

Conceptual Framework

At Shorter University, all programs (including Teacher Preparation Program) originate from the University Mission and seven Educational Principles. At the center of the Conceptual Framework for Teacher Preparation Program is the purpose: to build knowledge, skills, and dispositions of candidates. With that in mind, the Teacher Preparation Program focuses on four basic goals for teacher candidates: (a) to demonstrate subject matter knowledge; (b) to acquire and demonstrate effective pedagogy; (c) to demonstrate professionalism; and (d) to address the psychological, social, and cultural needs of learners. “Learner-centered teaching,” a term used synonymous with “addressing learners’ needs,” characterizes both the approach of the Shorter University faculty and the program expectations for the teacher candidates. Thus, the motto of the Conceptual Framework of the Shorter University Teacher Program is “**Learners First.**”

The teacher candidate who completes the Teacher Preparation Program at Shorter University will be prepared to enter the teaching profession with all of the skills, understanding, knowledge, attitudes, and ethics necessary to be a successful teacher. Through various program experiences, the student will be able to build an understanding of what a successful teacher does. The student also will develop a life-long desire to increase competence as an educator. The teacher candidate who completes the program will be ready for more formal study at the graduate level or less formal improvement based upon reflection and self-study. Along with continuing personal development as a professional, the teacher should be a leader in the continuous process of making schools better for all children.

The experiences in the Teacher Preparation Program at Shorter University include a thorough study of the principles of development, the principles of learning and motivation, and content in the discipline(s). Also included in the program are field work experiences culminating in student teaching. Field work allows the teacher candidate to discover and acquire the craft knowledge of master teachers. The ability of the Teacher Preparation Program to provide such outstanding opportunities for teacher candidates is the result of successful, long-term collaboration with local school systems by the faculty members. Combining the wisdom of experience of these qualified and diverse faculty, with their emphasis on recent research, modern theory, and proficiency in the use of technology, Shorter’s Teacher Preparation Program prepares the teacher for life-long learning and professional development.

Equally important is the development of professional ethics. Shorter University’s commitment to a liberal arts education from a Christian perspective for all students provides the basis for the development of a teacher’s professional ethics. Central to professional ethics is the belief that all children can learn and that the teacher’s primary responsibility is to facilitate and guide this process. All children include, of course, children of all ethnic, racial, religious, economic, gender, and social backgrounds. Diversity within the Shorter faculty and student body and in the public schools provides students with the opportunity to develop respect. From this basis and from knowledge of professional standards as taught in the program, teacher candidates can develop the professional commitments and dispositions that will enable them to be advocates for children.

Our Mission

Reflecting the mission of Shorter, the Conceptual Framework of the School of Education establishes the foundation upon which Shorter prepares teachers to think **Learners First**. **Our mission** is to provide exemplary classroom and field experiences for its teacher candidates so that they may become successful teachers dedicated to life-long learning, personal growth, collaborative effort, responsible citizenship, and community leadership in a global context. Upon successful completion of the program, Shorter graduates are expected to possess content, pedagogical, and curricular knowledge, but more importantly, it is expected Shorter graduates will demonstrate the professional dispositions to be caring professionals who are concerned for the needs of others, and able to assist others effectively in the learning process.

Our Vision

As our mission is accomplished, our vision is met. **Our vision** is to continue what the program has done so successfully over the years which is:

1. to keep the needs of others uppermost,
2. to adapt to change and help others make the desirable transitions,
3. to uphold high standards of scholarship and professionalism,
4. to model cultural diversity and global awareness, and
5. to foster cooperation and collaboration in order to accomplish shared goals.

Shorter University Teacher Preparation Program Conceptual Framework Goals and Objectives

GOAL I. Teacher candidates will demonstrate subject matter knowledge appropriate to their grade levels and specializations.

Teacher candidates will:

1. demonstrate current knowledge of subject and theories of the discipline,
2. know and utilize diverse viewpoints and perspectives of experts in their field,
3. integrate knowledge across academic disciplines,
4. demonstrate skills required to practice the discipline effectively,
5. use appropriate, available technology for the academic subject, and
6. use the following elements of the learning process to master the discipline content: motivation, understanding, contextualizing, reflection, critical thinking, social interaction, performance.

GOAL II. Teacher candidates will acquire and demonstrate pedagogical knowledge appropriate to their grade levels and specializations.

Teacher candidates will:

1. demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies, activities, and educational theories for the disciplines taught,
2. implement curricula using their understanding of the learning process: motivation, understanding, contextualizing, reflection, critical thinking, social interaction, performance,
3. develop assessments that consider the developmental stage and needs of the learner,
4. utilize assessment data to determine learning objectives, make instructional decisions, and revise curricula, and
5. employ a variety of technologies in their teaching.

GOAL III. Teacher candidates will address the psychological, social, and cultural needs of learners.

Teacher candidates will:

1. diagnose learner needs with appropriate assessments,
2. promote self-confidence in learners,
3. encourage cooperation among learners,
4. demonstrate multicultural and global awareness,
5. use community resources,
6. involve parents or guardians,
7. maintain a physical environment conducive to learning, and
8. plan and practice effective classroom management skills.

GOAL IV. Teacher candidates will demonstrate professionalism.

Teacher candidates will:

1. establish respectful relationships,
2. work collaboratively,
3. display professional demeanor and appearance,
4. base decisions and performance on high moral and ethical standards,
5. develop a teaching philosophy that reflects the ethics of the profession,
6. evaluate their own professional growth through reflection and synthesis of data from multiple sources,
7. demonstrate professional growth, and
8. value life-long learning.