

Walden University

Candidate Guidebook

**Teacher Preparation Program
With a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
With a Specialization in
Special Education (K–Age 21)**

The Richard W. Riley
College of Education and Leadership

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Welcome to Walden University's Teacher Preparation Program with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with a specialization in Special Education (K–Age 21). This program helps candidates obtain the professional knowledge and experience they need to become well-informed and skilled educators.

Candidates can gain an understanding of the guidelines and requirements for the teacher preparation program by reviewing this guidebook. While many questions are answered in this book, candidates will need to stay in close touch with their contacts at Walden, especially with their respective academic advisors and program directors, for specifics regarding their individual programs. Walden is here to build a relationship with candidates, to help them be successful all the way through their coursework, field experiences, and demonstration teaching.

Note: This guidebook refers to the *Walden University Student Handbook* for specific information on university policies. Candidates should be sure to have the student handbook available for reference. They can access it at the [catalog website](#), choosing the current student handbook from the drop-down menu at the upper right.

The College

The following vision and mission statements represent the commitment of The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership to pursue academic excellence, embrace the rich diversity of the community, value all of the university's stakeholders, and encourage civic responsibility through the promotion of positive social change. For graduates to cultivate habits of lifelong learning and continuous advancement of their knowledge, the university considers it essential that these statements guide Walden to ensure the quality and synergy of the programs.

Vision

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership fosters a dynamic and diverse network of educational leaders who seek to support learners globally by leveraging the power of teaching and technology and who are committed to the pursuit of positive social change through education.

Mission

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership provides access to high-caliber programs that prepare learners as scholar-practitioners and leaders who can inspire, influence, and impact their diverse communities by helping to meet the challenges and opportunities of education worldwide.

Conceptual Framework

Walden University has developed a conceptual framework in collaboration with the professional community that articulates the shared vision of the professional education unit's efforts to prepare educators to work in P-12 schools. The conceptual framework provides the philosophical foundation for Walden and serves as a guide for decision making within the unit.



Eight critical components were identified, based on professional standards, the university's guiding philosophy, and Walden's vision and mission at the unit and institutional levels. Walden believes that these critical components distinguish Walden candidates from those who graduate from other institutions.

- Teaching and Lifelong Learning
- Research With Application
- Reflective and Analytic Thought
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Diversity
- Social Change

Professional Education Unit Outcomes

The eight critical components of the conceptual framework serve as outcomes for candidates in the professional education unit. Three additional outcomes address professional dispositions and proficiencies in diversity and technology.

Walden expects the candidates to successfully demonstrate each of these outcomes upon completion of their programs:

1. **Teaching and Lifelong Learning:** Demonstrate current knowledge and skills with the understanding that educators are lifelong learners who continually add to their knowledge and skills.
2. **Research With Application:** Analyze educational issues in light of current research and best practice through Walden University's scholar-practitioner model.
3. **Reflective and Analytic Thought:** Reflect on and analyze educational issues in light of current research to inform best practice in P–12 classrooms.
4. **Leadership:** Demonstrate leadership to build a shared vision for effective teaching and learning that positively impacts all stakeholders within a given educational community.
5. **Collaboration:** Demonstrate collaborative skills that integrate multiple perspectives in order to create ongoing support for the learning environment.
6. **Communication:** Demonstrate skills to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of professional and interpersonal contexts.
7. **Diversity:** Act in ways that honor multiple perspectives and affirm the dignity and respect of all individuals internal and external to the learning environment.
8. **Social Change:** Demonstrate the skills and professional dispositions that advocate for social change to make a positive impact where the educator works and lives.
9. **Diversity Proficiencies:** Create educational opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners and remove barriers that inhibit learning.
10. **Professional Dispositions:** Build meaningful relationships to improve student learning by effective planning, communication, use of assessment data, and high-caliber delivery of instruction. ([Appendix A](#))
11. **Technology Proficiencies:** Design and develop learning environments that integrate various technology tools and applications, connect technology usage to content areas, and embed technology into assessment strategies. ([Appendix B](#))

The Program

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership is committed to preparing candidates with the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions of exemplary educators who work in diverse settings and utilize the best educational practices based on research and theory.

The college is committed to attracting candidates who seek to become skilled classroom teachers and to providing them with developmentally appropriate, student-centered learning experiences that build their students' knowledge and skills. To that end, candidates begin the teacher preparation program with a set of core courses and then are increasingly challenged as their studies advance in specific subject areas, as well as in the pedagogy and technology necessary for effective and creative teaching.

Program Outcomes

At the end of the teacher preparation program, teachers are able to achieve the following:

1. Understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. Understand how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support a child's intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. Understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical-thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills.
4. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
5. Understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
6. Be a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
7. Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
8. Foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.
9. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
10. Use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Academic and Professional Standards

High academic standards are important to professional success. The skills learned in the course of academic pursuit will be the same skills necessary for success in the workplace: the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to analyze a situation objectively, and the discipline of study.

The Minnesota State Board of Education and Board of Teaching have a set of standards that clearly define what a teacher needs to know. The Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers and the appropriate subject matter standards are covered in Walden's courses. These standards include the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions needed to be a teacher. The program is also designed to meet the standards of the leading professional organization in special education: the Council for Exceptional Children. Candidates in the teacher preparation program will demonstrate that they have met these standards through their coursework, performance assessments, and major assessments in their portfolios.

The Riley College of Education and Leadership faculty members are here to help candidates meet those standards. They keep a watchful eye on candidates' academic progress. Through teaching, advising, and tutoring, they assist candidates in developing the skills, knowledge, and professional dispositions necessary for academic and professional success. Further, Walden University has an array of services to support candidates. The [Walden University Student Handbook](#) contains more information about these candidate services. Also, see Part 3 of this guidebook for a description of specific candidate [support services](#).

Notes on Licensure

The Minnesota Department of Education grants teaching licenses, not Walden University. Walden University is approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching to offer a teacher preparation program that leads to Minnesota licensure in special education (K–21). Candidates for teacher licensure must successfully complete Walden University's state-approved teacher preparation program, which may make them eligible for the Minnesota teaching licensure in the teaching area of the program completed. Before a candidate can be recommended for licensure to the Minnesota Department of Education, he or she must also pass the required exams for Minnesota licensure adopted by the Minnesota Board of Teaching, undergo a Minnesota background check, and complete any other Minnesota Board of Teaching requirements beyond completion of Walden's state-approved teacher preparation program.

For individuals seeking a comparable teaching license in a state other than Minnesota, Walden's advisors can provide guidelines and other information about licensure. It remains the individual's responsibility to understand and comply with the out-of-state licensure requirements for the state in which he or she seeks to be licensed, as requirements vary state by state. Walden University makes no representation or guarantee that successful completion of any program or coursework will permit candidates to obtain state certification or licensure in their home state.

In all states, there are policies regarding out-of-state procedures that must be followed when someone is eligible for or has received licensure through an out-of-state institution with a state-approved program, such as the Minnesota Board of Teaching-approved program at Walden University. Some states require that an individual actually obtain the out-of-state license first; other states do not require the actual license, just completion of a state-approved program. For more information, candidates should contact their Walden University enrollment advisor, who can provide information on licensing requirements. It is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that they understand and comply with the most up-to-date licensing information for their state.

State-Specific Notes

- **Prospective Alabama candidates:** Contact the Teacher Education and Certification Division of the Alabama State Department of Education at 1-334-242-9935 or www.alsde.edu to verify that these programs qualify for teacher certification, endorsement, and/or salary benefits.
- **Note to all Pennsylvania residents:** Walden University's teacher preparation program is approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching as leading to licensure. Because this program is not reviewed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, candidates are instructed to

apply for Pennsylvania certification as out-of-state graduates of a teacher preparation program.

- **Prospective Washington state candidates** are advised to contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 1-360-725-6320 or prof.educ@k12.wa.us to determine whether Walden's programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

Part 1. Program Requirements

Please note: Walden University reserves the right to make program changes as needed in order to ensure the highest quality program.

Program Design and Structure

The teacher preparation program is an accelerated, intensive program, offered entirely online, with concurrent field experiences. Courses are offered in a prescribed sequence, with completion expected in six semesters. Most courses are 5 weeks long, with the exception of the Action Research and Collaboration to Support All Learners courses, which are both 8 weeks long. During most semesters, candidates take three courses, which allows for a week off between each 16-week semester. During the final semester, when candidates complete demonstration teaching, they are enrolled in a concurrent seminar.

Each course is taken singly. This innovative model is based on research that indicates adult candidates benefit from accelerated models of education with enrollment in only one course at a time. With a total of 46 semester credits, candidates complete the program, allowing them to achieve the goal of becoming a teacher who can enter into the licensed educational workforce in a timely manner.

Within the program, a group of core courses provides the foundation of educational knowledge and understanding necessary for all teachers. These core courses meet the Minnesota Board of Teaching's Standards of Effective Practice.

Professional Portfolio

One required component of the program is the completion of a professional portfolio. The portfolio demonstrates the candidate's mastery of the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers as well as the standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children.

Because the professional portfolio is electronic (thus referred to as the ePortfolio), candidates can access it anytime via the "Academics" tab on their myWalden university portal. Candidates construct and update their portfolios throughout the program by completing a series of major assessments. Various course assignments serve as the foundation for the major assessments. The major assessments are evaluated according to clear performance criteria, as specified on scoring rubrics or guides.

Program Sequence

The course dates listed in Tables 1–3 are approximations based on which semester the candidate begins the program. Actual dates are dependent upon the calendar year. For exact course start and end dates, visit the academic calendar in the [student handbook](#). Candidates with questions regarding the program sequence should contact the Academic Advising Team at 1-800-WALDENU (1-800-925-3368).

Table 1. Course Sequence—Fall Start

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Approximate Dates</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Required Field Experience</i>	<i>Semester Credits</i>
Fall	Sept. 2–Oct. 5	EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator	N/A	3
	Oct. 6–Nov. 9	EDUC 6606 - Today’s Classroom and the Diverse Learner	N/A	3
	Nov. 10–Dec. 14	No courses offered	N/A	0
Spring	Jan. 2–Feb. 4	EDUC 6627 - Foundations of Literacy	15 hours	3
	Feb. 5–March 10	EDUC 6626 - Foundations of Special Education	N/A	3
	March 11–April 14	EDUC 6628 - Individualizing Education Programs for Learners With Exceptionalities	N/A	3
Summer	May 1–June 25	EDUC 6209 - Collaboration to Support All Learners	N/A	3
	June 26–Aug. 20	EDUC 6688 - Action Research	N/A	3
Fall	Sept. 2–Oct. 5	EDUC 6607 - Effective Practices: Assessment, Teaching, and Learning	15 hours	3
	Oct. 6–Nov. 9	EDUC 6608 - Classroom Management	15 hours	3
	Nov. 10–Dec. 14	EDUC 6636 - Characteristics of Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
Spring	Jan. 2–Feb. 6	EDUC 6637 - Literacy Assessment and Intervention to Support Student Learning	15 hours	3
	Feb7–Mar. 13	EDUC 6638 - Behavior Management to Support Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
	Mar. 14–April 17	EDUC 6639 - Instructional Strategies for Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
	No courses offered in the second summer			
Fall	Sept. 2–Dec. 14	EDUC 6649 - Seminar for Professional Educators		3
	Sept. 2–Dec. 14	EDUC 6648 - Demonstration Teaching	12 weeks	4
Total semester credits				46

Table 2. Course Sequence—Spring Start

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Approximate Dates</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Required Field Experience</i>	<i>Semester Credits</i>
Spring	Jan. 2–Feb. 4	EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator	N/A	3
	Feb. 5–March 10	EDUC 6606 - Today’s Classroom and the Diverse Learner	N/A	3
	March 11–April 14	No courses offered.	N/A	0
Summer	May 1–June 4	EDUC 6627 - Foundations of Literacy	15 hours	3
	June 5–July 9	EDUC 6626 - Foundations of Special Education	N/A	3
	July 10–Aug. 13	EDUC 6628 - Individualizing Education Programs for Learners With Exceptionalities	N/A	3
Fall	Sept. 2–Oct. 5	EDUC 6607 - Effective Practices: Assessment, Teaching, and Learning	15 hours	3
	Oct. 6–Nov. 9	EDUC 6608 - Classroom Management	15 hours	3
	Nov. 10–Dec. 14	EDUC 6636 - Characteristics of Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
Spring	Jan. 2–Feb. 4	EDUC 6637 - Literacy Assessment and Intervention to Support Student Learning	15 hours	3
	Feb. 5–March 10	EDUC 6638 - Behavior Management to Support Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
	March 11–April 14	EDUC 6639 - Instructional Strategies for Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
Summer	May 1–June 25	EDUC 6209 - Collaboration to Support All Learners	N/A	3
	June 26–Aug. 20	EDUC 6688 - Action Research	N/A	3
Fall	Sept. 2 –Dec. 21	EDUC 6649 - Seminar for Professional Educators		3
	Sept. 2–Dec. 21	EDUC 6648 - Demonstration Teaching	12 weeks	4
Total semester credits				46

Table 3. Course Sequence—Summer Start

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Approximate Dates</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Required Field Experience</i>	<i>Semester Credits</i>
Summer	May 1–June 4	EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator	N/A	3
	June 5–July 9	EDUC 6606 - Today’s Classroom and the Diverse Learner	N/A	3
	July 10–Aug. 13	No courses offered.	N/A	0
Fall	Sept. 2–Oct. 5	EDUC 6627 - Foundations of Literacy	15 hours	3
	Oct. 6–Nov. 9	EDUC 6626 - Foundations of Special Education	N/A	3
	Nov. 10–Dec. 14	EDUC 6628 - Individualizing Education Programs for Learners With Exceptionalities	N/A	3
Spring	Jan. 2–Feb. 4	EDUC 6607 - Effective Practices: Assessment, Teaching, and Learning	15 hours	3
	Feb. 5–March 10	EDUC 6608 - Classroom Management	15 hours	3
	March 11–April 14	EDUC 6636 - Characteristics of Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
Summer	May 1–June 25	EDUC 6209 - Collaboration to Support All Learners	N/A	3
	June 26–Aug. 20	EDUC 6688 - Action Research	N/A	3
Fall	Sept. 2–Oct. 5	EDUC 6637 - Literacy Assessment and Intervention to Support Student Learning	15 hours	3
	Oct. 6–Nov. 9	EDUC 6638 - Behavior Management to Support Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
	Nov. 10–Dec. 14	EDUC 6639 - Instructional Strategies for Learners With Exceptionalities	15 hours	3
Spring	Jan. 2–April 21	EDUC 6649 - Seminar for Professional Educators		3
	Jan 2–April 21	EDUC 6648 - Demonstration Teaching	12 weeks	4
Total semester credits				46

Field Experiences

Each candidate actively engages in *four different types* of field experience. The experiences take place across *three different levels*, to cover the scope of the teaching license. Each candidate will have experience working in mild to moderate settings with students in the following disability categories: autism spectrum disorders (ASD), specific learning disabilities (SLD), emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD), other health disorders (OHD), and developmental cognitive disorders (DCD). Except for the field experience associated with EDUC 6627 - Foundations of Literacy, each classroom in which a candidate is placed must include at least one student who has special needs.

Types of Field Experiences

Virtual Field Experiences (VFE®) are organized, purposeful, and thought-provoking experiences that allow Walden candidates to see authentic practices demonstrated by real teachers across the United States in a variety of classrooms at multiple levels of learning and with a rich diversity of students. The VFE® plays an important role in the program by offering candidates a guided, focused, and shared experience. The assignments related to the VFE® require candidates to view, discuss, apply, and reflect upon experiences in diverse classrooms in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, first language, and learning exceptionalities. For each VFE®, there is a standards-based viewing sheet with accompanying guiding questions that help focus candidate attention on crucial aspects of the VFE®. The total time commitment on the part of the candidate for viewing and completing related assignments is expected to be between 3 and 6 hours.

Early Field Experiences (EFE) are initial experiences during the second and third semester of the program. During EFE, candidates complete activities such as observing their host teacher working with students across multiple disability classifications, and implementing learning from their coursework under the guidance of a host teacher. Candidates are required to complete 15 hours of field experiences per 5-week course.

Intensive Field Experiences (IFEs) are taken in the final semester before demonstration teaching. Candidates are required to complete 15 hours of field experiences per 5-week course. During the IFE, candidates are supervised by a qualified and trained university supervisor face-to-face on at least two occasions during the experience. With the support of a host teacher, candidates are expected to accomplish more complex teaching tasks in IFE placements, including an Individual Behavior Management Project and Lesson Planning Project.

Demonstration teaching is a 12-week full-time experience that provides the teacher candidate with opportunities to gradually assume total responsibility for all classroom tasks including management, curriculum development, daily instruction, and the other duties of a professional educator. The candidate must assume full responsibility in the classroom for at least 4 weeks of the placement.

This culminating field experience, under the direction of a qualified faculty member, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor, is arranged with a cooperating teacher who is recommended by the principal and has at least 3 years of teaching experience, with at least 1 year at the current

age level and school, and current credentials in the special education licensure area. Candidates complete this 12-week experience on a full-time basis with a schedule that parallels the schedule of the cooperating teacher. To achieve a passing grade in demonstration teaching, candidates must attain a minimum rating of “Acceptable” (i.e., 3 on a 5-point scale) on every criterion.

Demonstration teaching may be completed during the fall or spring semesters only: no winter or summer placements are available. Candidates complete EDUC 6649 - Seminar for Professional Educators concurrently with demonstration teaching so that they can discuss their classroom experiences with and receive additional support from their instructor and their peers. With the support of the cooperating teacher and guidance from faculty, candidates complete three major assessments during demonstration teaching: the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), Professional Practice Plan, and Data-Based Individualized Instruction.

Levels of Field Experiences

All candidates must have field experiences across the scope of the license and disability areas, including one placement each at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. When candidates enter the program, they are allowed to request an “area of focus” for their field experience. By selecting an area of focus, candidates indicate the level where they prefer to conduct their demonstration teaching (DT). Usually, that is the level in which they anticipate seeking employment upon graduation. Early Field Experience (EFE) and Intensive Field Experience (IFE) take place at the other two levels.

Field Experience Placements

1. The Office of Field Experience (OFE) makes all placements for candidates.
2. The OFE ensures all candidates have at least one placement in each of the three levels of the license—elementary, middle, and high school.
3. The OFE ensures all candidates have experiences working with students in mild to moderate settings across the disability scope of the Academic and Behavioral Strategist license
4. The OFE ensures that candidates are placed in at least one setting classified as diverse.
5. The OFE collaborates with districts and schools to make the placement and verify the qualification of the host and cooperating teachers.
6. The OFE tracks all experiences and collects evaluations and assessments of candidate professional dispositions from the candidates’ host teacher (EFE, IFE) and cooperating teacher (DT).
7. All placement data are tracked by the OFE.
8. Qualified and trained university supervisors are responsible for face-to-face supervision of each candidate in both the IFE (two visits) and DT (three visits).

Note: The program offers limited courses during the summer that have field experiences. There is no option of demonstration teaching during the summer.

Specific expectations for field experiences and demonstration teaching— policies, structure, and placement requirements—are described in detail in the program’s *Field Experience and Demonstration Teaching Handbook*. Candidates can access this handbook via the “Academics” tab of their myWalden university portal.

Host and Cooperating Teachers

The teacher of the classroom in which a candidate completes his or her early field experience and intensive field experiences is referred to as the *host teacher*. Host teachers are asked to complete an evaluation on each candidate’s knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. They also verify the number of hours spent in the field. Candidates are responsible for submitting evaluations and time sheets for verification in their ePortfolio.

The teacher of the classroom in which a candidate completes his or her demonstration teaching is referred to as the *cooperating teacher*. The cooperating teacher completes a *Demonstration Teaching Evaluation*, which includes an assessment of the candidate’s professional dispositions. At the conclusion of the demonstration teaching experience, the cooperating teacher verifies the number of weeks the candidate spent in the field.

For more information on the qualifications for host and cooperating teachers and the evaluation of demonstration teaching performance, see the *Field Experience and Demonstration Teaching Handbook*.

Identifying Preferred Placement Sites

The Office of Field Experience makes all placements for candidates. However, candidates need to submit a *Preferred Placement* form (located in the ePortfolio) that identifies local school districts and organizations and provides their contact information. The form is due during EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator, the first course of the program. Failure to complete the *Preferred Placement* form by the deadline will result in a hold on the candidate’s record, preventing registration for the subsequent semester, and will delay the candidate’s placement.

Placement at a preferred site is not guaranteed. The Office of Field Experience will make every effort to place candidates according to their indicated preferences, provided the site meets program requirements. Once a placement has been confirmed, the Office of Field Experience will notify the candidate of his or her placement site via the candidate’s Walden e-mail address. (All e-mail communication between the Office of Field Experience and candidates will take place via the Walden e-mail server, as per university policy.)

Candidates can find additional information about the placement process in the *Field Experience and Demonstration Teaching Handbook*.

Field Experience Requirements

Diversity of Field Experiences

Diversity in field experiences (both classroom-based and demonstration teaching) is highly valued. Candidates will be placed at sites that meet diversity criteria in their state in

race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, first language, and learning exceptionalities. At minimum, candidates will be placed in one site classified as diverse. Candidates are also exposed to a wide range of diverse classroom settings through the VFE® in each course.

Criminal, Sex Offender, and Other Background Checks

Although the Riley College of Education and Leadership does not require a background and sex offender check on candidates, it is critical that candidates know the implications of having a criminal history in the state of Minnesota. Field experience and demonstration teaching sites may require background checks. Because each site may have specific requirements of “observers” or “volunteers” regarding criminal, sex offender, and other background checks, it is important that candidates discuss this issue with the site as soon as the Office of Field Experience notifies them of an impending placement.

For specific information and recommended actions, see the [Background Checks](#) section in [Part 3](#) of this guidebook. Upon admission, candidates are required to submit a signed acknowledgment form stating they received information about criminal background checks.

Proof of Immunization and TB Clearance

Placement sites also vary in their requirements of observers and volunteers regarding proof of immunizations and tuberculosis (TB) clearance, so it is important that candidates discuss this issue with their impending placement sites as well. Some placement sites may require proof of recent TB clearance and immunization to specified diseases.

Professional Liability Insurance

Many school districts require teachers working in U.S. schools to carry professional liability insurance. Walden University requires all candidates to purchase and show proof of professional liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million per year during field experiences. Candidates are responsible for completing the *Professional Liability Insurance Verification* form (located in the ePortfolio) during EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator, the first course in the program. Failure to complete the *Professional Liability Insurance Verification* form by the deadline will result in a hold on the candidate’s record, preventing registration for the subsequent semester, and will delay the candidate’s placement.

Walden University suggests candidates research professional organizations that may offer discounted professional liability coverage as a benefit to their student members. The following professional organizations offer liability insurance, as well as other membership benefits candidates may want to consider:

- [Council for Exceptional Children](#) (CEC)
- [Association of American Educators](#) (AAE)

Satisfactory Academic Progress

In addition to meeting the professional standards set by the Minnesota State Board of Education and Board of Teaching and the Council for Exceptional Children, candidates are responsible for meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards set by Walden University. Faculty

members in the Riley College of Education and Leadership monitor candidates' academic progress on a regular basis to make sure they are making progress toward program requirements and degree completion. Candidates are expected to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA throughout the program, as described in the [Transition Points](#) section that follows.

Walden University believes that teacher candidates must take responsibility for their own academic experience, including knowing the standards, regulations, rules, and processes of both Walden University and the Riley College of Education and Leadership. In addition to reading this guidebook, candidates should thoroughly read the applicable sections of the [Walden University Student Handbook](#).

Transition Points

Walden University's teacher preparation program has four transition points, specific times during the program when candidates must meet certain program and Minnesota Board of Teaching requirements to move on in the program and ultimately be recommended for licensure.

The requirements for each transition point help ensure that the candidates' education and teaching knowledge, skills, and performance are of high caliber. The university recognizes that when a candidate obtains his or her license, he or she will be a novice teacher. Walden's goal is to ensure that the individual is a highly capable novice teacher.

It is the candidate's responsibility to manage his or her own progress through the four transition points. The transition point elements are located in the candidate's ePortfolio. Candidates should contact the Academic Advising Team at any time for help and support. Candidates will learn more about these transition points when they are accepted into the program.

Transition Point I. Conditional Admission

Transition Point 1 occurs during the admission process. Candidates who are admitted into Walden's Teacher Preparation Program with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) are admitted conditionally.

Admission to the program requires the following:

1. A bachelor's degree, or equivalent, from a U.S. school accredited by a regional, professional/specialized, or national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation ([CHEA](#)) or the U.S. Department of Education, or from an appropriately accredited non-U.S. institution, in a discipline or field related to the program/specialization for which application is made. **Note:** Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE, [www.ece.org](#)) must evaluate a degree awarded from a non-U.S. institution as equivalent to a bachelor's degree awarded by a U.S. institution.
 - It is Walden's policy, consistent with the policy of most states, that all U.S.-licensed educators must complete a degree, either at the bachelor's or master's level, from an institution that is regionally accredited by one of the six associations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, [www.ncahlc.org](#).

- Degree programs that include a liberal arts or general studies core are advantageous to the future success of teacher candidates. Walden recommends that potential candidates demonstrate completion of college-level work in communication (including composition), humanities, and social/behavioral sciences, as well as in mathematics and natural sciences.
2. A minimum GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent in bachelor's degree coursework. Candidates with a 2.30–2.49 cumulative GPA are eligible for conditional admission. Goal statements must include why the candidate wants to become a teacher in the chosen area. The statement should include any prior work with children and families and/or with diverse populations. These candidates must provide additional information in their application goal statement that includes an explanation of their GPA and a rationale for why they should be granted conditional admission to the program. These candidates must meet all requirements of Transition Point Two before they can continue in their selected programs.
 3. In lieu of research experience, the goal statement must cover the candidate's experience with diversity.
 4. Admission requires the completion of all application materials, including a signed acknowledgment of background check and fingerprinting guidelines as well as immunization and TB guidelines.
 5. Applicants must have completed at least one college-level course in multicultural and/or global studies. Coursework would include, but is not limited to global studies, multicultural studies, diversity studies, cultural/ethnic studies, linguistic/language studies, or social studies with an international focus (world or regional economics, sociology, political science, religion). If candidates are not able to fulfill this requirement through coursework as determined by a transcript analysis, they will be referred to the admission committee for a final review. If the admission committee determines that they have no applicable courses in their undergraduate program, the prospective candidates will need to take a course in this area prior to being admitted to the program. They may fulfill this course through Walden or a different institution.
 6. Completion of the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam–Basic Skills and scores must be received by Walden prior to admission in the program. (See Part 2 for more information about testing.)

English Language Proficiency

The main language of instruction at Walden is English; therefore, academic success depends upon a candidate's ability to converse in, write, and understand English. Therefore, if a candidate does not meet at least one of the following exemptions, he or she will be required to submit a score of an official test of English proficiency (see table below with minimum scores):

1. Applicants must possess an associate's degree or higher from an institution in one of the following countries: Australia, Belize, the British Caribbean and British West Indies, Canada (except Quebec), Guyana, Ireland, Liberia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, or the United States.
2. The admitting degree is from an institution where the primary language of instruction and evaluation was in English, and for which verification is available through the *International Handbook of Universities*, published and edited by IAU/UNESCO. Additional information

may be requested from the applicant's university registrar's office to verify that the instruction was conducted in English.

Table 4. English Language Proficiency Requirements

<i>English Proficiency Test</i>	<i>Minimum Required Score</i>
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	paper-based: 550 computer-based: 213 Internet-based: 79
Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	82
Academic Modules of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	6.5 overall band score
Pearson Test of English	53

Transition Point 2. Official Program Admission

Candidates can expect to complete the components of Transition Point 2 during their first semester of the program:

1. Submit a completed *Preferred Placement* form during EDUC 6605 - Teacher as Lifelong Learner and Professional Educator, the first course in the program.*
2. Submit a completed *Professional Liability Insurance Verification* form during EDUC 6605.*
3. Successfully complete all program course requirements, with any and all Incomplete grades resolved.
4. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 during the first semester. (Candidates' GPAs will be checked at the end of each semester. If at any point a candidate's GPA falls below 3.0, the candidate will be placed on academic warning. Candidates will have two semesters to raise their GPA to the required level.)

*Failure to submit the required forms during EDUC 6605 will impact the candidate's future registration and delay the candidate's placement.

Upon successful completion of these requirements, candidates will be fully admitted into the teacher preparation program and will move into their second semester.

Transition Point 3. Approval for Demonstration Teaching

Candidates can expect to complete the components of Transition Point 3 by the end of their coursework in EDUC 6639 - Instructional Strategies for Learners With Exceptionalities:

1. Maintain a cumulative program GPA of 3.0 or above to be approved for demonstration teaching.
2. Submit a completed *Application for Intensive Field Experiences and Demonstration Teaching* by the appropriate deadline. Candidates who plan to complete intensive field

experiences during the spring semester (January–April) must submit the application by May 31 of the preceding year; candidates who plan to complete intensive field experiences during the fall semester (September–December) must submit the application by Jan. 31.

3. Successfully complete all program course requirements, with any and all Incomplete grades resolved.
4. Have no unresolved professional disposition concerns.
5. Successfully complete the major assessments, with a minimum score of 3 on a 5-point scale.
6. Successfully complete the field experience hours, as evidenced by time sheets and host teacher evaluations.
7. Submit all required host teacher evaluations.

Transition Point 4. Program Completion

Candidates complete Transition Point 4 when they successfully complete all program requirements.

1. Maintain a cumulative program GPA of 3.0.
2. Successfully complete demonstration teaching.
3. Successfully complete all course requirements.
4. Successfully complete all major assessments, with a minimum score of 3 on a 5-point scale.
5. Have no unresolved professional disposition concerns.
6. Take and pass the required *Praxis II*[®] exam. (See Part 2 for more information about testing.)

Part 2. Testing and Licensure

Minnesota Board of Teaching Licensure Exams

On September 1, 2010, the Minnesota Board of Teaching launched the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exams (MTLEs). The exams are aligned to the Minnesota standards, which may not have been included in the licensure program.

The following are the MTLEs relevant to the specialization in Special Education:

1. Basic Skills: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics (see test battery options below)
2. Pedagogy: Elementary (Grades K–6) *OR* Pedagogy: Secondary (Grades 5–12)

Note: It is recommended that candidates select the test level (elementary or secondary) for the level they would like to teach; however, their choice of test does not impact the license they will receive.

3. Content Area: Special Education Core Skills (Birth to Age 21)

Required Tests for Admission

All candidates, as part of the admission process (Transition Point 1), must take the Basic Skills test and have their scores submitted to Walden. To meet the admissions requirement, candidates must take the Basic Skills test in one of the following test batteries:

1. National Evaluation Series or NES (Reading, Writing and Math)
2. ACT Plus Writing – must be taken within the past 10 years
3. SAT (Reading, Writing, and Math) – must be taken within the past 10 years
4. Minnesota Teacher Licensure Basic Skills exam (Reading, Writing, and Math)
5. Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Math) – must be taken prior to 9/1/2010
6. Graduate Record Examinations or GRE (Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing)

Note: The Minnesota Teacher Licensure Basic Skills exam is no longer being offered, but if a candidate took it previously, it will be accepted for program admission.

Required Tests for Licensure

There are two reasons to seek a license in Minnesota: (1) if the candidate resides in Minnesota, or (2) if the candidate first needs a Minnesota license to transfer (license in hand) to his or her home state. Candidates who are not seeking a license in Minnesota must consult the department of education website in their home state for required licensure exams.

Candidates who are seeking a five year teaching license in Minnesota must take and pass one of the Basic Skills exam options (see Table 5 for options), and also the MTLE pedagogy and MTLE content exams (see Table 6). Candidates who are seeking a one year teaching license in

Minnesota must take, but do not need to pass, the Basic Skills exam, and also the MTLE pedagogy and MTLE content exams. Questions regarding testing options in Minnesota should be emailed to educlicensure@waldenu.edu.

Table 5. Required Minnesota Teacher Licensure Basic Skills Exam Options

<i>Minnesota Licensure Exam – Basic Skills</i>	<i>Minnesota Qualifying Score</i>	<i>Important Notes for Walden Teacher Licensure Candidates</i>
NES Essential Academic Skills: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics	Reading: 205 Writing: 214 Math: 213	Passing NES subtest scores can be combined with passing MTLE subtest scores. For example, a passing NES Reading score can be combined with passing MTLE Writing and Math scores to meet the MN basic skills testing requirement.
MTLE Basic Skills: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics	240 (reported as scaled score)	Test is no longer being offered
ACT Plus Writing	Composite Score ≥ 22 and Combined English/Writing ≥ 21	Must have been passed within 10 years of applying for the MN license
SAT	Reading ≥ 510 Writing ≥ 510 Mathematics ≥ 520	Must have been passed within 10 years of applying for the MN license
Praxis I	Reading: 173 Writing: 172 Math: 171	Must have been passed before 9/1/2010
GRE	<u>Taken prior to 8/1/2011</u> Verbal Reasoning: 450 Analytical Writing: 3 Quantitative Reasoning: 540 <u>Taken after to 8/1/2011</u> Verbal Reasoning: 150 Analytical Writing: 3 Quantitative Reasoning: 145	

Table 6. Required Minnesota Teacher Licensure Content and Pedagogy Exams: Special Education

<i>Minnesota Licensure Exam – Content and Pedagogy</i>	<i>Minnesota Qualifying Score</i>	<i>Important Notes for Walden Teacher Licensure Candidates</i>
MTLE Pedagogy: Elementary (Grades K–6) OR MTLE Pedagogy: Secondary (Grades 5–12)	240 (reported as scaled score)	Walden recommends candidates take the appropriate pedagogy test during the semester in which they demonstration teach.
MTLE Content Area: Special Education Core Skills (Birth to Age 21)	240 (reported as scaled score)	Walden recommends candidates take the content area test during the semester in which they demonstration teach.

Application for Licensure

**** Note:** Candidates should not wait to apply for certification. Walden can only recommend that a candidate met current requirements. If Minnesota (or state of residence) changes certification or program requirements, then additional work may be required to obtain certification. The best way to avoid this problem is to apply for certification upon commencement.

In Minnesota

After completing demonstration teaching, candidates who would like to obtain initial licensure in Minnesota should follow these steps:

1. Go to the [Minnesota Department of Education \(MDE\) website’s](#) educator licensing page and review the information about the latest licensure requirements and processes.
2. In the menu on the left, select “Apply for an Educator License.”
3. To access the secure application system, click on “Online Licensing System.”
3. On this page, click on “Create Account” and follow the instructions to establish an online user profile and submit materials electronically.
4. Print out the *Verification of Completion of a State-Approved Licensure Program* form and e-mail it to Walden’s certification officer at educlicensure@waldenu.edu.
5. After receiving the signed verification form, submit it with any accompanying material (particularly fingerprint cards, Walden transcript, and NES score report, if applicable) to MDE at the address provided.

Note: Any candidates seeking a five year Minnesota license must obtain the required scores on all required MTLEs before Walden University can recommend them for licensure in Minnesota. With the exception of NES score reports, the certification officer at Walden University can only recommend candidates upon receiving **official** score reports; therefore, candidates must select

Walden as a score recipient when they register for the exams. Unofficial score reports will be accepted for NES only – both for admission and licensure recommendations.

In Other States

After completing demonstration teaching, candidates who are seeking initial licensure outside of Minnesota should go to the respective state department of education website and follow the directions for obtaining a license in that state. Candidates should pay special attention to which tests need to be passed to obtain a license.

Program Completion Exam: *Praxis II*[®]

All candidates must take and pass the *Praxis II*[®] Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543) test, with a minimum score of 153, to complete the teacher preparation program.

The *Praxis II*[®] exam may also be required by the state in which a candidate seeks a teaching license. When this occurs, the candidate must meet the score above to complete the program and must obtain the score required by the state to obtain a license.

Note; Not all states require the *Praxis II*[®], but it is a Walden **program** requirement (unrelated to licensure). Regardless of what is listed as a test requirement for a specific state, all candidates must complete and pass the *Praxis II*[®].

Test Preparation and Registration

Information about *The Praxis Series*[®] tests, which are administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), is located on the [ETS website](#). To get an overview, go to the middle of the [test series page](#) and under the “Quick Links” heading, choose “About the Tests.”

For each test, the ETS website provides a study companion document. These informational documents include the number and type of questions on the test, topics covered on the test, sample questions and answers, and tips for success. To access the study companion for the required *Praxis II*[®] exam, under “Quick Links,” choose “Prepare for a Test.” On this page, under the “Preparation Materials” heading, scroll to select “Special Ed: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (5543).” Then click on “Study Companion (PDF)” to download the document.

In addition to accessing the information provided on the ETS website, candidates can obtain support services by contacting Walden’s [Writing Center](#). Candidates also can contact the Academic Advising Team for guidance in identifying the most appropriate support services for their individual needs.

To be sure they know what to bring—and not to bring—to the test, candidates should visit the [test series page](#) and under “Quick Links,” choose “On Test Day.”

Important note: When [registering for the exam](#), candidates should designate Walden University as a score recipient (code RA6675).

Test Scores

Praxis[®] official scores are available online 10–16 business days after your test date. For tests that are offered during testing windows, scores are available online 10–16 business days after the testing window closes. To learn how to access and understand their *Praxis*[®] test scores, candidates can go to the [test series section](#) of the ETS website and under “Quick Links,” choose “Scores.”

Part 3. Other Important Information

Background Checks

Background checks are investigations into one or more of the following: employment history, criminal records, driving records, education records, drug test results, and sex offender lists. Prospective employers usually will require these types of checks before hiring an applicant to work with children.

Although the Riley College of Education and Leadership does not *require* candidates to obtain certain background checks, it is strongly recommended that candidates do so, because field experience and/or demonstration teaching placement sites might require it.

Why Should a Candidate Know About Background Checks?

Candidates are choosing to enter a profession—teaching—that has many regulations governing the people who come into contact with children. Depending upon the state, district, school, site, and/or child care facility, different background checks are required, and they may be performed in different manners. Background checks are primarily required of people who are to become employees; however, sometimes background checks are required of any person who will come into contact with children, including volunteers or those who may be on-site for field experience or demonstration teaching.

Thus, it is important for candidates to know about background checks for three specific reasons:

1. Candidates will come into contact with children during required field experiences.
2. Candidates will come into contact with children during demonstration teaching.
3. Candidates likely will seek employment as a teacher, other educator, or on-site school personnel once they have obtained licensure.

Which Background Checks Are Most Important for Candidate Awareness?

The most commonly required background checks are criminal history (including illegal substances and alcohol) and sex offender lists. However, the specific requirements vary from state to state and even district to district and child care facility to child care facility.

What Should Candidates Know About Criminal Histories?

Any conviction, even one for which the candidate has successfully completed probation, is part of the candidate's criminal history. This includes convictions for drug and alcohol offenses and any misdemeanor offenses. Certain exceptions may apply, such as sealed records or records that have been expunged.

Criminal or Sex Offender History and Licensure in Minnesota

It is important to understand that teacher licensure in the state of Minnesota (or any state, for that matter) is partly dependent upon character, which includes, but is not limited to, criminal history

and sex offender history. The state needs to feel absolutely sure that a candidate not only is qualified but also has a good character to work with children.

When applying for a Minnesota teaching license, applicants are required by the Minnesota Department of Education to submit fingerprints for a national criminal background check. According to the department:

All initial licensure candidates must be fingerprinted at a law enforcement agency in black ink on a card supplied by Educator Licensing. E-mail [Educator Licensing](#) to request a fingerprint card. You may be charged a separate fee from the law enforcement agency for this service. Provide all of the requested information on the card, but do not make any other marks, bend, or fold it. This background check is for state use only.

Applicants also are required to complete a Conduct Review. This consists of questions regarding the nature and dates of arrests and convictions, as well as formal disciplinary measures. If a candidate marks “Yes” to anything on the *Conduct Review Statement*, he or she may be denied a teaching license. See the [Minnesota Board of Teaching website](#) for more information.

Important note: If, for *any* reason (whether intentionally or by accident), a candidate misrepresents his or her criminal history in the conduct review portion of the license application, certification will be revoked. Thus, when self-disclosing criminal history or sex offender history, candidates should mark “Yes” if they are unsure about marking “Yes” or “No.”

If a candidate does not mark “Yes” and something comes to light, the lack of disclosure—an apparent attempt to hide facts about his or her past—will reveal an untruthful part of his or her character that is even more troublesome to the state. This is true even if the crime hidden would not otherwise have kept the candidate from becoming a Minnesota-licensed teacher.

Recommendations for Candidates Regarding Criminal Background Checks

The Riley College of Education and Leadership highly recommends that all teacher candidates understand their own criminal and sex offender history, and also recommends the following actions:

1. So that there are no delays in being able to complete field experiences, including demonstration teaching, candidates should complete any background checks required by the placement site(s) immediately if the Office of Field Experience advises that any background check is necessary.
2. Candidates who are considering any employment that involves working with children, regardless of state or setting, should complete a name-based and fingerprint-based criminal history check and complete a national sex offender registry check well in advance of when they anticipate applying for the license.

Credit for Prior Coursework and Experience

Because of the intensive and standards-focused course of study required in Walden University’s teacher preparation program, transfer of credit is generally not advisable. The program is six

semesters in length, and each course carefully builds on the learning and assignments that come before. In many ways, Walden offers a spiral curriculum: assignments and opportunities for reflection are revisited, added to, and developmentally enriched as candidates prepare increasingly complex and comprehensive materials for inclusion in their ePortfolios.

Prior Coursework Credit

If a candidate has taken previous coursework that closely aligns with Walden's licensure program requirements, he or she may appeal for a credit-transfer review by contacting the Academic Advising Team. A candidate may need to submit the syllabus for the course he or she wants to transfer. If an advisor determines the coursework credit may be eligible for transfer, the advisor will forward the appeal to the appeals committee.

The appeals committee is composed of the advisor, the program director, and the associate dean. The committee will review the course syllabus submitted for consideration and make a transfer determination. *Note:* Candidates are not required to complete the major assessment(s) for the course(s) for which transfer credit is awarded.

Teaching Experience

Field experiences and demonstration teaching cannot be waived, in full or in part, regardless of prior or current teaching experience. If a candidate currently is working as an aide or unlicensed teacher in a P–Age 21 setting, he or she may list the current work setting on the *Preferred Placement* form when the setting is deemed appropriate in age, grade, and content. Candidates should remember they are expected to develop and refine their teaching skills through a variety of diverse field experiences at different age, grade, and content levels; therefore, they will not be able to complete all of their field experiences in the current work setting. In addition, experiences must span the scope of the license.

Dependent Care

While conducting field experiences, Walden University teacher candidates are considered an invitee at their approved placement site, and time spent at the site must be focused on completing the field experience and program requirements. Therefore, teacher candidates are not allowed to bring their dependent child or other family member to their placement site during field experiences or demonstration teaching unless the dependent is an enrolled student at the placement site. If the dependent is an enrolled student at the placement site, the teacher candidate must complete all requirements in a classroom other than the one in which his or her dependent child is enrolled or other family member is present.

Graduation Information

A candidate's graduation date is also called the degree conferral date or the validation date. Candidates are eligible for validation or conferral of their degree at the end of the final academic term for which they are registered. As candidates approach the completion of their program, they must submit an application for graduation to confirm their eligibility to graduate and to help ensure that their diploma will be accurate. They must apply within two terms of the anticipated

graduation date. Candidates can find the application on their myWalden university portal under the “Student Services” tab. Candidates can find additional information about the graduation process in the *Walden University Student Handbook* in the Degree Audit, Completion, and Graduation section under Section 6. Academic Progress and Grading (select “Grading”) or contact the Academic Advising Team.

Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

In Walden’s Code of Conduct, the university maintains the following nondiscrimination and nonharassment policies.

Nondiscrimination

Walden University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination by or against members of the university community on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, marital status, or other protected characteristics in the admission to, access to, or treatment or employment in any of its programs or activities.

Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual discrimination in educational settings. Walden’s Sexual Misconduct policy, which includes policies related to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence may be found in the Walden Student Handbook and by visiting <https://www.waldenu.edu/experience/support-services/student-safety-title-ix>.

If you have been a victim of any form of sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination (or know someone who has), whether at a Walden-sponsored event or at your field experience site, your first priority is your own personal safety. After you are safe, please contact either your field experience coordinator or Walden’s Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for receiving and processing, in a timely manner, reports from students, faculty, staff, and administrators regarding rights and responsibilities concerning Sexual Misconduct in violation of Title IX. Any questions or complaints regarding Title IX may be referred to the Walden University Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator or to the Office of Civil Rights.

Walden University’s Title IX Coordinator

Title IX Coordinator Gina Dyson, Director, Student Affairs

Phone: 443-220-7016

E-mail: gina.dyson@waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator Julie K. Ogren, Associate Director, Student Affairs

Phone: 612-312-2376

E-mail: julie.ogren@waldenu.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator, Academic Residencies

RoChelle Gilbert, EdD, Associate Director, Academic Residencies

Phone: 612-308-9254

E-mail: rochelle.gilbert@waldenu.edu

Professionalism

Candidates must remember to maintain a professional attitude with respect to confidential information about children and with respect to relationships and practices with colleagues.

Also, it is important that candidates dress appropriately in the field and present themselves as educators. Even if other teacher candidates (or, for that matter, classroom teachers) do not dress professionally, Walden candidates need to remember that there is only one chance to make a good first impression and that Walden candidates in the classroom are role models for young people.

Professional Dispositions

Professional dispositions are not so much about what candidates do but rather about how they do it. For example, being adept with technology (or not adept with it) is not a professional disposition but a skill (or lack thereof). A professional disposition involves one's attitude toward something, such as being willing to learn and use technology and being open to its benefits in the classroom and with the children in one's care.

The Riley College of Education and Leadership is committed to recommending only those candidates who display the professional dispositions expected of a quality educator, someone who can and will make a positive difference in the lives of children and within the collaborative culture of an effective school. Therefore, assessment of candidates' professional dispositions is one of the key assessments used by the college to determine eligibility for institutional recommendation for Minnesota licensure. (See the [Transition Points](#) section in this guidebook.) The teacher preparation program has identified several professional dispositions that align with Walden goals as well as with the standards published by the state of Minnesota and national organizations ([Appendix A](#)).

Assessment of Professional Dispositions

Walden takes the responsibility of assessing candidates' professional dispositions very seriously and thus has established specific policies and procedures to ensure that candidates, faculty and staff members, and host and cooperating teachers understand and assess candidate professional dispositions accurately. Professional dispositions are formally assessed by host and cooperating teachers and university supervisors at the end of each field experience, including demonstration teaching.

Instructors, host and cooperating teachers, and university supervisors of demonstration teaching see candidates' work up close, sometimes on a day-to-day basis as they work with children. They see how well candidates manage pressure and interact with children. Other individuals see candidates' online abilities and use of proper online etiquette. People notice and keep track of whether or not candidates are on time, have a positive attitude, are friendly and polite to the school secretary or janitor, are cordial and professional with college staff members, and are supportive and helpful toward children and their families.

Professional Disposition Concerns

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership is committed to helping its candidates become the best educators they can be. Thus, any concern with a candidate's professional dispositions is taken very seriously.

Policies for Professional Disposition Concerns

If any evaluator selects a rating of "None" on a *Professional Disposition Assessment* form, that indicates the candidate needs improvement in that area. The evaluator must then complete a *Professional Disposition Concern* form ([Appendix C](#)).

In addition, at any time during the program, any instructor, staff member, or teacher who comes into contact with a candidate and feels that the candidate is behaving in ways that are inappropriate or unprofessional should complete a *Professional Disposition Concern* form. In this way, the Riley College of Education and Leadership faculty and staff members are able to help candidates improve as the course progresses. In the quest to develop good teachers, addressing professional disposition concerns or offenses is an ongoing process. This commitment lets candidates know that they are held accountable to the highest standards and are supported in their steps to improve.

All professional disposition concerns must be resolved for a candidate to remain in the teacher preparation program. Any unresolved professional disposition concerns may lead to the postponement and/or cancellation of demonstration teaching.

Any candidate in the Riley College of Education and Leadership may be subject to further disciplinary sanctions (as defined by the [Walden University Student Handbook](#)), up to and including expulsion, if more than three *Professional Disposition Concern* forms are submitted in any academic year, regardless of whether or not the candidate has resolved the concerns.

Procedures for Resolving Professional Disposition Concerns

The following steps are used when a professional disposition concern has been identified:

1. The individual (e.g., course instructor, university supervisor, host or cooperating teacher) with the concern completes a *Professional Disposition Concern* form and submits the form to the director of the Office of Field Experience and the relevant program director.
2. The director of the Office of Field Experience and the program director schedule a telephone conference with the candidate, the individual who filed the concern, and any other parties who may be directly involved (e.g., school administrator, host or cooperating teacher, Walden faculty member). The candidate is provided with a copy of the form prior to the conference. The purpose of the conference is to investigate the concern. The program director outlines the concern and invites the candidate to respond.
3. The academic team (i.e., program director, director of the Office of Field Experience, and others as appropriate) meets to decide on the outcome of the conference. The team may determine that the disposition concern was resolved in the conference. If not, an improvement plan may be developed to support the candidate in resolving the disposition concern.*

4. The candidate is informed in writing of the team's decision. This communication includes the improvement plan, if applicable, as well as a timeline for further review.
5. A second conference is held to review the candidate's improvement and determine whether the disposition concern has been resolved.
6. Once the disposition has been resolved, the matter is closed, and the form is placed in the candidate's file. No further action is taken unless additional disposition concerns arise.
7. If the disposition cannot be resolved, the candidate may appeal the decision of the team to the associate dean.

*If the concern is of a serious nature that could compromise the safety or well-being of children, the candidate will be removed from any field placement until the issue has been resolved.

Appeals and Grievances

Academic Grievances

If a candidate has an academic grievance, he or she should refer to the Students Appeals and Grievances section of the Walden University Student Handbook for specific directions. (From the [catalog website](#), select the student handbook from the drop-down menu at the top of the page; once on the handbook home page, select "Section 3. Student Expectations and Responsibilities" tab on the left navigation bar; then select "Process for Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Complaints").

Minnesota Licensure Appeals

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 122A.09, after a candidate has exhausted all appeal options in accordance with university policy, the Minnesota Board of Teaching may assist a candidate preparing for Minnesota licensure in resolving a dispute between the candidate and the institution when the dispute involves an institution's recommendation for Minnesota licensure. Candidates should contact the Board of Teaching at erin.doan@state.mn.us.

122A.09 Duties

(c) The board must adopt rules to approve teacher preparation programs. The board, upon the request of a postsecondary student preparing for teacher licensure or a licensed graduate of a teacher preparation program, shall assist in resolving a dispute between the person and a postsecondary institution providing a teacher preparation program when the dispute involves an institution's recommendation for licensure affecting the person or the person's credentials. At the board's discretion, assistance may include the application of Chapter 14.

Supporting Student Services

The Office of Disability Services

Walden University will not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to providing all qualified candidates with disabilities equal access to its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Office of Disability Services will work with candidates to provide personalized support services and accommodations for disabilities.

In postsecondary education, it is the candidate's responsibility to self-identify disability status and register with Disability Services prior to requesting accommodations. If assistance is needed, candidates should review the information on the [Disability Services website](#) and contact the Office of Disability Services (disability@waldenu.edu) as soon as possible in the program.

Candidates who anticipate the need for disability-related accommodations during field experiences must contact Walden's Office of Disability Services prior to registering for those field experiences and clarify their specific accommodation needs. Disability services staff will work with the candidate and the Office of Field Experiences to help ensure that field placement sites are prepared to accommodate the candidate. Failure to officially request accommodations through Walden's Office of Disability Services in a timely manner will delay a candidate's field placement.

Career Services Center

Taking a proactive approach to developing and managing a career is an important part of lifelong learning. The Career Services Center offers resources and advice to help candidates navigate their career paths. Whether candidates are looking to change jobs or enhance their current professional roles, the center encourages goal-setting, professional network-building, and active stewardship of career progress from the very start of an academic program. For more information or to schedule a counseling appointment, candidates should visit the [Career Services Center website](#).

Appendix A. Professional Dispositions

Walden has identified the following professional dispositions.

Professional Conduct

1. **Ethical and Legal Conduct** – The candidate demonstrates professionalism as outlined by legal and ethical guidelines within the profession.
 - a. Demonstrates professional behavior as described in Walden’s Code of Conduct.
 - b. Demonstrates ethical behavior as described by professional codes of ethics.
2. **Professional Obligations** – The candidate meets professional obligations in a responsible manner.
 - a. Maintains a strong record of attendance and punctuality, communicating in advance the need for any absence or delay in meeting performance expectations.
 - b. Prepares for professional obligations and meets expected deadlines.
3. **Professional Appearance and Demeanor** – The candidate demonstrates professional appearance and behaviors in the educational setting.
 - a. Maintains appropriate appearance through professional dress and grooming.
 - b. Approaches teaching and learning tasks with initiative, confidence, and energy.
 - c. Exhibits composure and self-control.
 - d. Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances and student needs.

Professional Qualities

4. **Professional Development/Growth** – The candidate engages in ongoing professional development and growth to improve professional practice.
 - a. Engages in continuous learning through participation in professional development opportunities.
 - b. Applies new ideas to professional practice based on existing data, reflection, and intellectual curiosity.
 - c. Engages in ongoing critical reflection of personal performance to improve professional practice.
5. **Advocacy** – The candidate advocates for fairness, equity, and social change in the learning environment.
 - a. Displays empathy, fairness, persistence, problem-solving skills, and appropriate risk-taking actions on behalf of others.
 - b. Advocates for the social, emotional, physical, educational, behavioral, and basic needs of others.

- c. Promotes positive social change to enhance educational opportunities and promote student learning.

6. Equity – The candidate demonstrates culturally responsive practices to create an inclusive learning environment that is respectful of diverse cultures, values, and beliefs of others.

- a. Displays equitable treatment of others:
 - Sets high expectations for all learners.
 - Treats others with respect and dignity.
 - Recognizes individual differences in teaching and learning.
- b. Engages in culturally responsive practices in interactions with students, families, colleagues, and communities.
- c. Creates learning environments that are inclusive; free of bias and discrimination; and respectful of diverse cultures, values, and beliefs.
- d. Engages families and other stakeholders in planning for individual success.

Collaboration

7. Collaboration – The candidate works in collaboration with others to improve student learning and advance the profession.

- a. Builds partnerships and fosters relationships with stakeholders to improve student learning and advance the profession.
- b. Collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the community to promote positive social change.
- c. Uses technology to enhance collaboration, strengthen partnerships, and foster relationships with others to improve teaching and learning.

Communication

8. Communication – The candidate uses effective verbal, nonverbal, and technological communication techniques to foster active inquiry, improve collaboration, and create positive interactions in the learning environment.

- a. Actively and thoughtfully listens to others.
- b. Adjusts communication to meet the needs of individual learners and changing circumstances.
- c. Asks probing, thoughtful questions to elicit meaningful responses.
- d. Conveys ideas in multiple ways using a professional tone.
- e. Acknowledges and respects ideas and/or feelings of others; makes others feel welcome, valued, and appreciated in their communications.
- f. Utilizes technological tools to facilitate communication to improve student learning and relationships with others.

Appendix B. Technology Proficiencies

Technology Proficiencies: Design and develop learning environments that integrate various technology tools and applications, connect technology usage to content areas, and embed technology into assessment strategies.

1. Design of Learning Experiences and the Environment – Candidates design learning experiences and foster learning environments that integrate various technologies.

- a. The candidate demonstrates how to evaluate technology and media resources for quality, accuracy, and effectiveness to support the processes of content and skill development.
- b. The candidate demonstrates fluency using effective technologies to plan, coordinate, organize, manage, and/ or supervise effective learning opportunities for all students.
- c. The candidate demonstrates use of online research databases and research-based practices in education to improve student learning, engagement, and outcomes.

2. Facilitation of Learning and Assessment - Candidates use technology to facilitate learning for a diverse population of students, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

- a. The candidate engages all students in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources to improve and/or enhance student learning.
- b. The candidate meets the diverse needs of all students by providing equitable access to digital tools and resources.
- c. The candidate uses appropriate technologies for assessment (administering assessments, monitoring student progress, presenting assessment results, and evaluating teachers and programs) to improve and/or enhance student learning.
- d. The candidate models and promotes diversity, cultural understanding, and global awareness by assisting students in the use of digital-age communication and collaboration tools.

3. Communication and Collaboration - Candidates use digital media tools in communicating and working collaboratively with students, families, colleagues, and community stakeholders to improve and/or enhance student learning.

- a. The candidate communicates relevant information and ideas effectively to students, parents, and colleagues using a variety of digital age media and formats to improve and/or enhance student learning.
- b. The candidate evaluates a variety of professional communication tools to improve collaboration with all stakeholders.

4. Professional - As lifelong learners, candidates improve their technology proficiency through collaboration, leadership, ethical practice, and additional professional development opportunities.

- a. The candidate takes a leadership role in developing a shared vision of technology infusion by collaborating with colleagues to promote effective educational practices.
- b. The candidate demonstrates a commitment to continuous professional development by reflecting on current professional research, legal issues, and ethical expectations to model effective technology decision making and to enhance student learning.
- c. The candidate advocates and practices safe, legal, and responsible use of technology and digital-age communication tools.

Appendix C. Professional Disposition Concern Form

Directions: The professional with the concern must complete all the fields through step 3 electronically, using the “Tab” key to move to the next field, and then print. The form must be signed by the person with the concern and the candidate. The signed form must be submitted to the Office of Field Experiences at fieldexperience@waldenu.edu and titled “Attn: Director.”

Candidate Name: _____

Your Name: _____ Your Role: _____

Your Telephone: (____) ____ – ____ Your E-Mail Address: _____

Today’s Date: _____ (*mm/dd/yyyy*)

1. Indicate the professional disposition for which there is a concern:
2. Describe the concern in detail, including specific description(s) of the candidate’s action(s) that prompted this concern and the date(s) on which the action(s) occurred:
3. Describe specific actions the candidate should do to address/resolve this concern:
4. Call the candidate to discuss this concern. Give the candidate a copy of this form. During the discussion, complete the information in step 5.
5. Complete the following information:
 - a. Date that the candidate was given a copy of this completed form and had the concern discussed with her/him. (*mm/dd/yyyy*)
 - b. Was this concern addressed/resolved satisfactorily? (*circle one*) Yes No
 - c. If “No,” contact The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership coordinator immediately.
6. Submit the completed form to the director of field experiences.

Candidate Signature

Date

Your Signature

Date



**THIS SECTION FOR RICHARD W. RILEY COLLEGE
OF EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP USE ONLY**

Date *Professional Disposition Concern* form was received: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Were further steps needed to resolve the concern? (*circle one*) Yes No

Describe the follow-up steps taken, including dates: _____

If this *Professional Disposition Concern* form was submitted as a result of a *Professional Disposition Assessment* form, attach this form to the *Professional Disposition Assessment* form.

Submit the completed and signed original form to:
Walden University
The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership
Attn: Director of Office of Field Experiences
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Or send it by e-mail or fax to:
E-mail: fieldexperience@waldenu.edu
Fax: 1-612-338-5092, Attn: Director of Field Experiences