



## EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM (EPP) 2026–2027 STUDENT HANDBOOK

- TRADITIONAL PATHWAY
- LEAP ACCELERATED PATHWAY

LEADING EDUCATORS THROUGH ACCELERATED PATHWAYS

GO FORTH *inspired.*



**WILEY UNIVERSITY**  
School of Education

**EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
PROGRAM**  
**(WU-EPP)**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

*TraditionalPathway • LEAPAcceleratedPathway*  
*Leading Educators through Accelerated Pathways*

2025–2026

*Teaching. Leading. Inspiring.*  
*“Go Forth Inspired.”*

## Preface

This handbook is the official guide for all candidates in the Wiley University Educator Preparation Program (WU-EPP). It serves candidates in both the traditional WU-EPP pathway and the LEAP Program (Leading Educators through Accelerated Pathways), an accelerated, hybrid pathway offered through the WU-EPP. LEAP candidates are WU-EPP candidates: they are governed by the same Texas Education Agency (TEA) standards, the same State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules, and the same program policies that apply to every candidate in the WU-EPP.

Most policies in this handbook are universal and apply to all candidates regardless of pathway. Where requirements genuinely differ — program identity, admission entry, the cadence of benchmarks, and the structure of clinical teaching — the relevant section is divided into clearly labeled “Traditional Pathway” and “LEAP Accelerated Pathway” subsections. The benchmark gates themselves (admission, testing readiness, clinical eligibility, and certification) are identical in substance across both pathways.

Program requirements outlined in this handbook align with the standards set forth by the Texas Education Code (TEC) and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) for educator certification. While no single document can address every circumstance that may arise, this handbook provides the foundational framework within which the WU-EPP functions; its provisions represent an expressed or implied agreement between the student and Wiley University.

Where a discrepancy exists between this handbook and the official Wiley University Academic Catalog, the Academic Catalog shall take precedence. In accordance with updates from TEA, Wiley University reserves the right to modify, revise, or amend the contents of this handbook at any time, and to correct any errors made during its preparation, printing, or posting.

## Table of Contents

Right-click and select "Update Field" to generate the table of contents.

# 1. Acronym Guide

Acronym	Full Name	Description / Context
WU	Wiley University	The institution
EPP	Educator Preparation Program	Wiley University's teacher certification program
WU-EPP	Wiley University Educator Preparation Program	The EPP, branded for Wiley University
LEAP	Leading Educators through Accelerated Pathways	Accelerated, hybrid bachelor's-degree pathway within the WU-EPP
IMPACT	Inspire, Model, Prepare, Advocate, Collaborate, Transform	Conceptual framework for the WU-EPP
TEA	Texas Education Agency	State education oversight body
TEC	Texas Education Code	Statutory code for education in Texas
TAC	Texas Administrative Code	Administrative regulations for certification
SBEC	State Board for Educator Certification	Governs educator standards and certification
TEExES	Texas Examinations of Educator Standards	State exams for teacher certification
PPR	Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities	Part of TEExES certification exams
STR	Science of Teaching Reading	Specific exam for reading-instruction certification
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills	State curriculum standards
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	Federal privacy law for student records
FBE	Field-Based Experience	Classroom observation and practice hours
SOE	School of Education	Wiley University's academic unit for education majors
TEAL	Texas Educator Certification Online System	Online system for TEA and certification tracking
ECOS	Educator Certification Online System	TEA system for entering test approvals
EC-12 / EC-6	Early Childhood through Grade 12 / Grade 6	Grade-level bands for certain certifications

T-TESS	Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System	Performance appraisal system for teachers
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## 2. About Wiley University and the Educator Preparation Program

### Institutional Overview

Wiley University, located in Marshall, Texas, was established in 1873 by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and holds the distinction of being the oldest historically Black college west of the Mississippi River. In November 2023, during its 150th-anniversary celebrations, Wiley College announced its transition to Wiley University. Today, Wiley University is a private, liberal arts institution affiliated with the United Methodist Church, committed to producing graduates who are academically proficient and socially conscious leaders. The University upholds its motto, "Go Forth Inspired."

The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) at Wiley University prepares highly competent, capable, and caring educators who are effective and efficient in meeting the needs of diverse student populations within Texas and beyond. By integrating theory, scholarship, and innovative strategies, our students graduate ready to embark on lifelong journeys in their chosen fields.

### Mission Alignment and Purpose

Graduates of the Educator Preparation Program embody professional dispositions shaped by strategic planning and thinking, featuring intensive, guided pathways and comprehensive curricular enhancements. This approach ensures students are fully certified and career-ready. The program emphasizes social justice, cultural responsiveness, and meaningful community engagement, and provides robust co-curricular and technology-integrated experiences that prepare candidates for dynamic classrooms.

### School of Education Learning Outcomes

- **Fostering** content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional dispositions that lead to effective instruction.
- **Promoting** sound instructional decisions supported by research and technology integration.
- **Supporting** active, student-centered learning environments.
- **Embracing** culturally responsive teaching practices that address the evolving needs of diverse students, families, and communities.

### 3. Conceptual Framework: The IMPACT Model

The WUEPP conceptual framework is the IMPACT model—Inspire, Model, Prepare, Advocate, Collaborate, Transform. It defines Wiley University’s approach to preparing transformative educators who are equipped to serve diverse and historically underserved communities, centering the development of educators who are reflective, action-oriented, and driven to create equitable learning environments. Candidates in both the traditional and LEAP pathways are prepared within this same framework.

Element	Description
Inspire	Empower candidates to lead with passion, purpose, and high expectations.
Model	Demonstrate ethical, culturally responsive, and inclusive professional behavior.
Prepare	Develop deep content knowledge and pedagogical expertise through research-based practices.
Advocate	Promote equity and justice in education by addressing the needs of all learners.
Collaborate	Engage with families, communities, and stakeholders for student success.
Transform	Lead systemic change in education through innovation, reflection, and action.

In alignment with the IMPACT framework, Wiley University prepares educators who are Intentional, Motivated, Professional, Accountable, Culturally Responsive, and Technologically Competent — prepared to meet the diverse academic and social needs of all learners, especially those in underserved and urban communities.

## 4. Program Proficiencies and Expected Outcomes

The School of Education has established a set of proficiencies that reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions aligned with state and national standards. These serve as benchmarks that all candidates must demonstrate upon successful completion of the program, grouped into three categories:

- **(K) Knowledge** — what educators must know;
- **(S) Skills** — what educators must be able to do;
- **(D) Dispositions** — the values and attitudes educators must consistently demonstrate.

### (K) Knowledge

1. Demonstrates deep understanding of subject matter and pedagogy aligned with state standards.
2. Understands learner development, diversity, and the sociocultural factors that impact student learning.
3. Knows evidence-based instructional strategies that support high levels of student achievement.
4. Understands legal, ethical, and policy frameworks that guide educational practice.
5. Demonstrates knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive classroom practices.
6. Understands how to integrate technology to enhance teaching and learning.

### (S) Skills

1. Plans and implements instruction that reflects high expectations and diverse learner needs.
2. Uses data to assess student progress and guide instructional decisions.
3. Engages students using varied instructional strategies and technologies.
4. Creates a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment.
5. Demonstrates effective classroom management strategies.
6. Collaborates with families, colleagues, and community partners to support student success.
7. Integrates technology to personalize learning and support differentiated instruction.

### (D) Dispositions

1. Demonstrates a strong commitment to student learning and success.
2. Reflects on practice and seeks continuous improvement.
3. Upholds professional ethics, integrity, and responsibility.
4. Respects and responds to the cultural, linguistic, and learning diversity of all students.
5. Maintains high expectations for self and others.
6. Advocates for equity, access, and excellence in education.
7. Demonstrates resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset.

8. Exhibits professionalism in communication, appearance, and conduct.

## 5. Program Pathways at a Glance

The WUEPP offers two pathways to a bachelor's degree and Texas teacher certification. Both are governed by the same TEA standards and lead to a recommendation for standard certification; they differ primarily in calendar, entry point, and delivery.

Feature	Traditional Pathway	LEAP Accelerated Pathway
Degree	Bachelor's degree in the candidate's certification field	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
Calendar	Traditional multi-year academic calendar	Year-round; six 5-week terms plus one 16-week clinical semester
Entry Point	Begins with general education / first-year coursework	Enters with transferable credit (24+ or 60+/Associate)
Delivery	Primarily on-campus	Hybrid — online coursework plus in-person clinics
Typical Duration	Multi-year (full degree length)	As little as 65 weeks (approximately 15 months)
Clinical Teaching	Clinical Experience I and II	One 16-week clinical semester (490 hours)
Governing Standards	TEA 19 TAC Chapters 227–230	Same — TEA 19 TAC Chapters 227–230

### Traditional WU-EPP Pathway

The traditional pathway is the standard multi-year route to a bachelor's degree and Texas certification across the EPP's certification fields. Candidates progress through a structured, four-benchmark system — from declaring an education major, to admission to the EPP, to clinical eligibility, to graduation and certification — completing general education, content, and professional educator-preparation coursework along the way.

### LEAP Accelerated Pathway

The LEAP Program is a bachelor's-degree program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and eligibility for Texas teacher certification. Designed for working adults, paraprofessionals, and individuals whose college journeys were interrupted by life circumstances, LEAP combines accelerated, year-round delivery with rigorous educator preparation, allowing students to earn their first bachelor's degree and state certification in as little as 65 weeks. LEAP is not an alternative certification program and is not a post-baccalaureate pathway. The word "Accelerated" refers to its year-round delivery model — not to a shortcut. LEAP students earn the same degree and meet the same TEA certification standards as any other WU-EPP candidate.

## LEAP — Key Program Facts and Specifications

Specification	Details
Degree Awarded	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
Total Credit Hours	120
Program Tracks	Standard LEAP (minimum 24 transferred credits) • LEAP Accelerate (60+ credits or an Associate degree)
Program Structure	Six 5-week terms plus one 16-week clinical semester
Credits per Term	6–9 credit hours (full-time, accelerated)
Total Duration	As little as 65 weeks (approximately 15 months)
Delivery Model	Hybrid — online coursework plus in-person clinics
Calendar	Year-round delivery (not a traditional academic calendar)
Clinical Requirement	490 hours of clinical teaching and field-based experience in TEA-approved Texas schools Texas EC–6 Core subject-matter competencies
Certification Foundation	TEA-approved EPP under 19 TAC Chapter 228
Accreditation / Approval	

## LEAP — Critical Program Constraints (Non-Negotiable)

- The 490-hour clinical teaching requirement cannot be substituted with prior-learning credit, work experience, or any other credit substitution.
- Professional educator preparation coursework cannot be satisfied through prior-learning credit and follows fixed course placements within the LEAP sequence.
- All coursework and clinical experience must meet TEA Administrative Code 19 TAC Chapter 228 compliance standards.

## LEAP — Credit Distribution

The 120 credit hours are distributed as follows:

Component	Credit Hours
General Education (transferred or completed at Wiley)	42
Educator Preparation Coursework (specific sequence)	48
Content / Subject Matter	30
Total	120

### LEAP — Who LEAP Is Designed For

LEAP serves adults seeking their first bachelor's degree who have experienced interrupted educational pathways. The primary audience includes:

- Working adults with prior college credit but no bachelor's degree;
- Paraprofessionals currently employed in schools, such as teaching assistants and aides;
- Individuals whose college journey was interrupted by family or work circumstances;
- Career-long educators and school staff seeking formal certification and degree completion.

LEAP is not designed as an alternative-certification route for professionals from other fields who already hold a bachelor's degree, for traditional high-school graduates entering college for the first time, or for international applicants seeking certification outside the Texas pathway — the program focuses on preparing Texas-certified teachers.

### LEAP — Certification Pathways

LEAP offers multiple certification options. All candidates complete the EC–6 Core subject-matter competencies as the foundation, with Elementary Education (EC–6) serving as the primary pathway:

- Elementary Education — EC–6 Core (primary pathway);
- Physical Education— EC–12;
- Health Education—EC–12;
  
- 4–8 Social Studies (requires additional content-area hours);
- 4–8 Science (requires additional content-area hours).

## 6. Admission to the EPP

*The criminal history background check and the general admission standards in this section apply to all candidates. Pathway-specific entry requirements follow.*

### Criminal History Background Check

Pursuant to 19 TAC §227.1(b) and to TEC §22.083 and §22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching and prior to employment as an educator. Pursuant to 19 TAC §249.16, the WU-EPP has the right to request a criminal history evaluation letter from the Texas Education Agency. Candidates and potential candidates who have been convicted of an offense may become ineligible to be certified or to be employed in a certification-required position in the state of Texas.

### General Admission Standards (All Candidates)

The SOE Advisory Committee [19TAC §228.25(b)] expects all teacher-education students to be above-average scholars. To be eligible for admission to the EPP, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- **GPA Requirement:** Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 overall and 2.75 at Wiley University.
- **Application Submission:** Candidates must complete an application for admission, submitted online through the School of Education Application Portal.
- **Admission Essay:** Pursuant to TAC §227.10, applicants are required to write an essay that assesses readiness and commitment to the educator profession.
- **Financial Standing:** Candidates must be in good financial standing with the University.

### Pathway-Specific Entry Requirements

#### Traditional Pathway

Prior to applying for admission to the EPP, traditional candidates must have completed at least 60 hours of coursework and must have declared Education as their major (Benchmark I). Applications are submitted online through the School of Education Application Portal at <https://www.wileyc.edu/school-of-education-wiley-university>. Admission requirements are verified at Benchmark II (see Section 7).

#### LEAP Accelerated Pathway

LEAP candidates enter the program having already completed the transferable college credit required by their track — a minimum of 24 transferable credit hours for Standard LEAP, or 60+ credit hours or a completed Associate degree for LEAP Accelerate — and are admitted directly into the educator-preparation phase of the WU-EPP. Candidates must submit official transcripts documenting prior coursework. The LEAP application is available at <https://www.wileyc.edu/leap>.

## **Application Process (All Candidates)**

1. Submit Application —complete the application in the School of Education Application Portal and submit it online through the Wiley University School of Education website.
2. Application Audit — the Director of the WU-EPP audits the application to ensure all components are completed.
3. Admission Letter — upon acceptance, the candidate receives a written letter of acceptance, which they must sign. The signed letter is placed in the candidate's official student folder.

## **Post-Admission Orientation (All Candidates)**

Once admitted, each candidate attends the WUEPP Orientation held for newly admitted candidates. During this orientation, WU-EPP faculty will:

1. Review program requirements, including the expectations, coursework sequence, field-experience components, and certification milestones for the candidate's certification area.
2. Explain Texas Administrative Code (TAC) compliance, including candidate responsibilities for maintaining good standing, the Code of Ethics, fingerprinting, and testing requirements.
3. Distribute and walk through this handbook, including policies on academic performance, professional conduct, field-placement procedures, and grievance protocols.
4. Outline benchmarks and assessments, including pre-service benchmarks, PPR readiness, and clinical-teaching evaluations.
5. Discuss support systems such as test-preparation workshops, mentoring, academic advising, and remediation plans.
6. Emphasize professional dispositions — professionalism, reflective practice, cultural competence, and commitment to student success.

At the conclusion of orientation, candidates sign a Program Agreement Form acknowledging their understanding of and commitment to the requirements of the WU-EPP.

## 7. Benchmark System and Progression

The WUEPP uses a structured benchmark system to ensure candidates are prepared academically, professionally, and ethically to pursue Texas teacher certification. Both pathways pass through the same four benchmark gates — declaring intent and program entry, testing readiness, clinical eligibility, and graduation/certification — but on different calendars.

### Traditional Pathway — Benchmark Progression

Phase	Key Requirements
1st Semester, First Year	Pass all general education courses with a grade of “C” or better.
2nd Semester, First Year	Pre-register for summer and fall courses; complete 10 FBE hours with reflections; attend at least one WU-EPP event; register for, attend, and pass Introduction to Teaching. Declare Education as a Major.
Benchmark I	Submit a formal EPP application by the due date; provide an official transcript with 60 hours earned, overall GPA 2.5 and WU GPA 2.5; maintain program coursework at “C” or better; remain in good financial standing; complete 20 FBE hours with reflections; attend at least one WU-EPP event. Apply for admission to the EPP. Admission
1st Semester, Second Year	checklist: overall GPA $\geq$ 2.5 and WU GPA $\geq$ 2.75; at least 50 hours with 12+ in progress; 12 or 15 (Math & Science) content/education credits; Code of Ethics training; attendance at $\geq$ 2 events; qualifying essay; $\geq$ 20 FBE hours; Certify Teacher practice exam score $\geq$ 85%. Create a TEAL account; take and pass the
2nd Semester, Second Year	TEXES PPR EC–12 (160); Elementary majors pass the TEXES Core Subjects EC–6 or STR; maintain 2.75 GPA; complete coursework at “C” or better; complete 30–35 FBE hours; attend mandatory events; submit TEXES scores. Complete 40–50 FBE hours; attend events; meet
1st Semester, Third Year	with advisor and complete a degree audit; maintain 2.75 GPA and coursework at “C” or better; submit updated Certify Teacher score $\geq$ 85%. (Senior Recital preparation applies to Music Education majors only.) Take and pass remaining TEXES certification
2nd Semester, Third Year	exams; attend Clinical Experience training;

	complete 50 FBE hours; attend events; maintain GPA and academic standing.
Benchmark III	Apply for Clinical Experience and submit the Professional Portfolio.
1st Semester, Fourth Year	Register for and earn a minimum grade of “B” in Clinical Experience I; follow the Clinical Experience Handbook; complete all face-to-face coursework; attend events; final TExES exam attempts.
2nd Semester, Fourth Year	Register for and earn a minimum grade of “B” in Clinical Experience II; follow the Clinical Experience Handbook; complete clinical experience with a minimum grade of “B”.
Benchmark IV	Graduate and apply for certification.
Post-Graduation	Apply for certification through the TEA TEAL portal; complete exit surveys for Wiley University and TEA; ensure the employing principal completes the TEA Principal Survey.

**LEAP Accelerated Pathway — Benchmark Mapping**

Because LEAP is delivered on an accelerated, year-round calendar, the four-benchmark progression is re-mapped onto LEAP’s term structure. The gates remain identical in substance to those required of all WU-EPP candidates.

Benchmark	LEAP Phase	Key Requirements
Benchmark I — Program Entry	Admission (prior to Term 1)	Transferable credit verified for track; GPA 2.5 overall / 2.75 WU; admission essay; criminal background check; signed Program Agreement.
Benchmark II — Testing Readiness	Terms 1–4	Code of Ethics training; create TEAL account; Certify Teacher practice score ≥ 85%; begin TExES testing (PPR EC–12 and Core Subjects EC–6 / STR); accumulate FBE hours with reflections.
Benchmark III — Clinical Eligibility	Terms 5–6	Pass required TExES exams; complete all coursework at “C” or higher; maintain 2.75 GPA; complete degree audit; apply for clinical teaching and submit the Professional Portfolio.

Benchmark IV — Clinical & Certification	16-Week Clinical Semester	Complete 490 clinical hours; earn a minimum grade of “B” in clinical teaching; complete exit surveys; graduate and apply for Standard Certification.
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### LEAP — Sample Term-by-Term Sequence

The following illustrates the accelerated structure and the fixed placement of professional educator-preparation courses. Exact course rosters are governed by the candidate’s official degree plan; general-education and content courses are scheduled around the fixed educator-preparation placements shown.

Term	Length	Fixed Educator-Preparation Placement	Concurrent Coursework
Term 1	5 weeks	EDUC 2310 (third course)	General education / content coursework per degree plan
Term 2	5 weeks	EDUC 3377 (third course)	General education / content coursework per degree plan
Term 3	5 weeks	EDUC 3322 (third course)	Content / educator-preparation coursework per degree plan
Term 4	5 weeks	Educator-preparation coursework per degree plan	Content coursework; TExES preparation
Term 5	5 weeks	Educator-preparation coursework per degree plan	Clinical-readiness preparation; portfolio development
Term 6	5 weeks	Educator-preparation coursework per degree plan	Degree audit; apply for clinical teaching
Clinical Semester	16 weeks	Clinical teaching — 490 hours	No additional coursework taken during clinical teaching

### Application and Testing Timeline (Both Pathways)

Milestone	Traditional Timing	LEAP Timing
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Declare Education as Major	End of First Year (after Benchmark I)	Established at entry via declared intent and transfer credit
Apply to / enter the EPP	Fall: Last Day of May; Spring: First Day of December	At admission, prior to Term 1
Create TEAL account	2nd Semester, Second Year	Terms 1–2
Take TExES Core Subjects EC–6 / STR	By end of Third Year	During coursework terms, before clinical placement
Take TExES PPR EC–12 (160)	No later than start of Clinical I	No later than start of the clinical semester
Final TExES exam attempts	During Clinical Experience I (4th Year)	During the clinical semester
Submit Professional Portfolio	Before clinical placement	Before clinical placement (end of Term 6)
Apply for Standard Certification	Immediately post-graduation	Immediately post-graduation

Elementary candidates must pass either the TExES Core Subjects EC–6 or the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) exam as applicable to their certification path, in addition to the PPR EC–12 (160). Candidates must submit official TExES scores for all required exams to the WU-EPP office for verification.

## 8. Clinical Teaching and Field-Based Experience

Clinical teaching is the culminating experience of the EPP. Throughout their coursework, candidates accumulate field-based experience (FBE) hours with reflections, providing graduated exposure to real classroom environments. TEA requires interactive field placements: candidates are expected to work with students individually, in small groups, and with the whole class rather than passively observing. A criminal history background check must be completed prior to any clinical placement.

### Traditional Pathway — Clinical Experience I and II

Traditional candidates complete clinical teaching across two courses, Clinical Experience I and Clinical Experience II, taken in the final year of the program. Candidates must register for each, earn a minimum grade of “B,” adhere strictly to all policies in the Clinical Experience Handbook, and complete all face-to-face coursework. Clinical Experience is the final phase before graduation and certification.

### LEAP Accelerated Pathway — 16-Week Clinical Semester

LEAP candidates complete clinical teaching during a single 16-week clinical semester, totaling 490 hours of clinical teaching and field-based experience in a TEA-approved Texas school system.

- The 490-hour clinical requirement cannot be waived, reduced, or substituted with prior-learning credit, work experience, or employment, regardless of a candidate’s background.
- Clinical teaching is conducted in partnership schools under the supervision of a cooperating teacher and a Field Experience Mentor.
- Candidates must earn a minimum grade of “B” in clinical teaching to complete the program and must adhere strictly to the Clinical Experience Handbook.

### Universal Rule (Both Pathways)

Candidates must complete all required coursework before entering clinical teaching and cannot take classes during the clinical-teaching portion of their candidacy.

## 9. Prior Coursework and Experience

As a TEA approved EPP, the WUEPP preserves the right to verify the equivalency of coursework and training received by prospective candidates. Candidates must provide documentation of prior academic coursework and relevant training — such as transcripts, certificates, or credentials — as part of the admission process. In all cases, the clinical-teaching requirement and professional educator-preparation coursework cannot be satisfied through prior-learning credit.

### **Military Service Members and Veterans**

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(A), military service members or veteran candidates may receive credit for verified military service, training, or education that directly aligns with the requirements for educator certification — excluding certification examinations.

### **Non-Military Service Members**

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(B), candidates who are not military service members or veterans may substitute relevant prior or ongoing service, training, or education only if that experience is not also counted toward an internship, clinical teaching, or practicum requirement. To qualify, the training or education must have been provided by an approved EPP or an accredited institution of higher education within the past five years and must be directly related to the certification area sought.

### **Evaluation of Out-of-Country Credit**

Pursuant to 19 TAC §227.10(f), applicants who earned credentials outside the United States must have their academic credit evaluated by an accrediting organization recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to determine equivalency to U.S. standards and ensure the applicant meets the academic readiness required for admission.

## 10. Supply and Demand Forces

Pursuant to 19 TAC §227.1(c)(3), the WUEPP publishes information regarding the effects of supply and demand forces on the educator workforce in Texas. Texas schools continue to experience a critical teacher shortage. The Texas Education Agency formed the Texas Teacher Vacancy Task Force to support districts in addressing this shortage. Both the traditional and LEAP pathways are designed in part to respond to this need by preparing fully certified educators for high-need Texas classrooms.

According to TEA data, Texas continues to experience shortages in certification areas that include bilingual education, special education, secondary mathematics, secondary science, and English as a Second Language. The WU-EPP aligns its program concentrations with state shortage areas and actively recruits candidates from underrepresented populations to increase placement in high-need schools.

## **11. Release of Student Records (FERPA)**

Based on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all candidates are presented with the option to sign a FERPA release form, which may be completed during registration or orientation. A candidate's signature allows faculty to discuss the candidate's academic matters with designated parties, such as parents or potential employers. Until this form is signed, faculty and institutional representatives are not permitted to discuss any aspect of a candidate's academic record.

## **12. Standards of Professional Conduct**

Teachers have a responsibility for professional behavior and conduct at all times, as stated in the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. The WU-EPP expects the highest standards of professional conduct during teacher preparation and field-based experiences from candidates in both pathways.

### **I. Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance and punctuality are required for all classes, tests, seminars, group meetings, collaborative sessions, and field-based experiences.

### **II. Professional Attitude**

A candidate's maturity and commitment to the profession are reflected in a positive, professional attitude, which is crucial to both coursework and field experiences.

### **III. Professional Communication Skills**

Professionalism implies active listening, thoughtful responses, and active participation. A candidate's professional reputation — and the University's — rests on conduct during field experiences. Teacher candidates are not to (1) communicate electronically with P–12 students — including texting, emailing, calling, or accessing social-networking sites — or (2) take pictures of P–12 students. Candidates are to communicate with P–12 students only concerning academics or classroom learning, and must respect and honor the confidentiality of all interactions with school districts, administrators, teachers, and students during field experience.

### **IV. Honesty and Ethical Behavior Reflecting Good Character**

A candidate's actions must communicate personal and professional integrity. For all assignments and examinations, candidates adhere to the University policy of personal responsibility for one's own work and uphold Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Standard IV: "The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession."

### **13. EPP Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is mandatory. Teaching strategies and activities are integrated into the class schedule; therefore, all candidates must attend and actively participate in each class session. The term "class session" includes field-experience weeks, online courses, and the online weeks within blended/hybrid courses. For LEAP candidates, whose terms are compressed into five weeks, consistent attendance is especially critical to success.

If a candidate is absent more than three class sessions without an excuse, or is tardy more than three times, a note will be placed in the candidate's permanent EPP file citing the disposition of poor attendance or chronic tardiness; a copy will be given to the candidate, who has the right to respond in writing. Each candidate is allowed one absence per class credit hour; every subsequent unexcused absence reduces the course grade by one letter grade. Three tardies equal one absence. Absences due to participation in University-sanctioned events may be excused, but the candidate remains responsible for all in-class notes, discussions, and assignments. See the Wiley University Academic Catalog for further description of the attendance policy.

## 14. EPP Intervention and Retention Policy

### Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the standards and support systems for maintaining eligibility in the WU-EPP for all candidates. It is designed to ensure candidates meet academic, professional, and regulatory expectations as required by TAC §227.10(a)(3) and §228.31.

### GPA Standards (Per TAC §227.10(a)(3))

- **Admission Requirement:** A minimum overall and last-60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required for entry into the program.
- **Ongoing Eligibility:** Candidates must maintain a 2.5 GPA throughout the program, and a 2.75 GPA at Wiley University as required for continued good standing.

### Academic Intervention Timeline

#### A. Early Alert Stage

Triggered when the term GPA or program-coursework GPA falls below 2.5. The advisor initiates support, including individual consultation, academic workshops, and referral to tutoring.

#### B. Probationary Stage

If the GPA remains below 2.5 at the end of the next term, the candidate is placed on probationary status, with a personalized academic improvement plan, mandatory tutoring, and progress reports. Monitoring continues for one term.

#### C. Retention Review and Dismissal

After the probation period, candidates meeting either of the following will be dismissed: (1) failure to achieve a 2.5 GPA, or (2) continued unsatisfactory academic or professional conduct. Dismissed candidates may appeal following University policies.

### Lapsing from the Program (TAC §228.31(d))

If a candidate's completion of the program exceeds five years from program entry, the candidate must be re-evaluated or reapply to demonstrate current competence. Candidates who have not maintained contact may need to re-enter the program after meeting current standards and completing missing coursework or field experiences.

### Program Closure Compliance (TAC §228.20(f))

In the event the EPP is inactive for more than one year, the program will no longer provide recommendations for certification. Currently enrolled candidates at that time must be assisted in transferring to an active program for test approval and certification eligibility.

### Student Rights and Appeals

All candidates have the right to be notified in writing of probation, dismissal, or re-evaluation status; to appeal decisions according to University and EPP appeal protocols; and to access

tutoring, advising, and disability services. This policy is published on the EPP website and in the student handbook and is reviewed during orientation and advising sessions.

## 15. Policies Pertaining to Field Experience

Teacher candidates should monitor their degree plans and advising sheets carefully due to ongoing curricular changes. Due to changes made by TEA, candidates may be required to complete additional curricular requirements to obtain certification. Candidates enrolled in field experience should:

- Begin the field experience as soon as the placement is received.
- Present Wiley University identification and officially sign in and out at the office for each visit;
  - wear a visitor name tag if required.
- Introduce themselves to the cooperating teacher and the school principal, and exchange contact information with the cooperating teacher and Field Experience Mentor.
- Develop and adhere to an observation and teaching schedule with the cooperating teacher; notify the cooperating teacher immediately of any necessary absence.
- Dress professionally. Professional attire excludes sagging, tight, or revealing clothing; flip-flops or slippers; jeans, leggings, or sweatpants; and shirts with inappropriate logos or sayings. Cover tattoos; minimal piercings; no gum.
- Keep cell phones out of sight and locked away unless used for teaching purposes; provide family members with the school's contact number in case of emergency.
- Follow all rules and regulations of the school and engage interactively with students, as TEA requires interactive field placements.
- Keep the timesheet current and have the cooperating teacher date and sign it at each visit; provide and collect all required forms.
- Submit lesson plans to the Field Experience Mentor for approval at least 24 hours in advance; complete self-assessments and follow-up conferences; be open to feedback.
- Treat all information about individuals or schools as confidential, and notify the Field Experience Mentor of any problems encountered.

Each placement may be terminated by school-site personnel, the course instructor, or the dean when deemed to be in the best interest of the candidate, school, or learners.

## 16. Test Approval Policy

This policy establishes a clear, equitable, and compliant process for approving candidates to attempt Texas educator certification exams, ensuring alignment with the TEC, the TAC, and TEA, SBEC, and SBOE guidelines. It is mandated under 19 TAC §228.40(c), 19 TAC §230.21, and TEC §21.044, and applies to all candidates enrolled in an initial teacher-certification pathway at Wiley University, including both the traditional and LEAP pathways.

### Eligibility for Test Approval

#### A. Content Pedagogy and PPR Exams

1. Complete 80% or more of the required coursework aligned with the exam framework.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in content knowledge via grades of “C” or higher in aligned courses and 85% or higher on practice exams.
3. Submit evidence of completion of performance-based assignments in aligned courses.
4. Participate in assigned test-preparation sessions or workshops.

#### B. Science of Teaching Reading (STR) Exam

Required for candidates seeking EC–6 or 4–8 certification:

1. Complete EPP STR-aligned coursework and earn a minimum score of 80% on STR benchmark assessments.
2. Submit STR readiness artifacts, such as lesson plans and reading diagnostics.

### Test Approval Procedures

1. Candidate Application — the candidate submits a formal test-approval request using the EPP’s designated form.
2. Advisor Verification — the faculty advisor or program director verifies eligibility using academic records and practice-exam results.
3. Program Director Review — final approval is granted by the Program Director or Certification Officer.
4. TEAL Entry — approved test approvals are entered into the TEA Educator Certification Online System (ECOS) via TEAL.

### Denial, Remediation, and Appeals

If a candidate does not meet the criteria, a written notice will outline areas of deficiency, and a remediation plan will be developed including timelines, tutorials, and reassessments.

Candidates may reapply after completing the remediation plan. A candidate may appeal a denial in writing within 10 business days of notification; appeals are reviewed by the EPP Appeals Committee, and a final decision is issued within 10 additional business days.

## **Responsibilities**

Candidates are responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic progress, participating in required EPP trainings and practice exams, and complying with ethical testing practices per TEA and Pearson guidelines. The EPP will provide timely information and preparation resources, maintain documentation of all approvals, denials, and appeals, and ensure annual compliance with TEA audit requirements and program accountability standards.

## 17. Notice for Former Students Seeking TExES Approval or Certification

The Wiley University School of Education is committed to supporting past students who completed educator preparation programs. However, in accordance with TAC 19 §228.31, only candidates who were formally admitted to a Texas-approved EPP and meet all admission and program requirements are eligible for approval to take TExES certification exams.

- TAC §228.31 requires that all candidates must have been admitted into an approved EPP and have completed coursework and training aligned to the standards in effect at the time of enrollment.
- The program must verify that candidates are certification-eligible under the most current TEA rules and requirements before recommending them for testing or certification.
- As outlined in TAC §228.20(h), educator preparation programs closed for more than one year are no longer authorized to recommend candidates for certification or sign eligibility documents, including TEA Form 2410 or exam-approval forms.

If a candidate was not fully admitted to the EPP or did not complete certification requirements while the program was active, Wiley University is unable to submit the candidate's name to TEA for testing approval. Affected individuals are encouraged to contact a currently approved Texas EPP or an Education Service Center for guidance on re-entry or pathway options.

## 18. Candidate Acknowledgment and Program Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Wiley University Educator Preparation Program Student Handbook. I understand that I am subject to all WU-EPP policies, the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, and the standards of the Texas Education Agency, regardless of whether I am enrolled in the traditional pathway or the LEAP accelerated pathway. I agree to meet the academic, professional, attendance, field-experience, and certification requirements described in this handbook, including the clinical-teaching requirement, which cannot be waived or substituted.

Pathway (check one):  Traditional WU-EPP  LEAP Accelerated

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Candidate Name (printed)

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Candidate Signature

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Date