

ACT – Rio Grande Valley

McAllen, Texas

Secondary Preparation Program



Secondary preparation program structure:

Before internship:
300 hours of coursework

30 hours of field work,
of which 15 hours can
be video-based

Notable features of internship:

Program supervisor conducts at least five 45-minute formal observations

Mentors meet weekly with candidates; log hours of mentoring extensively; provide support

Teacher candidate enrollment: **146** (2011-2012)

Teacher production: **165** (2011-2012)

(2013 Title II Reports)

Secondary Preparation Program Grade

F

Score Breakdown

Alt Cert Std A: Selection Criteria

○

By employing sufficiently high but pragmatic admissions standards, the program is designed to attract talented individuals who otherwise would not choose to teach.

Selection criteria for admission into the program do not satisfy this standard because neither requirements for post-secondary grade point averages nor standardized test scores are set sufficiently high to ensure that candidates have the requisite academic talent. And although the program may interview candidates and/or require “critical thinking” assessments, the program does not require candidates to audition, and so cannot ascertain whether a candidate has non-academic traits important for teaching.

Alt Cert Std B: Subject Area Expertise

○

Before teacher candidates have full-fledged teaching responsibilities, the program ensures their content mastery in every subject for which they could be responsible for instruction.

Without a thorough grasp of the subject they will teach—typically acquired by majoring in an academic discipline—secondary school teachers will be unable to provide the sophisticated level of instruction that their students need to progress. All children deserve to have teachers who are well versed in each and every one of the subjects they teach, regardless of teacher shortages that may be used to justify preparation shortcuts. Alternative certification programs should make sure, by either reviewing transcripts or requiring that candidates pass rigorous assessments, that before secondary candidates enter the classroom as the teachers of record they know the subjects they will teach.

LEGEND: ● Meets standard; ● Nearly meets standard; ● Partly meets standard; ● Meets a small part of standard; ●* Meets a small part of standard, score imputed; ○ Does not meet standard; ○* Does not meet standard, score imputed; NA Not applicable.

We have evaluated programs on this standard with an eye toward regulations in each state regarding the nature of multiple-subject certification and required content licensing tests. Because our evaluation parallels the evaluation conducted for secondary preparation in traditional teacher preparation programs, more information can be found in the scoring methodology for the comparable standard applied to such programs, Standard 8: High School Content.

The program does not meet this standard because although it reviews transcripts or requires content testing, it offers two or more multiple-subject certifications for which its review of the content preparation of candidates is not adequate to ensure that all teacher candidates have sufficient content knowledge in every subject they will be qualified to teach. The multiple-subject certifications are in the areas of:

- Science
- Social science

The program's review of the content preparation of candidates in one of more of these single-subject certifications is adequate:

- English
- Mathematics
- Specific sciences (such as Biology or Chemistry)
- Specific social sciences (such as History or Government)

Alt Cert Std C: Supervised Practice



The program provides adequate supervised classroom instruction practice opportunities.

The fundamental premise of alternative certification is that full-time, independent teaching can serve as a clinical training ground for teacher candidates. To the extent that this is even possible, it requires a co-teaching arrangement with a highly qualified mentor teacher, or—barring that—as close to a co-teaching arrangement as can be offered through intense support and feedback from the alternative certification program. In the latter case, the program's support with five or more formal observations in the beginning months of teaching must be supplemented by the support of a school-based colleague who has been selected to be a mentor on the basis of demonstrated mentoring capabilities as well as effective instruction as measured by student performance.

The program satisfies only a small part of the standard because although the candidate is provided with relatively strong mentor support, the candidate

- is not provided a true co-teaching arrangement;
- is provided only five formal observations by a program supervisor in the first year, therefore fewer than five formal observations in the first three months of teaching; and
- is provided with the support of a teacher-colleague who is a capable mentor (or has had mentorship training), but who is not required to be an effective instructor.

**Alt Cert Std D: Evidence of Effectiveness****NA**

The program's graduates have a positive impact on student learning.

A score on this standard is not applicable because evaluation depends on reports on the relative effectiveness of the program's graduates from a teacher preparation student performance data model; either 1) the program's state does not publish any such report, 2) the state publishes such a report, but the results do not pertain specifically to only this secondary program, or 3) the state publishes such a report, but the results for this program are not consistent for two consecutive years.