

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Standard 6.1

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each *candidate's professional placement*.

All teacher candidates in STEP receive ongoing professional, academic and personal support, including for their clinical placement, throughout the STEP year from numerous, qualified professionals.

Drs. Ira Lit and Peter Williamson, **the directors** of STEP Elementary (multiple subject + multiple subject with bilingual authorization) and STEP Secondary (single subject), respectively, serve as the candidates' primary academic advisors. Both are associate professors in the Graduate School of Education and are members of the Stanford University's Academic Council. They provide support and guidance in numerous ways, both formal and informal, throughout the year, including, but not limited to all of the following:

- The directors are the lead instructors for the weekly Teaching Seminar (see *EDUC246A, B, C, D: Secondary Teaching Seminar* and *EDUC246E, F, G, H: Elementary Teaching Seminar syllabi*). The courses are framed around core academic content, but also serve as a programmatic 'homeroom' where the directors maintain regular and active involvement in the vicissitudes of the program year.
- As part of the weekly Seminar courses, the two directors require each individual candidate to complete a weekly '[check in](#)' card, offering insights into their progress and challenges in course work, clinical experiences, and their general personal and professional development. These 'check ins' serve as a key means of communicating progress and concerns, and also serve as a catalyst for individualized advising, conferencing, and other supports, as needed.
- The directors host 1-1 advising sessions with each candidate during fall quarter, to gain a sense of progress, challenges, and goals, to better guide future advising and support.
- The directors offer regular office hours to provide tailored advising and support, as warranted, for each candidate.
- The directors keep close and regular progress reports on all candidates, via formal means, such as course grades and [quarterly assessment report](#), and informal means, through weekly meetings with key staff, including clinical associates and the director of clinical work.

The university supervisors provide the most regular and direct support and advisement to the teacher candidates in regards to their clinical placements and professional and personal growth.

The STEP supervisors include practicing elementary and secondary teachers, retired teachers, doctoral candidates, teaching scholars with advanced degrees in education, and administrators and educators published in their fields. (See Tables [4.3](#) and [4.3a](#) for STEP supervisors' qualifications.) All STEP Supervisors are experienced classroom practitioners, with a minimum of three years of public school teaching experience, and with a credential in the field they supervise.

In their clinical placements, candidates are also supported in their pedagogical and professional development by expert **cooperating teachers**. Cooperating teachers must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in their area of certification, a California teaching credential (including English Learner Authorization), and a strong commitment and willingness to mentor teacher candidates over the period of a semester or full academic year. (See Tables [4.3](#) and [4.3a](#) for STEP cooperating teachers' qualifications.)

Both supervisors and cooperating teachers receive training and ongoing support to ensure the strength of their skills and qualifications as mentors and advisors to the teacher candidates, and to support their own growth and development as mentors. (See sample [CT](#) and [supervisor](#) professional development agendas and attendance lists.)

Ruth Ann Costanzo, **STEP's director of clinical work K-12**, coordinates and supports the entire system of field placements, including the teams of supervisors and cooperating teachers. Ms. Costanzo is an experienced educator with a wealth of relevant experience including time as a classroom teacher, school principal, and district associate superintendent. In addition to her other roles, Ms. Costanzo provides direct support and advising to candidates on a regular basis, in support of their personal and professional growth and of their clinical experiences.

STEP's director of clinical work also supports candidates in their professional placement. In the winter quarter Ms. Costanzo conducts a series of [workshops](#) on resumé-writing, [cover-letter writing](#), and interviewing techniques, and the series concludes with an annual [Mock Interview](#) event in which administrators from STEP's clinical partner schools are invited to interview candidates in a small-group format. In addition to supporting candidates as they seek full-time employment, the program also tracks candidates' placement through the office of the director of clinical work. The [GSE EdCareers](#) office also conducts an [annual employment survey](#) of all immediate graduates of the GSE. Program directors review candidate employment information through the spring in order to gauge additional supports that might help in candidates' preparation for the job market.

Finally, the entire team of **STEP faculty, course instructors, teaching assistants, and regular program staff** provide ongoing advising and support to individual candidates as needed. STEP prides itself on close and personalized support of each of its candidates.

Standard 6.2

Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements.

STEP candidates are informed of both California credential requirements and program requirements throughout the program year. The process begins during the admissions and recruiting cycles. Information about key program and credential requirements, including testing, course expectations, and CTC expectations are all spelled out on the program's [website](#) and in [email communications](#) from the STEP program officer and credential analyst, Viviana Alcazar. Throughout the year, the STEP program officer and credential analyst continues to track each candidate's progress on all program and state requirements, informs candidates in a timely manner of any impending requirements and expectations, and supports the candidates in their efforts to meet said requirements.

All program requirements and expectations are further addressed at the very start of the STEP program year. During [STEP Orientation](#), which occurs during the first week of the program, candidates are guided to review the STEP [Secondary](#) or [Elementary](#) Handbook, which describes all program requirements for Multiple Subject (all) and Single Subject candidates. During that week, candidates also participate in sessions led by the Director of Clinical Placement, the PACT Coordinator, and the Faculty Directors in order to learn more information on programmatic requirements such as the PACT Teaching Event, quarterly assessments, and STEP coursework.

In addition, throughout the year, candidates are kept apprised of requirements through formal meetings, timely email updates, and personalized advising sessions with the directors and other STEP staff, as relevant. For example during Orientation, the director of clinical work first meets with all candidates ([Secondary/ Elementary \(all\)](#)) to discuss the process of clinical placement matching and solicits input from candidates about important factors relating to their placement assignments. The director of clinical work meets with candidates again ([Secondary/ Elementary \(all\)](#)) once they have been placed at a site and cooperating teacher to discuss requirements, expectations, and norms for establishing professional relationships and meeting expectations (TPEs and CSTPs) as delineated on the [quarterly assessment](#). Weekly supervisory groups and frequent informal check-ins with the Faculty Directors provide candidates additional opportunities to delve into and clarify programmatic expectations. Some program requirements—such as the [PACT Teaching Event](#) and [Content Area Tasks](#)—are completed in conjunction with STEP coursework. Thus, candidates are also informed of requirements regularly by STEP faculty and key staff, such as the PACT Coordinator. Finally, as mentioned above, the [STEP website](#) details all program requirements by program area, and also contains a link to the STEP Handbooks ([Multiple Subject- all](#); [Single Subject](#)).

Standard 6.3

The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retains candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession.

STEP, the Stanford Graduate School of Education, and Stanford University are all committed to supporting the professional, academic, and personal development of our teacher candidates. In addition to highly personalized advising and support by STEP faculty and staff (as described in detail above), candidates have access to GSE-specific and university-wide student services from both individuals (e.g., the Associate Dean for Student Affairs) and organizations such as the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at [Vaden Health Center](#), the [Office of Accessible](#)

[Education](#), and the [Hume Center for Speaking and Writing](#). When a candidate is identified as needing additional support—be it personal, professional, or academic—program stakeholders work with the candidate to match him/her with the appropriate resources. As candidates' advisors, STEP directors often coordinate the necessary stakeholders and services (e.g., arranging meetings between the candidate and a financial aid officer). In addition, the STEP Director of Clinical Work may also facilitate conversations between the candidate, cooperating teacher, and supervisor when difficulties arise in a placement.

Candidates receive numerous data points and related evaluative feedback throughout the STEP year to understand their academic, instructional and professional strengths, as well as areas for improvement. For example, candidates complete a self-reflection assignment as part of their [formal observations](#) in which they reflect on their practice in light of the standards (TPEs and CSTPs) and the evaluations and feedback of their cooperating teacher and supervisor. STEP urges candidates to use these data to reflect on and take ownership of their own professional and academic development. Faculty, supervisors, and STEP staff are all available to support candidates as they reflect on their professional growth, set goals for further development, and help provide appropriate resources and coaching to guide improvement.

Drs. Lit and Williamson monitor all [other key evaluations](#) of candidate progress in determining the preparedness of candidates to remain in the program and to determine whether to recommend candidates for advancement in the profession. Though quite rare, when a candidate's progress is not sufficient to meet program and/or professional standards and expectations, after sufficient opportunities for support and redress, the directors will counsel candidate out of the program/profession. In these rare circumstances, STEP directors have worked with such students to identify more appropriate and promising career paths.

In 2013-14, 99 of 99 teacher candidates successfully completed the program and were recommended for a credential, and in 2014-2015, 86 of 86 candidates successfully completed the program and were recommended for a credential.

Standard 6.4

Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

Many of the efforts relevant to this sub-standard are described above.

Because STEP frequently monitors candidate progress through a variety of formal assessments and informal check-ins, STEP is able to identify candidates who need additional professional and/or academic support in a timely manner, and to provide these candidates with needed and appropriate resources.

Formal sources of programmatic progress include course grades and key assignments, clinical observations, [quarterly assessment reports](#), and PACT score reports ([Secondary/Elementary \(all\)](#)). These summative assessment tools are augmented with regular, formative assessment instruments, and ongoing personal check-ins, all of which serve to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

Some of the mechanisms for doing so include the following:

- Through ongoing conversations with STEP faculty, as well as a review of candidates' quarterly grades and quarterly assessment reports, Drs. Lit and Williamson are able to identify candidates who might need additional academic support and to then direct these candidates to the appropriate program and university resources (e.g., tutoring, the [Hume Writing Center](#), etc.). Because STEP faculty often use a variety of formative assessments, such as exit tickets, reading logs, and instructional tasks, faculty are generally able to recognize candidates who might benefit from supplementary academic supports early in the quarter.
- Ongoing conversations with supervisors and cooperating teachers, as well as conversations with candidates themselves, help STEP's program directors and director of clinical work flag candidates who may need assistance in their professional practice. Such candidates receive individualized help including, but not limited to, additional observations, additional peer reviews, and additional three-way meetings with their supervisor and cooperating teacher. Additionally, feedback from candidates' [formal observations](#) and [quarterly assessments](#) provide insight into candidates' pedagogical development as measured by the TPEs and CSTPs. Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers use these observations to focus their efforts on the particular areas in which the candidate needs support.
- As mentioned elsewhere, the STEP program directors collect [weekly exit tickets](#) from all candidates to gauge candidates' academic, professional, and personal needs and follow up individually with candidates. In addition to informal meetings with individual candidates, the directors also meet individually with all candidates in their respective. These meetings offer the directors an additional opportunity to provide each candidate with in-depth and personalized support and resources.
- Program directors review grade reports and [quarterly assessment reports](#) at the end of every quarter.
- The program administrator and credential analyst provides Drs. Lit and Williamson with [regular reports](#) on candidate progress toward state credential requirements.
- The PACT Score Report (see [Secondary](#) and [Elementary \(all\)](#) samples), which candidates and program directors receive in the spring quarter following their completion of the Teaching Event, details each candidate's instructional strengths and areas of growth as evaluated by the PACT Teaching Event.