Pre-Teacher Education Program Handbook

Collaborative Teacher (K-6, 7-12)
and
Early Childhood Special Education (B-8)

Department of Interdisciplinary Teacher Education

College of Education

The University of Alabama

We are all alike and we are all different; what matters most, however, is that we are all significant.
Faculty in the Department of Interdisciplinary Teacher Education (ITE) have designed an innovative and dynamic Pre-TEP model for beginning undergraduate students. This model will provide substantial assurances that undergraduate Collaborative Teacher Program (CTP) students attain the needed competencies for successful Teacher Education Program (TEP) participation in one or more of the three CTP certification areas: Early Childhood Special Education (0-8); Elementary CTP (K-6); and/or, Secondary CTP (7-12).

As a new student in the CTP of the College of Education, you may be wondering what types of experiences and expectations are required before you apply to TEP. Essentially before being admitted to CTP or TEP, all preservice undergraduate students must successfully complete the College of Education core curriculum, and two key requirements along the developmental focus in CTP. The following is an introduction to these requirements.

**College of Education Core Curriculum**

In the past several years, there has been a formal effort from the University and the College of Education to ensure that all undergraduate students possess a well-rounded knowledge base in diverse areas. The College of Education core curriculum requirements will enable you to be a teacher who possesses a diverse knowledge base across such fields as mathematics, humanities, fine arts, natural science, history, social science, English, etc. Being accepted into CTP is contingent upon having and maintaining an overall 2.75 GPA in the core curriculum and completing a successful oral interview process with CTP faculty.

**Requirement 1 – PRE-TEP Coursework**

Once you have been admitted to CTP, you will begin in-depth coursework related to your specific field of study. However, as part of the admission process to TEP, there are four (4) central course requirements and attached field experiences that you must navigate. Embedded in each of these courses are numerous professional standards and field experiences that you will be expected to successfully complete during the CTP phase of the program. The student must receive at very minimum a C in all CTP coursework and maintain an overall 2.75 GPA. While these standards and activities are specific to CTP and individual courses, you will also receive coursework and field experiences in areas such as pedagogy, diversity, technology, professionalism and ethics, etc. The four central Pre-TEP courses are highlighted below:

**SPE 302 “Educational Diagnostic Measurement”**
- or-
**SPE 476 “Assessment of Young Children” (ECSE program only)**

Introduction to group and individual assessment used for evaluating student development, student learning, and for planning instruction. Course emphasis is on appropriate test selection, test procedures, evaluating results, report writing, and program planning. In addition, a diagnostic practicum is required.
SPE 304 – Methods in Special Education

This course addresses the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP), curriculum planning and selection of instructional tasks, with emphasis on making decisions that facilitate learning for students with special needs. The ability to develop diverse products and materials is an essential component of this course.

SPE 414 – Collaboration and Consultation

This course allows students to exam ways in which individuals interact with educational systems, communities at large, and each other to bring about appropriate educational services for students with special educational needs. Included in this course are fundamentals of group process, human behavior and interaction, and motivation, as well as skills and knowledge necessary for successful collaboration and consultation with others concerned with the education of students with special needs.

SPE 435 – Behavior Management

This course addresses the development of models for analyzing, modifying, and managing behavior. Concepts and principles of behavior change and management with emphasis on developing behavior management plans. Field-based experiences are a requirement of this course.

**Requirement 2 – Pre-TEP Portfolio**

Products and materials from each of the four central CTP courses and field experiences encompass a major portion of the Pre-TEP Portfolio. This developmental portfolio process requires students to demonstrate increasing competencies as they progress through the CTP coursework and activity experiences. The Pre-TEP Portfolio is not a collection of everything the CTP student does. Rather, it is a careful selected series of artifacts that reflect the student’s emerging growth and development.

**Student Pre-TEP Portfolios**

Murname (1994) defines a student portfolio as a “multidimensional collection of a student’s work assembled in an organized fashion” where “specific attention is given to what students are doing and can do” (p. 74). Paris and Ayres (1994) add that portfolio-building involves a process as much as a product, since work samples should be collected and reviewed in “a systematic way” (p. 167).
McLaughlin and Vogt (1996) expand the idea of process to include collaboration between student and teacher as portfolio samples are selected and organized. Porter and Cleland (1995) add that portfolio selections should be “accompanied by a reflective narrative that not only helps the learner to understand and extend learning, but invites the reader of the portfolio to gain insight about learning and the learner” (p. 154).

From these ideas, the CTP faculty describe the Pre-TEP Portfolio as a two-part experience. The first part involves students collecting work samples over time and analyzing what those samples demonstrate (often with the aid of peer and instructor feedback). The second part of the experience involves deciding which samples best illustrate important insights, accomplishments, or values; considering how those samples (and insights) might best be presented to an audience; and then creating an actual presentation product.

CTP faculty believe that requiring undergraduate students to engage in the Pre-TEP Portfolio process is essential to professional teacher development from within the basic tenets embedded in the College of Education's Conceptual Framework. As such, the benefits of the Pre-TEP Portfolio process are that it:

1. Documents growth in learning or increased proficiency in a particular area over time.
2. Documents growth that is not easily assessed through more traditional means.
3. Accommodates diversity among Pre-TEP students.
4. Enhances the Pre-TEP student’s ownership of learning.
5. Allows Pre-TEP students to capitalize upon their strengths.
6. Allows Pre-TEP students, in collaboration with faculty and significant others, to identify areas in need of improvement.
7. Empowers Pre-TEP students by requiring them to critically self-reflect upon their knowledge, dispositions, skills, and future learning goals.
8. Encourages a sense of community and cooperation among CTP students rather than a sense of competition.

Rationale for the Pre-TEP Portfolio (Green & Smyser, 1996) is as follows:

1. A holistic evaluation that focuses on the process of learning as well as the product of learning.
2. Archival in nature.
3. Typically a continuous collection of a variety of authentic student processes across a range of content areas over time that shows the processes and products associated with student learning.
4. A collection of samples of work that is reviewed periodically by significant others and the student.

5. An assessment tool that requires the student to reflect upon his/her learning.

6. An assessment tool that typically assesses three areas of teaching (i.e., range, depth, and growth).

7. A multidimensional approach in that the developmental teaching portfolio incorporates a variety of tasks and situations in which students are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and to thoughtfully apply pedagogical knowledge in a variety of contexts.

What is the Pre-TEP process leading to admittance to TEP?

1. Admittance to CTP – Requires an overall minimum GPA of 2.75 and a successful interview with CTP faculty regarding goals, objectives, etc.

2. Documentation that the student has passed the Alabama Basic Skills Test (ABST) – The ABST is offered 4 times a year. The test covers three major content areas – reading, writing and mathematics. Registration packets are available through the College of Education’s Office of Student Services located in 104 Carmichael Hall.

3. Inclusion of the student’s Philosophy of Teaching - Should be a minimum of 400 words in length and completed in SPE 304. Your philosophy should reflect your knowledge and disposition in working with individuals with special needs. To be placed in Pre-TEP Portfolio.

4. Inclusion of support forms/evaluations – The student will be evaluated by supervisors during field experiences. The student will need to collect evaluation forms and letters of support from these individuals in order to document potential for success in TEP. Placed in Pre-TEP Portfolio.

5. Reflective self-study of the student’s Pre-TEP experiences. This submission is very important in that students are required to engage in a process of critical self-reflection of Pre-TEP experiences. The student should include in this self-study an identification of their strengths, limitations, and needs as a potential educator. An action plan for capitalizing on strengths and addressing limitations/needs should be included. Additionally, students should establish individual goals and objectives they wish to obtain once admitted to TEP. Placed in Pre-TEP Portfolio.

6. Authentic products – The Pre-TEP student must include in their portfolio a number of authentic products that document their competencies across the standards identified in the four (4) central Pre-TEP courses:

- CTP Elementary/Secondary
- ECSE
- SPE 302 (assessment)
- SPE 476 (ECSE assessment)
- SPE 304
- SPE 304
- SPE 414
- SPE 414
- SPE 435
- SPE 435
7. **Documentation of Exposure to Various Cultures** – Given the emphasis on diversity as part of the College of Education Conceptual Framework, the student is required to submit in the **Pre-TEP Portfolio** a summary that details their experiences with various cultures. This may include experiences in diverse school settings, community organizations, etc.

8. Successful completion of the **Written Diagnostic Evaluation**. - The written evaluation is usually scheduled at the end of the spring semester (2\(^{nd}\) semester in CTP). For those entering CTP in the spring, this process will be completed at the end of the summer semester (2\(^{nd}\) semester).

9. **Submission and oral presentation of the Pre-TEP Portfolio and faculty interview for admission to TEP** - This process is usually completed at the end of the spring semester (2\(^{nd}\) semester). For those entering CTP in the spring, this process will be completed at the end of the summer semester (2\(^{nd}\) semester). Along with the other requirements identified above, successful completion of the Pre-TEP Portfolio, will provide assurances that each undergraduate student in CTP will have attained critical standards and outcomes related to essential subject matter knowledge, oral and written communication, and technology which are essential components for admission to TEP.

In conclusion, the "choose-your-own adventure" nature of teaching individuals with special needs attracted many of you to CTP. Professional development within the educational enterprise is intensive but also an exciting time. However, rest assured that you will not be alone. CTP faculty will be there to assist and mentor you throughout the process. This process is a rewarding one, and we believe that you will find it a reflective, thought challenging, experience.
REFERENCES


