

Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence

Standard 9.1

Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and *support* effectively all *students* in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

A deep and flexible understanding of subject matter is the foundation of the pedagogical content knowledge underpinning teachers' ability to help all students engage effectively with the curriculum. STEP prepares educators to effectively teach diverse learners; help their students achieve high intellectual, academic, and social standards, while meeting state-adopted academic standards; and create equitable and successful schools and classrooms. Professional knowledge and skills include an understanding of how children and adolescents learn, a deep understanding of content and pedagogical content knowledge, an understanding of broader principles of teaching and learning, and an understanding of how school, community, and societal contexts affect teaching and learning. Thus, the program advocates teaching that is content-based and context-responsive, with a strong emphasis on both the development of content-specific pedagogy and preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners. All of these efforts are pursued in connection with the [STEP Mission Statement](#).

STEP evaluates foundational [subject matter competence](#) as per state requirements, via California Subject Exam for Teachers (CSET) or completion of a state approved subject matter program, as appropriate for each content area. In 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 100% of the Teacher Candidates successfully met state subject matter competence requirements.

Multiple Subject candidates must also pass the Reading Instruction Competence Exam (RICA). In 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 100% of the Multiple Subject Candidates passed the RICA.

Below, we highlight the array of avenues through which the program assesses candidates' mastery of professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

COURSES

During the STEP year, candidates are required to complete a rigorous series of content-specific Curriculum and Instruction courses (C&I). In these courses, the candidates study, practice, and demonstrate competence in the knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction of all learners, including lesson design, formative and summative assessment practices, instructional strategies, and management techniques, all of which are connected to the strengths, interests, and needs of the diverse learners in today's classrooms (see curriculum grids for [STEP Elementary \(all\)](#) and [STEP Secondary](#)). In the C&I courses, which are coordinated with year-long field placements, STEP provides substantive instruction and supervised practice that prepares each candidate to plan and deliver effective

content-specific instruction. This instruction draws on the Common Core State Standards, all state-adopted academic content standards for students, the curriculum frameworks in each content area, and the fundamental principles and ideas of each discipline. The program provides multiple opportunities for candidates to apply the TPEs and curriculum standards to instruction in each of the designated subjects, as well as to practice and reflect on the specific pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge that comprise the subject-specific TPEs. The major assignments for these courses, as well as course grades in the Curriculum and Instruction sequence, provide a body of evidence from which to assess the development of each candidate's pedagogical content knowledge, and their professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

Course sequences (see [curriculum grids](#)) for Multiple Subject candidates (all) address all key content areas: Becoming Literate in Schools (three courses on literacy), Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematics (three courses), Development of Scientific Reasoning and Knowledge (two courses), History/Social Science (one course), Creative Arts (one course with a focus on visual arts, and modules/workshops in theater and dance), and Health/Physical education (one course with a focus on health, gardening, and cooking, and a year-long thread of physical education and health in the Elementary Teacher Seminar). Assignments often require candidates to videotape their teaching and then analyze video segments using the key ideas and frameworks of the course. The major assignments for these courses, as well as course grades in the curriculum and instruction sequence, provide a rich body of evidence from which to assess the development of each candidate's pedagogical content knowledge, and their professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

The Curriculum and Instruction [courses](#) for Single Subject candidates contribute significantly to the development of candidates' pedagogical content knowledge. They help candidates learn to make content accessible to students who come from different backgrounds and have a variety of strengths, needs, and interests. The courses also engage candidates in developing discipline-specific theoretical frameworks for teaching and learning; selecting and designing appropriate curricular materials; crafting individual lessons, instructional sequences, and unit plans; practicing various instructional approaches; and analyzing student work. Assignments often require candidates to videotape their teaching and then analyze video segments using the key ideas and frameworks of the course. The major assignments for these courses, as well as course grades in the curriculum and instruction sequence, provide a rich body of evidence from which to assess the development of each candidate's pedagogical content knowledge and the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

A primary culminating assessment of Single Subject candidates' pedagogical content knowledge is the Curriculum Development Assignment that they complete during the winter quarter. With support and feedback from faculty and peers, candidates plan a unit that demonstrates their ability to set clear and intellectually challenging learning goals that are deeply embedded in the discipline they are

preparing to teach, and then use a variety of instructional strategies to help all students meet those goals. Candidates also develop authentic assessments so that they will be able to measure student learning by drawing on a variety of evidence.

Similarly, in their Curriculum and Instruction courses, Multiple Subject (all) candidates design and implement learning segments of increasing duration, depth, and complexity in order to demonstrate their emerging pedagogical content knowledge, particularly in literacy and mathematics, with careful attention to state-adopted standards and frameworks. These assignments provide a breadth of information about candidates' ability to plan, implement instruction, assess student learning, and reflect on that instruction with student learning as the primary focus.

Evidence of how STEP prepares candidates to select and use materials, plan presentations, design activities, and monitor student learning—such that instructional materials, goals, and strategies demonstrate an awareness of the needs and strengths of *every* student—can also be found in the syllabi for multiple courses, including the subject-specific Curriculum and Instruction courses described above. The following additional courses support and assess candidates capacity to effectively meet the diverse needs of all learners in their classrooms: [EDUC388A: Language Policies and Practices](#), [EDUC246A, B, C, D: Secondary Teaching Seminar](#) and [EDUC246E, F, G, H: Elementary Teaching Seminar](#), [EDUC285: Supporting Students with Special Needs \(Multiple Subject \(all\)/ Single Subject\)](#), and, for STEP Secondary, in [EDUC289: The Centrality of Literacies in Teaching and Learning](#) and [EDUC284: Teaching and Learning in Heterogeneous Classrooms](#). In the Secondary and Elementary Teaching Seminars, candidates explicitly focus on what it means to be a teacher and the many roles that teachers fulfill in the classroom, in their schools and districts, and in the broader professional community. Course readings also address the responsibilities of professional communities. For example, Multiple Subject candidates discuss a set of readings on “Exploring Teaching” in [ED246E: Elementary Teaching Seminar](#).

In their coursework, candidates have multiple opportunities to explore their professional responsibility to address the needs of diverse learners. For example, [EDUC285: Supporting Students with Special Needs \(Multiple Subject \(all\)/ Single Subject\)](#) focuses on the developmental variations among children and their implications for teaching and learning, as well as the importance of building learning profiles of individual students, drawing on each student's strengths, addressing learning challenges incrementally with curricular support and personalized attention, and encouraging and supporting students to set high academic standards for themselves. In that course, candidates, draw on classroom observations, interactions, multiple student assessments, and IEP meetings to develop and a Child Case Study where they explore students' learning profiles and identify students' developmental and emotional needs. Similarly, the final project in [EDUC284: Teaching and Learning in Heterogeneous Classrooms](#) asks candidates to plan, implement, assess, and reflect upon a task designed specifically for heterogeneous classrooms. In [ED299: Equity and Schooling](#), candidates address a range of issues related to the diverse students, families and communities they work to support. One of their key assignments is to work in teams to design ‘tool kits’ of strategies and approaches to supporting diversity and equity in their practice.

Single Subject candidates complete [*EDUC240: Adolescent Development and Learning*](#). This course focuses on principles of adolescent development and learning in family, school, and community contexts. Candidates examine adolescents from biological, psychological, cognitive, and social perspectives. The course helps candidates consider how school, community, and broader culture influence adolescent development, how adolescents learn, what motivates them to learn, and how schools and teachers can contribute to that growth by teaching in ways that respond to the developmental and cultural needs of youth. As a final project candidates use the theory and research learned in the course to conduct a thorough Case Study of an adolescent from their field placement site. Throughout the quarter candidates complete weekly logs that help them connect course readings to a particular aspect of the case study student's learning and development.

Multiple Subject candidates (all) complete [*EDUC283: Child Development in and Beyond Schools*](#), which provides an introduction to schools as a context for development during early and middle childhood. The course addresses the knowledge base about child development (e.g. from biological, behavioral, social, and sociocultural paradigms) as well as aspects of cognitive processes, including but not limited to memory, information processing, and definitions of intelligence and academic achievement. This approach serves as the foundation for framing the course around the concept of "intentional teaching," wherein candidates are equipped with resources and a critical frame to question teaching practices and to make instruction decisions grounded in theory and research. It also focuses on children's social-emotional development, examining their understanding of self, their social relationships with peers, as well as their developing identities as learners, and motivation for school learning. Candidates demonstrate their ability to apply the key concepts of the course in a classroom context through three written observations and analyses from their placements, as well as a summative assignment in which candidates create developmentally appropriate lesson plans for their students.

Multiple Subject candidates who are also pursuing a bilingual (Spanish) authorization credential pathway complete [*ED264E: Methods and Materials in Bilingual Classrooms*](#). This course is taught in Spanish and English and lays the groundwork for teaching in a Spanish bilingual education classroom. It introduces bilingual education theory, research, and practice, with a focus on literacy instruction in Spanish and issues of transition between the two languages.

Additionally, all candidates have many opportunities to develop an understanding of their legal and ethical obligations as classroom teachers. In [*EDUC246A, B, C, D: Secondary Teaching Seminar*](#) and [*EDUC246E, F, G, H: Elementary Teaching Seminar*](#) candidates learn about guidelines for mandatory reporting as well as and issues of mental, physical, and emotional health; they also learn about policies and practices related to bullying and harassment at their school/district placement sites. Candidates also have opportunities to learn about laws and policies regarding educational equity and access for all students. For example, in [*ED388A: Language Policies and Practices*](#), candidates examine the background and legal ramifications of various language policies, as well as the differential learning and achievement outcomes of students who are English language learners. [*EDUC285: Supporting Students with Special Needs \(Multiple Subject \(all\)/ Single Subject\)*](#) addresses requirements for identifying and referring students with special needs, providing appropriate

accommodations, and assessing student work.

QUARTERLY ASSESSMENTS

The [quarterly assessments](#), which we discuss in depth in the next section, align with the CSTPs and provide evidence of the emerging pedagogical content knowledge and other professional knowledge and skills that candidates demonstrate in their field placements. In particular, pedagogical content knowledge is addressed in CSTP Standard 1 (Engaging and Supporting all Students in Learning), CSTP Standard 3 (Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning), and CSTP Standard 4 (Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students).

Standard 9.2

Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.

Candidates are introduced to the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) during the first week of the program, and throughout the year candidates have opportunities to build their knowledge, understanding, and professional practice while receiving appropriate feedback in their coursework and clinical placements, in support of developing the competency requirements specified in the program standards. [Table 9.1](#) outlines the alignment of key experiences, course assignments, and assessments of candidate progress in coursework and clinical work in relation to the TPEs. As the table demonstrates, STEP uses both summative and formative assessments of candidates throughout the year to measure their progress towards Commission-adopted competency requirements at key checkpoints. Below, we highlight the key assessments that provide systematic evidence that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.

OBSERVATIONS & QUARTERLY ASSESSMENTS

The professional competencies that are evidenced in clinical practice are monitored by University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, who use a standards-based observation protocol to assess candidates' clinical progress over the four quarters of STEP (See [Record of Observation Cycle](#) and [Quarterly Assessment](#)). Quarterly Assessments provide benchmarks that reflect the domains of teaching specified by the CSTPs and TPEs. University Supervisors conduct nine formal observations of each candidate across three quarters using CSTPs and TPEs as a guide. Each quarter at least one of these observations is videotaped. Prior to each observation, University Supervisors confer with candidates about their instructional plans and together they debrief each learning segment following the observation, drawing on video evidence as available. Candidates then complete a written reflection to extend their thinking about the observed learning segment. These nine observations provide regular opportunities for candidates to receive feedback on their professional dispositions and professional growth and serve as the basis of the evidence recorded in Quarterly Assessments, which are

completed by University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers at the end of each quarter. The Quarterly Assessments provide insight into candidates' professional development, including their strengths and needs with regard to instruction and their professional disposition. When Supervisors or Cooperating Teachers identify individual areas of needed growth, they, along with the program Directors, work with candidates to remedy these areas.

The Quarterly Assessments also provide opportunities to assess candidates' professional growth. For example, in Standard 6 of the Quarterly Assessment, Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers provide evidence for candidates' professional demeanor in the following categories:

- reflects on teaching practice in support of student learning
- establishes professional goals and engages in continuous and purposeful professional growth and development
- collaborates with colleagues and the broader professional community to support teacher and student learning [e.g. STEP peers, supervisor, cooperating teacher; grade level, department and other school members, as appropriate and applicable]
- works with families to support student learning
- engages local communities in support of the instructional program
- manages professional responsibilities to maintain motivation and commitment to all students
- demonstrates professional responsibility, integrity, and ethical conduct

Moving from level 1 to level 4, the descriptors on the Quarterly Assessments show how candidates' practice develops in terms of consistency, organization, integration, initiative, independence, effectiveness, and professionalism. The goal is for the teacher candidate to be at level 3 or 4 on all of the standard elements by the end of the academic year; we typically see a range of performance across the elements with the overwhelming majority of ratings at level 3 or level 4.

In the [2015 Biennial Report](#) we presented data from supervisors' final quarterly assessments during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 years. Across domains, we see end of the year performance solidly in the Level 3 and Level 4 descriptors on the Quarterly Assessment rubric for both Single Subject and Multiple Subject (all) candidates. In year-end [quarterly assessment scores](#) from cooperating teachers, we see similar trends in candidate competency. Taken together, these data indicate that our candidates' performance in the clinical settings is strong.

PACT

STEP has chosen the PACT (Performance Assessment for California Teachers) as its Commission-approved summative assessment, and has adopted the PACT's scoring and passing standards. The PACT is designed to assess candidate performance in light of the

California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). For example, in the PACT Teaching Event (see pacttpa.org for related information, including rubrics for the performance assessment), candidates are asked at multiple points to consider how their unit supports the needs of all learners. In the Planning Task, candidates must reflect on their planned lessons, given their students' backgrounds and familiarity with the content. Later in the Reflection Task, candidates discuss potential changes to their lesson, and the learners who would be best served by these changes (TPE 4: Making Content Accessible). (See the PACT rubric for an overview of the alignment of each PACT section with a given TPE.)

Candidates for the Single Subject credential complete the PACT Teaching Event (TE) during the independent student teaching phase of their yearlong field placements. Their completion of the PACT is supported by a series of assignments in their winter [EDUC246C: Secondary Teaching Seminar](#). Multiple Subject candidates (all) complete a Teaching Event in late March, in conjunction with [EDUC246H: Elementary Teaching Seminar](#), and are supported by a series of related course activities and assignments. In addition, Multiple Subject candidates (all) complete one Teaching Event Content Area Task (CAT) in each of the three additional core areas not addressed in the complete TE (mathematics, history/social science and science). Multiple Subject candidates (all) collect the information needed to respond to the PACT TE and CAT requirements in two different field placements, one in the early elementary grades and another in the upper grades. In addition, Multiple Subject candidates (all) complete one TE task in each of the three additional core areas not addressed in the complete TE (mathematics, history/social science and science). The Curriculum and Instruction [courses](#) for each content area provide support for the completion of the teaching event and the additional tasks.

As we discuss in the [2015 Biennial Report](#), STEP candidates demonstrate competence, as measured by the PACT: in [2014-2015](#) all teacher candidates passed the PACT Teaching Event. Two candidates in the [2013-2014](#) cohort did not meet the passing standard on their first submission, but subsequently passed with one revision and resubmission of their Teaching Events. Across all rubrics the mean scores are all well above the expected level (2), with the means in many categories approaching or even exceeding a level (3), beyond expectations for a beginning teacher. The PACT scores indicate that our candidates are demonstrating the knowledge and skills expected of the profession, and that they leave the program well-prepared for the challenges of classroom teaching.

COURSE GRADES

Candidates' academic development is continually assessed in STEP courses, as STEP faculty use both formative and summative assessments to gauge candidates' mastery of course learning objectives, which are aligned with the TPEs and CSTPs. Final course grades and key assignments reflect candidates' work and progress throughout each quarter. Most STEP courses include multiple formative assessments of candidates' mastery of the content of the course (see [Multiple Subject \(all\)](#) and [Single Subject](#) course syllabi). Throughout each quarter, the directors of STEP Elementary and STEP Secondary are in continual communication with faculty to identify and provide academic resources (e.g., [writing tutors](#); services from Stanford's [Office of Accessible Education](#), etc.) to candidates who

may need additional supports. In 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 all Single Subject and Multiple Subject (all) candidates met passing standards for their required courses.

GRADUATION PORTFOLIOS

Finally, in June, all [Single](#) and [Multiple Subject](#) candidates (all) construct graduation portfolios. This summative assessment includes tasks that facilitate candidates' examination of their practice in relation to relevant research and theory. In addition to the PACT Teaching Event, additional entries of the portfolio represent key courses and areas of study, along with more integrated investigations of teaching. In the process of constructing their portfolio, candidates consider evidence of student learning, reinforcing a teaching stance that is always concerned with responsiveness to student needs rather than teaching as the mere implementation of routine. The portfolio includes key assignments from across the program, such as the curriculum unit, key literacy and mathematics assignments, case studies, the classroom management plan, and reflections on the university supervisor's observations. These assignments require students to draw upon research and theory as the basis for developing plans and interpreting observations or events they are analyzing. In a Summary Reflection in the portfolio, candidates explain how the various artifacts of teaching included in the portfolio reflect the TPEs and the CSTPs and assess how their practice has developed in each of the domain.