

Francis Marion University
School of Education

Teacher Candidate Handbook



2024 - 2025

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Welcome From the Dean...

Thank you for choosing Francis Marion University as the best institution for your undergraduate degree. We look forward to providing you with a challenging and rewarding experience.

This handbook will provide information and procedures to support the successful completion of your education program. Your adviser and program coordinator are your best resources. Should you need clarification on any issue, please contact the School of Education office at 843-661-1460 or soe@fmarion.edu

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THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Francis Marion University's School of Education, where teaching and learning are the highest priorities, prepares competent and caring professional educators in the Pee Dee region and beyond, for a rapidly changing, complex, and diverse society through the acquisition of professional knowledge, professional skills and professional dispositions.

Purpose for the School of Education

The purpose of all Teacher Education programs at Francis Marion University is to train **competent and caring teachers**. Caring and professional competence are the twin pillars upon which a successful teaching career is built. A career that is lacking either pillar will always lack the effectiveness necessary to produce meaningful learning in students. The programs within the school of education are built around the notion that all educators need to be well grounded in knowledge of learning, learners and the environment in which each takes place. This knowledge is best learned from the professional literature and experienced practitioners. Teacher candidates must capitalize through reflective inquiry on what each domain has to offer. They cannot merely accept old patterns and traditions. They must critically analyze the merit of accepted theory and practice and be prepared to make decisions which are divergent and, in many cases, innovative.

These decisions must be made in both a social and an academic context. The students' diverse culture must be analyzed and evaluated in terms of its impact on the learning process. A main focus of all programs is on diversity in its many forms - cultural, racial, geographical, academic and social. Tied into this focus is a global, multicultural perspective that fosters appreciation of values and lifestyles of various groups.

Another critical focus of all programs in education at Francis Marion University is technology. Technology is not viewed as an end in itself but as a vehicle by which many other ends are met. The purpose of technological enlightenment within the scope of all programs is very utilitarian in that teacher candidates are taught to pursue and apply technology in all teaching/learning environments. In addition, teacher candidates are able to make decisions about optimum use of software programs available through many commercial outlets.

The School of Education Conceptual Framework

Our Conceptual Framework

The School of Education prepares competent and caring teachers.

The Conceptual Framework and Assessment Points

The School of Education has defined what it means by “competent and caring teachers” by specifying the areas below as representative points for focus and assessment:

A competent teacher possesses at least these knowledge and skills traits:

- A. Content Knowledge
 - 1. Exhibits content knowledge in their area of teaching.
 - 2. Applies content knowledge appropriately in instruction for all P-12 students.

- B. Exhibits Professional Knowledge and Skills
 - 1. Creates and maintains a safe and productive learning environment for all P-12 students.
 - 2. Plans varied instruction to meet the needs of all P-12 students.
 - 3. Applies professional knowledge and skills in the classroom/clinical experiences for all P-12 students.
 - 4. Utilizes effective instructional strategies, technology and information resources to cause learning in all P-12 students.
 - 5. Demonstrates creativity and innovation in creating effective learning experiences for all P-12 students.
 - 6. Demonstrates critical thinking and problem solving in creating effective learning experiences for all P-12 students.
 - 7. Demonstrates the use of multiple perspectives and interdisciplinary themes in creating effective learning experiences for all P-12 students.
 - 8. Assesses learning and learners, analyze assessment data results, and adapt / adjust instruction based on assessment results for all P-12 students.

A caring teacher possesses at least these professional dispositions:

- A. Exhibits professional attributes and dispositions.
 - 1. Shows respect for learners and the learning process by exhibiting instructional / assessment flexibility to accommodate for the individual differences of all P-12 students.
 - 2. Respects families, cultures, and communities by demonstrating a sense of fairness to all participants.
 - 3. Communicates and collaborates with colleagues, P-12 students and their families, faculty, and staff.
- 4. Upholds ethical and professional standards.

Your program

The Catalog

The best single source of information for your academic progress at FMU will be the [Francis Marion University Catalog](#) better known as “The Catalog.” This document is published each year and will inform you of all of the rules, regulations, policies and procedures related to the academic life of the university. A new catalog is updated and published each year but the catalog that you received as a freshman is worth keeping. If the University changes policies or programs between two catalogs, with few exceptions you will be expected to follow the catalog you received upon entry. This Teacher Candidate Handbook will attempt to avoid redundancy whenever possible by referring you to “The Catalog” when appropriate.

News and Announcements

The School of Education has a [News and Announcements](#) webpage. It is your responsibility to check this webpage regularly to ensure you meet all requirements and deadlines.

Teacher Preparation Programs at FMU

The School of Education prepares teachers for most levels of public school education. Each program will have its own idiosyncrasies. Your advisor and the [Catalog](#) will be the best sources of information about how successfully enter and proceed through your program.

South Carolina Licensure Program	Grade Levels	FMU Major
Early Childhood (BS and MAT degree option)	PK - 3	Early Childhood Education
Elementary (BS and MAT degree option)	2 - 6	Elementary Education
Secondary	9 - 12	Biology – Teacher Certification
		English – Teacher Certification
		History – Teacher Certification
		Math – Teacher Certification
Art Education	K-12	Art Education
Multi-Categorical Special Education - Autism	K-12	Multi-Categorical Special Education - Autism

Advisors and Advising

Selecting and/or Changing a Major

Typically, teacher candidates select their level of licensure or major within their first three semesters. If you have not already selected a major, you can do so by contacting the appropriate department below. Your advisor will be assigned to you based on your selection of a major.

To change your FMU Major to:	Grade Levels	Contact
Early Childhood	PK - 3	The School of Education
Elementary	2 - 6	The School of Education
Art Education	k-12	Visual Arts Department
Secondary Biology	9 th – 12 th	Biology Department
Secondary English	9 th – 12 th	English Department
Secondary History	9 th -12 th	History Department
Secondary Math	9 - 12	Math Department
Multi-Categorical Special Education - Autism	K-12	Multi-Categorical Special Education - Autism

To change your program to Early Childhood or Elementary Education, please refer to the Change Program section of the School of Education's News and Announcements Page.

[\(https://www.fmarion.edu/education/soenews/\)](https://www.fmarion.edu/education/soenews/)

Your Academic Advisor

When you declare a major at FMU, you will be assigned an academic advisor from the School of Education. Your advisor is ready and willing to assist you as you progress through your program. It will always remain **your** responsibility, however, to contact your advisor when you want or need assistance. Likewise, it will remain your responsibility to periodically review your personal progress and ensure that you are conforming to the applicable policies and procedures within the School of Education and the University. This will mean

making periodic checks of the policies and procedures as provided in the [Catalog](#).

The Advising Process

In the middle of each fall and spring semester, you will notice dates for the advising and preregistration period. Advising time is the time for you to meet with your academic advisor to discuss your progress in the program and to plan your schedule for the next semester in light of your accomplishments and program requirements. It is important that you register as early as possible within the range of registration dates. Early registration provides you with the most options for getting the schedule you desire. Before you meet with your advisor, you should prepare a written copy of a tentative schedule.

Steps in Admission to the Professional Education Program

The steps you need to follow to be admitted into the School of Education's Professional Education Program and to be admitted to student teaching are listed in the current [catalog](#) and on our [News and Announcement](#) webpage. Be sure to study these procedures and to discuss them with your advisor.

Add-on Licensure

Once you have been certified at one level, the South Carolina Department of Education will allow you to add licensure in other areas should you choose to do so. If you are interested in doing this, you should consult with your advisor.

Progress Through Your Program

Teacher Candidate Status

Upon being officially admitted to an education program during Check Point I, you will take on a new title: **teacher candidate**. This term has been adopted nationally to reduce confusion in discussions that involve you (the college student) and the P-12 (pre-school through grade 12) students you teach in schools as part of your training. Once you complete your program and have graduated, you move from teacher candidate to **teacher**.

Check Points

Your progress through any of the education programs at FMU will be marked by a series of **three** Check Points.

Check Point I: Acceptance into Professional Education Program (PEP)

Check Point II: Admission into Clinical Experiences (Student Teaching)

Check Point III: Completion of Clinical Experiences and Licensure

At these points you will have to complete state and university requirements to progress to the next level. For the complete requirements for each Check Point, you must refer to "[The Catalog](#)" under the School of Education section. You will find that your advisor in the School of Education will be an important source of information and support as you proceed through your program.

Ultimately, you are responsible for your own progress through your university experience. Be sure you understand your program, the requirements for that program and what requirements you will need to meet to enter and complete that program. Be sure to check with your advisor if you have any questions concerning your status.

State and National Criminal Records Checks

All potential teacher candidates need to be aware that they must pass a state criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and a national criminal records check prior to student teaching. This check will include fingerprinting by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A teacher candidate "with prior arrests or convictions of a serious nature that could affect his fitness to teach in the public schools of South Carolina may be denied the opportunity to complete the clinical teaching experience and qualify for initial teacher licensure."

Each candidate or potential candidate is responsible for ensuring that he/she is eligible to student teach when he/she reaches this point in the program. The School of Education faculty recommends that if a candidate or potential teacher candidate has any questions as to whether his/her background may be in question, he/she should investigate this issue as soon as possible.

Professional Dispositions

Teaching is more than just knowing academic content and a few teaching strategies. Competent and caring teachers demonstrate a large array of professional behaviors that set them apart. The faculty at FMU is committed to assisting candidates with the development or strengthening of these behaviors. This is why, for example, your education instructors will be especially concerned with things like frequent absences, late arrivals, late submission of papers, poor attitude in class, failure to participate in class or lack of preparation. You will be assessed on these **professional dispositions** in specified classes/clinical experiences throughout your program. Failure to demonstrate appropriate dispositions may lead to dismissal from the program.

Field Experience and Clinical Placements

Time spent in schools working with and teaching students is an integral part of your teacher preparation program. It is so important, in fact, that all of your field and clinical experiences have been carefully planned and coordinated. The faculty member responsible for the clinical placements is the Director of Field and Clinical Experiences. This person will be responsible for placing you in each experience. A few facts may help you as you enter into the field or clinical phases of your training.

1. Your assignment will intentionally place you in as many diverse settings as is possible. This wide range of experience will be invaluable to you as you enter the job market.
2. While every effort is taken to make placements as convenient for you as possible, the School of Education will not be able to meet every request for convenient placements.
3. Your dress and behavior during clinical placements must be 100% professional at all times. It is in clinical settings that your professors and the school staff have a chance to evaluate your performance in real life settings. You should review the list of **Professional Dispositions** often as you proceed through your program. Failure to demonstrate appropriate dispositions may lead to dismissal from the program.

A WORD ABOUT CAEP, STUDENT LICENSURE AND LEARNING (SLL) AND ASSESSMENT

CAEP

You will no doubt hear your professors talking about CAEP from time to time. CAEP stands for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. CAEP is the national accrediting body for the Schools of Education around the state and around the nation. Because the FMU School of Education is nationally accredited, you are assured that your teacher training experiences here at FMU will be recognized around the nation. One big part of the accrediting process is the presence of a robust assessment system that allows the faculty at FMU and CAEP to assess teacher candidates, courses, procedures, and outcomes from the program.

Student Learning and Licensure (SLL)

The School of Education faculty at FMU has selected Student Learning and Licensure (SLL) as the foundation of its assessment system. After much study, the faculty determined that SLL provides both teacher candidates and faculty at FMU with the safest, easiest and most useful commercial program for our assessment system.

Students will be required to purchase a membership to this management system. Online assistance for candidates is available on the School of Education [Website](#) or by contacting the School of Education office.

Assignments in SLL

During your progress from teacher candidate to teacher, you will have many assignments in SLL. When SLL assignments are assessed or graded, the results of those assessments go directly into the School of Education Assessment System. Assignments in SLL will be used to improve programs and policies.

WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

Disagreements About Grades

Teacher candidates are highly encouraged to make frequent contact with their professors. These contacts should be related to how best to master the knowledge and/or skills being taught in a course. Experience has shown that when a student better understands the demands of a class and is willing to do the necessary work, he/she is

more satisfied with the grade given. Teacher candidates who are still dissatisfied with the grade awarded should consult The University [Catalog](#) for steps in the appeal procedure.

Grievances Related to Disability

Grievance procedures related to disability when a student with a disability strongly feels that reasonable accommodations have not been made, that student should seek resolution within the administrative channels for the area in which accommodation is in question. The student should first contact the Director of Counseling and Testing if he or she is dissatisfied with his or her accommodations.

Student Complaints and Resolutions

The School of Education faculty realizes that conflicts may arise between teacher candidates and their instructors, advisors, and/or public school personnel.

For instructor/candidate conflicts, the candidate is first recommended to discuss the issue with the instructor in a respectful and professional manner. If no resolution is forthcoming, the candidate should share the concern with his/her academic advisor. If the previous two approaches have been unsuccessful, the candidate may bring the issue to the Dean.

The final step in conflict resolution will be for the candidate to take the issue to the Provost. This step, however, should only occur when all other avenues for resolution have been exhausted.

FINDING YOUR FIRST TEACHING JOB

Supply and Demand

The School of Education attempts to remain informed of supply and demand issues related to the employment of FMU trained teachers. Some of the ways that Francis Marion University maintains close contact with issues of supply and demand in the teaching profession is through the South Carolina Department of Education publications and other national and regional reports. Further, the School of Education is an active partner with regional school districts in the Pee Dee Education Center consortium. This group meets multiple times throughout the year to discuss issues, including current teacher supply and demand.

The issue of supply and demand in teacher education is included in the curriculum as part of the introductory courses in the student's professional program and in the student teaching seminar. Such information is also incorporated into the advisement process so that the prospective teacher can make career decisions based on the most current information regarding supply and demand for educational personnel. Finally, the South Carolina Center for Education Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), supplies data on districts where there are teacher shortages.

Career Fair Expo

Each year, the University Office of Career Development sponsors one or more "Career Fair Expos." During the Fair a number of local and regional school districts send teacher recruiters.

Job Recommendations:

The faculty is usually more than willing to assist you with job recommendations. We recommend, however, that you contact the faculty member to obtain permission prior to submitting his or her name and/or sending a form.

Continuing your Professional Growth with FMU

FMU provides certified teachers and persons with a bachelor's degree looking to make education a career with opportunities to earn the following graduate degrees:

- Master of Education in Teaching and Learning
- Master of Arts in Teaching Multi-Categorical Special Education
- Master of Education in Montessori Early Childhood
- Master of Education in Montessori Elementary

Information about each program along with admissions criteria are provided in "The [Catalog](#)" beginning on page 194. Graduates are invited to talk with faculty members from the School of Education to learn more about the advantages of pursuing a graduate degree at FMU.