

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
Hollins University
Teacher Education Program¹
Audit Dates: October 6-7, 2005

The Summary of the Case is written by the auditors and approved by program faculty. The Summary reflects the auditors' understanding of the case the faculty are making for accreditation.

Authorship and Approval of the *Inquiry Brief*:

The *Inquiry Brief* was written by Kristi S. Fowler, and Rebecca Reiff. The full-time members of the education faculty, which includes Dr. Fowler and Dr. Reiff as well as Prof. Anna Baynum, approved the Brief on December 4, 2006.

Introduction:

Hollins University is an independent, nondenominational institution founded in 1842 as Virginia's first chartered women's college. Hollins, which enrolls approximately 1100 students, continues to offer its undergraduate program to women only, and has offered coeducational masters programs since 1958.

The Hollins teacher education program requires an undergraduate degree in an academic major, with liberal arts coursework as well as an education sequence that includes professional studies coursework and field and student teaching experiences. Licensure can be earned at either the undergraduate or the masters level, and licensure options include:

- PK-6 (early education)
- 6-12 (biology, chemistry, English, history and social sciences, mathematics, physics)
- PK-12 (art, choral music, French, Latin, Spanish)

Program design is based on the educational theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Bloom, Allington, McKenna, Invernizzi, and others in such areas as multiple intelligences, brain-based learning, cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary studies, as well as on the Virginia Standards of Learning and licensing requirements and on the needs of the community.

The program is seeking accreditation after having been awarded preaccreditation in 2002.

Program Claims:

With reference to TEAC Component 1.1 (**subject matter knowledge**), the faculty claim that Hollins graduates have mastered the subject matter concepts of their endorsement areas to the degree required to teach the subjects effectively (see [Claim 1](#)).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.2 (**pedagogical knowledge**), the faculty claim that Hollins graduates are able to recognize developmental needs of children and understand individual differences in learning abilities and styles so they can deliver effective lessons (see [Claim 2](#)).

With reference to TEAC Component 1.3 (**teaching skill**), the faculty claim that Hollins graduates are able to make use of varied teaching tools and strategies, that they are committed to providing all children with a quality education and to expecting all children to be successful, and that they meet Virginia licensure requirements (see [Claim 4](#), [Claim 6](#), [Claim 7](#)).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **learning how to learn**, the faculty assert that Hollins students are consistently encouraged to participate in professional development activities and to stay current in their fields of concentration.

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **multicultural perspectives and accuracy**, the faculty assert that Hollins graduates respect the diverse nature of the children they teach and are able to teach children of varying backgrounds, abilities, and cultural perspectives (see [Claim 3](#)).

With reference to the TEAC cross-cutting theme of **technology**, the faculty assert that Hollins graduates are competent in the use of technology (including email, word processing, spreadsheets, electronic research, and educational software) as it relates to teaching (see [Claim 5](#)).

Supporting Evidence with Associated Reliability and Validity Measures:

The faculty rely primarily on ratings by university supervisors and cooperating teachers on the *Final Student Teaching Evaluation* items specific to Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. The faculty assert that this evaluation is reliable based on high interrater agreement between the university supervisors and cooperating teachers (correlations of between 0.73 and 0.87 for each of the four sections), and on a high alpha coefficient (of 0.97) across all 41 items on the assessment. The faculty note that the evaluation is highly aligned with the claims and thus has content validity.

The faculty also report Praxis II scores to support Claim 1, and overall GPA scores to support Claim 7. In addition, they indicate that the following evidence may also be used in support of the claims:

- Portfolio (Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Completion of Hollins University's technology requirement (Claim 5)
- Completion of approved program for licensure (Claim 7)
- Eligibility for a Virginia teaching license (Claim 7)

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Results:

The faculty reported results for a stratified random sample of 7 MAT students (5 in the PK-6 option, 2 in the 6-12 option), and 3 undergraduate students (2 in the PK-6 option, 1 in the 6-12 option). The mean GPA for these students was 3.82/4.00, the mean Praxis II scores for these students was 174.1 (relative to pass scores of 143 to 172), and ratings on all reported items of the *Final Student Teaching Evaluation* were between 7 and 10 on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Internal Audit:

The faculty chose two recent program completers at random, one from the PK-6 option and one from the 6-12 option, and reviewed admission criteria for the program, admission criteria for student teaching, efforts to retain students, documentation, courses, program offerings, faculty, and facilities with respect to these two students. Their findings indicated that although in some instances an instrument needed to be refined or a checkpoint needed to be added—for example, the faculty determined that they needed a way to link student course evaluations to specific professors—the quality control system was working effectively for the most part.

Plan for program improvement

Based on findings from the internal audit, the faculty identified several areas they wished to address:

1. Instead of relying solely on the university's efforts to admit and retain diverse students, the faculty wished to develop their own recruitment policy, and discussed several possible components of such a policy.
2. Instead of relying solely on the university's grievance procedure, the faculty wished to develop their own procedures in order to better track formal complaints relating to the education department.
3. The faculty discussed adding a way to track which professors taught which courses on the anonymous Hollins Program Opinion Survey in order to make better sense of the survey findings.
4. The faculty decided to check that undergraduates' GPA met the minimum 2.5 requirement at the time of acceptance rather than at the time of application.

Evidence of Commitment and Capacity:

The faculty examined parity between the Hollins University Education Department (HUED) and Hollins University overall with respect to the seven capacity components, and found:

- (4.1) HUED undergraduates are required to complete an academic major, as are all Hollins students, and HUED students have comparable or higher GPAs than do other Hollins students at the same levels.

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- (4.2) HUED faculty have comparable statistics to Hollins faculty overall with respect to faculty with terminal degrees, faculty at academic rank, research support, and salaries.
- (4.3) HUED has comparable space, equipment, and clerical support to other Hollins departments, and has special facilities such as a curriculum lab and resource room.
- (4.4) HUED has a greater budget and library funds than do other Hollins departments.
- (4.5) HUED students have the same access as all Hollins students to health services, counseling services, career development services, and computer help services, and have exclusive access to education job fairs and advising.
- (4.6) HUED students must meet a number of varied admissions requirements.
- (4.7) HUED students have access to the same grievance procedure as do all Hollins students, although it is not currently possible to track complaints according to department.

The faculty concluded that Hollins University is committed to the teacher education program.

¹ **The program includes options in the following areas and Virginia, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program's graduates:**

1. early education (PreK-6);
2. secondary education (6-12): biology, chemistry, computer science, English, history and social sciences, mathematics, and physics;
3. other (PreK-12): Art, French, German, Spanish, Latin, and choral music (we are currently in the process of adding instrumental music and dance as well as theatre arts)
4. a Master of Arts in Teaching degree that parallels the undergraduate options.