR, Content exam - Secondary and K-12 Music and PE) prior to the start of clinical teaching.
10. As of September 1, 2021, all candidates must have attempted one of the TExES certification exams prior to student teaching placement.

The Education Department will review all applications to determine eligibility for clinical teaching. Admission to the EPP does not necessarily ensure acceptance into clinical teaching. Appeals to any decision must be made in writing to the Department of Education and Psychology, and if needed, to the Vice President for Academic Administration.

Dismissal from the EPP

It is never anticipated that a student will be asked to leave the education program. There are several levels of support provided for students in order to assist them through the process of teacher certification. Failure to adhere to the TEA Educators' Code of Ethics is cause for immediate removal from the program with no appeals allowed. Candidates who engage in unprofessional behavior, endanger the welfare of another person, or engage in dishonest or immoral behavior are subject to dismissal.

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the EPP, written notification is required. A student should speak with their assigned advisor to discuss options. If necessary, a student may be placed on a growth plan, targeting areas of deficiencies and support to address and remediate these deficiencies.

A faculty committee, comprised of members familiar with the student's situation will construct a growth plan to include goals and a specific timeline for improvement. Failure to meet the goals in the growth plan will result in dismissal from the EPP.

Appeals:

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Department Chair and the student's advisor. If appealing an admission or dismissal decision, the request must be provided to the department no more than 5 days after the decision is rendered.

Recommendation to the State Board for Educator Certification

To be recommended to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) for teacher certification, a student must have successfully met the following criteria:

- All specified coursework must be completed on the degree plan or certification plan in which certification is sought.
- Candidates must apply for certification with the Texas Education Agency (fee required) and complete fingerprinting (fee required).
- Candidates seeking Texas certification must pass all appropriate state exams (limit of four retakes per test) and apply for appropriate state certification(s) with the State Board for Educator Certification/Texas Education Agency within twelve months of the completion of their student/ clinical teaching or practicum program. If a candidate allows the twelve-month period to go by without passing all state exams and applying for certification, additional coursework and/or state exams may be required for recommendation for certification. Additional coursework will be determined by the appropriate Program Coordinator in consultation with the faculty.
- In accordance with Article 6252-13c, Texas Civil Statutes, the Texas Commissioner of Education may suspend or revoke a teaching certificate, or refuse to issue a teaching certificate, for a person who has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for a crime that directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the teaching profession. All applicants for Texas certificates will be screened for a record of felony or misdemeanor conviction through the Texas Department of Public Safety. Students must make an application through the SBEC website and enclose the appropriate fee required for the certificate sought. The Teacher Certification Officer will make recommendations based upon satisfactory completion of all requirements pertaining to certification.

State Certification Options in Educator Preparation Program

Elementary Certification

Core Subjects Early Childhood - 6th grade (EC - 6)

Secondary Teacher Certification, 7th grade - 12th grade

English

History

Life Science

Mathematics

Physical Science

Social Studies

All Level Teacher Certification, Kindergarten - 12th grade

Physical Education (PE)

Music

Alternative certification options are available. See Education - Alternative Certification

SDA Teaching Certification

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists: Elementary Endorsement for Grades 1-8, Specialty Endorsement in Kindergarten, and Secondary Content Area Endorsement for Grades 7 - 12. Content areas available for Grades 7-12 are Business, English, History, Journalism, Life Science, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, and Social Studies. Students must earn a grade of C or higher for credit in all religion courses required for NAD certification.

Federal Title II Rating

Southwestern Adventist University is currently ranked in the second quartile nationally for its Title II rating. This reflects a 90% pass rate by students taking the state certification exams.

Educator Certification Examination Retake

Beginning September 1, 2015 candidates will be limited to four attempts to retake any educator certification examination. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is implementing this change to Texas Education Code §21.048 in response to HB 2205, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015. Students may request a waiver from the Texas Education Agency in order to attempt additional exam attempts beyond the maximum limit.