ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024 – 2025 Academic Year

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School of Education
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https://education.gmu.edu/elementary-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

MEd, Curriculum & Instruction, Elementary Education Concentration

The 39-credit, initial licensure program provides professionals with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the educational needs of students attending today's elementary schools. Three admission terms with multiple cohort models — summer hybrid, fall daytime, fall evening, and spring — allow for students to choose the model that works best for their life. Two student teaching internship options — semester-long (SL) or year-long (YL) internships — provide further flexibility for all students.

As a PDS Program, we work closely with a select group of elementary schools in local school districts for student field observations and internship placements.

BAM: Bachelor's Degree + Accelerated MEd in Curriculum & Instruction, Elementary Education Concentration

Highly qualified undergrads may be admitted to the bachelor's/accelerated master's program (BAM) and obtain both a bachelor's degree in any major other than ELED and an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction with an Elementary Education Concentration in an accelerated time frame. Students in the BAM program must fulfill all university requirements for bachelor's 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 1) get along well with others, 2) be a supportive member of the cohort, and 3) be productive in a collegial setting. As a "critical friend," you will help others improve their performance, and you will be open to feedback from classmates, instructors, academic advisors, university facilitators, site facilitators, and clinical faculty members. Thoughtful, reflective, and helpful questions are always welcome as are solutions to problems that the cohort encounters. Students have several cohort options from which they can choose; the details of each cohort are outlined in the following sections.

Summer Cohort

Designed for students who need evening and primarily online classes, the summer start cohort track is comprised of hybrid classes that meet mostly online with somewhere between 1 and 5 in-person meetings throughout the semester. Occasionally, some courses will be 100% online. Most students in this cohort are working full time, often as provisionally licensed teachers, instructional assistants, or long-term substitutes. Students who are working as lead teachers may choose an on-the-job internship rather than a traditional student teaching internship.

This cohort begins in the summer and continues across 6 semesters (summer, fall, spring, summer, fall, spring). Prior to the internship, you will complete 30 hours in the field each semester in one of our PDS Network partnership schools or in a school of employment if it is an approved VDOE site. Typically, these hours are completed in 3- to 4-hour periods during the semester (over about 8-10 weeks).

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 1 in session C (starts late June). Usually these are both fully online.
Fall	ELED 544: Intro to Elem Methods and Mgmt ELED 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning I	Classes will be hybrid and will meet once a week.
Spring	ELED 552: Math Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 553: Science Methods for Elem Classroom	Classes will be hybrid and will meet once a week.
Summer	ELED 545: Differentiation Elem Methods, Mgmt ELED 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning II	Usually, 1 class in session A and 1 in session C. Both are usually hybrid.
Fall	ELED 554: Social Studies & Fine Arts Methods Elective* (for SL interns) or ELED 790 (for YL interns)	ELED class will be hybrid or online. YL interns will do 4 days per week.
Spring	ELED 559: Research and Assessment ELED 790: Internship in Elem Education (6 cr)	Five days in internship school; 559 in the evening at Mason or online.

*Recommended electives: EDSE 501: Intro to Special Education or EDUC 537: Intro to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. Any other elective needs advisor approval ahead of time.

Fall Cohorts

If enrollment numbers permit, we will offer two cohort options each fall: one with daytime classes, and one with evening classes. Students who start in the fall complete 5 consecutive semesters (fall, spring, summer, fall, spring). During the first fall and first spring semester you could easily work because you'll only be taking two classes per semester. However, in the summer the schedule becomes condensed, and you start to prepare for your internship. You will have to complete 30 hours in the field each semester in one of our PDS Network partnership schools. Typically, these hours are completed in 3- to 4-hour periods during the semester (over about 8-10 weeks).

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 meet once a week and are usually in-person.
Spring	ELED 544: Intro to Elem Methods and Mgmt ELED 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning I	Classes will meet once a week and are usually in-person.
Summer	ELED 545: Differentiation Elem Methods, Mgmt ELED 553: Science Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 554: Soc Studies & Fine Arts Methods	Classes will meet several days a week for two 5-week sessions starting mid-May.
Fall	ELED 552: Math Methods for Elem Classroom ELED 556: Literacy Teaching and Learning II Elective* (for SL interns) or ELED 790 (for YL interns)	ELED 790 Internship will be four days a week; classes will be at Mason one day a week for daytime cohort and two evenings a week for evening cohort.
Spring	ELED 790: Internship in Elem Ed (6 credits) ELED 559: Research & Assessment	Five days in school; 559 in the evening at Mason or online.

*Recommended electives: EDSE 501: Intro to Special Education or EDUC 537: Intro to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. Any other elective needs advisor approval ahead of time.

Spring Start
Beginning in Spring 2024, this option will be part-time with two classes per week and will span 6 semesters resulting in a Fall graduation term. The times of the classes (daytime or evening) will be determined by enrollment numbers, student need, and faculty availability. For those wanting a faster option, it is possible to work with the program advisor to create a completion plan that will allow you to graduate in 4-5 semesters instead of 6. This would involve taking classes with other cohorts, though, so would be dependent upon open spaces in those classes. This accelerated option would only work for students who are not employed (or who have a flexible part-time job, like substitute teaching).

Spring Start Schedule & Course Sequencing Details
The course sequence will depend on a variety of factors and will be shared with spring cohort students at their program orientation.

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. (Classes in summer session C will not require fieldwork.) Thus, most semesters you will be required to complete a MINIMUM of 30 hours in a classroom. **You must complete these hours in one of our partner schools assigned by the program. Students are NOT allowed to make their own placements. Fingerprinting and background check procedures vary across our partnership sites.**

Before each semester, you will be given an opportunity to rank the schools we are using for your cohort's field placement. You will then be assigned to a school by the Elementary PDS Coordinator, and the school's Site Facilitator (SF) will assign you to a teacher. Students who are already employed full-time within an elementary school can request to complete some of their field hours at their place of employment. In some courses, faculty may 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.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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 D) 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.

Accommodations in the Field

If you utilize academic accommodations for your classes, please be aware that accommodations in the field require a separate process. Field placement accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Advance notice is required so Disability Services can work with the instructor, field placement coordinator, and field site personnel to develop an appropriate accommodation plan. More information is available on Mason's Office of Disability Services website.

Fingerprinting & Background Check

Local school systems require students to complete a criminal background check through their human resources office prior to beginning field work. Detailed instructions on the process will be sent to you from either the school system or Mason. **When undergoing the background check, 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 assume the risk that classes may be deferred and program progress delayed or altered due to the individual severity of notations.

Go React

All students in the Elementary Education program use Go React in their internship. Go React is a web-based video coding program that will enhance your professional development. You will purchase your Go React license in your internship course.

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. If a school division requests a student's removal from the placement:
- The student will be informed by the ELED Clinical Coordinator and expected to participate in a conference to discuss the matter.
- After the conference, program leadership will determine if a second placement during the same semester is feasible and appropriate.

- Students may be required to initiate an individualized development plan, in which they are required to participate in some interventions or meet additional criteria before being cleared for a second placement.
- Students removed from an internship site who do not satisfy the terms of the development plan within two internship application cycles may be recommended for academic termination due to failure to make satisfactory academic progress.

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 an **internship placement** is terminated by the school, the student will fail the class.

Clinical Experience (Internship)

We often use the terms internship and student teaching interchangeably to describe the capstone clinical experience in the MEd program. 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. The schedule is based on the school's calendar—NOT Mason's. 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.

Students *cannot* initiate their own placements. Placements are made by the program in a PDS Network school. Currently those are located within the Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William County, Arlington, Manassas Park, and Manassas City 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.

Traditional Student Teaching Internship Details: SL and YL
The **Semester-Long Internship (SL)** is <u>unpaid</u>. It is usually completed during the final spring semester, but some students complete it during the fall. SL interns must take a 3-credit elective to replace the 3 credits of ELED 790 that YL interns complete.

The **Year-Long Internship (YL)** is completed during the final two semesters (fall and spring) of the program and comes with a $4500 stipend in return for substitute teaching at the internship school site.

On-the-job (OTJ) Internship Details
Students can opt to complete an OTJ internship in lieu of a traditional student teaching internship. This is **never** recommended because it doesn't provide the same levels of support and mentorship you get with the traditional internship. To qualify for an OTJ Internship, a student must obtain a provisional contract to teach a PK-6 class in a public school or be hired as a lead teacher in an accredited private school, and must submit the OTJ internship application along with the same requirements for a regular internship by the deadline. This truly is *not* a recommended path. If you are considering it, consult with your advisor and faculty.

Application for Internship

All ELED students MUST apply to internship. This process is managed by CEHD's Office of Teacher Preparation, not by the ELED program. Complete information, including the online application, <u>can be found here</u>. The deadlines are firm, and **late application materials will NOT be accepted without an approved, official extension request form**. 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 two separate 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 has 2 deadlines:
  - **February 15**: online application and supporting documents
  - **September 15:** passing scores for the VCLA, Praxis Subject, and Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary exams + all content area requirements + CPR/AED/First Aid certification
- OTJ internship in Fall: **July 1**
- OTJ internship in Spring: **November 1**

Important: It takes up to 6 weeks for test scores to be reported to and processed by the university, 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) – *The governor signed a bill in spring 2024 to remove this requirement. We are waiting for guidance from VDOE on when that will go into effect.*
- Praxis Subject Assessment for Elementary Education
- Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary

Students are responsible for scheduling and paying for their exams which will total approximately $500 for all three combined. When registering, students must indicate that their official scores should be sent to Mason. As a student in the Elementary Education program you will be provided a timeline of test registration and licensure activity deadlines. By embedding these expectations in your coursework, we are supporting your timely completion of these requirements in preparation for internship deadlines. Additional details about the exams can be found **[HERE](#)**.

Licensure Exam Preparation Resources

The university provides resources to assist students in preparing for these important exams. These include Learning Services Workshops and academic coaching. Information about these and other free resources available online can be found on [Office of Teacher Preparation website.](#)

Content Area Coursework

ALL [content area coursework](#) must be completed and approved by the Office of Teacher Preparation prior to the internship application deadline. Questions can be sent to endorse@gmu.edu.

CPR/AED/First Aid

Virginia law requires that all new licensure applications must include verification that a [First Aid/CPR/AED training](#) has been completed. The training should be for adults and pediatrics and must include a "hands-on" CPR skills component. Mason's Recreation Department offers several trainings each fall and spring at a cost that is slightly below what you would pay if you sought this training through an outside organization. A valid certificate is due with your internship application.

If you have any questions about the above requirements, please contact your advisor or the Clinical Practice Specialist at internsh@gmu.edu.

University and Program Policies

The Elementary Education Program has adopted policies that align with the university and college and the expectation for your performance as a professional educator in a 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 (SAA) website](#). Any policy-related questions can be directed to your academic advisor.

Academic 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. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, so be sure to complete this process before your first semester begins.

Attendance

As described in the catalog, "students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register" (see section AP.1.6 [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.

In the Elementary Education Program, an *unexcused absence* is considered an issue of professionalism. More than one absence of any kind will affect your mastery of course content, which can affect your final grade and may require a conference with your instructor. Please note: notification of an "intended absence" does not mean it is an excused absence. However, it's better to notify your instructor of an intended absence ahead of time than to simply not show up for class without any communication.

Attire

As a future educator, your dress while at the school site should reflect the highest caliber of professionalism. Dress in modest, business professional attire at all times (slacks or skirts and a dress

shirt, or dresses). No one should wear sweatpants, 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.

BAM Policies

BAM students need to be aware of some key policies regarding the transition from being a BAM student to a regular graduate student.

In the final semester as an undergrad, BAM students must submit the BAM Transition Form by the deadline to initiate the process. At the time of degree conferral for their undergrad degree, BAM students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and no grades below B- in a graduate level class. Students must take classes in the semester immediately following their bachelor's degree conferral. If a student chooses not to do this, they must work with their advisor and the CEHD admissions office to request a deferral of their start term in regular grad student status.

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, and review your syllabi thoroughly. 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 university and/or 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 when 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 respond 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
> G09876543

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. 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 internet 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) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education promote standards of professional competence. Students have a responsibility to develop and maintain professional behaviors and dispositions that are associated with career professionals in education. Development toward the acquisition of such professional dispositions will be part of the Elementary Education Program assessment process.

Dispositions Reviews

Once admitted to the program, the CEHD Dispositions Assessment will be used by students and faculty to evaluate an individual's dispositions in the domains of professional responsibility, collaboration and leadership, cultural responsiveness, and high expectations for learning. These evaluations occur at the beginning of the program, midway through, and during internship. In addition, the Professional Dispositions Tool in this handbook will be used by ELED program students and faculty as a tool for professional development, support and intervention as needed. More information about professional dispositions can be found on the Office of Teacher Preparation website.

Process for Addressing Dispositions Concerns

If a student is not meeting professional disposition standards, the program faculty will intervene to support them in their development. This process contains multiple steps and levels depending on the issue that needs to be addressed. Full details can be found on the CEHD website under the Professional Dispositions heading. The process involves four levels depending on the severity and frequency of the dispositional concern, and can ultimately lead to termination from the program if the area(s) of improvement is not sufficiently addressed.

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 student 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 after a due date 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. *Faculty 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 advisor. All course requirements must be complete and submitted to the instructor by the end of the 9th week of the following semester, or earlier if specified in the contract.

Students cannot begin internship or a full-time load of cohort classes with unresolved IN grades from the previous semester. Any student who would like to request an exception to this rule must explain their situation to the APC and program advisor along with a detailed plan of how they intend to successfully finish the IN work in addition to their new classes and/or internship.

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 deadline. 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 just one class. See the Withdrawal Request section of the CEHD SAA website for complete information.

Grade Appeals and Grievance Procedures
If a student believes 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 Grade Appeal on the CEHD 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). 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 always exhibit professional dispositions. 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. Full details about that process can be found on the CEHD website under the *Professional Dispositions* heading.

Termination Process

The CEHD Student and Academic Affairs (SAA) Office formally notifies student of pending termination and the right to appeal by requesting an exception to the policy. If the student does not request an exception to policy during the specified window, the termination will be processed.

If the student appeals, SAA will review the case. 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. More details can be found on the CEHD SAA website under Academic Appeals.

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 in the Office of Teacher Preparation at edlicen@gmu.edu. View the requirements and application HERE.

Graduation Information

Graduation from Mason is not automatic! There are 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. Details:

- 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 College of Education & Human Development degree celebration in May. The degree celebration is where the student graduates will get to walk across the stage as their names are called. Students who graduate in the Fall can participate in the Winter Graduation ceremony in December.

Alumni

There are multiple ways for alumni to stay connected with the program, CEHD and Mason. At the end of your program, you will receive an Exit Survey from the program advisor. Please take the time to respond as we value your feedback and take it into account for continual program improvement efforts. In this survey, we ask for your personal email address which we'll add to our ELED alumni email listserv. We've also created a LinkedIn group for program alumni title *George Mason University Elementary Education Alumni*, and we hope you'll join the group to stay connected.

Appendix A — Elementary Education Faculty and Staff

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The Elementary Education Program is in Thompson Hall, Suite 1800, and is reached at 703.993.3696. For more information, including full bios of each faculty member, 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 in the same semester into the same model of the program and move through together as a group.

Elementary PDS Liaison: The faculty members who coordinate student placements (field experience and internship) in our PDS schools.

INTASC: Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium

Clinical Coordinator: The faculty member who oversees the internship experience at a program-level.

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

SAA: CEHD's Student and Academic Affairs Office; they handle academic actions and appeals

Semester-Long Interns (SL): students who opt to complete a Semester-Long (SL) Internship, either in the Fall or Spring.

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.

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 opt to complete a Year-Long Internship that begins in August and runs through June, following the elementary school calendar.

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** (app only) + **September 15** (exams & Content Area Courses + CPR/AED/First Aid certification)

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
	Get your initial Content Area Review (CAR). When you complete a requirement, email endorse@gmu.edu	Meeting should occur prior to application to the program, and student should be within 9 credits of completion **prior to the start of the program**.
	Content Area coursework complete and all official documentation submitted	By your **internship application deadline**
	Fingerprinting	Prior to visiting a school site for field experience hours, students must be fingerprinted and undergo a background check.
	Internship Application	- Fall-only SL: February 15 - Spring-only SL: Sept 15 - YL: February 15
	Emergency First Aid/CPR/AED	Completion of Emergency First Aid, CPR, and AED Certification requirement must be submitted by the **internship application deadline** and again with the licensure application.
	Praxis Subject Assessment — Elementary Education Subjects Assessment (code 5001-5005)	Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the **internship app deadline**.
WAIT! This is being cancelled.	Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA)	Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the **internship app deadline**.
	Teaching Reading: Elementary	**Do not take this exam until completion of Literacy I course.** Official, passing test score must be submitted and in the Mason system by the **internship app deadline**.
	Child Abuse Recognition & Intervention (CARI)	The online module must be completed and certification included in licensure application. **Print and keep this certificate for licensure.**
	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. **Print and keep this certificate for licensure.**
	Regulations Governing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia Modules	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. **Print and keep this certificate for licensure.**
	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.

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

Appendix D – Experiences to seek out and explore

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

Activities:
    Field Trip
    Fire Drill
    PTA/PTO meeting
    Back-to-School Night
    Parent Conference
    Calls to Parents
    Parent Newsletter
    Eligibility Conference
    Mock Job Interview
    IEP Meeting
    CLT Meeting
 	
Instruction and Assessment (K-6):
    Reading
    Writing
    Spelling
    Oral Language
    Mathematics
    Social Studies
    Science
    Health
    Physical Science
    Music
    Art
 	
Equipment:
    Computer
    Printer
    Copier
    Doc Cam
    Manipulatives
    Listening Station
    Digital Camera
    Smartboard
	Observation of Specialists:
	    Special Education Resource
	    PE
	    Music
	    Art
	    ESOL
	    Gifted/Talented
	    Reading Specialist
	    Speech Clinician
	    Extra or Co-Curricular Activities
	
	Records:
	    Cumulative Folders
	    Work Samples
	    Anecdotal Records
	    Attendance Records
	    Grade Book
	    Report Cards
	    Accident Report
	    Emergency Cards
	    Referral Forms
	
	Test Administration or Interpretation:
	    Teacher-made
	    Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
	    Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
	    Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT)
	    Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)
	    Readiness Test/Inventory
	
	Duties:
	    Playground
	    Cafeteria
	    Bus
	    Hall

Notes:

Appendix E – Dispositions and Professional Development Improvement 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 Tools,* 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.

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS in CLASS (PDC) ASSESSMENT TOOL

The ELED faculty reviewer may communicate with the student's advisor, other ELED faculty, field placement or internship University Facilitator, 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:
N = needs improvement; S = satisfactory; H+ = highly commendable, N/A = not applicable

Characteristics of Professional Dispositions in Class (PDC)	Rating	Notes
Attendance		
Attends every class, arriving on time and staying the entire session		
Comes to class prepared with assigned readings and activities complete		
Participation		
Engages productively in class discussions and activities		
Shows respect for, and collaborates with, classmates		
Responds to all communications from faculty and program staff in a prompt and professional manner		
Submits assignments on time		
Learner Characteristics		
Approaches learning through a growth mindset		
Reflects on, and implements suggestions from, previous feedback		
Communicates proactively with instructors regarding questions, concerns, or any additional issues that may need to be addressed		
Demonstrates effort to continue learning both content and pedagogy		
Is a self-determined learner who takes initiative and problem solves		
Displays flexible thinking		
Other:		

☐ Development Plan needed (see attached)   ☐ No Development Plan needed at this time

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS in the FIELD (PDF) ASSESSMENT TOOL

To be provided to the student prior to the initial conference so they can prepare for the discussion. The 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:
N = needs improvement; S = satisfactory; H+ = highly commendable, N/A = not applicable

Characteristics of Professional Dispositions in the Field (PDF)	Rating	Notes
Professionalism		
Meets all expectations for attendance - 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		
Is responsible, dependable, and observant of school policies and procedures – reads assigned school's faculty handbook and conforms to the professional expectations of the school site.		
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)		
Presents a professional appearance in dress, demeanor and teacher presence		
Exhibits the highest professional and scholarly ethics and upholds high expectations for all students - demonstrates respect for all students, the school, and the community		
Demonstrates stamina, flexibility, and a positive attitude - mindset allows for instructional adjustments, anticipation of challenges		
Reflective Practice		
Welcomes assistance for improvement and problem solving - 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/university facilitator)		
Applies feedback appropriately to improve performance		

Reflects on professional practice including personal vision for teaching/learning – can develop and explain professional judgements using research-based theory and practice		
Possesses the basic skills and knowledge needed to guide students' learning - identifies and addresses own content gaps related to teaching assignments		
Communication		
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		
Develops and maintains positive, productive, professional relationships with all professional colleagues and support staff		
Encourages positive classroom interactions - actively engages with students		
Relates to students in developmentally appropriate ways - uses responsive language and actions to establish boundaries and teacher presence		
Follows school policies regarding communication with families - maintains confidentiality of information about colleagues, school sites and students unless disclosure serves a professionally compelling purpose or is required by law		
Other:		

☐ Development Plan needed (see attached)   ☐ No Development Plan needed at this time

Development Plan

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

Measurable Goals List specific goals based on the *Dispositions Assessment Tool.*	Action Steps for Remediation 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.

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**: _____

Appendix G —Professional Organizations

Multiple professional organizations and associations for educators provide student memberships at a discounted rate. Students should consider joining at least one national, state or local organization to take advantage of membership benefits that will aid in their development as professional educators.

ASCD

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE)

Virginia State Literacy Association

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics

The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)

National Science Teaching Association

National Council for the Social Studies

Virginia Council for the Social Studies