



VIRGINIA
WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY



Teacher Education Program

MAEd Candidate Handbook

Mission of the Teacher Education Program

The mission of the Teacher Education Program at Virginia Wesleyan University is to prepare reflective, engaged teachers of good character who will adhere to the highest standards of professionalism and who are willing to advance the cause of education and to cultivate and inspire a love of learning both in their students and within the communities they teach.

Rigorous disciplinary and education coursework combined with multiple supervised field experiences serve to develop the content and pedagogical knowledge necessary to teach successfully, to foster an appreciation for the richness of diverse culture, and to value the worth and dignity of all individuals in the international community.

This mission is driven by a conceptual framework based soundly on the current research in teacher education and the needs of America's public schools, and rests upon a foundation laid by exemplary scholars and writers on the importance of character, the growth and worth of knowledge, and the impact of global education, and in accordance with our United Methodist heritage.

Philosophy of the Teacher Education Program

WE learn.

The Education faculty contend that our candidates must see and experience the wonder in the human ability to learn¹ in order to understand teaching as a vocation. This is accomplished by preparing the hearts and minds of our candidates through rigorous content and education coursework combined with multiple supervised field experiences, leading to development of the knowledge necessary to teach successfully and to appreciate the richness of diverse cultures.

WE do.

Building on John Dewey's notion that "we learn what we do," the faculty of the Education Program contend that all children can and do learn. Embracing both a constructivist and humanistic philosophy, we contend that good teachers, when prepared through a program that values both the science and art of teaching, can "cultivate the mind, the hand, the heart, and indeed the whole person" to elevate and prepare all children for the concrete challenges of life and a changing world.²

WE serve.

The Wesleyan heritage promotes a commitment to servant leadership within the University's faculty, staff, and students. This commitment is embraced by the faculty, staff, and candidates of the Teacher Education Program to see and use education as a pathway to purposefully engage the needs of students of all cultures and value the worth and dignity of all individuals.

¹Emerson, R. W. In Hansen, 2008, p. 7.

²Hansen, 2008, p. 16.

Conceptual Framework of the Teacher Education Program

Guided by the La Sallian motto, “Enter to learn, leave to serve,” and John Dewey’s belief that “we learn what we do,” the Teacher Education Program at Virginia Wesleyan University seeks to inspire and prepare teachers to become champions of all students’ hearts and minds. To accomplish this lofty goal, the Education faculty embrace and advocate a perspective that values lifelong learning and continuous improvement of the individual that is best captured by six words:

WE learn. WE do. WE serve.

This philosophical statement expresses the Education faculty’s commitment to an understanding that teaching is a vocation to which one is specially drawn, and for which one can be specially prepared. Both the academic and education faculty at VWU prepare and guide each candidate to become an education professional – a teacher – dedicated to the continual improvement of all students’ educational experiences.

For years, the field of education has been depicted visually by a set of keys that represent keys of knowledge. At VWU, we incorporate keys into the visual representation of our conceptual framework as a clear and present reminder that teachers impart knowledge that unlocks the doors of their students’ hearts and minds, and perhaps the doors to a better life. The Conceptual Framework of the Teacher Education Program at Virginia Wesleyan University is represented visually by four keys hanging from a ring that encircles a lighthouse superimposed on a globe. The keys represent the four components of Program emphasis: Character, Academic Knowledge, Professional Knowledge, and Field Experience. These four components bring our philosophy statement to fruition. The ring symbolizes the ongoing challenge of helping teacher candidates move from a perception of self-as-student to self-as-teacher in order to reach the ultimate goal of becoming teachers who empower all students to learn for learning’s sake. In the foreground of the ring is VWU’s prominent visual symbol of a lighthouse superimposed upon a globe. The globe represents the international influences and growing diversity in the Hampton Roads region and symbolizes the connectedness of the global community and the unity that education can bring to that global community. This symbol invokes an awareness needed by today’s educators of the local impact of their vocation on the education experiences of their own students and communities, as well as the global impact of the vocation for the improvement of all students’ educational experiences in the international community. The lighthouse completes the metaphor that education provides the keys to knowledge and wisdom that light the way to a hope-filled life and a better world.

Each key in the graphic represents a component that constitutes the educative process that Virginia Wesleyan education faculty, with the input of public and private school partners, have identified as essential for the development of the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and dispositions of education professionals: 1) Character consists of the dispositions, behaviors, and ethical values identified by our partners and in the literature on teaching and teacher education, as necessary to be successful, effective teachers; (2) Academic Knowledge encompasses VWU’s General Studies and Frames of Reference courses that assist our candidates in understanding themselves and the world around them, and that allow them to gain a more integrated view of knowledge; the disciplinary content courses enhance and build upon the general studies and frames courses, providing candidates the opportunity to learn how to think about the knowledge in their disciplines and endorsement areas, and how this knowledge can contribute to becoming effective, successful teachers; (3) Professional Knowledge evolves through carefully thought-out courses of study that are combined with multiple site-based experiences starting with the first course students take in the MAEd program. Throughout their professional studies coursework, candidates are encouraged to start connecting their endorsement

area knowledge to an understanding and eventual application of effective pedagogy through observation and participation in diverse classrooms to see how P-12 students learn and think at various stages in their development; (4) Field Experience opportunities help candidates develop the practical knowledge that pre-service teachers need to connect academic and professional studies coursework to professional practice. Early site-based experiences begin in the pre-admission courses and continue throughout the program, and lead to formal practicum experiences and pre-service teaching. These experiences provide candidates with extensive opportunities to explore diverse education settings and develop specific competencies and desired dispositions through observation, participation in professional learning communities, peer collaboration, guided practice, and direct instruction in the endorsement area sought.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of the importance of inquiry, reflection, and communication as prerequisites to being a good educator (in Hansen, p. 7, 2008). Cumulatively, the intention of the four aforementioned areas of study is to lead candidates to develop a spirit of inquiry, a need for professional reflection, and the ability to communicate effectively.



Character


Character speaks to the “inner landscape of teaching” and the need to “cherish – and challenge – the human heart that is the source of good teaching” (Palmer, 2007, p. 4). The challenge of which Palmer (2007) writes is best described by Covey (2004) as the crucial challenge: to find our own voice and inspire others to find theirs. Over the past two decades, great attention has been focused on the importance of identifying and cultivating appropriate dispositions, or character strengths, for candidates in teacher education programs (Pang, Nichols, Terwilliger, and Walsh, 2014). Character can be described as “an ensemble of settled dispositions – of habitual feelings and desires” (Kronman, in Brooks, 2015, p. 57).

At Virginia Wesleyan, we see dispositions as qualities that are necessary to possess good character, a vital part of the expressed mission of our Teacher Education Program. Within teacher education, dispositions have been defined as “patterns of behavior exhibited frequently, consciously and voluntarily by educators (Katz, 1993) and often demonstrated through a positive attitude, engagement, a value of diversity, and commitment to effective communication” (Baum & Swick, in Pang, et al., 2014). Correlating with these frequently identified dispositions are key character strengths (hope, perspective, creativity, zest, collaboration, social intelligence, and gratitude) identified by Ormrod (2006) as contributing strongly to a sense of self-efficacy, the confidence in one’s own ability to achieve intended results, which, when combined with curiosity, kindness, honesty, and perseverance (often referred to as “grit”), lead to a greater sense of global life fulfillment and satisfaction, or a positive disposition toward life and vocation. Research on dispositions in teacher education indicates there is a “correlation between teachers’ positive dispositions and students’ self-determination”, including acknowledgement of (expressing gratitude for) students’ individual efforts (Hong and Shull, in Pang, et al., 2014). Additionally, research finds that “teachers who foster a caring learning environment improve students’ reported sense of efficacy” (Hong & Shull, 2009; Johnston, et al., in Pang, et al., 2013). Both Maslow and Covey felt it necessary to address social and emotional needs – Parker’s “inner landscape” – as powerful motivators and speak of “the heart” in terms of having relationships which are satisfying interactions, which in the case of the literature cited above are satisfying interactions with students in the classroom, and with other teachers, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders. As such, character plays a significant role in a teacher’s success both in and out of the classroom. Thus, the cultivation of good character and the dispositions associated with good character seems in keeping with states’ guidelines and professional education organizations’ (e.g. InTASC, CAEP) calls for teacher education programs to cultivate positive dispositions and assess these dispositions as one part of continual program improvement. Based on the research and established guidelines, the potential conclusion is that the more of the critical character traits that are possessed by teachers in terms of dispositions, the more likely those teachers are to persist in the profession and to have a positive impact on the learning of P-12 students.

In VWU’s programs, we identify good character as part of our mission, and include as part of the needed dispositions the goals and learning outcomes of evaluative and reflective practice (InTASC 9) and knowledge of education trends and issues (InTASC 10), as well as the additional behaviors and dispositions needed to become successful, reflective educators. The dispositions are cultivated and developed through coursework across the curriculum, but primarily through the professional studies courses and through interactions with education faculty and education professionals, both in university classrooms and during site-based and formal field experiences. It is our firm desire to communicate these dispositions to candidates, faculty, and school partners to ensure that all parties are contributing to and reinforcing the development of qualities and traits that empower teachers and define good character.

Academic Knowledge

Academic knowledge is developed through the fulfillment of General Studies and Frames of Reference requirements and specially designed endorsement area programs (*VWU Catalog 2017/18*, pp. 41- 44). The General Studies Program at VWU is designed to instruct students how to think in integrative ways. This program rests upon seven epistemological approaches, the Frames of Reference, which expose VWU students to broad patterns of thought about how people perceive and seek to understand their world, their society, and themselves. In addition to being able to demonstrate proficiency in writing and competency in a language other than English, graduates of VWU will be able to demonstrate Aesthetic Understanding, knowledge of Historical Perspectives, the ability to employ the scientific method from the



Natural Science Laboratory courses, the ability to analyze data and models from a Quantitative Perspective, a critical understanding of Institutional and Cultural Systems in human society, the ability to engage in Literary Textual Analysis, and an understanding of how Ethical Values and Faith Perspectives shape worldviews (*VWU Catalog 2017/18*).


Discipline-based knowledge is a prerequisite for effective teaching (Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Secondary candidates in math, English, history/social sciences, biology, chemistry, and earth/environmental science and P-12 candidates in art, vocal music, theater, and world languages (Spanish, German, French, Latin) develop their content knowledge by earning a BA or BS in the appropriate academic major. Candidates are assessed on the pedagogical and endorsement competencies specified in the *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia* and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards (2011). All candidates must demonstrate competency in the Virginia Standards of Learning. Assessment instruments, including rubrics, examinations, and practica and pre-service teaching observation forms, are based on these guiding documents.

Endorsement area courses of study are typically co-constructed by education faculty and content area faculty to fulfill the required teaching competencies identified in the *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia* (2011). New programs added over the last five years have also been vetted by our partners in P-12 education through direct contact or membership on advisory boards, including the new 5th-Year BA/BS to Master of Arts in Education Program in Secondary and PreK-12 Education. Courses of study in the academic disciplines are dynamic, as coursework is continually reviewed and adjusted, when necessary, based on emerging knowledge of best practices in the academic field, updates to the Standards of Learning, and feedback from partners, advisory boards, and alumni in the field.

Professional Knowledge

Professional knowledge, including pedagogical knowledge, evolves in the graduate program through a carefully considered course of study, including both pre-admission and professional studies courses that include site-based experiences throughout the program. The faculty contend that knowledge about the teaching profession and the issues that surround the field of teaching are best acquired by pairing coursework with exposure to real school settings, with real students and real teachers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). The MAEd program develops professional and pedagogical knowledge through a purposeful progression of professional studies courses combined with multiple site-based experiences and supervised internships starting with the first course MAEd candidates will take. Throughout their tenure in the Teacher Education Program, all candidates regardless of endorsement area are encouraged to begin connecting their content area knowledge to the understanding and eventual application of effective pedagogy through observation and participation in diverse classrooms to see how P-12 students learn and think at various stages in their development. Making this connection is crucial for candidates to develop an understanding of praxis, or informed action, that is, “the process of taking action in practice whilst acting within a theoretical framework of thought” (Quinlan, 2012). Praxis also includes establishing a disposition of reflection based on Freire’s notion of praxis as “reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed” (2014). Our interpretation of this notion is that through the process of reflection and field experiences (action), our candidates will evolve from students of teaching into teachers of students, capable of transforming the lives of all students.

Professional and pedagogical preparation has and continues to draw on the work of Danielson (2007, 2014), Marzano (2017), researchers on culturally responsive teaching (Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2010), research conducted by education faculty, state guidelines, and feedback from our school partners and alumni. We integrate these resources




into our program structure in order to prepare our candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in both the InTASC Standards (2011) and Virginia's teacher competencies as essential to being successful, reflective, culturally responsive teachers. Evidence of this preparation perspective is found in our Goals and Program Learning Outcomes (see Table 1), in our field observation instruments, and in our syllabi. The learning outcomes are aligned with our program goals and used for program and institutional assessment as part of the Student Learning Assessment Report (SLAR) required each year, allowing us to perform annual and, when analyzed over a period of years, long-term audits of program effectiveness. Because our program is philosophically aligned with a constructivist and humanistic approach to learning, Danielson's constructivist-based Framework (2007; 2014) provides a practical and accessible resource for program and candidate development, assessment, reflection, and growth. Syllabi also provide evidence of the education faculty's embrace of a constructivist (or social constructivist) perspective, as the faculty provide opportunities for experiential and inquiry-based learning, and frequently use collaborative, team-based and project-based assignments to assess candidates' understanding of pedagogical concepts and applications.

Field Experiences

Once admitted, MAEd candidates are exposed to site-based experiences that are carefully coordinated with their professional studies courses. These experiences, occurring before formal practica and student teaching, allow candidates to begin the process of observing, then translating, theory into practice in diverse settings under the watchful guidance of VWU faculty and committed education partners, thus reinforcing the development of praxis. Practicum experiences during methods coursework allow candidates to apply their pedagogical knowledge in diverse, formal school settings appropriate for their endorsement areas. During these experiences, candidates are typically supervised by their methods course instructors, who can provide near-immediate feedback and fine-tune or re-emphasize course content based on multiple classroom observations of the candidates. Upon successful completion of practicum experiences and the recommendations of faculty teaching the methods courses, candidates proceed to pre-service teaching experiences.

Student teaching at VWU is a performance-based demonstration of curriculum implementation and teaching procedures and competencies at acceptable levels for the areas and learning outcomes described in this conceptual framework. Pre-service teachers are also expected to demonstrate developing knowledge and awareness of the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* (VDOE, 2008). All of this is accomplished with the support of cooperating teachers, university supervisors, the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences and Partnerships, and education and content area faculty. It is in this environment of multi-faceted support that VWU candidates emerge as highly desirable professional educators who exhibit good character (InTASC 9); understand the importance of clear and coherent communication (InTASC 5 & 9); demonstrate effective instructional planning (InTASC 5-8); demonstrate effective behavior management practices (InTASC 1, 3); demonstrate effective instructional and assessment practices (InTASC 6, 7, 8); and demonstrate the ability to reflect on and evaluate their practices and engage in identified professional behaviors that lead to lifelong personal growth, continual improvement, and a commitment to the growth and status of the profession (InTASC 9 & 10). The *Virginia Standards* document also form the basis for the development and use of new observation forms for content area student teachers in the MAEd Program.

From these four components, seven goals, expressed below, have been identified and are annually assessed. These outcomes reflect alignment with CAEP Standards, as well as those of InTASC, and reflect evolving program emphases




over the past seven years. These goals are expressed are annually considered and reviewed by the Program faculty, staff, and stakeholders.

Goals of the Teacher Education Program

1. Develop candidates who know their endorsement area content and are able to employ best practices in instruction of that content to all students.
2. Develop candidates who are knowledgeable, reflective, and able to plan, provide, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners, to include culturally responsive teaching.
3. Develop candidates who are knowledgeable, reflective, and able to employ effective behavior management strategies in the classroom and beyond.
4. Develop candidates who are able to evaluate and reflect on professional responsibilities, enhance the profession, and are knowledgeable of current trends and issues in education.
5. Develop candidates who are knowledgeable, reflective, and able to use instructional media and technology to enhance student learning.
6. Develop candidates who are knowledgeable, reflective, and able to employ assessment strategies to collect and evaluate data to increase student learning.
7. Develop candidates who possess good character and the dispositions to be successful, reflective teachers.

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The Master of Arts in Education (MAEd)

The Education Department at Virginia Wesleyan University offers coursework leading to a Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) and initial licensure with secondary 6-12 endorsement in six content areas (math, history/social sciences, biology, chemistry, earth/environmental sciences, English) and preK-12 endorsement in seven content areas (art, vocal music, theater arts, Latin, German, Spanish, French). Candidates in the MAEd program develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, and dispositions they need to teach effectively in today's diverse and ever-changing classrooms.

The MAEd Program provides coursework and field experiences leading to initial licensure. The Program is a unique, field-based course of study that combines theories of learning and pedagogy with meaningful field experiences to help teacher candidates develop a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding teaching and learning. Central to this innovative program is a 2-semester internship in school settings that begins in the fall semester and culminates with a 10-12-week student teaching experience in the spring. Additional highlights of the program include coursework in learning theory and human development, exceptional student populations, and collaborating with families and communities. The course of study will be delivered by full-time faculty in collaboration with highly qualified school personnel who bring exceptional expertise and experience in vital areas.

Program Highlights

Secondary (6-12) endorsement areas:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth/Environmental Sciences
- Mathematics
- English
- History/Social Sciences

PreK-12 endorsement areas:

- French
- German
- Spanish
- Latin
- Vocal/Choral Music
- Theatre Arts
- Visual Arts

Note: The MAEd program must be completed on a full-time basis.

Potential candidates must have *completed a baccalaureate degree at Virginia Wesleyan University* in the arts and sciences discipline they wish to teach, *plus satisfy all Virginia requirements* for endorsement in that teaching field. Potential candidates must also have satisfied Praxis Core requirements prior to application and pass the appropriate Praxis Subject Assessment for their endorsement area prior to being allowed to student teach.

Admission Requirements

- Earned baccalaureate degree from Virginia Wesleyan University in the appropriate approved major
 - Completed state-required coursework within the degree
- Passing scores on Praxis Core or SAT/ACT equivalent
- Minimum 2.8 GPA overall (minimum 2.5 GPA in endorsement area major or coursework)
- Documentation that the candidate is free from tuberculosis

Continuation Requirements (Prior to start of Fall Semester)

- Complete the [Child Abuse Recognition and Intervention Module](#) and submit certification of completion
- Clearance background check (includes fingerprinting)

Continuation Requirements (Prior to start of Spring Semester)

- Submission of passing scores on appropriate Praxis Subject Area assessment
- Submission of passing scores on the VCLA
- Grades of C or higher in all coursework
- Maintain minimum 3.0 GPA
- Complete the Dyslexia Awareness Training Module and submit certification of completion
- If seeking endorsement in history and social sciences 6-12, successfully complete the [Virginia State and Local Civic Education Module](#) and submit certificate of completion
- Complete required *hands-on* Emergency First Aid, CPR, & AED Training

This program requires full-time candidates to complete the program according to a set three-semester course sequence. Candidates also have important field experiences prior to their student teaching semester. The seminar that accompanies student teaching promotes reflection, group discussion, and instructor feedback about their teaching experiences.

The MAEd leads to *initial licensure* and is open only to individuals who are *not* already certified.

5th-Year BA/BS to MAEd Professional Education Course of Study

Semester 1: Summer (13 hours)

Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
EDUC 510	Current Issues in Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	3
EDUC 511	Practicum in Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	1
EDUC 520	Foundations of the Teaching Profession	3
EDUC 530	Cognition and Child and Adolescent Development	3
EDUC 535	Characteristics of and Adaptations for Exceptional Student Populations	3

<i>Complete required Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Intervention Training Module (must be submitted no later than August 15)</i>	Date Submitted:
<i>Complete required Background Clearance Check prior to Fall Semester</i>	Date Completed:

Semester 2: Fall (15 hours)

EDUC 610	Methods, Media, & Materials for Secondary Education (endorsement area breakout sections)	3
EDUC 611	Internship in Secondary Education (50+ hrs)	1
EDUC 550	Content Reading Across the Curriculum	2
EDUC 551	Content Writing Across the Curriculum	2
EDUC 540	Classroom & Behavior Management	3
EDUC 620	Research Methods in Education	4

<i>Virginia Communication & Literacy Assessment must be passed before registering for Spring Semester</i>	Date Taken:	Passed: Yes No Score:
<i>Praxis Subject Area Assessment must be passed before registering for Spring Semester</i>	Date Taken:	Passed: Yes No Score:
<i>Emergency First Aid, hands-on CPR, & AED Training must be completed before registering for Spring Semester</i>	Date Completed:	
<i>Complete Dyslexia Awareness Training Module during Content Reading Across the Curriculum course</i>	Date Submitted:	
<i>History and Social Sciences candidates complete required Virginia State and Local Civic Education Module for Licensure (must be submitted no later than October 15)</i>	Date Submitted:	

<i>Emergency First Aid, CPR, & AED Training</i> <i>(must be submitted no later than October 15)</i>	Date Submitted:
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Winter Session (2 hours)

EDUC 525	Collaboration with Families, Communities, & School Personnel	2
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Semester 3: Spring (12 hours)

EDUC 625	Creating a Culture of Evidence-based Learning	2
EDUC 690	Internship in Supervised Teaching	8
EDUC 691	Internship Seminar	2

	TOTAL HOURS	42
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MAEd Program Policies and Procedures

Note: MAEd Candidates must maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout the program and complete all requirements in order to graduate and be eligible for recommendation for licensure to teach in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Consequences of Academic Underperformance

Any student achieving less than an overall GPA of a 2.8 at time of application will not be admitted into the Teacher Education Program. Any candidate achieving less than a GPA of a 3.0 following admission to the Master of Arts in Education Program will be put on Academic Probation as University policy dictates and will be notified via email of a scheduled meeting with his or her advisor, followed, if necessary, by a meeting with the Director of the Education Program. To prepare for this meeting, candidates on Academic Probation must prepare a written description detailing how they plan to raise their overall GPA for the next semester. This meeting with the advisor and/or Director will consist of a description of support services, a discussion of the candidate's plan for remediation, and consequences of another semester under an overall 3.0 GPA. Candidates must bring their overall GPA to or above a 3.0 in the following semester to continue enrollment in the MAEd Program. A course must be repeated if a grade of C- or below is earned.

Because a 3.0 cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) is necessary for graduation, a GPA of 3.0 (B) or higher is required to remain in good academic standing, and a GPA below 3.0 is a warning that a candidate's academic performance falls below acceptable standards. A graduate student with a GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and has the next 12 credit hours (including courses retaken to improve the GPA) to raise the GPA above 3.0, or they may be dismissed from the program. Graduate students whose GPA falls substantially below 3.0 may be suspended or dismissed, at the discretion of the Committee on Academic Standing.

Dispositional Support and Consequences of Dispositional Underperformance

Due to the nature of the teaching profession, the development of dispositions typical of effective teachers is critical. Professors assess candidates' dispositions in *all professional education courses*. Candidates without at least "Acceptable" dispositional ratings will not receive the required consent to complete their field-based internship.

Dispositional ratings are designed to encourage metacognitive reflection and discussion. However, students who receive ratings less than "Acceptable" are expected to develop a plan for improvement. An underperforming candidate and the professor will discuss how best to address the issue, and the candidate will submit a written plan to the professor on how he or she hopes to address any areas that need improvement. This plan will then be sent to the Director of the Education Program for placement in the candidate's file. If the candidate does not agree with a rating, he or she may request a meeting with the Director to discuss the issue. Failure to earn "Acceptable" ratings on the dispositional rubric may result in suspension or removal.

The Importance of Consistent Attendance and the Prompt Submission of Assigned Work

Of course, it is extremely important for all VWU students to attend class regularly and to submit assignments in a timely manner. Due to the nature of VWU's Education Programs and the career path that education candidates have embarked upon, consistent attendance and the prompt completion of assigned work are crucial. Because professional studies coursework involves field-based experiences that include the teaching of PreK-12 students, a candidate's absence could negatively impact the learning achievements of the children and adolescents in their charge. Effective educators exhibit professionalism; that is, they are prompt, dependable, and honest. Syllabi will clearly delineate procedures for notifying the professor of a need to be absent or late to class and any consequences for chronic absences or the submission of late work.

In Conclusion

The aim of this *Handbook* is to provide candidates in the MAEd Program with a comprehensive overview of the graduate-school experience. Changes in Virginia Department of Education requirements are inevitable, and the Education Department will always endeavor to inform candidates of such changes in the most expedient manner possible. Updates to the *Handbook* will be made accordingly. Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for knowing and understanding the requirements for program completion and graduation rest with the candidate.

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