

# ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021 – 2022 Academic Year



Elementary  
Education

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**School of Education**

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## Introduction

Welcome to Mason’s Elementary Education Professional Development School (PDS) Program! Just as you have selected us, we have selected you because we’ve determined that you possess the knowledge, dispositions, and willingness to learn that are necessary for becoming an exemplary educator. Our goal is to work with you as a partner to help you reach your full potential and personal goals. We are excited to have you in our program!

This handbook contains important information regarding the Elementary Education PDS Program. **Please read this handbook and use it as your first reference point should questions arise during your time in the program.** If you cannot find the information you need or if you have any questions or concerns, contact your advisor, the program coordinator, or program manager. For your convenience, *Appendix B* contains a list of frequently used terms along with their abbreviations and definitions.

## Program Overview

### Curriculum and Instruction, MEd with Concentration in Elementary Education

The 39-credit Elementary Education concentration and initial licensure component provides professionals with the specialized knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to meet the educational needs of students attending today’s elementary schools. Specific content and endorsement courses are required; all courses are taught in cohorts. Two cohort models — semester-long (SL) or year-long (YL) internships — provide flexibility for all students. The YL (two semesters) internship cohort begins each fall and spring semester; the SL internship cohort begins each summer semester.

As a Professional Development School (PDS) Program, we work closely with a select group of elementary schools in local school districts for student field observations and internship placements. All students are required to submit and successfully complete a series of performance-based assessments. These assessments include content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and dispositions.

### Bachelor’s Degree (ANY)/Curriculum and Instruction, Accelerated MEd with Concentration in Elementary Education

Highly-qualified undergrads may be admitted to the bachelor’s/accelerated master’s program (BAM) and obtain both a BA or BS in any major and an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary Education Concentration in an accelerated time frame. Students in a BAM program must fulfill all university requirements for the bachelors’ and master’s degrees.

## Cohort Model

The Elementary Education program follows a cohort-based model, therefore, it is imperative that you possess the ability to get along well with others, to be a supportive member of the cohort, and to be productive in a collegial setting. As a “critical friend,” you will help others improve their performance and you will be accepting of the feedback given from classmates as well as your instructors, university facilitator, site facilitator, and clinical faculty members. Thoughtful, reflective, and helpful questions are always welcome as are recommended solutions to problems that the cohort encounters.

Students have several cohort options from which they can choose. These options provide choice in the length of the PDS Internship (one or two semesters) and the semester in which you start:

- Semester-Long PDS Internship Cohort (6 semesters, summer start)
- Year-Long PDS Internship Cohort (6 semesters, fall start)

- Year-Long PDS Internship Cohort (5 semesters, spring start)

## Semester-Long (SL) PDS Internship Cohort — Summer Start

This cohort begins in the summer and contains 6 consecutive semesters (summer, fall, spring, summer, fall, spring). You could maintain employment until your final semester when the internship will start. Prior to the internship, you will have to commit to 30 hours in the field each semester in one of our Mason Elementary Education PDS Network partnership schools. Typically, these hours are completed in 3- to 4-hour periods during the semester (over about 8-10 weeks). At times, faculty will arrange course experiences with predetermined times for the observations.

### Internship Details

The internship for the Semester-Long Internship Cohort is unpaid. It is usually completed during the final spring semester, but some students complete it during the fall. The schedule is based on the school's calendar—NOT Mason's. During your internship you are expected to be there every day and maintain the same hours as the teacher with the exception of days in which you may need to leave early for a class at Mason. All students will be placed in a PDS partner school. While we do our best to place you into one of your top choice schools, the reality is that you may be placed into a school that isn't one of your top choices.

Internship placement is not automatic; students must complete an application and meet all requirements prior to placement. Please review the **Internship Application** section carefully for details.

### Schedule and Course Sequencing Details (exact sequencing is subject to change)

Semester	Required Classes (All are 3 credits unless otherwise noted.)	Schedule Details
Summer	ELED 542: Foundations of Elem Ed ELED 543: Children, Family, Culture, & Schools	Usually 1 class in session A (starts mid-May and runs 5 weeks), and 1 in session C.
Fall	ELED 544: Intro to Elem Methods and Mgmt ELED 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms I	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week.
Spring	ELED 552: Math Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms II	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week.
Summer	ELED 545: Differentiation Elem Methods, Mgmt Elective*	Usually 1 class in session A (starts mid-May and runs 5 weeks), and 1 in session C.
Fall	ELED 553: Science Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 554: Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Fine Arts	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week.
Spring	ELED 559: Research and Assessment ELED 790: Internship in Elem Education (6 cr)	Five days in schools; one in the evening at Mason. All endorsement coursework must be completed, with all transcripts submitted and approved by the CEHD Endorsement Office prior to the deadline of the internship application.

\*Recommended electives: EDSE 501: Intro to Special Education or EDUC 537: Intro to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. To request any other elective, seek prior approval from advisor.

## Year-Long (YL) PDS Internship Cohort — Fall or Spring Start

This cohort begins each fall or spring and contains two semesters of internship, allowing the student to experience a full academic year in the classroom. Students who start in the fall complete 6 consecutive semesters (fall, spring, summer, fall, spring, summer), while students who begin in the spring complete the program in five semesters (spring, summer, fall, spring, summer). During the first fall and first spring semester you could continue to work; however, in the summer the schedule becomes condensed and you start to prepare for your internship. You will have to commit to 30 hours in the field each semester in one of our Mason Elementary Education PDS Network partnership schools. Typically, these hours are completed in 3- to 4-hour periods during the semester (over about 8-10 weeks). At times, faculty will arrange course experiences with predetermined times for the observations.

### ***Internship Details***

The internship for this cohort is completed during the final two semesters (fall and spring) of the program and may come with a \$4500 stipend in return for substitute teaching at the school site of your internship. The internship schedule is based on the school’s calendar—NOT Mason’s. During your internship you are expected to be there every day and maintain the same hours as the teacher with the exception of days in which you may need to leave early for a class at Mason. All students will be placed in a Fairfax or Prince William County School. While we do our best to place you into one of your top choice schools, the reality is that you may be placed into a school that isn’t one of your top choices.

Internship placement is not automatic; students must complete an application and meet all requirements prior to placement. Please review the **Internship Application** section carefully for details.

### ***Fall Start Schedule & Course Sequencing Details (sequencing is subject to change)***

Semester	Required Classes (All are 3 credits unless otherwise noted.)	Schedule Details
Fall	ELED 542: Foundations of Elem Ed ELED 543: Children, Family, Culture, & Schools	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week. Day cohorts will be formed if admission numbers permit.
Spring	ELED 544: Intro to Elem Methods and Mgmt ELED 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms I	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week. Day cohorts will be formed if admission numbers permit.
Summer	ELED 545: Differentiation Elem Methods, Mgmt ELED 553: Science Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 554: Methods of Teaching Soc Studies & Fine Arts	Classes will be held several days a week during two five-week sessions beginning in mid-May. Some will be daytime courses.
Fall	ELED 552: Math Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms II ELED 790: Internship in Elem Education	Internship will be in the school four days a week; classes will be at Mason one day a week.
Spring & Summer	ELED 790: Internship in Elem Ed (6 credits) — Spring ELED 559: Research & Assessment (1 credit in Spring + 2 credits in Summer Session A)	Five days in school; one in the evening at Mason.

### **Spring Start Schedule & Course Sequencing Details (sequencing is subject to change)**

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Required Classes</b> (All are 3 credits unless otherwise noted.)	<b>Schedule Details</b>
Spring	ELED 542: Foundations of Elem Ed ELED 543: Children, Family, Culture, & Schools ELED 544: Intro to Elem Methods and Mgmt	Classes will be in the evening at 4:30-7:20 or 7:20-10pm and will meet once a week. Day cohorts will be formed if admission numbers permit.
Summer	ELED 545: Differentiation Elem Methods, Mgmt ELED 554: Methods of Teaching Soc Studies & Fine Arts ELED 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms I	Classes will be held several days a week beginning in mid-May, and will be daytime courses, most likely running from 9 am until 4 pm.
Fall	ELED 552: Math Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 553: Science Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elem Classrooms II ELED 790: Internship in Elem Education	Internship will be in the school four days a week; classes will be at Mason one day and one evening a week.
Spring & Summer	ELED 790: Internship in Elem Ed (6 credits) — Spring ELED 559: Research & Assessment (1 credit in Spring + 2 credits in Summer Session A)	Five days in school; one evening at Mason.

## **Field Experience**

Prior to your internship, you will participate in a variety of field experiences. Almost every elementary course includes a field experience that requires at least 15 in-class contact hours for the semester. Thus, most semesters you will be required to complete a **MINIMUM** of 30 hours in a classroom—3-4 hours per week across 8-10 weeks. **You are required to complete these hours in one of our partner schools. Fingerprinting procedures vary across our partnership sites.**

For some courses, faculty will arrange for the entire cohort to complete their field hours together at a designated site and time. These innovative efforts are to ensure that you have robust, supported opportunities to make course to field connections. In other courses, you will be given an opportunity to rank the schools for which you are eligible. You will then be assigned to a school by the Elementary PDS Coordinator; that school's Site Facilitator (SF) will assign you to a teacher.

### **Expectations of students during field experience:**

- You are a guest at the school. You need to determine with your teacher the best days and times. When you say you will show up, do so and be punctual. Consider this appointment a serious commitment. Many teachers plan special lessons or activities based on your presence.
- Keep a log of your hours, as your host teacher will need to verify those hours.
- Do not sit in the back of the room checking your email or text messages. If you can assist, ask the teacher how you can be helpful. If your assignment is to observe certain activities, the teacher needs to be aware of what you need to accomplish on any particular visit.
- At the beginning of each semester, ask for a few minutes of the teacher's time to explain your assignments for the semester. If you have to teach a particular lesson, discuss what they will be teaching during the few weeks you need to complete the assignment and ask how you might teach a part of what is being planned. Remember that communication is key and you need to work with the teacher's schedule and plans in order to fulfill your assignment requirements.

- Please consider each and every visit as part of a long job interview. Dress and act professionally, and respect the school's rules.
- You should check with your mentor teacher or SF regarding school procedures and policies that pertain to absence from school, tardiness, leaving school during the day, attire, confidentiality, suspected child and/or substance abuse reporting protocols, and the crisis management plan.  
*You are expected to abide by all school rules and procedures while on site.*

Your mentor teacher and SF will expect you to be at your field experience site as scheduled. Should you experience difficulty with attending field experience, you should contact your mentor teacher immediately or your SF as appropriate.

During your field experience, you may discover an activity or technique used by the teacher that interests you; we suggest you use the Experiences to Seek out and Explore Form (Appendix B) to keep a record of your observations, any questions you may have, and topics you'd like to bring into a class discussion. This will be your personal reference sheet, and we recommend you refer to it during your classes and your internship.

## **Fingerprinting & Background Check**

Local school systems require students to complete a criminal background check through their human resources office (not through Mason) prior to beginning field work. Detailed instructions on the process will be sent to you from either the school system or Mason. When applying for the background check/fingerprinting, you should disclose any legal incidents that may appear on your record. School divisions can and will withhold placement if discrepancies are found between your disclosure and your official judicial record. Students must assume the risk that classes may be deferred and program progress delayed or altered due to the individual severity of notations on such a check and review by individual agencies.

## **Go React**

All students in the Elementary Education program use Go React in their courses, field experiences, and final internships. Go React is a web-based video coding program that will enhance both your coursework and your professional development. You will purchase your Go React license in your first or second semester of the program (typically coinciding with ELED 544) and will be needed through your graduation year.

## **Removal from Field Placement**

School divisions have the right to request that an ELED student be removed from their assigned location for field hours or internship for behaviors that do not reflect the professional dispositions required of educators. Placement in a new location is not guaranteed and depends largely on the severity of the circumstances involved in the removal. If a placement for field work is terminated prior to the end of the semester, all assignments requiring field work that are not yet completed at the time of removal may be scored as a 0. If a practicum or internship placement is terminated by the school, the student will fail the class. The student may be required to sit out one semester and complete a remediation plan before being placed in the field again. Should a candidate be removed from a field placement a second time, their case will be reviewed for termination from the program and the student will sit out for up to one year. Should a third removal occur, the student will be immediately terminated from the program.



Due process is followed should a removal from field placement occur; see the section on *Process for Addressing Violations of Dispositions* for details. For the process involving termination, see the section titled *Termination Policy and Process*.

## Internship

We often use the terms internship and student teaching interchangeably to describe the capstone experience in the MEd program. The internship schedule is based on the school's calendar—NOT Mason's. During your internship you are expected to maintain the same hours as the teacher with the exception of days in which you may need to attend class at Mason. Students cannot be employed Monday – Friday during daytime hours in the semester(s) they engage in internship because they will be at their school site or in class. All students will be placed in a PDS Network school; currently those are located within the Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William County School districts, but this is subject to change. While we do our best to place you into one of your top choice schools, the reality is that you may be placed into a school that isn't one of your top choices. Internship placement is not automatic; students must complete an application and meet all requirements prior to placement.

## Application for Internship

All ELED students MUST apply to internship. Complete information, including the online application, [can be found here](#). The deadlines below are firm, and **late application materials will NOT be accepted unless an official extension request has been approved ahead of time**. All of the appropriate supporting documentation along with exam scores, completed content area coursework, and CPR certification are due with the application for SL internship. YL applicants have multiple deadlines.

## Deadlines

- Semester-Long (SL) internship in Fall: **February 15**
- Semester-Long (SL) internship in Spring: **September 15**
- Year-Long (YL) internship in Fall and Spring:
  - **February 15:** Online application, CPR certification
  - **August 1:** Endorsements, VCLA, Praxis Subject Exam
  - **November 1:** RVE

**Important:** It takes up to 6 weeks for test scores to be processed and listed in the university's system, so plan accordingly when scheduling test dates. These are firm deadlines, and **students are expected to plan ahead and complete the requirements on time**. An extension request form and process does exist for students who experience extraordinary circumstances that prevent them from meeting the established deadlines.

## Internship Application Requirements

### *Licensure Exams*

All official and passing test scores must be submitted and in the Mason system by the internship application deadline. Allow a minimum of six weeks for official test scores to arrive at Mason. Testing too close to the application deadline means scores will not arrive in time and the internship application will not be processed. Required tests include:

- Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA)
- Reading for Virginia Educators (RVE)
- Praxis Subject Assessment for Elementary Education (formerly Praxis II)

## **Content Area Coursework (aka Endorsements)**

ALL [content area coursework](#) must be completed, with all transcripts submitted and approved by the Content Area Advisor, prior to the internship application deadline. Please work closely with the Content Area Advisor to plan the completion of your endorsements.

## **CPR/AED/First Aid**

Virginia law requires that all new license applications must include verification that “hands-on” [First Aid/CPR/AED training](#) has been completed. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the hands-on component has been temporarily waived. Before completing your training, please check the site linked here in the section to see if that requirement is still being waived.

If you have any questions about the above requirement, please contact your advisor or the Clinical Practice Coordinator at [internsh@gmu.edu](mailto:internsh@gmu.edu).

## **University and Program Policies**

The Elementary Education Program has adopted policies that align with university and college and the expectation for your performance in the professional school setting.

## **Academic Policies**

All University policies governing graduate students can be found in the [University Catalog](#), and it is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and abide by these policies. You can find the most frequently encountered policies on the [CEHD Student and Academic Affairs website](#). Any policy-related questions can be directed to your academic advisor.

## **Accommodations**

Students who may need an academic accommodation for class must go through Mason’s [Disability Services](#) office to make this request. The first step in this process is to fill out the [online form](#) available on their website.

## **Attendance**

As described in the catalog, “students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register” (see section [Attendance Policies](#)). Much of the learning that takes place in this program is done within the classroom, so missing class will negatively impact your ability to succeed in the course and master the course objectives. Simply attending is not enough; students are expected to be active participants in class discussions and activities, and to come to class prepared to engage with the material, their instructor, and their classmates.

*Excused absences* are due to an emergency (i.e., death of a family member, hospitalization, etc.). Permission for an excused absence can only be given by the instructor. Every effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance and to plan for the completion of all work required. The instructor may request documentation of the reason for the absence (e.g., doctor’s note).

In the Elementary Education Program, **no more than one unexcused absence is allowed for any course**. More than one absence of any kind will affect your mastery of course content, which can affect your final grade and will require a conference with your instructor and/or advisor. In some cases, you may be requested to meet with the program coordinator. Please note: notification of an “intended absence” does not mean it is an excused absence.

## Attire

As a future educational professional your dress while at the school site should reflect the highest caliber of professionalism. Dress in modest, business professional attire at all times (slacks/skirts and a dress shirt, or dresses). No one should wear jeans, shorts, t-shirts, extremely form-fitting clothing, or outfits that show undergarments. Some schools celebrate “dress down” or “dress up” days; you can dress as they do on those days. These guidelines are in place because children should be able to focus their attention on what you are teaching, not on what you are wearing. Parents should be able to recognize you as a “teacher.”

## Communication

Excellent communication skills are the hallmark of an effective teacher.

Students are expected to take advantage of all forms of information that are available to them. Become familiar with the [CEHD](#) and [Elementary Education](#) websites, read the Mason catalog for curriculum and academic policy information, review your syllabi thoroughly, and be proactive in planning your new career as well as managing your time. Should you have questions that cannot be answered through these resources, please contact your instructors for course work questions, your advisor for program issues, or your clinical faculty/site facilitator for school-based concerns.

Program resources and advising documents can be found on the Elementary Education Organization page in Blackboard. Students are given access to this site after they begin their first semester.

### ***Email Communication***

Students are expected to check their Mason e-mail daily and to *read* all email communications from the program and college. All email correspondence with Mason faculty and staff and with your mentor teacher or other personnel at the school site should be done via your Mason email account.

Email is a professional means of communication. When you receive a program-related email that requires a response, you should provide one within two business days. Emails to program faculty and staff or elementary school personnel should include a greeting, a concise message that has been spellchecked and contains correct grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation, and a signature at the end that includes your full name and any other pertinent information like your program name. In fact, you may want to add an automatic email signature to your Mason account. Example:

*Taylor Teacher*  
George Mason University  
Elementary Education MEd Program  
[tteacher@masonlive.gmu.edu](mailto:tteacher@masonlive.gmu.edu)

### ***Social Media***

As you enter the teaching profession, it is critical that you embrace your role as a professional educator in all of your public interactions and in written and oral communication. This includes, but is not limited to, your use of social media — both personal accounts and those that you create to support your program completion. Now is the time to take stock of your "internet presence" and make sure that your use of social media aligns with the professional dispositions required of classroom teachers.

**The importance of this cannot be overstated.** Potential employers search social media and the web to ascertain information about potential employees. The media is filled with examples of how seemingly

private items from interns' and teachers' social media accounts have made their way into the public spotlight. The ramifications of these missteps are serious and can include removal from the program, removal from internship, termination of employment, and/or loss of certification.

## **Dispositions**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) promotes maintaining standards of professional grading and requires applicants for licensure to possess good moral character. Students must meet grading standards and course requirements as well as demonstrate professional performance in the areas required of professional educators: communication, collaboration and professionalism. Therefore, the School of Education expects its students to develop and exhibit the following professional dispositions:

### **I. Commitment to the Profession**

- a. Promoting exemplary practice
- b. Excellence in teaching and learning
- c. Advancing the profession
- d. Engagement in partnerships

### **II. Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards**

- a. Fairness
- b. Honesty
- c. Integrity
- d. Trustworthiness
- e. Confidentiality
- f. Respect for Colleagues and students

### **III. Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge**

- a. Belief that all individuals have the potential for growth and learning
- b. Persistence in helping individuals succeed
- c. High standards
- d. Safe and supportive learning environments
- e. Systematic planning
- f. Intrinsic motivation
- g. Reciprocal, active learning
- h. Continuous, integrated assessment
- i. Critical thinking
- j. Thoughtful, responsive listening
- k. Active, supportive interaction
- l. Technology-supported learning
- m. Research-based practices
- n. Respect for diverse talents, abilities and perspectives
- o. Authentic and relevant learning

### **IV. Commitment to Being a Member of a Learning Community**

- a. Professional dialogue
- b. Self-improvement
- c. Collective improvement
- d. Reflective practice
- e. Responsibility
- f. Flexibility
- g. Collaboration

- h. Continuous, lifelong learning

**V. Commitment to Democratic Values and Social Justice**

- a. Understanding systematic issues that prevent full participation
- b. Awareness of practices that promote equity and access
- c. Respects the opinion and dignity of others
- d. Appreciates and integrates multiple perspectives

**In addition, candidates for initial teaching licensure in elementary education are assessed on the following standards:**

- Possess the basic skills and knowledge needed to guide students' learning
- Demonstrate effort to continue learning both content and pedagogy
- Reflect on his/her professional practice, including personal teaching and learning style
- Welcome assistance for improvement and problem solving
- Can develop and explain professional judgment using research-based theory and practice
- Engage in productive relationships with professional colleagues and support staff
- Demonstrate stamina, flexibility, and a positive attitude
- Is responsible, dependable, and observant of school policies and procedures
- Project a professional image in terms of demeanor and appearance
- Maintain confidentiality of information about colleagues, school sites and students unless disclosure serves a professionally compelling purpose or is required by law
- Is punctual and prepared for all responsibilities
- Meets all expectations for professional behavior

Students must understand that they have a responsibility to develop and maintain professional behaviors and dispositions that are associated with career professionals in education. Their development toward the acquisition of such professional dispositions will be part of the Elementary Program assessment process.

References: Virginia DOE, INTASC, NEA Code of Ethics, Graduate School of Education (Adopted 2002, Approved by PDS/Partnership Advisory Board 12/6/02)

***Process for Addressing Violations of Dispositions***

If a student violates the professional disposition standards, the following steps will be taken:

- If the violation is not unethical or one that creates a safety concern, the faculty/staff member may have an informal discussion with the student.
- If the violation is deemed by the faculty or staff member to be repetitive, severe, unethical, and/or puts people at risk, a *Professional Readiness Review Form*, possibly including a formal *Development Plan* (see *Appendix F*), will be completed by the faculty member and at least one other faculty or staff reviewer, and then provided to the student and to the Academic Program Coordinator (APC). The faculty reviewers will then do the following:
  1. Call a meeting with the student and any other relevant faculty or staff to discuss the violation and development plan with timelines for action (documented on the

*Professional Readiness Review Form and Development Plan*). A copy will be provided to the student.

2. Faculty evaluators assess if goals have been met by the timeline developed.
  - a. If significant progress has been made, but goals have not been fully met, an extension can be granted.
  - b. If the student has not met the goals nor made significant progress toward them by the timeline, the faculty reviewers will provide an update to the APC who will issue a warning notice to the student which will reiterate the importance of professional dispositions, set a deadline to schedule a meeting with the APC and faculty evaluators, and set a deadline to satisfy the Development Plan in order to avoid recommendation for termination.
  - c. At the new deadline, the APC (with input from the faculty evaluators) determines if the student has made sufficient progress OR should be recommended for termination from the major. See the section on *Termination Policy and Process* for next steps.

In the event where the behavior is egregious and/or puts others at serious risk, the student will be reported to the university's Student Conduct office.

## **Grading Policies**

Students enrolled in this degree program must earn a B or higher in all coursework. University policy ([see AP.6.6](#)) for grad students dictates that any student who accumulates grades of F in two graduate courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (a C or below) will be terminated from the program.

### ***Revision of coursework***

Correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics are expected. All work should be of the *highest quality in the first submission*. Written work that is not of high quality may be returned to the candidate before it is accepted for grading. Additional points will not be given on resubmissions for writing, spelling, or grammar corrections. While the faculty may allow resubmissions, they are *not required* to do so. If you experience difficulty with writing standards, you should visit the Writing Center on campus.

### ***Extensions***

Every effort is made by the faculty to coordinate assignments and due dates for each term. The coursework is aligned with the school curriculum in order to facilitate the accomplishment of work in a timely manner. *Therefore, asking for an extension is not recommended*. In extenuating circumstances, extensions may be granted by the instructor, but must be approved in advance. Requests for extensions for work that you simply were not able to finish will seldom receive a positive response. Further, all students may be asked to submit their requests for extension and new due date in writing. *While the faculty tries to be helpful, they are under no obligation to grant extensions*. Should a student submit work past the original or extended deadline, the assignment may have points deducted or may not be counted for that term. Each course syllabus will provide you with that instructor's policy for late work.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

In the event that circumstances beyond the control of a student prevent them from being able to complete coursework during the semester, the student may request an incomplete grade from the instructor. The instructor is not obligated to grant this request. Per university policy, ([A.P.3.3](#)), the student should be passing the course at the time an incomplete is requested.

Any time a grade of incomplete is given, the student and faculty member should complete and sign an [Incomplete Grade Contract](#) and provide a copy of the contract to the program manager. All course requirements must be complete and submitted to the instructor by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the following semester, or earlier if specified in the contract. (See the [catalog](#) for the full policy.)

### ***Withdrawing from a Course***

The university's withdrawal deadlines for each semester are found in the [academic calendar](#). A withdrawal will result in a grade of "W" for the course which does not affect GPA.

If a student experiences circumstances that prevent them from being able to successfully complete their courses, they can request a late withdrawal after the university withdrawal deadlines have passed. Late withdrawals will not be granted for academic reasons, and generally, they will not be granted for one class but not others unless the student can clearly explain why the circumstances have affected one class but not others. See the [Withdrawal from Classes](#) section of the CEHD SAA policy webpage for complete information.

### **Grade Appeals and Grievance Procedures**

If a student feels their final grade is not reflective of their work for the semester, they can follow the steps for a grade appeal that are listed under [Academic Appeals](#) on our CEHD Student and Academic Affairs (SAA) website.

Grievances against faculty or staff of a non-academic nature should, ideally, first be directed to the faculty or staff member involved. If the grievance cannot be resolved at this level, you should discuss the issue with the Academic Program Coordinator (APC) for Elementary Education. In the case of an issue related to field experience, a student should contact the Elementary PDS Coordinator before escalating the conversation to the APC. Any grievance that remains unresolved after this step can be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Success in the CEHD SAA Office.

### **Termination Policy and Process**

To maintain the academic integrity of the program and to prepare exemplary educators, students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic performance and to adhere to the standards of professional behavior (dispositions) for educators. Failure to do so may result in termination from the elementary education program. Students have the right to appeal a termination decision.

#### ***Academic Termination***

Students enrolled in this degree program must earn a B or higher in all courses. University policy ([see AP.6.6](#)) for graduate students dictates that any student who accumulates grades of F in two graduate courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (a C or below) will be terminated from the program.

#### ***Non-Academic Termination***

Failure by a student to exhibit the professional dispositions required of an educator can lead to termination. See the section titled *Process for Addressing Violations of Dispositions* for the procedures that will be followed when a student's behavior violates the professional dispositions.

#### ***Termination Process***

The CEHD Dean's office formally notifies student of pending termination and the right to appeal by requesting an exception to the policy. If student does not request an exception to policy during the specified window, the Dean's office will process the termination. If the student requests the exception,

the Dean's office will review the case and make a decision. If the appeal is approved, a second approval is required by the university's Associate Provost for Graduation Education. If the APGE agrees with the decision, the student can remain in the program with a remediation plan but may be eligible for termination from the program again upon an additional violation. If the appeal is denied, the student will be terminated from the program.

### ***Appealing Termination***

If the student appeals the termination through the CEHD Dean's office and that appeal is denied, the student may submit an appeal to the Associate Provost for Graduation Education. More details can be found on the CEHD SAA website under [Academic Appeals](#). The student must submit the appeal by the deadline provided in the written termination notification.

## **Graduation and Beyond**

### **Licensure**

Once you have successfully completed your internship, you will need to work with our licensure coordinator to apply for your license. It is your responsibility to gather all of the materials you will need (test scores, application, fees, etc.) and submit these to the licensure coordinator, Rebekah Flis Wills, at [rflis@gmu.edu](mailto:rflis@gmu.edu). View the requirements and application [HERE](#).

### **Graduation Information**

Graduation from Mason is not automatic! There are a number of steps that you must complete as you near the end of your program in order to participate in graduation activities and receive your degree. It is imperative that you read all communication from Mason carefully as graduation timelines and procedures are updated regularly.

YL interns will graduate in the summer since they will be finishing ELED 559 in the A Session and fulfilling substitute teaching responsibilities at their school site. Spring SL interns will graduate in May. Fall SL interns will graduate in December.

- The steps to initiate the degree conferral process are outlined [HERE](#).
- Students who graduate in spring or summer are welcome to participate in two graduation events: the university commencement ceremony and the [School of Education degree celebration](#). The degree celebration is where the student graduates will get to walk across the stage as their names are called.

### **Alumni**

There are multiple ways for alumni to stay connected with CEHD and Mason. Check out our [alumni webpage](#) for details.



## Appendix A — Elementary Education Faculty and Staff

### Program Faculty

Dr. Audra Parker  
Academic Program Coordinator  
[aparke19@gmu.edu](mailto:aparke19@gmu.edu)

Dr. Courtney Baker  
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Dr. Mandy Bean  
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Dr. Teresa Edkins  
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Dr. Lois Groth  
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### Program Staff

Mathilde Speier  
Program Manager & Outreach Coordinator  
[mspeier@gmu.edu](mailto:mspeier@gmu.edu)

Valerie Bartush  
Academic Advisor  
[vbartush@gmu.edu](mailto:vbartush@gmu.edu)  
Thompson Hall, 2300

The Elementary Education Program is located in Thompson Hall, Suite 1800, and can be reached at 703.993.3696 or [elemed@gmu.edu](mailto:elemed@gmu.edu). For more information, including full bios of each faculty member, please visit [our website](#).

## Appendix B — Frequently Used Terms and Abbreviations

**ACEI:** Association for Childhood Education International

**Academic Program Coordinator (APC):** The faculty member who coordinates and oversees the BSEd and MEd elementary education programs; currently this role is held by Dr. Audra Parker.

**Advanced Mentor Teacher (AMT):** a classroom teacher who has been recommended by the school principal, has at least three years of teaching experience, and who has completed a three-credit graduate course in mentoring, supporting, and assisting you in your internship.

**CEHD:** College of Education and Human Development

**Cohort:** group of students who are admitted into the same model of the program and move through together as a group.

**Elementary PDS Coordinator:** The faculty member who coordinates student placements (field experience and internship) in our PDS schools; this position is currently held by Dr. Mandy Bean.

**INTASC:** Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium

**Mentor Teacher (MT):** a classroom teacher who has been recommended by the school principal and has at least three years of teaching experience.

**NCATE:** National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

**PBA:** Performance Based Assessment

**Site Facilitator (SF):** a member of a school, selected by the principal to be the point of contact between the elementary program and the school. This person may be a classroom teacher or a specialist (reading, media, etc.). This person matches interns with CFs and assists in all areas of support for interns.

**Semester Long Interns (SL):** students who are part of the Semester Long Internship cohort; these students are admitted for summer start and complete six consecutive semesters—including one semester of internship during their final spring semester. Optional: Complete the program in five consecutive semesters –including one semester of internship during their final fall semester. You must work closely with your Elementary Education advisor if you would like to pursue this option!

**University Facilitator (UF):** a faculty member or PDS Associate who works in one school to support the goals of the PDS program, supervise all interns in that school, and work with the school's leadership team.

**Year Long Interns (YL):** students who are part of the Year Long Internship cohort; these students are admitted for spring start and complete four consecutive semesters—including two semesters of internship during their final fall and spring semesters. Year Long Interns who are admitted for fall start complete five consecutive semesters.

## Appendix C – Program and Licensure Requirement Checklist

Use this checklist to keep track of important deadlines for program and licensure requirements. Be sure to note your internship application deadline which is dependent upon cohort, length of internship, and internship semester: **Students are expected to plan ahead, keep records of their test scores and certifications, and complete the requirements on time.**

- Fall internship for Semester-Long (SL) Cohort: **February 15**
- Spring internship for Semester-Long (SL) Cohort: **September 15**
- Year-long internship beginning in fall semester for Year-Long (YL) Cohort: **February 15, August 1, November 1**

**Important:** It takes up to 6 weeks for scores to be received and processed so that they appear in the university system for reporting test scores, so plan accordingly when scheduling test dates.

Date Complete	Requirement	Due date and details
	Meet with Endorsement Advisor	Meeting must occur prior to application to the program. Must be within 9 credits of completion <b>prior to the start of the program.</b>
	Content Area coursework complete and all official documentation submitted	Prior to <b>internship application deadline</b> for SL interns. (By Aug. 1 for YL interns)
	Fingerprinting	Prior to visiting a school site for field experience hours, students must be fingerprinted and undergo a background check. Details for this will be discussed in your orientation.
	Internship Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fall-only SL Cohort: February 15</li> <li>- Spring-only SL Cohort: Sept 15</li> <li>- YL Cohort: February 15</li> </ul> <a href="https://cehd.gmu.edu/epo/student-internship">https://cehd.gmu.edu/epo/student-internship</a>
	Emergency First Aid/CPR/AED	Verification of completion of in-person Emergency First Aid, CPR, and Use of AED Certification or Training requirement must be submitted and in the Mason system by the <b>internship application deadline</b> and again with the licensure application. <a href="https://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/emergency-first-aid">https://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/emergency-first-aid</a>
	Praxis Subject Assessment — Elementary Education Subjects Assessment (code 5001-5005)	Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the <b>internship app deadline.</b>
	Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA)	Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the <b>internship app deadline.</b>
	Reading for Virginia Educators (RVE)	<b>Do not take this exam until completion of Literacy I course.</b> Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the <b>internship app deadline.</b>
	Child Abuse Recognition & Intervention (CARI)	The online module must be completed and certification included in licensure application. <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/child_abuse_training.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/child_abuse_training.shtml</a> <b>Print and keep this certificate for licensure.</b>

	Dyslexia Awareness Training	Complete VDOE online training on the indicators of dyslexia, as that term is defined by the board and regulations, and the evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia. <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/dyslexia-module/story.html">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/dyslexia-module/story.html</a> <b>Print and keep this certificate for licensure.</b>
	Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Modules ( <i>New requirement beginning in fall 2020.</i> )	Complete the online modules that cover positive behavior interventions and supports; crisis prevention and de-escalation; the use of physical restraint and seclusion consistent with regulations of the Board of Education; and appropriate alternative methods to reduce and prevent the need for the use of physical restraint and seclusion. <a href="https://www.odu.edu/eps/programs/ciees/initiatives/restraint-and-seclusion.html">https://www.odu.edu/eps/programs/ciees/initiatives/restraint-and-seclusion.html</a> <b>Print and keep this certificate for licensure.</b>
	Licensure Application	During internship semester begin to explore licensure application requirements. You may apply for licensure after successful completion of all program coursework and final grades have posted. The CEHD Licensure Coordinator will guide you through this process during your final semester. <a href="https://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/instructions">https://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/instructions</a>

If you have questions about the above requirements, do not wait! Please contact your advisor or the Clinical Practice Coordinator at [internsh@gmu.edu](mailto:internsh@gmu.edu). Always use your Mason email account and include your full name, G# and program/content area when communicating with CEHD staff and faculty via email.

**On-the-job (OTJ) Internship Details**

Very rarely, a student will opt to complete an OTJ internship in lieu of a traditional internship. This is **never** recommended because it does not provide the same levels of support and mentorship that are provided by the traditional internship. To qualify for an OTJ Internship, a student must obtain a provisional contract from a qualified school to teach a PK-6 class, and must submit the OTJ internship application along with the same requirements for a regular internship by the deadline:

- July 1<sup>st</sup> for an OTJ Internship in the Fall
- November 1<sup>st</sup> for an OTJ Internship in the Spring

This truly is *not* a recommended path. If you are considering it, please consult with your advisor and faculty.

# Appendix D – Experiences to seek out and explore

Use as appropriate to record activities and as a reminder to broaden your experiences.

<p><b><u>Activities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field Trip</li> <li>Fire Drill</li> <li>PTA/PTO meeting</li> <li>Back-to-School Night</li> <li>Parent Conference</li> <li>Calls to Parents</li> <li>Parent Newsletter</li> <li>Eligibility Conference</li> <li>Mock Job Interview</li> <li>IEP Meeting</li> <li>CLT Meeting</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Instruction and Assessment (K-6):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading</li> <li>Writing</li> <li>Spelling</li> <li>Oral Language</li> <li>Mathematics</li> <li>Social Studies</li> <li>Science</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Physical Science</li> <li>Music</li> <li>Art</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Equipment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computer</li> <li>Printer</li> <li>Copier</li> <li>Doc Cam</li> <li>Manipulatives</li> <li>Listening Station</li> <li>Digital Camera</li> <li>Smartboard</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Observation of Specialists:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Education Resource</li> <li>PE</li> <li>Music</li> <li>Art</li> <li>ESOL</li> <li>Gifted/Talented</li> <li>Reading Specialist</li> <li>Speech Clinician</li> <li>Extra or Co-Curricular Activities</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Records:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative Folders</li> <li>Work Samples</li> <li>Anecdotal Records</li> <li>Attendance Records</li> <li>Grade Book</li> <li>Report Cards</li> <li>Accident Report</li> <li>Emergency Cards</li> <li>Referral Forms</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Test Administration or Interpretation:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher-made</li> <li>Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)</li> <li>Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)</li> <li>Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT)</li> <li>Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)</li> <li>Readiness Test/Inventory</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Duties:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground</li> <li>Cafeteria</li> <li>Bus</li> <li>Hall</li> </ul>
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Notes:

## Appendix E – Dispositions and Professional Development Plan

Education professionals are held to high standards both inside and outside of the classroom, so students in the Elementary Education program have a responsibility to develop and exhibit the behaviors and dispositions of a professional educator. Dispositions are formally evaluated at various points in the Elementary Education program and as needed whenever concerning behaviors are noted. This gives students the opportunity to proactively address any areas requiring growth. Therefore, when dispositions are assessed as 'needs improvement', the candidate must take steps to improve and grow as a professional educator.

This *Dispositions Assessment Tool*, which can include a *Development Plan*, serves as a means for faculty to provide feedback to students who need assistance in the development of professional dispositions and behaviors in the field and in coursework. The faculty evaluator can use this tool as an intervention by itself, in order to guide a conversation with the student, or they can use the tool in conjunction with a development plan that includes specific action steps the student must take by a specific deadline.

If a *Development Plan* is needed, it should include:

1. Identification of the specific areas requiring further development.
2. Measurable action steps student must take, including
  - a. Specific activities to accomplish the goals including but not limited to reflections, multiple observations, role-playing activities, and other opportunities for feedback to the candidate by the evaluator regarding the disposition(s) in question, and/or
  - b. Specific resources necessary to implement the plan, including but not limited to readings; opportunities for the candidate to work with specialists, faculty, classroom teachers, fellow candidates, or others with relevant expertise; and training videos
3. Procedures and evidence to determine whether or not the goals of the plan were met by the target completion date for the plan.
4. The student's written comments (if any) attached.
5. Signatures of faculty evaluator and student.

If the student shows some progress by the deadline but has not yet completed all requirements, the faculty evaluator may extend the timeline of the plan and may modify the plan if appropriate. Failure to satisfy this development plan may result in termination from the program; please see the student handbook for details on that process.

# Dispositions Assessment Tool

To be provided to the student **prior to the initial conference** so they can prepare for the discussion. The faculty reviewer may communicate with the student’s advisor, other ELED faculty, field placement or internship University Supervisor, Site Facilitator, and/or Mentor Teacher, as appropriate, and take input from them into consideration.

Student Name & G#: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

ELED course(s) and/or field site: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating Scale:** - = needs improvement; ✓ =satisfactory; + = highly commendable, N/A = not applicable

Characteristics of Professional Dispositions in Class	Rating	Notes
Prepares for each class and engages in class discussions and activities		
Attends every class, arriving on time and staying the entire session		
Submits assignments on time		
Communicates proactively with instructors regarding questions, concerns or any issues that may need to be addressed		
Responds to all communications from faculty and program staff in a prompt and professional manner		
Shows respect for and collaborates with classmates		
Other:		
Characteristics of Professional Dispositions in the Field		
Is punctual; arrives early when needed for adequate planning time with the mentor teacher; stays the agreed-upon amount of time; remains late enough to be sure of being prepared for the next day		
Presents a professional appearance		
Is prepared for the day upon arrival which includes presenting complete lesson plans and materials in advance for feedback		
Is responsive to requests from mentor teacher to participate in non-classroom activities as needed (if issues arise with such requests, bring them to the attention of University Supervisor)		
Solicits feedback on planning, teaching, and assessment of student learning (it is your responsibility to clarify any confusion on these issues with your mentor teacher)		
Applies feedback appropriately to improve performance		
Identifies and addresses own content gaps related to teaching assignments		
Contacts University Supervisor at the first sign of any difficulties or concerns		
Communicates professionally verbally and electronically with University Supervisor, Mentor Teacher and other school personnel and administrators.		
Uses resources, including technology, appropriately and effectively		
Demonstrates respect for all students, the school, and the community		
Exhibits the highest professional and scholarly ethics and upholds high expectations for all students.		
Relates to students in developmentally appropriate ways		
Encourages positive classroom interactions		
Develops and maintains positive professional relationships within the school		
Communicates effectively and appropriately with parents		
Other:		

Development Plan needed (see next page)

No Development Plan needed at this time

## Development Plan

The student and evaluator will collaborate on this Development Plan during the initial conference. If consensus is not reached, the evaluator shall develop and finalize the Development Plan.

<b>Measurable Goals</b> List specific goals based on the <i>Dispositions Assessment Tool</i> .	<b>Action Steps for Remediation</b> Include all specific professional learning activities and resources required.

### Evidence of Improvement

Indicate types of evidence that will support and document the student's development to a satisfactory level. These may include follow-up observations, written reflections, assigned readings, role-playing and conferencing, and related assessments of learning.

### Timelines for Goal Completion

The required actions steps in this plan must be successfully completed by the following date: \_\_\_\_\_. A final conference between the evaluator and student will take place on or shortly after this date.

**Faculty Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I have carefully reviewed the Development Plan with the student and have clearly communicated what is expected of the student to satisfy this plan.*

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I have received the Development Plan, understand it, and will work on the plan as described.*

Upon signing, both student and evaluator will receive a copy of this plan and make a note of the target completion date. The student and evaluator may each request to meet for further clarification of the *Development Plan*, to give a progress report, or to request modifications to the *Development Plan* including its deadlines. The final decision to modify a *Development Plan* or extend its deadlines rests with the evaluator.

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### Final Plan Conference and Outcome

The evaluator and student meet at the end of the plan and review the student's progress. This should include a review of all professional development activities, observation notes, reflections, and other evidence of growth.

The student has met the objectives of this plan by the deadline indicated above.

- Yes
- No, but has shown progress and is granted an extension to \_\_\_\_\_.
- No, and no significant progress has been made. Student case referred to the APC.

**Faculty Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_