

Francis Marion University  
School of Education

# **Teacher Candidate Handbook**

(Initial Certification Programs)

**Spring 2011**

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The School of Education continues to grow as an independent professional school and yet remains an integral part of Francis Marion University. In our growth we have found it necessary to refine our way of operating to allow for a larger faculty and increasingly diverse programs. This Handbook represents those descriptions, policies, and procedures not covered in the University Catalog and that are unique to our School. Many of the policies and procedures are relatively new because of the tremendous amount of change within teacher education in general and the FMU School of Education in the last few years. The descriptions, policies and procedures included herein are reflective of University policy as well as internal policy as decided by the School of Education faculty. It will be to your benefit to become familiar with the information, policies and procedures in this handbook. We look forward to helping you become an outstanding teacher.

Dr. J. R. Faulkenberry, Dean  
School of Education  
Spring 2009

## THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Francis Marion University's School of Education, where teaching and learning are the highest priorities, prepares competent and caring professional educators in the Pee Dee region and beyond, for a rapidly changing, complex, and diverse society through the acquisition of knowledge, professional skills and professional dispositions.

### PURPOSE FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The purpose of all Teacher Education programs at Francis Marion University is to train **competent and caring teachers**. Caring and professional competence are the twin pillars upon which a successful teaching career is built. A career that is lacking either pillar will always lack the effectiveness necessary to produce meaningful learning in students. The programs within the school of education are built around the notion that all educators need to be well grounded in knowledge of learning, learners and the environment in which each takes place. This knowledge is best learned from the professional literature and experienced practitioners. Teacher candidates must capitalize through reflective inquiry on what each domain has to offer. They cannot merely accept old patterns and traditions. They must critically analyze the merit of accepted theory and practice and be prepared to make decisions which are divergent and, in many cases, innovative.

These decisions must be made in both a social and an academic context. The students' diverse culture must be analyzed and evaluated in terms of its impact on the learning process. A main focus of all programs is on diversity in its many forms - cultural, racial, geographical, academic and social. Tied into this focus is a global, multicultural perspective that fosters tolerance and appreciation of values and lifestyles of various groups.

Another critical focus of all programs in education at Francis Marion University is technology. Technology is not viewed as an end in itself but as a vehicle by which many other ends are met. The purpose of technological enlightenment within the scope of all programs is very utilitarian in that teacher candidates are taught to pursue and apply technology in all teaching/learning environments. In addition, teacher candidates are able to make decisions about optimum use of software programs available through many commercial outlets.

# THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## Our Conceptual Framework

*The School of Education prepares competent and caring teachers.*

## The Conceptual Framework and Assessment Points

The School of Education has operationalized what it means by “competent and caring teachers” by specifying the areas below as representative points for focus and assessment:

A competent teacher possess at least these knowledge and skills traits:

- A. Knowledge of content in his/her area of teaching
- B. Professional knowledge and skills
  - 1. Ability to plan instruction or appropriate interventions
  - 2. Ability to apply skills and knowledge in a clinical setting
  - 3. Ability to cause learning in Pre-K -- 12 students
  - 4. Ability to assess learning and learners
  - 5. Ability to work with children of poverty/diversity
  - 6. Ability to use technology

A caring teacher possess at least these five professional dispositions:

- 1. Exhibits professional attributes.
- 2. Respects the learning process in demonstrating instructional/assessment flexibility and accommodations to individual differences reflect the belief that all students can learn regardless of their backgrounds.
- 3. Upholds ethical and professional standards.
- 4. Shows respect for families, cultures, and communities and demonstrates a sense of fairness and respect to all participants within a group.
- 5. Shows respect for colleagues, Pre-K -- 12 students, faculty and staff.

## GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The goals for Teacher Education at Francis Marion University are grounded in a conceptual framework: *The School of Education prepares competent and caring teachers*. To prepare candidates to be competent and caring teachers, the School of Education has adopted the goals listed below. These goals were selected to express the priorities of the School of Education while reflecting the mission and goals of the University itself.

All programs in professional education seek to present each candidate with a logically sequenced series of experiences leading him or her from novice to the early stages of expert professional. Further, all programs will provide in-depth experiences in liberal arts, science, and mathematics targeted toward relevant South Carolina Academic Standards. These experiences will assist each candidate to develop:

### Competency Goals

1. A strong and balanced background in fine arts, humanities, mathematics, and natural, social, and behavioral sciences.
2. Facility in oral and written communication.
3. A strong academic background in each student's area of specialization along with the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge for the area.
4. An understanding of the enterprise of education as an institution influenced and molded by historical, social, philosophical and political forces.
5. Facility with the best instructional practices as revealed by current research.
6. Facility with the "wisdom of practice" as determined by systematic monitoring of experienced teachers.
7. Ability to plan, implement, evaluate and/or revise a variety of instructional approaches based on current research-based best practice and reliable data.
8. Ability to utilize a variety of appropriate techniques to evaluate student achievement.
9. Facility with selected aspects of modern instructional technology.

### Caring Goals

1. Instructional adaptation to the diversity and similarity of learners, including learning styles, developmental stages, cultural background, and exceptionalities. Adaptation to the unique needs of children of poverty is a high priority for the School of Education at Francis Marion University.
2. A belief that all students can learn and that fairness to all students is an essential component to professional teaching.
3. Ability to work cooperatively with others including peers, faculty, administrators and faculty.
4. An understanding of teaching as a career-long learning and sharing experience.

## YOUR PROGRAM

### The Catalog

Probably the best single source of information for your academic progress at FMU will be the *Francis Marion University Catalog* better known as “The Catalog.” This document is published each year and will inform you of all of the rules, regulations, policies and procedures related to the academic life of the university. A new catalog is updated and published each year but the catalog that you received as a freshman is worth keeping. If the University changes policies or programs between two catalogs, with few exceptions you will be expected to follow the catalog you received upon entry. This Teacher Candidate Handbook will attempt to avoid redundancy whenever possible by referring you to “The Catalog” when appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

### Teacher Preparation Programs at FMU<sup>2</sup>

The School of Education prepares teachers for all levels of public school education.

<b>South Carolina Certification Program</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>FMU Major</b>
Early Childhood	PK - 3	Early Childhood Education
Elementary	2 - 6	Elementary Education
Middle Level	5 - 8	Middle Level Education
Secondary	9 - 12	Mathematics, English, Social Science

Each program will have its own idiosyncrasies. Your advisor and The Catalog will be the best sources of information about how successfully enter and proceed through your program. The early suggestions are provided below may help you as you navigate through your program.

#### Early Childhood (ECE)

1. Most of the coursework for the last three semesters for Early Childhood majors is very prescribed. Early Childhood majors need to work closely with their advisor to ensure that all preliminary work has been completed prior to these semesters.
2. Many of the courses in the Early Childhood program will be taught in the Center for the Child on the FMU campus.

#### Elementary Education (ELE)

1. Elementary Education Majors should focus on general education courses that prepare them to teach the academic content that

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<sup>1</sup> The Student Handbook is another valuable resource. It covers all other aspects of campus life at FMU.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for specific program descriptions.

- they will be expected to teach in grades 2-6. Recommended courses are listed on the advising sheet for this program.
2. Beginning with the Fall 2009 semester, each Elementary Major will have an area of concentration in English, mathematics, foreign language, science, or social science. A concentration will require either three (English, foreign language, mathematics or social science) or two (science) courses **in addition to** those already taken for general education.

#### Middle Level Education (MLE)

1. Middle Level Education Majors must specialize in two academic disciplines chosen from English/language arts, mathematics, science or social studies.
2. MLE majors need to pay particular attention to their selection of general education courses since many of the general education courses provide credit for courses that are required for a specialization.
3. MLE 422 should be taken **before** either of the two methods courses.

#### Secondary Education

1. Those seeking certification at the secondary level must complete a major in one of the designated disciplines. These teacher candidates should have an advisor within their chosen discipline.
2. Because those who are seeking secondary certification are coordinating a major and a certification program, candidates seeking secondary certification also need to maintain an ongoing dialog with an advisor within the School of Education.

## ADVISORS AND ADVISING

### Selecting and/or Changing a Major

Typically, teacher candidates select their level of certification or major within their first three semesters. If you have not already selected a major, you can do so by filling out the appropriate form with the Education Services Coordinator in the School of Education. Although you can always change majors, be aware that the more courses you take in one program, the more difficult it will be to change majors. Changing majors will be especially difficult if Middle Level Education is involved since these majors must specialize in two disciplines. Your advisor will be assigned to you based on your selection of a major.

### Your Academic Advisor

When you declare a major at FMU, you will be assigned an academic advisor from the School of Education. Your advisor is ready and willing to assist you as you progress through your program. It will always remain **your** responsibility,

however, to contact your advisor when you want or need assistance. Likewise, it will remain your responsibility to periodically review your personal progress and ensure that you are conforming to the applicable policies and procedures within the School of Education and the University. This will mean making periodic checks of the policies and procedures as provided in The Catalog.

### **The Advising Process**

In the middle of each fall and spring semester, the Registrar will send you notice of the upcoming advising and preregistration period. You will also see notices posted in and around the School of Education. Advising time is the time for you to meet with your academic advisor to plan your schedule for the next semester in light of your accomplishments and program requirements.<sup>3</sup> It is important that you register as early as possible within the range of registration dates assigned to you by the Registrar's office. Early registration provides you with the most options for getting the schedule you desire. Before you meet with your advisor, you should prepare a written copy of a tentative schedule.

### **Your Degree Audit**

Each semester, the Registrar prepares an updated record on each student showing what courses he/she has taken, a grade point average (GPA) and what other courses remain to be taken. You may obtain a copy of your degree audit by going on line at [www.fmarion.edu](http://www.fmarion.edu).

### **Steps in Admission to the Professional Education Program**

The steps you need to follow to be admitted into the School of Education's Professional Education Program and to be admitted to student teaching are listed in the current catalog and summarized on the chart on the next page of this handbook. Be sure to study these procedures and to discuss them with your advisor if there is a need.

### **Add-on Certification**

Once you have been certified at one level, the South Carolina Department of Education will allow you to add certification in other areas should you choose to do so. Typically that addition will involve taking extra courses and an additional Praxis exam specified by the South Carolina Board of Education. The School of Education staff can help you find requirements for add-on certification should you become interested. Some teacher candidates anticipate adding a second certification by using add-on course requirements as electives while pursuing their initial degree.

## PROGRESS THROUGH YOUR PROGRAM

### **Teacher Candidate Status**

Upon being officially admitted to an education program during Check Point I, you will take on a new title: **teacher candidate**. This term has been adopted nationally to reduce confusion in discussions that involve you (the college student) and the P-12 (pre-school through grade 12) students you teach in schools as part of your training. Once you complete your program and are graduated, you move from teacher candidate to **teacher**.

### **Check Points**

Your progress through any of the education programs at FMU will be marked by a series of three Check Points. At these points you will have to complete state and university requirements to progress to the next level. For the complete requirements for each Check Point, you must refer to “The Catalog” under the School of Education section. You will find that the Education Student Services Coordinator in the School of Education will be an important source of information and support as you proceed through your program.

**Ultimately, YOU are responsible for your own progress through your university experience.** Be sure you understand your program, the requirements for that program and what requirements you will need to meet to enter and complete that program. Be sure to check with the Education Services Coordinator or your advisor if you have any questions concerning your status. The chart that follows will provide a quick summary of the Check Points for you.

Requirement	Check Point I Admission to Professional Education Program	Check Point II Admission to Student Teaching	Check Point III Completion of the Program
Course Work completed	Educ 290/299 and Educ 305 with a C or better	Completion of all education courses	Completion of all coursework
Admissions status	Eligible for admission	Previous admission to program	Successful completion of student teaching
GPA - Cumulative	2.5 or higher	2.5 or higher prior to admission	
Grades in Education Courses	C or better in Educ 290/299 and Educ 305	C or better on all education courses	C or better on all education courses
Testing Requirements <sup>4</sup>	Passing scores on <b>all three parts</b> of PRAXIS I	Passing scores on <b>all parts</b> of PRAXIS II	
Recommendations School of Ed			Positive (by college supervisor)
Recommendations School Personnel	Positive (Educ 290)	Positive	Positive
Recommendations Program Committee	Positive	Positive	
Dispositions Ratings	Positive dispositions ratings in Educ 305	Acceptable	Acceptable
Hours Completion	45 semester hours min.		
Professional Skills Demonstration			Successful completion of ADEPT and Teacher Work Sample
Additional Applications, Screening & Other Clearance		Completion of SC Application for Teacher Certificate  All clear on fingerprint and criminal record check	Completion of all required paperwork

<sup>4</sup> Under no circumstances will you be permitted to move past Check Point I or II without passing all of the required parts of PRAXIS. For Check Point I, this will mean that you will not be able to take any education-related courses beyond Education 305. For Check Point II, this will mean not being able to enroll in student teaching (Educ 490).

## **State and National Criminal Records Checks**

All potential teacher candidates need to be aware that they must pass a state criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and a national criminal records check prior to student teaching. This check will include fingerprinting by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A teacher candidate “with prior arrests or convictions of a serious nature that could affect his fitness to teach in the public schools of South Carolina may be denied the opportunity to complete the clinical teaching experience and qualify for initial teacher certification.”

Each candidate or potential candidate is responsible for ensuring that he/she is eligible to student teach when he/she reaches this point in the program. The School of Education faculty recommends that if a candidate or potential teacher candidate has any questions as to whether his/her background may be in question, he/she should investigate this issue as soon as possible. Candidates have two courses of action. They may go through the fingerprinting process early or they may go to a local police department and request that their record be checked. Any remediation of a candidate’s record is the responsibility of the candidate.

## **Professional Dispositions**

Teaching is more than just knowing academic content and a few teaching strategies. Competent and caring teachers demonstrate a large array of professional behaviors that set them apart. The faculty at FMU is committed to assisting candidates with the development or strengthening of these behaviors. This is why, for example, your education instructors will be especially concerned with things like frequent absences, late arrivals, late submission of papers, poor attitude in class, failure to participate in class or lack of preparation. A list of these dispositions is provided in Appendix 2. The faculty’s concern with professional dispositions will impact you in three ways:

1. Your instructors should discuss this list of dispositions with your class at the beginning of each course. If you have any questions about the dispositions or the disposition process, please ask your instructor.
2. In several of your courses, your professor will rate you based on how well he/she feels you are demonstrating these behaviors. These ratings will have no direct impact on your grade but they will be used by the School of Education to monitor the overall progress of our candidates as a group.
3. Whenever your professor feels that there is a problem or even a potential problem, he/she will begin the Teacher Candidate Disposition Resolution Policy. This policy is designed to assist teacher candidates in correcting behaviors that may be professionally destructive to them or that will prevent them from providing excellent teaching to their students. The details of this policy are provided later in this document.

## **Field Experience and Clinical Placements<sup>5</sup>**

Time spent in schools working with and teaching students is an integral part of your teacher preparation program. It is so important, in fact, that all of your “clinical” experiences have been carefully planned and coordinated. The faculty member responsible for the clinical placements is the Coordinator of Clinical and Field Placements. This person will be responsible for placing you in each experience. A few facts may help you as you enter into the field or clinical phases of your training.

1. Your assignment will intentionally place you in as many diverse settings as is possible. This wide range of experience will be invaluable to you as you enter the job market.
2. While every effort is taken to make placements as convenient for you as possible, the School of Education will not be able to meet every request for convenient placements.
3. Your dress and behavior during clinical placements must be 100% professional at all times. It is in clinical settings that your professors and the school staff have a chance to evaluate your performance in real life settings. You should review the list of Professional Dispositions often as you proceed through your program. Failure to demonstrate appropriate dispositions may lead to dismissal from the program.<sup>6</sup>

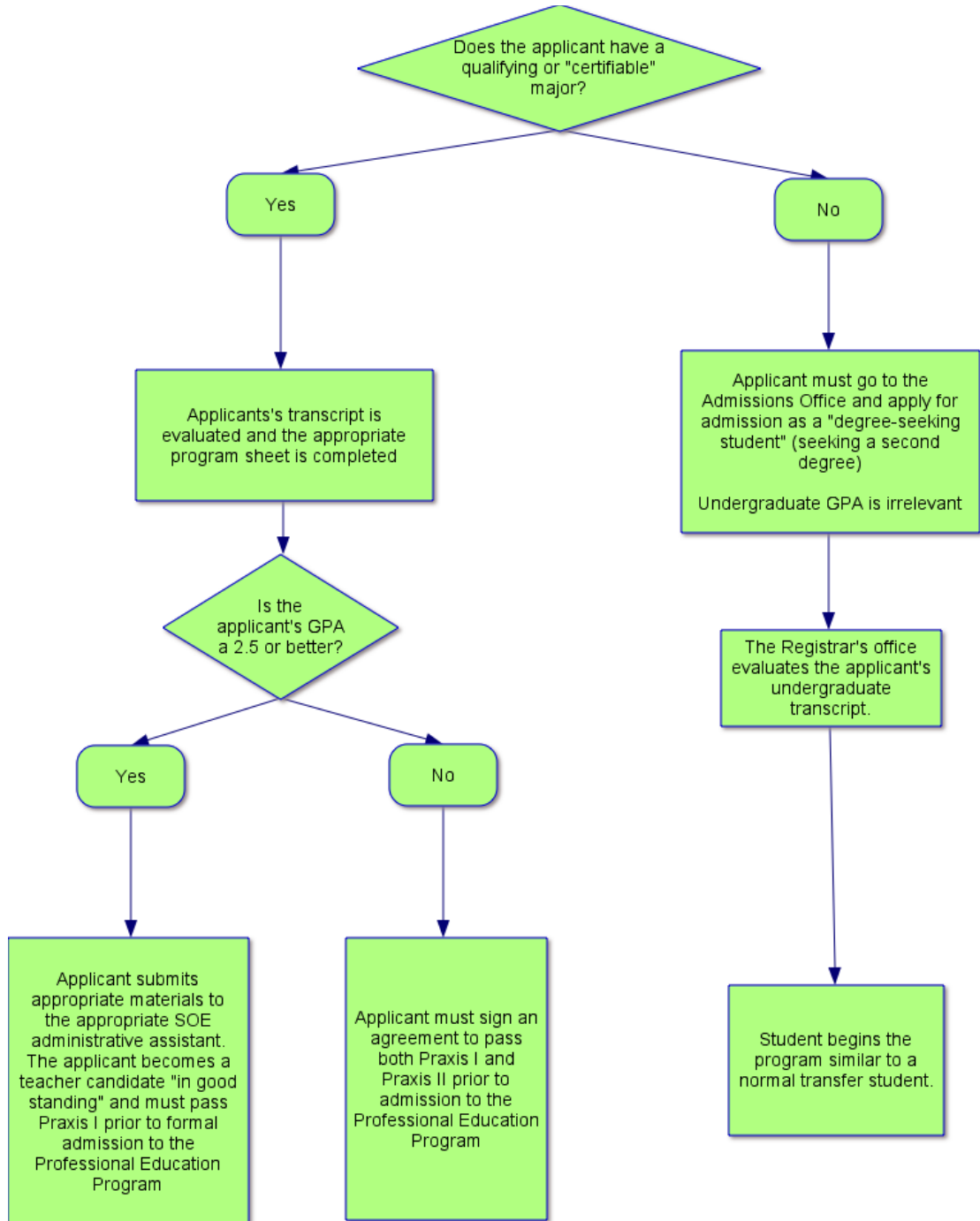
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<sup>5</sup> Extensive detailed information about field experiences and clinical placements will be provided in the designated courses once you are admitted to the Professional Education Program.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix II for the list of Professional Dispositions.

## Are You a Post Degree Certification Candidate?

Individuals who already have an undergraduate degree from any accredited institution but who are seeking initial certification are classified as post degree certification candidates or “comebackers” and are subject to a different admissions process. Students seeking to receive initial certification at FMU under this process must go through a special advising process following the steps below.



## A WORD ABOUT NCATE, LIVETEXT AND ASSESSMENT

### **NCATE**

You will no doubt hear your professors talking about NCATE from time to time. NCATE stands for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE is the national accrediting body for the Schools of Education around the state and around the nation. Because the FMU School of Education is nationally accredited, you are assured that your teacher training experiences here at FMU will be recognized around the nation. One big part of the accrediting process is the presence of a robust assessment system that allows the faculty at FMU and NCATE to assess teacher candidates, courses, procedures, and outcomes from the program.

### **LiveText**

The School of Education faculty at FMU has selected LiveText as the foundation of its assessment system. After much study, the faculty determined that LiveText provides both teacher candidates and faculty at FMU with the safest, easiest and most useful commercial program for our assessment system. Online assistance for candidates is available on the School of Education Website and the LiveText website<sup>7</sup>.

### **Assignments in LiveText**

During your progress from teacher candidate to teacher, you will have many assignments in LiveText. When LiveText assignments are assessed or graded, the results of those assessments go directly into the School of Education Assessment System. Most, but not all, assignments in LiveText will be used to improve programs and policies. You will want to be aware of three special uses of the data:

1. Some of the assignments are rated using a special rubric and become part of what is called CORE data. These data are used for assessing programs and the School of Education itself. The rubrics used, however, DO NOT in themselves indicate a grade. They are designed to tell you where you are with respect to your progress in becoming a competent and caring teacher.
2. When your professor chooses to use an assignment for a course grade, he or she will typically use a separate rubric or a special rubric specifically designed to give both CORE data and a grade. If you are in doubt about how you are being assessed on any assignment, ask your professor.
3. You will also be assessed periodically on your professional dispositions. These are the essential attitudes and behaviors that are necessary for a successful career in teaching. These dispositions will be explained in the next section.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fmarion.edu/academics/livetext>

## WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

### Teacher Candidate Disposition Conflict Resolution Policy

The School of Education has two distinct but related protocols related to dispositions. These protocols are:

1. Candidate Disposition Monitoring And Assessment System – This process collects dispositions data on a regular basis as a means of providing data to program committees. This system is not directly related to the Disposition Conflict Resolution System described in this section.
2. Disposition Conflict Resolution System – This process assists candidates and faculty with disposition issues. This system is described in the paragraphs below.

The Disposition Conflict Resolution System is designed to provide the faculty with a systematic way of dealing with teacher candidates who may have problems with their professional dispositions that may keep them from being a competent and caring teacher. The steps below show the protocol for resolution of disposition problems.

#### Resolution Step 1: Conference with the Instructor

The instructor formally discusses disposition issue and develops a remediation plan with the teacher candidate. During this conference, the instructor will provide specific references to the candidate's inappropriate behavior and how that behavior conflicts with the School's written statement of desired professional dispositions. The instructor and candidate then discuss the issues and reach an understanding and/or plan of how the candidate will make improvements in his/her professional behaviors so that the unacceptable behavior is no longer an issue. The instructor then records the essential information from the conference on the Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 1 form in LiveText. After the conference, the candidate and instructor will sign a Dispositions Conflict Resolution Conference Verification form. A copy of the Conference Verification form is given to the candidate and a copy is filed electronically<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Note:**

1. If the instructor feels that the initial problem is sufficiently serious, the instructor may proceed immediately to Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 2.
2. If the instructor feels that the problem is reflective of a pattern displayed in other courses, the instructor may proceed immediately to Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 2.
3. If the candidate follows the plan and resolves his/her disposition issues, the resolution process ends with step 1.

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<sup>8</sup> All forms are available upon request.

### Resolution Step 2: Conference With the Professional Dispositions Committee

If the teacher candidate does not respond in a satisfactory manner to the suggestions and solutions discussed in Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 1, the instructor will refer the process to the Professional Dispositions Committee. The instructor will first meet with the Committee to share the details of the case along with what took place during Step 1. The Committee will schedule a meeting with the candidate at the earliest possible date. During the Step 2 conference, the committee will provide detailed information about their understanding of the progress of the candidate to date along with the specific FMU dispositions that are in issue. The candidate will have a chance to explain the situation from his/her point of view. The Committee may then hold any discussion with the candidate that it feels will help it to draft an equitable solution. At the conclusion of the conference with the Committee, the candidate will sign a copy of the Conference Verification form and a copy will be provided to the candidate. A copy of this form will be filed electronically. After the conference with the candidate, the Committee will meet (the presence of the instructor at this time is at the discretion of the Committee) to make one of three possible recommendations. They may recommend that

1. The candidate continue to follow the plan developed in Disposition Conflict Resolution Step 1
2. The instructor makes substantive changes in the current plan
3. The instructor and/or candidate develop an entirely new remediation plan.

Regardless of the action taken, a specific timeline for resolution will be established. Records of this meeting will be recorded on the Disposition Conflict Resolution Step 2 Form and a copy of the form provided to the candidate and the instructor. The Committee's decision and the timeline will be provided to the instructor who will share it with the candidate.

### Resolution Step 3: Conference on Unresolved Conflicts

The instructor will monitor the candidate's progress and his/her compliance with the timeline. If the instructor determines that the candidate has failed to meet the requirements of either the plan or the timeline described in Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 2, the issue will again be submitted to the Professional Dispositions Committee. At this point the committee will involve the program committee chair as well as any other faculty it deems helpful in making an appropriate decision. The Committee has the prerogative to take one of the following options: It can recommend that the candidate be

- a. Dismissed from program. This option requires that the recommendation be submitted to the Dean for final approval. Notification of this decision will be forwarded to the appropriate program chair, the Registrar and the Provost.
- b. Required to meet a set of newly specified conditions for remediation. This option will require a Step 4 follow-up by the committee.
- c. Allowed to continue with the remediation plan recommended,

amended or developed in Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 2. This option will require a Step 4 follow-up by the committee.

Regardless of the action taken, the Committee will complete a Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 3 Form to document its actions. The chair of the committee will inform the candidate and instructor of its actions. A copy of this form will be filed electronically in LiveText.

#### Resolution Step 4: Follow-up Conference

If the Professional Dispositions Committee adopts option b or c above, the committee will set a date for a follow-up evaluation conference called to assess the candidate's progress in conforming to the plan. The instructor must provide the Committee with relevant information about candidate progress on or before the agreed upon date. If the candidate's performance is in full compliance with the agreed upon plan and timeline, the Committee may judge the process to have been successful and no additional action need be taken other than the completion of Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 4 Form. If sufficient progress is not forthcoming, the candidate must appear for the follow-up conference. At this conference, the Professional Dispositions Committee will decide on the status of the candidate as a participant in a professional education program at Francis Marion University. During Step 4, the Committee has the same options present in Step 3 above. The Professional Dispositions Committee will complete a Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 4 Form and provide a copy of that form to the candidate and instructor.

#### **Appeals process:**

If the Professional Dispositions Committee recommends dismissal of the teacher candidate in either Step 3 or Step 4, the candidate may appeal the decision to the Dean of the School of Education. The Dean's decision will be recorded on the Dean's Recommendation Form and a copy provided to the candidate and to the Registrar.

#### **Readmission to a professional education program:**

If the School of Education Dean's decision is "dismissal from the program", the candidate may reapply to enter the program after not being enrolled at Francis Marion University for a full semester. Beyond whatever reapplication process is required by the Francis Marion University, a formal letter of application for "education program readmission" must be sent to the appropriate program committee for its consideration of acceptance or non-acceptance. Being readmitted at this point will be at the discretion of the program committee. The application for readmission should be made at least one month prior to the beginning of anticipated semester for being readmitted.

Candidates who are readmitted to the program are readmitted without conditions. If problems occur after admittance, however, the resolution process goes

immediately to Dispositions Conflict Resolution Step 3. If the candidate is dismissed a second time, there is no further provision for future admission to any education program at Francis Marion University.

### **Disagreements About Grades**

Teacher candidates are highly encouraged to make frequent personal contact with their professors. These contacts should be related to how best to master the knowledge and/or skills being taught in a course. Experience has shown that when a student better understands the demands of a class and is willing to do the necessary work, he/she is more satisfied with the grade given. Teacher candidates who are still dissatisfied with the grade awarded should consult their "Student Handbook" concerning the "Grade Change Policy."

### **Grievances Related to Disability**

Grievance procedures related to disability<sup>9</sup> when a student with a disability strongly feels that reasonable accommodations have not been made, that student should seek resolution within the administrative channels for the area in which accommodation is in question. The student should first contact the Director of Counseling and Testing if he or she is dissatisfied with his or her accommodations.

### **Student Complaints and Resolutions**

The School of Education faculty realizes that conflicts may arise between teacher candidates and their instructors, advisors, and/or public school personnel. If conflicts are of an extreme nature, the candidate is referred to the section of the "Student Handbook" that deals with discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.<sup>10</sup>

For other instructor/candidate conflicts, the candidate is first recommended to discuss the issue with the instructor in a respectful and professional manner. If no resolution is forthcoming, the candidate should share the concern with his/her academic advisor. If the previous two approaches have been unsuccessful, the candidate may bring the issue to the Dean both in writing and in person. The candidate will activate the Teacher Candidate Conflict Resolution Form. The Dean will maintain an active file of issues that have been brought before him/her.<sup>11</sup> The Dean will keep these files for five (5) years.

The final step in conflict resolution will be for the candidate to take the issue to the Provost. This step, however, should only occur when all other avenues for resolution have been exhausted.

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<sup>9</sup> See FMU Student Handbook

<sup>10</sup> Every student is provided with a student handbook.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix IV: Student Complaint Resolution Form

## OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### **Opportunities to Provide Input to the School of Education**

While you are here at FMU, we hope you will find the time to participate in one or more student activities, perhaps even take a leadership role in an activity. The organizations below are established to allow candidates to grow professionally and to allow the SOE to learn from candidate experience and insights.

1. Center of Excellence Teacher Candidate Association (COE TCA) serves to increase the achievement of children of poverty by improving the quality of teacher preparation, instruction and curriculum at the undergraduate level.
2. Teacher Candidate Advisory Council serves as a specialized committee to elicit student ideas on program development and evaluation. This committee meets formally at the beginning of each academic semester in an open and frank discussion with the Dean about all areas of the program. Program coordinators appoint members to this committee.
3. Course and Program Evaluations and Surveys -- Students are encouraged to evaluate all courses in the Professional Program in Teacher Education at the end of each semester. This mechanism provides more broadly based student input into the Professional Program. Student input is received at the end of each clinical experience. Student teachers or program completers formally evaluate the total program, including student teaching, thus soliciting the ideas of students who have just completed their programs of study.
4. Alumni Surveys: A sample of FMU education graduates are surveyed each year to provide similar types of feedback from individuals who have been away from the campus in professional positions. These extensive and broadly-based evaluation procedures of the on-going programs allow considerable student input into both the development and evaluation of the Professional Program.

### **Academic Awards for Teacher Candidates**

Each year, the School of Education presents three awards based on academic achievement and leadership. Students are nominated for these awards by their professors. These awards are:

Dr. Thomas W. Sills Memorial Award in Early Childhood Education

Dr. James E. Potterfield Award in Elementary Education

Secondary Education Award

## FINDING YOUR FIRST TEACHING JOB

### **Supply and Demand**

The School of Education attempts to remain informed of supply and demand issues related to the employment of FMU trained teachers. Some of the ways that Francis Marion University maintains close contact with issues of supply and demand in the teaching profession is through the Association of School, College, and University Staffing (ACUS), publications and South Carolina Department of Education publications and other national and regional reports. Further, the School of Education is an active partner with 19 regional school districts in the Pee Dee Education Center consortium. This group meets monthly to discuss issues, including current teacher supply and demand.

The issue of supply and demand in teacher education is included in the curriculum as part of the introductory courses in the student's professional program and in the student teaching seminar. Such information is also incorporated into the advisement process so that the prospective teacher can make career decisions based on the most current information regarding supply and demand for educational personnel. Finally, the South Carolina Center for Education Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), supplies data on districts where there are teacher shortages. The data are shared with students in most classes, particularly in Education 290, 299 and 305.

### **Job Fair Expo**

Each year, the University Office of Career Development sponsors on or more "Job Fair Expos." During the Fair a number of local and regional school districts send teacher recruiters.

### **Job Recommendations:**

The faculty is usually more than willing to assist you with job recommendations. We recommend, however, that you contact the faculty member to obtain permission prior to submitting his or her name and/or sending a form.

One recent procedure that will save time for both you and your instructor is to have the recommendation completed through the South Carolina Center for Education Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA).<sup>12</sup> Having your recommendations completed through CERRA allows you to make these documents available to multiple school districts over several years.

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<sup>12</sup> cerra@winthrop.edu

## ALUMNI PARTICIPATION

The Francis Marion University Alumni Association provides an ongoing relationship between its graduates and the university. The section below describes just some of the ways graduates can remain part of the professionalism and excitement that is FMU. The mission of the Alumni Association is to provide continuing service to the University and its alumni by facilitating communication and relations between alumni and the University community, and by managing the direction and progress of all alumni projects, events, and programs. Through its programs and events, the Alumni Association promotes a spirit of fellowship and loyalty among the students, faculty, staff, alumni and the greater University community.

### **The Office of Alumni Affairs**

The Office of Alumni Affairs is housed in the Office of Public and Community Affairs. Its main objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Maintenance of an up-to-date database on all FMU alumni
- Providing a point of contact and reference upon graduation for all alumni
- Making information available to graduates about Alumni Association and University activities, events, programs, and current offerings
- Recruiting volunteers for Alumni and University related events
- Soliciting membership fees for the Alumni Association Membership Campaign
- Managing and directing the Alumni Association Board of Directors
- Supervising and directing the Student Alumni Association (SAA)

### **Annual Alumni Activities and Events**

- Homecoming
- Alumni Association Phon-a-Thon
- Alumni Appreciation and Recognition Dinner
- Alumni Nights
- Patriots on Tour - Area Alumni Events
- School of Education Alumni Event
- Patriot Power Lunch
- Move-In Day for New Freshmen

### **Alumni Publications and Communications**

- Alumni Newsletter and Magazine, "The View"
- The Website
- The Online Directory
- Special Mailings

## CONTINUING YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH WITH FMU

FMU provides certified teachers in the region with opportunities to earn the following graduate degrees:

Master of Education in Early Childhood Education

Master of Education in Learning Disabilities

Master of Education in Instructional Accommodation

Information about each program along with admissions criteria are provided in “The Catalog” and in Appendix III of this document. Graduates are invited to talk with faculty members from the School of Education to learn more about the advantages of pursuing a graduate degree at FMU.

# APPENDICES

# **Appendix I: Program Specific Descriptions: Undergraduate and Initial Certification**

## **Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

### Program Overview

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the teacher education major that focuses on children from birth to grade 3. Because teaching certification is awarded (in South Carolina) for levels of prekindergarten through third grade, ECE at Francis Marion University involves instructional experiences that prepare teacher candidates to facilitate the development and learning of preschool and primary age children. ECE majors focus on children's development in areas such as language and emotions. Because these areas develop early and fast, ECE majors learn much about interacting with families who are children's first teachers. These instructional experiences include field and clinical experiences at different points before the Student Teaching semester. The ECE program is accredited by the South Carolina Department of Education, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program Goals

Teacher candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. Characteristics associated with the ideal of caring about students and families.
2. Characteristics of students and families from different cultural, ethnic, language, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Appropriate communications with students, families, and community.
4. Designing and implementing a variety of integrated instructional experiences that are developmentally appropriate for children from infancy to the third grade.
5. Educational principles and practices to achieve passing scores on assessment measures related to student teaching and the first two years of in-service.
6. Professional behaviors that include collaboration with peers and colleagues and goal setting to continue to pursue life-long learning.

## **Elementary Education (ELEM)**

### Program Overview

Elementary Education (ELEM) is the teacher education major that focuses on children in Grades 2 through 6. ELEM at Francis Marion University involves instructional experiences that prepare teacher candidates to facilitate the development and learning of children from primary age to pre- and early adolescence. Elementary teachers must have a broad range of content knowledge

accompanied by a strong background in how children learn. The ELEM program is accredited by the South Carolina Department of Education, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI).

### Program Goals

Teacher candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. Instruction and assessment that accommodates individual differences and backgrounds.
2. Characteristics of students and families from different cultural, ethnic, language, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Appropriate communications with students, families, and community.
4. Design and implementation of varied integrated, developmentally appropriate instructional experiences for children in Grades 2 through Grade 6.
5. Professional behaviors that include collaboration with peers and colleagues and goal setting to continue to pursue life-long learning.

## **Middle Level Education (MLE)**

### Program Overview

Middle Level Education (MLE) is the teacher education major that focuses on students from ten to fourteen years of age (grades 5-8). MLE majors choose two areas of concentration from the areas of mathematics, science, English/language arts, and social studies. MLE majors are passionate about working with early adolescent students because of their unique developmental characteristics.

Field experience in MLE courses will involve on-site visitations to schools with best practices in themes such as technology and single gender education. The field hours connected to the MLE content methods classes will give candidates an opportunity to be actively engaged with middle level students. MLE majors are strongly encouraged to attend and/or participate in state-level conferences for teachers in math, science, English/language arts, and social studies, as well as, the South Carolina Middle School Association.

### Middle Level Education Program Goals

Competent and caring teacher candidates for middle level students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. The physical, emotional, social, and cognitive characteristics and issues related to early adolescents and their experiences in school
2. Two content fields at a level beyond that required for elementary school teachers.
3. The organization and philosophy of the middle school and its curriculum.
4. Research-based strategies for the academic success of early adolescents as outlined in *Turning Points 2000: Educating Early Adolescents*.
5. The role of reflective practice for teachers of middle level students.

6. Resources available for curriculum development and implementation for early adolescents.

## **Secondary Education Programs (English, Mathematics and Social Studies)**

### Program Overview

The Secondary Education Program prepares caring and competent teachers through a thorough mastery of academic disciplines and the development of professional skills and dispositions relevant to teaching in grades 9-12. Teacher certification is offered in English, mathematics, and social studies. The academic disciplines meet the standards of the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council for Teachers of Social Studies (NCSS) respectively

### Program Goals

Major goals of the program include:

1. Successful interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
2. Development of multiple explanations and instructional strategies to connect concepts to students' prior experiences and relate content to contemporary events and students' daily lives.
3. Creation, organization, and management of learning activities which recapture students' attention and actively engage students in learning content, concepts, skills, and forming values.
4. Development and application of critical thinking skills and classroom interaction strategies.
5. Application of research findings to improve and defend teaching, curriculum, and school organization.
6. Appropriate and effective methods to collaborate with colleagues, families, and members of the community.

## Appendix II: Teacher Candidate Disposition Assessment Form

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Points: #1      #2      #3      Term/Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_  
 (circle one)      ED305      ED391/2/3      ED490

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by -- CT \_\_\_ FMU Super \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Rate the candidate above on each disposition below using the rubric provided:

Candidate Disposition	Not Met 1	Partially Met 2	Met 3
A1 Candidate is reliable in terms of punctuality and attendance for all classes, meetings, etc.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A2 Candidate follows directions.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A3 Candidate completes assignments on time.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A4 Candidate dresses and grooms professionally.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A5 Candidate reflects actively, persistently, and carefully about teaching, before, during, and after lesson implementation.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A6 Candidate actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A7 Candidate demonstrates professional oral and written communication skills.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

<b>Candidate Disposition</b>	<b>Not Met 1</b>	<b>Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Met 3</b>
B1 Candidate treats all students in a manner that reflects a belief that all students can learn.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B2 Candidate has a positive impact on student learning.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B3 Candidate is flexible and copes with change.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B4 Candidate believes teachers can positively impact student achievement and development.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B5 Candidate is committed to a safe and supportive learning environment.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B6 Candidate believes in establishing high and challenging standards.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
B7 Candidate encourages all students to be successful learners.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

<b>Candidate Disposition</b>	<b>Not Met 1</b>	<b>Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Met 3</b>
C1 Candidate is honest.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C2 Candidate maintains confidentiality of students and families.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C3 Candidate follows and implements school policies.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C4 Candidate maintains appropriate relationships with students and school personnel.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C5 Candidate acts as a role model for appropriate choices and decisions.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C6 Candidate upholds goals and standards of the teaching profession.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
C7 Candidate refrains from choices and/or actions that could bring harm to students.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

<b>Candidate Disposition</b>	<b>Not Met 1</b>	<b>Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Met 3</b>
D1 Candidate establishes positive rapport and appropriate partnerships with students, families, and the community.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D2 Candidate acknowledges and respects differences in culture, race, gender, SES, religion, age, and lifestyle preference.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D3 Candidate acknowledges and considers the influence of parents/families/guardians on student development.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D4 Candidate acknowledges the complex characteristics of families and communities.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D5 Candidate respects diversity.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D6 Candidate is tolerant of the many aspects of diversity.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D7 Candidate is fair in dealing with students, families, and the community.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D8 Candidate continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community).	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
D9 Candidate avoids allowing personal bias to impact interaction/instruction.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

<b>Candidate Disposition</b>	<b>Not Met 1</b>	<b>Partially Met 2</b>	<b>Met 3</b>
E1 Candidate makes significant contributions to group processes.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
E2 Candidate respects the opinions and contributions of others.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
E3 Candidate works collaboratively and appropriately with members of the school community.	Some or none of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

## **Appendix III: Program Specific Descriptions: Graduate**

### **Early Childhood Education (ECE): Graduate**

#### Program Overview

Knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired in the Early Childhood Education undergraduate program comprise the foundation of advanced studies in ECE. The advanced program involves a number of general or core teacher education courses and three courses specific to ECE content. These three ECE courses involve candidates in partnerships with community agencies and allow candidates to provide leadership for childcare providers. As candidates progress through the program, they continue to engage in learning opportunities – on the university campus and in the community – that lead to fulfillment of program goals and program accreditation by South Carolina, NCATE, and NAEYC.

#### Program Goals

Graduate candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. Characteristics associated with the ideal of caring about students and families.
2. The diverse characteristics of students and families from different cultural, ethnic, language, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Appropriate communications with students, families, and community.
4. Developing and implementing a variety of integrated instructional experiences that are developmentally appropriate for children from infancy to the third grade.
5. Learning principles and practices to achieve passing scores on assessment measures related to student teaching and the first two years of in-service.
6. Professional behaviors that include collaboration with peers and colleagues and goal setting to continue to pursue life-long learning.
7. Research endeavors to inform best (instructional) practices in ECE classrooms.
8. Involvement in the ECE profession as in mentoring coworkers, childcare providers from the community, and university practicum students.

### **M.Ed. in Learning Disabilities**

#### Program Overview

This program is **not** for teachers who are already certified. Francis Marion University offers a graduate program for add-on certification in learning disabilities for teachers who wish to enhance their lives and the lives of school age children with learning disabilities. The Master of Education (M.Ed.) is for certified teachers and includes coursework and related practica that provide the knowledge and skills needed to work with this unique population of students. This program proceeds from the premise that professional growth is a continuing process for which each individual must take primary responsibility.

The goal of developing professional educators who are knowledgeable in their understanding of learners is central to this program.

The goal of developing professional educators well versed in both pedagogical and content knowledge is convergent with the learning disabilities programs' focus on developing a broad repertoire of research-validated methods, strategies, and techniques designed to assist exceptional individuals in successfully meeting demands in both academic and non-academic settings.

### Program Goals

The principal goals for this program are the following:

1. Integration of a strong practicum component throughout the program.
2. Clearly identifiable links between program requirements and the mandates of standards, including the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Content Standards and the technology proficiencies specified in the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers.
3. Improved connections between the School of Education, other campus units, and with practitioners in P-12 schools.
4. Inclusion of structures that would help candidates become more pro-active in their approach to professional growth and development.
5. Incorporate performance-based measures of candidate performance throughout the program.
6. All program graduates would have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively in the region's schools.

## **MAT in Learning Disabilities**

### Program Overview

For individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree program and wish to enrich their lives and the lives of school age children, Francis Marion University offers a graduate program for initial certification in learning disabilities. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) includes coursework and related practica that provide the knowledge and skills needed to work with this unique population of students. The final semester of the MAT program includes coursework that is similar to the undergraduate student teaching block.

The goal of developing professional educators who are knowledgeable in their understanding of learners is central to this program.

The goal of developing professional educators well versed in both pedagogical and content knowledge is convergent with the learning disabilities program's focus on developing a broad repertoire of research-validated methods, strategies, and techniques designed to assist exceptional individuals in successfully meeting demands in both academic and non-academic settings.

### Program Goals

The principal goals for this program are:

1. Integration of a strong practicum component throughout the program.
2. Clearly identifiable links between program requirements and the mandates of standards, including CEC's Content Standards and the technology proficiencies specified in the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers.
3. Improved connections between the School of Education, other campus units, and with practitioners in P-12 schools.
4. Inclusion of structures that would help candidates become more pro-active in their approach to professional growth and development.
5. Incorporate performance-based measures of candidate performance throughout the program.
6. All program graduates would have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively in the region's schools.

## **M.Ed. Instructional Accommodation**

### Program Overview

The Instructional Accommodation program at Francis Marion University is an NCATE accredited program designed to prepare candidates to work with divergent learners both in and out of the classroom setting. Candidates who complete the program will be able to identify and implement specific strategies to accommodate divergent learners. Candidates in this program may be classroom teachers or other related school personnel, and will be expected to complete field and/or clinical experiences in an educational setting.

### Program Goals

Upon completion of the program candidates will be able to:

1. Discriminate among genuine disabilities, language variations, cultural obstacles, poverty syndromes, and divergence.
2. Modify the physical environment and introduce components that will support the performance of the divergent learner.
3. Formulate effective instructional actions that will be salient to the divergent learner by addressing the elements of global perception, holistic storage, concrete referents, social interactions, frequent movement, freedom of creativity, and pragmatic connections.
4. Design training in "replacement behaviors" which will enhance the congruity of the divergent learner within traditional-sequential environments.
5. Design assessments of knowledge and competencies that will validly capture and describe the developmental progress of the divergent learner.

## Appendix IV: Student Complaint and Resolution Form

Teacher Candidate(s) Expressing Concern:	Date:
Brief Summary of complaint, concern or issue (to be completed by candidate(s)):	
History of complaint, concern or issue and/or previous actions taken:	
Dean's Notes:	
Action/Resolution:	
Candidate Signature:	Date:

## Appendix V:

### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATORS

Pursuant to State Board of Regulation 43-58, the State Board of Education has the legal authority to deny, revoke, or suspend a certificate, or issue a public reprimand, for the following causes:

- incompetence,
- willful neglect of duty,
- willful violation of the rules and regulation of the State Board of Education,
- unprofessional conduct,
- drunkenness,
- cruelty,
- crime against the law of this state or the United States,
- immorality,
- any conduct involving moral turpitude,
- dishonesty,
- evident unfitness for the position for which one is employed,
- sale or possession of narcotics,
- obtaining or attempting to obtain a certificate by fraudulent means or through misrepresentation of material facts,
- failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board,
- test security violation,
- failure to comply with a court order for child support, and
- failure for a second time to complete successfully the formal evaluation process as an annual contract teacher.

The State Board of Education may impose any one of the following disciplinary actions on an educator certificate:

- permanent revocation;
  - revocation with the right to reapply after three years,
  - suspension for a specified period of time;
  - suspension for a specified period of time, upon satisfaction of certain conditions
- such as drug or alcohol testing, counseling, or treatment; psychiatric testing, counseling, or treatment; or other conditions appropriate to the facts of the case;
- public reprimand.

The process for taking disciplinary action on an educator certificate:

1. The Department of Education may learn of possible grounds for disciplinary action on an educator certificate from a school district superintendent pursuant to State Board of Education Regulation

43-58.1, other states, the media, and individual complaints.

2. Once the Department of Education learns of conduct that may constitute just cause for disciplinary action, the Department will notify the educator of pending disciplinary action and of the educator's right to a hearing. The educator has fifteen days from the receipt of the notice to make a written request for a hearing.
3. If the educator fails to request a hearing within this time frame, he or she will waive the right to a hearing and the State Board may impose disciplinary action based on the information presented by the Department.
4. If the educator requests a hearing, a hearing will be conducted before the Board or a hearing officer, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule BCAF, Procedures for Educator Certification Hearings.

South Carolina educators have had disciplinary action taken on their certificates for

- pursuing a personal, inappropriate relationship with a student;
- touching a student inappropriately;
- engaging in a physical altercation with a student;
- supplying alcohol or drugs to a student;
- using a school computer to view or download pornography;
- sending or receiving prurient e-mails;
- violating test security;
- violating state or federal laws involving drugs or alcohol or other illegal behavior;
- embezzling public funds;
- committing breach of trust; and
- breaching a teaching contract.

Applicants for certification in South Carolina have had their applications for certification denied because they have serious criminal records and, in some cases, failed to fully disclose their criminal records.

Notice of the denial, suspension or revocation of an educator's certificate is sent to all districts in South Carolina and to the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Clearinghouse. Notice of a public reprimand is sent only to the school districts.

# Appendix VI: Safe School Climate Act

## State of South Carolina General Assembly 'Safe School Climate Act' to Prevent School Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

### Findings

Section 1.

(A) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards.

(2) Harassment, intimidation, and bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, are conducts that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment.

(3) Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

(B) The purpose of this act is to protect the health and welfare of, and improve the learning environment for South Carolina school children.

### Safe School Climate Act

Section 2. Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

Section 59-63-110. This article may be cited as the 'Safe School Climate Act'.

Section 59-63-120. As used in this article:

(1) "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means a gesture, an electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act that is reasonably perceived to have the effect of:

(a) harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property,

or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage; or

(b) insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

(2) 'School' means in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the child.

Section 59-63-130. (A) A person may not engage in:

(1) harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or

(2) reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or one with reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

(B) A school employee, student, or volunteer who witnesses, or has reliable information that a student has been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.

Section 59-63-140. (A) Before January 1, 2007, each local school district shall adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying at school. The school district shall involve parents and guardians, school employees, volunteers, students, administrators, and community representatives in the process of creating the policy.

- (B) The policy must include, but not be limited to, the following components:
- (1) a statement prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student;
  - (2) a definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying no less inclusive than the definition in Section 59-63-120;
  - (3) a description of appropriate student behavior;
  - (4) consequences and appropriate remedial actions for persons committing acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and for persons engaging in reprisal or retaliation;
  - (5) procedures for reporting acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to include a provision for reporting anonymously. However, formal disciplinary action must not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The procedures must identify the appropriate school personnel responsible for taking the report and investigating the complaint;
  - (6) procedures for prompt investigation of reports of serious violations and complaints;
  - (7) a statement that prohibits reprisal or retaliation against a person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
  - (8) consequences and appropriate remedial action for persons found to have falsely accused another;
  - (9) a process for discussing the district's harassment, intimidation, or bullying policy with students; and
  - (10) a statement of how the policy is to be publicized, including notice that the policy applies to participation in school-sponsored functions.
- (C) To assist local school districts in developing policies for the prevention of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the State Board of Education shall develop model policies applicable to grades kindergarten through twelve. Additionally, the State Board of Education shall develop teacher preparation program standards on the identification and prevention of bullying. The model policies and standards must be developed no later than September 1, 2006.
- (D) The local school board shall ensure that the school district's policy developed pursuant to this article is included in the school district's publication of the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and in the student's handbook.
- (E) Information regarding a local school district policy against harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be incorporated into a school's employee training program. Training also should be provided to school volunteers who have significant contact with students.
- (F) Schools and school districts are encouraged to establish bullying prevention programs and other initiatives involving school staff, students, administrators, volunteers, parents, law enforcement, and community members.
- Section 59-63-150. (A) This article must not be interpreted to prevent a victim from seeking redress pursuant to another available civil or criminal law. This section does not create or alter tort liability.
- (B) A school employee or volunteer who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to the appropriate school official designated by the local school district's policy, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the district's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from failure to remedy the reported incident."

**Time Effective**

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor  
Ratified the 7<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2006.

Approved the 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2006.