edTPA AND THE MENTOR TEACHER'S ROLE
Winthrop University

This document was adapted from and includes complete sections from *Teachers Who Support Teacher Candidates* prepared by SCALE (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, & Equity) and made available to Colleges of Education by American Association of Colleges of Education. Copyright 2015 for edTPA materials and logos is held by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. The formatting has been altered to allow for Winthrop specific information.

General Introduction to edTPA

There is a nationwide effort to ensure that beginning teachers are truly prepared to teach effectively. In many states, this initiative includes the adoption of edTPA, which requires candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to help all students learn in real classrooms. edTPA is not simply about theory as it requires teacher candidates to demonstrate what they can and will do on the job, translating into practice what research has shown to improve learning. edTPA is intended to be used as a summative assessment at the end of an educator preparation program and to support state and national program accreditation by providing evidence for program completion or teacher licensure decisions.

As a P–12 teacher who mentors teacher candidates in their clinical experiences, you will see how edTPA creates a rigorous and meaningful experience for aspiring teachers and students. Teacher candidates will develop lesson plans and deliver instruction consistent with your school's standards and curricula. edTPA will provide a vehicle for all teacher candidates to document five priority areas for effective instruction.

edTPA Focuses on Areas Critical to Effective Instruction

Teaching Area	Candidate Classroom Materials (Artifacts) Reviewed
Planning	Lesson plans, instructional materials, student assignments, assessments, commentary justifying how plans meet student learning needs
Instruction	Unedited video clips, commentary analyzing student engagement in learning
Assessment	Samples of student work, feedback to focus students, commentary analyzing student learning and justifying next steps for teaching
Analysis of Teaching	Planning, Instruction, and Assessment commentaries as noted above
Academic Language	Unedited video clips and/or student work samples, Planning and Assessment commentaries

The Mentor Teacher's Role

As a mentor teacher, your role will be the same as always–offering support for excellent teaching. Teacher candidates may need your input about the context and background of their students early in the process so that they can learn to plan instruction based on specific student strengths and needs. Also, you may find that candidates want to spend more time reflecting on their instruction and lessons in preparation for the written commentaries they must submit.

Your collaboration as a mentor and facilitator will be critical to the overall experience and success of your teacher candidate. In return, edTPA will foster professional dialogue that will enhance the mutual benefits for both veteran teachers and teacher candidates. Although many program activities and experiences provide acceptable forms of support for candidates within the edTPA process, other activities are not acceptable within a summative assessment process that is intended to determine whether each candidate individually demonstrates readiness for an initial license. This document clarifies acceptable forms of support for candidates during the edTPA process and those that are unacceptable.

Acceptable Forms of Candidate Support within the edTPA Process	Unacceptable Forms of Candidate Support within the edTPA Process
Providing candidates with access to handbooks and other explanatory materials about edTPA and expectations for candidate performance on the assessment	Editing a candidate's official materials prior to submission
Explaining edTPA tasks and scoring rubrics and guiding discussions about them	
Providing and discussing support documents such as Making Good Choices about what lessons or examples to use within the assessment responses	Offering critique of candidate responses that provides specific, alternative responses, prior to submission for official scoring
Discussing samples of previously completed edTPA portfolio materials (where appropriate permissions have been granted)	

Acceptable Forms of Candidate Support within the edTPA Process	Unacceptable Forms of Candidate Support within the edTPA Process
Engaging candidates in formative experiences aligned with edTPA (e.g., assignments analyzing their instruction, developing curriculum units, or assessing student work)	Instructing candidates on which video clips to select for submission
Using rubric constructs or rubric language to evaluate and debrief observations made by mentor teachers as part of clinical experiences	Uploading candidate edTPA responses (written responses or videotape entries) on public access social media websites
Asking probing questions about candidates' draft edTPA responses or videorecordings, without providing direct edits of the candidate's writing or providing candidates with specific answers to edTPA prompts	
Arranging technical assistance for the video portion of the assessment	

Videorecording Requirement

Videorecording is a new requirement for teacher candidates and they are cautioned to protect privacy and confidentiality. The video clips will be submitted for scoring purposes and Winthrop-based training based on the permissions given by candidates.

Teacher candidates must obtain the necessary parental/guardian permission or to place those students without permission off-camera. Winthrop has provided a release form for the teacher candidate to use. Mentor teachers are encouraged to help the candidate videotape the learning segments selected by the candidate. The candidate has been encouraged to video significantly more classroom practice than required for the assessment.

The video submitted by each teacher candidate will not contain the candidate's name, the names of the cooperating teacher, school or district, or the last names of the students. Each teacher candidate must agree in advance that the video cannot be shared, posted publicly, or used for any other purpose without additional permission.

Winthrop's Timeline

Winthrop University began piloting the edTPA assessment in the Physical Education program in 2012. The Middle level education began to require edTPA of all candidates in 2013 and all teacher education programs began full implementation of the assessment in Fall 2015. Although not consequential for state licensure in South Carolina, there are clear national trends toward the use of such assessments and many neighboring states have already implemented a teacher performance assessment such as edTPA.

Winthrop will use the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years to further align the expectations of edTPA across the entire preparation program. While in this early stage Winthrop will use trained local scorers to evaluate candidate submissions and send a few portfolios for national scoring to evaluate understanding of the expectations while making program improvements. The local evaluators will include teacher education faculty and K-12 teachers. To find out how to get involved in national scoring of edTPA visit http://scoreedtpa.pearson.com/.

What about the Internship Work Sample (IWS) and Other Assessments

For the many returning mentor teachers and alums of Winthrop, the edTPA may remind you of the IWS. The edTPA will replace the use of the IWS and although similar there are some distinct differences. One very obvious difference is the requirement to submit video and student work samples to provide evidence. Further, the expectations for reflection and analysis are more focused on evidence from student or candidate performance and must be tied to research. Finally, the edTPA expectations are similar across programs but the assessment and expectations are indeed content specific. Therefore two students within a single school may have slightly different expectations in the assessment. Mentor teachers are not expected to know these differences, but are encouraged to read the handbook being used by the teacher candidate. A few similarities with the IWS include a continued emphasis on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of the students in the target class, a selection of a theme around which a candidate will teach 3 to 5 lessons (possibly not a full unit), and the need to make clear connections between the student learning objectives, state standards, assessments, and instruction choices.

The edTPA will only be one assessment used to evaluate candidate performance and the role of the mentor as guide to help foster candidate development will not change. In addition, the edTPA will not change the Teacher Education Program's focus on co-teaching as a way to better support candidate development while providing the richest environment for student learning. Teacher candidates will need to be responsible for the primary planning and instruction during the series of lessons used in the edTPA. The lessons included in the edTPA should be considered a solo teaching experience. The mentor teacher should feel free to be present and helping with the videorecording is highly encouraged.