



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# Prek-4 Education Post-Baccalaureate Handbook

## COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

**1** **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**  
 Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy  
 Demonstrating knowledge of students  
 Setting instructional outcomes  
 Demonstrating knowledge of resources  
 Designing coherent instruction  
 Designing student assessments

**2** **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**  
 Creating an environment of respect and rapport  
 Establishing a culture for learning  
 Managing classroom procedures  
 Managing student behavior  
 Organizing physical space

**3** **INSTRUCTION**  
 Communicating with students  
 Using questioning and discussion techniques  
 Engaging students in learning  
 Using assessment in instruction  
 Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

**4** **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**  
 Reflecting on teaching  
 Maintaining accurate records  
 Communicating with families  
 Participating in a professional community  
 Growing and developing professionally  
 Showing professionalism



courtesy of www.danielsongroup.org

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[commonwealthu.edu/academics/programs/early-childhood-education-bsed](http://commonwealthu.edu/academics/programs/early-childhood-education-bsed)

Thank you for your interest in our PreK-4 post-baccalaureate certification program! In this handbook, you will find information you need about earning your PA teaching certificate through Commonwealth University. Review this handbook carefully before applying and, if accepted, reference it throughout your program.

The post-baccalaureate program allows individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree to complete the requirements to earn teacher certification. Candidates will receive the same high quality, hands-on learning but will not need to seek a second degree. Please be aware, this program leads to a PA teaching certificate; Post-Bac students will **not** earn a **degree** in education.

### **Earn Your PreK-Grade 4 Teaching Certification in this Post-Bachelor's Plan!**

It's never too late to become a teacher! If you earned your bachelor's degree, have significant work with children, and have a proven track record of academic excellence, you should consider enrolling in our post-baccalaureate PreK-Grade 4 certificate program to earn the qualifications to start teaching in preprimary or primary classrooms. It is not necessary to complete a second degree to become certified. You may attend full or part time.

Many of our courses are offered online. Student Teaching must be done in the surrounding area (within 60 miles) of your campus and requires 12-15 weeks of **full-time** attendance. Most Post-Bac students complete the program within two years dependent upon the number of courses taken each semester.

### **What Do I Need to Do?**

Upon acceptance, Post-Bac students can register for courses as a walk-in registrant. Refer to the track sheet on the website and in this handbook for suggested courses. Once coursework is complete, Post-Bac students need to successfully pass the PECT exam and present their Portfolio prior to the student teaching semester.

### **How do I apply?**

Applying is easy! All students seeking their initial (first) instructional (teaching) certificate must be admitted through the PreK-Grade 8 and Professional Studies Department. A GPA of 3.0 or greater is required. Potential students who do not

have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 may be receive conditional acceptance and take up to 12 sh to establish the required GPA.

There are 3 components to submit as part of the application process:

1. The application (found on the website)
2. Transcripts
3. Admittance Essay

Essay Directions: In a single-spaced, 12 pt. font essay, explain why you wish to become an educator through Commonwealth University’s post-baccalaureate program. Be sure to include experiences working with prek-4 children. Limit your response to one page, with one-inch margins. Refer to the rubric below for how your essay will be evaluated.

	0	1	2
<b>Experiences with children</b>	Interactions with children are limited, unclear, or not mentioned	Moderate experience with children or significant interactions with children in non-academic settings	Significant interactions with children in academic settings
<b>Reflection</b>	Unclear (or lacking reflection) writing on why candidate desires to be an educator	Limited or vague reflection on why candidate desires to be an educator	Thoughtful reflection on how candidate desires to be an educator.
<b>Mechanics</b>	Significant issues with grammar, spelling, and punctuation that interfere with reader comprehension	Some issues with grammar, spelling, and punctuation, although meaning is mostly retained	Correct grammar usage, and accurate spelling and punctuation. Submitted on time
<b>Style</b>	Significant issues with writing style (ex. Unprofessional, too casual, etc.)	Some issues with writing style	Effective and professional writing style

\*Applicant’s essay must score 5 points or more on the above rubric to be eligible for the prek-4 Post-Bac Program.

**Additional Application Information to Note**

1. Applications must be made through the PreK-Grade 8 and Professional Studies Department as a post-baccalaureate certification student. Both undergraduate and graduate courses may be taken during this program.

- Students seeking additional coursework towards the M.Ed. must apply to the graduate program, *no certification* is issued with the M.Ed. program.
2. When application has been completed, transcripts will be evaluated by faculty in the Early Childhood/PreK-Grade 4 Program. All evaluations are done on an individual basis. All students are given written statements listing requirements and they may discuss them with their advisor at any time.
  3. Education Candidates must maintain continuous and satisfactory progress. All post-baccalaureate certification students may proceed a part-time basis as fits their needs with the exception of the required student teaching experience.
  4. Once relevant coursework is complete, and upon recommendation of the academic advisor, a candidate is eligible for student teaching. Working in cooperation with the Director of Student Teaching, the applicant will complete the application and interview process, including a portfolio presentation, prior to any student teaching placements are made.
  5. At the conclusion of student teaching and successful completion of the required PECT exams, the department will make a recommendation to the Certification Officer to recommend the issuance of the PA Instructional Certificate I in PreK-Grade 4.

### **Who Can I Contact to Answer My Questions?**

The current coordinator of the Prek-4 Post-Bac Program is Dr. Amy Long, Director of Student Teaching. She may be contacted at [ael01@commonwealthu.edu](mailto:ael01@commonwealthu.edu)

### **I've Been Accepted as a Post-Bac Student... Now What?**

When the registration period is open, candidates can register for courses through walk-in registration. Visit the Registrar's webpage at [commonwealthu.edu/offices-directory/registrar](http://commonwealthu.edu/offices-directory/registrar)

The following track sheet identifies suggested courses for the completion of the Prek-4 certificate. Your academic advisor will help you select courses that are appropriate for you. Please note that education courses require a grade of "C" or better.

**PreK-Grade 8 and Professional Studies Department**  
**PreK-4 with Certification NON-DEGREE program**  
**PreK-Grade 4/Early Childhood Education Post-Baccalaureate**

Recommended course of study\*

Major Area and Cognate Courses	Min. Grade:	
<b>Special Education</b>		<b>9 sh</b>
SPEC204 Cognitive Dev of Diverse Learners	C	
SPEC309 Effective Instructional Strategies	C	
SPEC345 Lit Instruction for Stud w/Dis	C	
<b>PreK-Grade 4/ECED Coursework</b>		<b>21 sh</b>
PSYC 102 Child Developmental OR ECED 605 <b>Diversity in Development from Infancy through 4th Grade</b>	C	
ECED100 Intro to Early Childhood Education	C	
ECED 212 Language Development OR SPEC 202 Cultural Diversity	C	
ECED200 Observing and Assessing Or ECED 335 Assessment and Differentiation Or ECED 620 Observation and Assessment	C	
ECED 225 Beginning Literacy OR ECED204 Primary Reading	C	
ECED230 Prof. Comm. and Family Collab. Or <b>ECED615 Family, Community and Educational Collaboration</b>	C	
ECED326 Guidance and Classroom Management OR <b>EDTL609 Classroom Management and Control OR ALTE610 Classroom Environment</b>	C	
<b>Student Teaching</b>		<b>12sh</b>
ECED493 Student Teaching and Practicum	C	
ECED494 Student Teaching and Practicum	C	

\*Additional Coursework may be required.

A faculty advisor will determine the deficiencies that must be met prior to recommendation for certification. Additionally, some courses may be substituted or waived based on a review of prior coursework and experience, at the advisor's discretion. A minimum grade of "C" or better is required for education courses.

To be recommended for certification by Commonwealth University:

- Candidates must have 2 college level math courses, 1 composition, and 1 English literature course.
- Candidates must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. Those coming into the program without an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or above must establish the GPA to be an eligible candidate.

- Candidates must complete 190 hours of classroom observation and teaching – 150 hours are imbedded in student teaching. Those working in the field may be eligible to count the hours towards the requirement.
- Candidates must be deemed to be of High Moral Character and demonstrate satisfactory understanding of the PreK-grade 4 competencies as established by PDE.

### **The PreK-Grade 4/Early Childhood Certification Portfolio for Post-Bac students**

As a culmination for Certification seeking candidates, each candidate must complete an electronic portfolio based on the NAEYC standards. The portfolio will be presented prior to student teaching. The portfolio will be a significant part of the student teaching application process.

### **Components of the Portfolio**

The candidate shall provide 2 artifacts that align with each of the 7 NAEYC standards, making a total of 14 required artifacts.

For each of the 14 artifacts, the candidate must provide a short written rationale clearly explaining how the artifact aligns with the specific standard or sub-standard.

For each standard the candidate will reflect on the meaning of the standard, how can be applied in their own classroom, and the strengths and weaknesses of the selected artifacts. Each candidate will present 14 total artifacts; it is recommended that each artifact be used only once. Artifacts may come from work completed in coursework or from materials used in the classroom. No copyrighted materials should be submitted, the work must be original to the candidate.

### **Scoring the Portfolio**

The rubrics on the following pages will be used in scoring each artifact. Additionally, each reflection will be scored with the Writing Rubric.

Portfolios will be presented at the your campus in order to receive your student teaching placement. You must notify your advisor when you are ready to present.

## Writing Rubric

	<b>Ineffective: 1</b>	<b>Average: 2</b>	<b>Good: 3</b>	<b>Superior: 4</b>
<b>Ideas/ Content/ Analysis Subscore:</b>	Lacks original ideas or exhibits confused, careless, or superficial thinking. Does not address the question or topic effectively. Support/	Contains some original ideas, but the thinking is not consistently deep, broad, or clear. Addresses the question or topic somewhat superficially.	Contains solid ideas and reflection, but could explore them in more depth or breadth. Addresses the question or topic, but could expand ideas.	Written content and reflections contain thoughtful, original, and broad-ranging ideas. Addresses the question or topic rigorously and completely.
<b>Evidence Subscore:</b>	Lacks supporting details, data, or examples; may include irrelevant discussion. Incorporates outside sources or textual evidence inappropriately, incorrectly, or ineffectively; may lack support altogether	Includes some, but insufficient, details, data, or examples to support the explanation. Incorporates outside sources and/or textual evidence to some extent, but more support is needed to be convincing.	Includes generally effective supporting details, data, or examples Incorporates outside sources and/or textual evidence satisfactorily although additional support would provide a stronger argument.	Uses vivid details, convincing data, and effective examples to clarify and support the analysis or explanation. Strategically incorporates outside sources (e.g., cites references) and/or textual evidence to support or illustrate ideas effectively.
<b>Structure Subscore:</b>	Follows no discernible pattern of organization; major structural elements are missing, e.g., lacks introduction, topic sentences, paragraph coherence, transitions, and/or Conclusions.	Has a vague or confusing organization; important structural elements are weak or absent; introduction, topic sentences, transitions and/or conclusions may be weak or ineffective.	Organizes in an appropriate, logical way with a fairly clear introduction, thesis statement, topic sentences, transitions between ideas and conclusions.	Organizes in an appropriate, logical way with an effective introduction, strong thesis statement, clear topic sentences, fluid transitions, and clear summary and/or conclusions.

<b>Language Subscore:</b>	Has many significant errors in word choices; awkward phrasing predominates.	Contains frequent errors in word choice and includes awkward phrasing	Displays generally effective word choices and clear phrasing; almost all passages flow well.	Displays precise word choices and fluent, economical phrasing; the writing flows exceptionally well throughout.
<b>Mechanics Subscore:</b>	Contains frequent, serious errors in spelling, grammar, and usage that obscure meaning. Fails to quote and document sources altogether or does so incorrectly	Exhibits frequent but not significant errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation). Quotes and documents sources, but has significant errors in format or content of citations	Is predominantly correct in spelling, grammar and usage or has only a few minor slip-ups. Quotes and documents sources appropriately and correctly but with occasional minor errors	Is flawless in spelling, grammar, and usage or has only one or two minor slip-ups. Quotes and documents sources appropriately, completely, and correctly
<b>SubScores</b>				



## Portfolio Presentation

	<b>Ineffective: 1</b>	<b>Average: 2</b>	<b>Good: 3</b>	<b>Superior: 4</b>
<p>Communication Skills - Verbal</p> <p>Subscore:</p>	<p>Oral communication skills fail to exhibit correct usage and grammar; is neither focused nor organized. The student's volume, intonation and enunciation are deficient. The student does not speak with conviction.</p>	<p>Oral communication sometimes exhibits correct usage and grammar; is focused and organized. The student sometimes speaks with proper volume, intonation, and enunciation. The student sometimes speaks with conviction.</p>	<p>Oral communication usually exhibits correct usage and grammar; is focused and organized. The student speaks with audible volume, intonation, and enunciation. The student speaks with conviction.</p>	<p>Oral communication most always exhibits correct usage and grammar; is focused and organized. The student speaks with proper volume, intonation, and enunciation. The student often speaks with conviction.</p>
<p>Communication Skills - Nonverbal</p> <p>Subscore:</p>	<p>Does not maintain eye contact. Demonstrates no confidence and fails to interact with the interviewers. Does not project a composed/relaxed demeanor and demonstrates</p>	<p>Seldom maintains eye contact. Demonstrates some confidence and interacts minimally with interviewers. Sometimes projects a composed/relaxed demeanor and demonstrates minimal</p>	<p>Often maintains eye contact with the interviewers. Demonstrates confidence and effectively interacts minimally with interviewers. Usually projects a composed/relaxed</p>	<p>Most always maintains eye contact. Demonstrates a strong degree of confidence and leadership, always interacting respectfully and cooperatively with</p>

	<b>Ineffective: 1</b>	<b>Average: 2</b>	<b>Good: 3</b>	<b>Superior: 4</b>
	distracting mannerisms.	distracting mannerisms	demeanor and demonstrates minimal distracting mannerisms	the interviewers. Most always projects a composed and relaxed demeanor and does not exhibit any distracting mannerisms.
<p>Professionalism Criteria:.....</p> <p>(1) Displays professional appearance and appropriate attire.</p> <p>(2) Demonstrates enthusiasm and a high level of energy.</p> <p>(3) Demonstrates creativity and resourcefulness in the portfolio presentation.</p>	Meets one or none of the professionalism criteria	Meets two of the four professionalism criteria	Meets three of the four professionalism criteria	Meets all four professionalism criteria

	<b>Ineffective: 1</b>	<b>Average: 2</b>	<b>Good: 3</b>	<b>Superior: 4</b>
(4) Presentation of portfolio is highly organized and presented in a logical manner using the NAEYC standards.				

## Checklist for Portfolio Artifacts

Provide some brief information about yourself in a well written professional autobiography. You may want to include a picture. Additional information that you might include are your first major/degree, any minors, other jobs or experiences you have had, the name of your advisor, your hometown, any interesting prior experiences, and other things that make you stand out as a teacher applicant.

\_\_\_\_\_ “Pink Sheet” verifying that you’ve submitted the required clearances

\_\_\_\_\_ Field Experience Hours-- 40 Field experience hours,

Documented by verification forms and Artifacts aligned with Program Standards.

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of Membership in recommended Professional Organization

\_\_\_\_\_ Liability Insurance

Provide two points for each complete artifact that appears in the portfolio.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_ **/8** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children’s characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children’s development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

### **Key Elements**

- a. 1a: Knowing and understanding young children’s characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8.
- b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
- c. 1c: Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b><u>Standard 1</u></b> Promoting Child Development and Learning	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the rationale help the reviewer to understand the student’s growth toward Standard 1?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the reflection provide evidence of the student’s proficiency in key elements of the standard?	1 2 3 4 5

## **Standard 2. Building Family and Community Relationships**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children’s families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children’s families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children’s development and learning.

### **Key Elements**

- a. Knowing about and understanding family and community characteristics
- b. Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.
- c. Involving families and communities in their children’s development and learning.

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b><u>Standard 2</u></b> Building Family and Community Relationships	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the rationale help the reviewer to understand the student’s growth toward Standard 2?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the reflection provide evidence of the student’s proficiency in key elements of the standard?	1 2 3 4 5

**Standard 3. Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.

**Key Elements**

- a. Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment – including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for children
- b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection.
- c. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities.
- d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
<b><u>Standard 3</u></b> Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families	Does the rationale help the reviewer to understand the student’s growth toward Standard 3?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the reflection provide evidence of the student’s proficiency in key elements of the standard?	1 2 3 4 5

## **Standard 4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child's development and learning.

### **Key Elements**

- a. Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children
- b. Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology
- c. Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching /learning approaches
- d. Reflecting on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
<b><u>Standard 4</u></b>		
Using Developmentally Effective Practices	Does the rationale help the reviewer to understand the student's growth toward Standard 4?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the reflection provide evidence of the student's proficiency in key elements of the standard?	1 2 3 4 5



## **Standard 5: Using Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

### **Key Elements:**

- a. Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines: language and literacy; the arts – music, creative movement, dance, drama, visual arts; mathematics; science, physical activity, physical education, health and safety; and social studies.
- b. Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines
- c. Using own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child.

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
<b><u>Standard 5</u></b> Using Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum	Does the rationale help the reviewer to understand the student's growth toward Standard 4?	1 2 3 4 5

Does the reflection provide evidence of the student's proficiency in key elements of the standard? 1 2 3 4 5

**Standard 6: Becoming A Professional**

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

**Key Element**

- a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
- b. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines
- c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.
- d. Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
- e. Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession

1=Poor 2=Below Average 3=Average 4=Above Average 5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b><u>Standard 6</u></b> Becoming a Professional	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
	Does the reflection help the reviewer to understand the student's growth toward Standard 6?	1 2 3 4 5

Does the reflection  
provide evidence of the 1 2 3 4 5  
student's proficiency in  
key elements of the  
standard?

**Standard 7: Early Childhood Experiences**

Field experiences and clinical practice are planned and sequenced so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood – in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth – age 3, 3 through 5, 5 through 8 years) and in the variety of settings that offer early education (early school grades, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs).

**Key Elements**

- a. Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood age groups (birth – age 3, 3-5, 5-8)
- b. Opportunities to observe and practice in at least two of the four main types of early education settings (early school grades, child care centers, family and home-based child care settings, and Head Start or equivalent programs)

1=Poor    2=Below Average    3=Average    4=Above Average    5=Superior

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	Is the artifact clearly and directly related to the standard?	1 2 3 4 5
<b><u>Standard 7</u></b> Promoting Child Development and Learning	Does the reflection help the reviewer to understand the student's growth toward Standard 7?	1 2 3 4 5

Does the reflection  
provide evidence of the 1 2 3 4 5  
student's proficiency in  
key elements of the  
standard?

Score Sheet and Recommendation for: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Artifacts (8) \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Score (12)

Writing Rubric Score (20) \_\_\_\_\_

Artifact Score (105) \_\_\_\_\_

Total (145) \_\_\_\_\_

(The student must achieve a 123 (85%) or higher to be recommended for student teaching)

This student \_\_\_\_\_ recommended for student teaching.  
Is/is not

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Advisor/Portfolio Reviewer

Date:

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Director of Student Teaching

Date:

## **Student Teaching**

Once the portfolio and PECT exam are complete, Post-Baccalaureate candidates are ready to student teach! The student teaching application is due the YEAR before a student plans to student teach. For example, if you plan to student teach in the spring of 2023, you must apply in the spring of 2022. Therefore, it's important to plan ahead! The application can be found on the student teaching webpage.

Once you apply for student teaching, you'll receive information via email regarding the student teaching process. The Office of Student Teaching and Field Experience will assign a cooperating teacher to work with and mentor you during student teaching. Please be aware that student teaching is full-time for the duration of a semester. Student teachers can be placed at schools within 60 miles of your campus. It is up to the student teacher to arrange transportation to the school. Student teachers are also required to have a *LiveText* subscription to submit assignments.

For detailed information on expectations, policies, and requirements for student teaching at CU, please review the student teaching handbook (contact department).

## **Teacher Certification Process**

Following the completion of Commonwealth University's teacher education program, candidates may apply to become certified to teach in Pennsylvania.

In order to teach in a Pennsylvania public school, candidates must apply for a Pennsylvania Teacher Certificate through the PA Department of Education (PDE). It is strongly recommended that program completers apply, although they may not be planning to seek a position immediately or they may be planning to work in another state. In current practice, if a person applies for PA certification sometime in the future, that person must meet the requirements in effect at that time. New requirements could mean additional coursework, testing, and/or higher test scores to qualify for a certificate.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) uses an online application process for teacher certification: Teacher Information Management System or TIMS.

To complete the TIMS application, go to [www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov), establish a PDE Login, complete the application, pay the required fee and submit the application electronically. For assistance completing the TIMS application, you can find an abbreviated guide [here](#) or a detailed guide on the PDE website.

After all requirements and obligations at Commonwealth University have been met – including program completion, appropriate GPA, and degree conferral – the Certification Officer will verify through the TIMS website that you met all PDE requirements and will recommend that your application be processed by PDE.

PDE will verify Praxis / PECT test scores when reviewing the applications on TIMS. If you were exempt from taking the Basic Skills tests due to SAT/ACT scores or Post-Baccalaureate status,

Commonwealth University's Certification Officer will provide the SAT/ACT scores/Post-Baccalaureate information to PDE when submitting your recommendation to PDE.

Once your PDE application has been fully approved, you will be able to print your certificate from TIMS. No paper copies will be mailed to you. Schools and educational institutions from whom you are seeking employment will then be able to log into TIMS to verify your certification credentials.

Your certification is your responsibility! Keep record of all test scores (Praxis and/or PECT), courses, credits, and in-service certificates, etc. CU does not keep copies.

Commonwealth University staff and the Pennsylvania Department of Education will process your application as quickly as possible. You can expedite the process by completing the application form accurately and completely.

Any questions regarding certification should be addressed to Ms. Tammie Allen, Certification Officer at [tallen@commonwealthu.edu](mailto:tallen@commonwealthu.edu) or 570-484-2137.

### **Disclaimer**

This handbook and any post-baccalaureate program requirements are subject to change. Refer to the website, listed on the cover of this handbook, for the most up-to-date information regarding the Prek-4 education post-baccalaureate program.