AAQEP Annual Report for 2021

Provider/Program Name: **Abilene Christian University**

End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or "n/a" if not yet accredited): **June 30, 2026**

PART I: Publicly Available Program Performance and Candidate Achievement Data

1. Overview and Context

This overview describes the mission and context of the educator preparation provider and the programs encompassed in its AAQEP review.

> Abilene Christian University (ACU), a private comprehensive university, was founded in 1906. It is affiliated with the Churches of Christ and is one of the largest private universities in the Southwest. The mission of the university is to *educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.*
>
> .Abilene Christian University earned Doctoral/Professional university status, as determined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in its latest update, released December 15, 2021. The Doctoral/Professional University classification (also known as R3) includes institutions that award at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees each year.
>
> The university comprises seven schools and colleges and offers 79 baccalaureate majors, 35 master's degree programs and four doctoral programs. In 2021, the university awarded more than 150 doctoral degrees. ACU includes the Abilene residential

campus and ACU Dallas (primarily online) campus, which was established in 2015. All teacher certification programs are housed on the Abilene campus. Our students come from 52 states and territories and 46 countries. ACU is designated as an Emerging Hispanic Serving institution by the Department of Education. The ACU Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is currently preparing the campus to consider full Hispanic Serving Institution Designation. Current recognitions and rankings can be found at the following link: https://www.acu.edu/about/rankings/

The Department of Teacher Education resides in the College of Education and Human Services which includes Teacher Education, Social Work, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Occupational Therapy, and Kinesiology & Nutrition.
The mission of the Department of Teacher Education is *to prepare exemplary, committed educators for service in diverse and multicultural communities for the glory of God.* The program is administered by the Department of Teacher Education and includes all students seeking initial teacher certification, including students from three colleges and 13 academic departments. We do not currently offer any advanced certifications but do offer a 5th year M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning that includes initial teacher certification.

Public Posting URL

Part I of this report is posted at the following web address (accredited members of AAQEP must post at least Part I):

https://www.acu.edu/academics/college-of-education-human-services/departments/teacher-education/accreditation-membership/
Because of the holiday, this will be posted after January 3rd.

2. Enrollment and Completion Data

Table 1 shows enrollment and completion data from the most recently completed academic year for each program included in the AAQEP review.

Table 1. Program Specification: Enrollment and Completers for Academic Year 2020-2021

Degree or Certificate granted by the institution/organization	**State Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential**	**Total Number of Candidates** Not including completers	**Number of Completers** in 2019-20
Bachelor of Science	Initial Certification: EC-6 Core Subjects	27	23
	Initial Certification: EC-6 Core Subjects with STR	22	0
	Initial Certification: 4-8 Core Subjects	0	2
	Initial Certification: 4-8 Science	1	0
	Initial Certification: 6-12 Physical Science	2	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Life Science	2	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Physics/Math	1	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Social Studies	8	1
	Initial Certification: 7-12 History	2	0
	Initial Certification: 4-8 Mathematics	2	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Mathematics	5	0
	Initial Certification: EC-12 SPED	7	0
Bachelor of Arts	Initial Certification: 4-8 ELAR	2	0
	Initial Certification: 4-8 ELAR with STR	1	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 ELAR	3	6

Bachelor of Music	Initial Certification: EC-12 Music	21	7
Bachelor of Fine Art	Initial Certification: EC-12 Theater	3	1
	Initial Certification: EC-12 Art	2	0
Masters of Teaching and Learning	Initial Certification: EC-6 Core Subjects	5	5
	Initial Certification: 4-8 Mathematics	1	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 ELAR	3	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Life Science	2	0
	Initial Certification: 7-12 Social Studies	1	0
	Initial Certification: EC-12 Music	1	0
	Initial Certification: EC-12 Theater	1	1
	TOTALS:	123	46

Added or Discontinued Programs

Any programs within the AAQEP review that have been added or discontinued within the past year are listed below. (This list is required only from providers with accredited programs.)

NA

3. Program Performance Indicators

The program performance information in Table 2 applies to the academic year indicated in Table 1.

Table 2. Program Performance Indicators

1. **Total enrollment** in the educator preparation programs shown in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals earning more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.

123
2. **Total number of unique completers** (across all programs) included in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals who earned more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.
46
3. **Number of recommendations** for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.
46
4. **Cohort completion rates** for candidates who completed the various programs within their respective program's expected timeframe **and** in 1.5 times the expected timeframe.
100%
5. **Summary of state license examination results**, including teacher performance assessments, and specification of any examinations on which the pass rate (cumulative at time of reporting) was below 80%.
53 students took the PPR exam with a 98% pass rate= Females-100%, Males-80%, African American-100%, Hispanic-100%, Other-100%, White-98%. 57 students took Non-PPR exams with a 95% pass rate= Females-94%, Males-100%, African American- 75%, Hispanic-100%, Other-100%, White-95% *African American 75%- one took and passed CS EC-6, one took and passed STR, one took and passed SS 4-8, and one took and failed SS 7-12.
6. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from program completers**, with a characterization of findings.
End of Program Feedback: Every semester our clinical teachers provide feedback through the End Of Program Feedback Survey. The questions included in this survey are as follows: 1. As you are at the close of your clinical teaching semester and as you reflect on your growth through this semester, identify ways that you are prepared to enter into the first year of your professional teaching career.

2. What were you prepared for as you entered clinical teaching? Click all that apply.
   - Lesson Planning
   - Content Specific Pedagogy
   - Assessment
   - Data Collection and Analysis
   - Behavior Management
   - Teacher Presence
   - Other

3. What were you least prepared for in clinical teaching?
   - Lesson Planning
   - Content Specific Pedagogy
   - Assessment
   - Data Collection and Analysis
   - Behavior Management
   - Teacher Presence
   - Other

4. Provide feedback related to your content area preparation. How prepared did you feel to teach your content area?

5. What commendation or recommendation do you have to make in your content area preparation?

6. Tell us about a time during which you were able to clearly connect an experience you had in clinical teaching with your preparation in coursework.

7. What about the Teacher Work Sample Assignment was helpful for you in your professional preparation?

8. It would be helpful if you could provide one or two tips related to the TWS Assignment. What would have made the assignment more clear, less confusing? What did you encounter that presented a challenge?

9. What was helpful in your preparation for job interviews? What tips or suggestions do you have to make that would support you in preparing for this aspect of the semester?

10. What about your preparation program does not need to change?

11. Is there anything you would like to say that has not been asked? Please use this space to communicate anything for which these questions have not provided you the opportunity.

Texas Education Agency First Year Teacher Survey:
The Texas Education Agency collected data through the First Year Teacher Survey. Of the 46 completers surveyed, 13 responded. There were two completers whose responses did not meet the state designation for adequate completion. For the first time, TEA provided the identity of respondents. We have reached out to these two teachers to seek further information and offer assistance.

Both teachers are certified in secondary fields and completed clinical teaching in the spring of 2020 which was interrupted due to COVID. They then entered an unprecedented teaching context. Still, we hope to learn from them so that we can address any areas of improvement needed. The data from this survey can be found at the following link:
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https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ny5Dl0G84objYe7q_pMRAvxM7aV8cru8/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115672657960142024219&rtpof=true&sd=true

Characterization of Findings:
Overall, the feedback from these two data sources is positive. However, there are areas for growth identified. Both of these feedback processes indicate that all-levels and secondary majors feel less prepared than EC-6 and Special Education majors. While this is not surprising, it is still a concern. In the End of Program Feedback process, 4-8, 7-12, and EC-12 completers state that they would like to have increased courses in the Teacher Education Department. While adding courses to the degrees is not possible at this time, we are exploring ways to enhance connection with these teacher candidates.

Both feedback processes indicate that completers feel limited preparation in serving students with special needs and working with parents. While completers indicate that they are prepared to understand the ARD process and that they are familiar with various disability categories, they lack specific strategies for addressing the needs of these students.

7. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from employers of program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

The Texas Education Agency provides data from the Principal Survey of first-year teacher performance. 92% of responses (35/38) for the 2020/2021 school year indicated that our completers are prepared for their responsibilities in the classroom. The findings demonstrate relatively consistent assessment across certification levels and survey categories. The lowest individual indicator was in response to preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

The completers in this cohort encountered a context with increased emotional and behavioral challenges due to the impact of Covid. Still, we have added specific training in trauma-informed practices for all teacher candidates. We are also evaluating the special education course taken by all candidates to identify specific areas of revision, including strategies for responding to behavioral challenges of students with disabilities. Finally, we provide training in de-escalation strategies using the CPI model as our framework.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1x90Z4bj5qQwT3LCXyoZs8tTR52hYlb2OUTfQGpghiEk/edit?usp=sharing

8. Narrative explanation of how the program investigates **employment rates for program completers**, with a characterization of findings. This section may also indicate rates of completers' ongoing education, e.g., graduate study.

Because we are a small program, it is typically easy to determine initial placement in graduate school or employment by contacting our alumni personally. Of our 2020/2021 completers, 42 were employed as teachers, one entered graduate school, one is serving as a missionary and two have not reported their employment status. Our Summer Institute provides a way to engage in continued relationship with program completers.

4. Candidate Academic Performance Indicators

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program's expectations for successful performance and indicators of the degree to which those expectations are met.

Table 3. Expectations and Performance on Standard 1: Candidate and Completer Performance

Provider-Selected Measures	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
Dispositions	Students are assessed formatively and given feedback using the Dispositions rubric multiple times throughout the program, expectations at each benchmark can be found here.	All rubrics are kept in students' permanent files. All teacher candidates met standard at for each benchmarking period. Formal data is summarized below for all Clinical Teaching Dispositions completed during the 2020-2021 school year:

		Clinical Teaching Dispositions (n = 30)		
		Met Standard	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
		97%*	92.27*	5.31

* One student (3%) non-completer due to dispositions concerns
** Out of a possible 96

TExES Certification Exams	The state of Texas has set the passing score of all certification tests at a scale score of 240.	Data from TExES exams taken during the 2020-2021 school year are below.

NOTE: 'N' represents the number of individual students who took individual certification exams, exams may have been taken multiple times to meet mastery. For reporting purposes, passing rates were calculated based on individuals passing by their second attempt. Where multiple attempts were reported, both scores are calculated into the means and standard deviations.

TExES Certification Exams

	Exam	Met Standard	Mean Scale Score	Standard Deviation
	PPR (N = 54)	98%	265.16	13.33
	ESL (N = 25)	96%	261.15	12.64
	Science of Teaching Reading (N = 27)	100%	75.56*	9.37
EC-6 Certification (N = 25)	ELAR	100%	273.08	8.89
	Math	100%	269.16	12.90
	Science	100%**	257.45	15.08
	SS	92%***	253.14	17.39
	FAHPE	100%	269.72	11.01

4-8 Certifications (N = 5)	ELAR (n = 1)	100%	274	-
	Math (n = 2)	100%	262.5	7.78
	Science (n = 1)	100%	275	-
	SS (n = 1)	100%	239	8.49
7-12 Certifications (N = 15)	ELAR (n = 8)	100%	259.13	9.76
	Math (n = 1)	100%	273	-
	Life Science (n = 1)	100%	282	-
	Science (n = 1)	100%	264	-
	SS (n = 4)	25%****	232.29	19.56
All Levels Certifications (N = 17)	Music (n = 7)	100%	249.22	15.02
	Theatre (n = 2)	100%	262.5	14.85
	SPED (n = 8)	100%	266.75	7.44

* STR is reported on a 100 point scale rather than the scaled score
** State passing rate for EC-6 Science is 78%
*** State passing rate for EC-6 Social Studies is 77%
**** State passing rate for 7-12 Social Studies is 54%

Teacher Work Sample	In the Fall of 2021, Clinical Teachers completed an abbreviated version of the Teacher Work Sample called *Contextual Factors.* This decision was made due to uncertainty with placements and the nature of teaching during a pandemic. Students are graded using a department-created rubric, which can be found here	Data from Contextual Factors collected during the Fall 2020 are as follows: Contextual Factors (N =16)

Met Standard	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation

		100%	92.69%	6.28

	Clinical Teachers complete a Teacher Work Sample documenting a unit of study from pre assessment through planning, delivery, and post-assessment. Students are graded using a department-created rubric, which can be found [here]().	Data from Teacher Work Samples collected during the Spring 2021 semester are as follows:

Teacher Work Sample (N =13)

Met Standard	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
100%	88.79%	6.44

Table 4. Expectations and Performance on Standard 2: Completer Professional Competence and Growth

Provider-Selected Measures	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
PPR - Domain 2	Domain 2 of the PPR standards is *Creating a Positive Productive Classroom Environment.* Our goal is for Teacher Education candidates to score a 65 or better on the Domain 2 competency of their TExES PPR exam.	Data from Domain 2 of TExES PPR exams taken by completers from the 2020-2021 school year are as follows: PPR: Domain 2 (N = 54)
Teacher Work Sample - Contextual Factors	The Contextual Factors section of the Contextual Factors (F20) and Teacher Work Sample (S21) require clinical teachers to collect and analyze data at the community, district, campus, classroom, and student levels in order to identify instructional implications that will impact their teaching. Candidates	Data from the Contextual Factor indicator of the Contextual Factors (F20) and Teacher Work Samples (S21) collected during the 2020-2021 school year are as follows: TWS Contextual Factors (N = 29)

PPR: Domain 2 (N = 54)

Met 65% Standard	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
98%	83.34%	11.38

	must score an eight (8) or higher (ten point maximum) on the Contextual Factors section to meet department expectations for that section.	Met Standard	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
		97%	9.4	0.81

Environmental Criteria from Observation Rubric	The Environmental Criteria from the ACU Observation Rubric include - ● Respect and Rapport ● Materials and Supplies ● Transitions ● Routines and Procedures ● Expectations ● Non-Verbal Supports In order to demonstrate mastery in these areas, candidates are expected to earn a score point three (3) out of four (4) possible points.	Data from the Environmental Criteria areas of the final Clinical Teaching Observations collected during the 2020-2021 school year can be found below.

Observation Environmental Factors (N=31)

	Met Standard	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
Respect & Rapport	100%	3.87	0.34
Materials & Supplies	97%	3.68	0.54
Transitions	94%	3.52	0.72
Routines & Procedures	97%	3.52	0.57
Expectations	94%	3.48	0.72
Non-Verbal Support	97%	3.45	0.57

5. Notes on Progress, Accomplishment, and Innovation

This section describes recent program accomplishments, efforts to address challenges, current priorities, and innovations that are in plan or process.

The 2020/2021 academic year required significant forced innovative problem solving. For the entire 2020/2021 academic year, our only access to field placements was in the clinical teaching setting. This required the faculty to approximate as closely as possible our rich field experience sequence. Strategies included the following:
- Serving as online tutors for struggling 4th and 5th grade readers.
- Creating virtual lessons for local home-school collaboratives.
- Simulated teaching experiences in the university classroom.
- Zoom observations of live instruction in classrooms and zoom conversations with P-12 classroom teachers.
- Analysis of teaching videos.
- Facilitating collaboration between teacher candidates in face-to-face instruction and those joining the classroom via Zoom.
- Structuring collaborative learning when our students were required to maintain social distance.

We were allowed to re-enter the schools in October 2021. Still, we found that some of the strategies we used during the 2020/2021 academic year were quite helpful. We will continue to use Zoom conversations with classroom teachers when possible and have located some excellent online sources for virtual classroom observations. The virtual classrooms provide the opportunity to actively process the teaching and assessment strategies with all students "in" the same classroom as opposed to only being assigned to individual classroom placements.

We learned that when students are faced with unavoidable absences, they can still participate in the classroom via Zoom. This allows them to maintain connection with their peers and not miss important learning experiences. This is a practice we will continue.

While we have required that our candidates complete Google Educator Level II Certification for some time, we recognize that we need to enhance our curriculum in the area of technology integration guided by the ISTE standards for digital literacy. This revision process will begin in the spring of 2022.

Part II: Self-Assessment and Continuous Growth

AAQEP does not require public posting of the information in Part II, but programs may post it at their discretion.

6. Self-Assessment and Continuous Growth and Improvement

This section charts ongoing growth and improvement processes in relation to each AAQEP standard.

Table 5. Provider Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement

Std.	Strengths, Needs, and Goals/Opportunities by Standard		Priorities to Be Addressed	Action Plan/ Steps to Be Taken	Steps Taken/ Outcomes (Reflection)
1	Strength				
	Need	Continue the revision process of SPED 371 Teaching Students with Special Needs.	This is the only course focused specifically on working with students with special needs taken by all our candidates. End of program feedback indicates that completers need an increased focus on specific strategies for meeting the needs of these learners.	Complete a peer review of SPED 371 with a team of three faculty members to evaluate the course content, assignments and assessments. Revise the course to provide additional focus on instructional strategies.	SPED 371 already includes a robust interprofessional simulation of the ARD process. Completers have indicated that they feel well-prepared to enter these meetings after participating in this simulation experience.
	Goal	Implement an assessment for inclusive teaching	Create a qualitative method to assess growth in candidate understanding of and	EDUC 211 Introduction to Education: Culture and Contexts is taken in the sophomore year and focuses on	The current assignment criteria and three examples can be found at the following link:

			commitment to inclusive teaching practices.	diversity and culturally responsive teaching. At the end of the course, students complete a reflective paper addressing inclusive practices. Beginning in fall 2023, students will revisit their responses in EDUC 476 Effective Teaching Strategies for English Learners and reflect on their current understanding of can commitment to inclusive teaching practices. We will select 20 senior level responses to analyze, identifying emergent themes to assist us in continued course revision in this area..	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TekRCYSHO5TYCyLoQBTJBsg15BHXLnsoR37IF-zcCtM/edit?usp=sharing
2	Strength	Our Summer Institute provides the opportunity to support our completers in continued professional growth. For the first five years, our alumni are invited back to campus for a free three-day institute designed to	The 2021/2022 school year was a significant challenge for all P-12 educators. Mental health and fatigue are pervasive among teachers and students.	This summer, June 9-11, our Institute will focus on mental health and strategies to manage anxiety and stress for teachers and students.	

		support them to persist in teaching.			
	Need				
	Goal				
3	Strength	Clinical Teaching supervision continues to be provided by full time faculty.			This increases the effectiveness of supervision in the following ways: 1. Supervisors know the curriculum that candidates have completed and can facilitate continued connection to previous learning. 2. Because supervisors have previous relationship with the clinical teachers, the ability to support and challenge candidats is enhanced. 3. We are able to establish clear, shared expectations of the level of competence we expect of our clinical teachers.

	Need				
	Goal				
4	Strength				
	Need				
	Goal	Monitor more closely candidate progress in the junior year.	When we have candidates enter Clinical Teaching and fail to complete successfully, it is obviously very difficult for the candidates and at times impacts our partnerships with cooperating teachers and principals. It is important that we identify potential deficits early so that we can proactively work with candidates to assist them in their preparation.	Establish a required 2.75 GPA in professional education courses (READ, EDUC, EACH and SPED). When a candidate falls below this level, an action plan will be developed with the candidate, the department chair and a faculty committee to determine what the candidate needs in order to be prepared for future success.	We audited the last five years candidates who entered Clinical Teaching and failed to complete successfully and qualify for certification. None with a Professional Education sequence GPA of lower than 2.75 have been successful. This data affirmed our decision to establish this standard and also affirmed that our curriculum is meaningfully aligned with the expectations for appropriate professional competence in order to qualify for certification.

Overall Comments in Response to Evidence

Optional explanation or elaboration on the findings noted in the final column of Table 5.

NA

7. Evidence Related to AAQEP-Identified Concerns or Conditions

This section documents how concerns or conditions that were noted in an accreditation decision are being addressed (indicate "n/a" if no concerns or conditions were noted).

NA

8. Anticipated Growth and Development

This section summarizes planned improvements, innovations, or anticipated new program developments, including description of any identified potential challenges or barriers.

We are exploring the possibility of offering an alternative certification program through our ACU Dallas campus. These conversations are in the very early stages and were interrupted by the challenges of the pandemic. Still, this is a question we have been encouraged to consider in order to broaden our reach while maintaining program quality.

9. Regulatory Changes

This section notes new or anticipated regulatory requirements and the provider's response to those changes (indicate "n/a" if no changes have been made or are anticipated).

Texas delayed again the implementation of the edTPA. It is anticipated that this new assessment will be launched in fall 2023. We will be working with the local district to address their concerns about the required video process beginning in spring of 2022.

The Science of Reading test for EC-6 Core Subjects and 4-8 ELAR was implemented in January 2021. At this time, our candidates have a 100% pass rate on the first attempt. We will continue to monitor the exam results to identify the lowest areas of performance that my indicate a need to revise the curriculum.

10. Sign Off

Provider's Primary Contact for AAQEP (Name, Title)	Dean/Lead Administrator (Name, Title)
Dr. Dana Kennamer, Department Chair – Teacher Education	Dr. Jennifer Shewmaker, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services

Date sent to AAQEP: December 31, 2021