

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief)
University of Richmond
Teacher Preparation Program¹
Audit Dates: January 20-23, 2008

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 Kimberlye Joyce, Susie Leahy, and Patricia Stohr-Hunt, and was unanimously approved by the Teacher Preparation Program on October 19, 2007.

Introduction:

The University of Richmond, established in 1830 to prepare young men for the ministry, is a private liberal arts institution with close to 3,000 undergraduate, 700 graduate students, and over 800 students enrolled in the School of Continuing Studies. The university offers degrees in arts and sciences, law, business, leadership studies, and continuing studies. The mission of the University of Richmond is “*to sustain a collaborative learning and research community that supports the personal development of its members and the creation of new knowledge*” preparing students to “*live lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a global and pluralistic society.*” During the 1998-99 academic year the Dean of Arts and Sciences proposed closing the departments of Education and Health and Sport Science. Faculty debated whether – and how – teacher preparation was an appropriate course of study at a liberal arts institution and concluded that the undergraduate program should be retained and housed within the School of Arts and Sciences and that the graduate programs of study in education would be discontinued.

The teacher preparation program is administered jointly by the School of Arts and Sciences (for the undergraduate education program) and the School of Continuing Studies (for the post-baccalaureate program) and offers licensure options in elementary education (preK-6), secondary education (6-12), and comprehensive education (K-12).

Teacher preparation at the University of Richmond is driven by seven principles: 1) the importance of the liberal arts in preparing knowledgeable teachers; 2) the promotion of independent intellectual inquiry and life-long learning among students; 3) the theory of constructivism as the foundation of education; 4) a commitment to reflection, learning, and change; 5) a grounding

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in practical experience; 6) the integration of technology in teaching and learning; and 7) an adherence to the standards and competencies articulated by the Virginia Department of Education.

Claims:

The University of Richmond claims that its graduates: (1) know the subject(s) they will teach; (2) know how to teach and base their instruction on research, best practices, and state standards; and (3) are professional and caring in their interactions with students and families.

The program's three claims and the eight sources of evidence they bring to support these claims align with both TEAC's requirements, the Virginia Standards of Learning, and Virginia's requirements for teacher licensure.

Evidence in support of the claims:

The program offered several sources of evidence in support of graduates' meeting its claims with the following results:

1. Praxis I basic skills test, required for admission to the program, is used as evidence of content knowledge. The program's mean scores exceeded the state's passing score for both the CBT and PPST versions of the test.
2. Praxis II licensure test is used as evidence of content knowledge. For those discipline areas with more than five test takers, the University of Richmond (UR) exceeds the state passing score and the UR median exceeds the national median.
3. GPA in the major for graduates in English secondary (mean = 3.24) and Social Studies secondary (mean = 3.31) and in Spanish comprehensive (mean = 3.57) exceed the program's minimum required 2.7 GPA.
4. GPA in education for graduates in elementary (mean = 3.85), English secondary (mean = 3.71), Social Studies secondary (mean = 3.80), Art comprehensive (mean = 3.69) exceed the program's required 3.0 GPA in education.
5. Grades with a mean between 3.54 and and 4.00 in the technology course (to meet claim 2 and TEAC's technology cross-cutting theme), in the student teaching seminar (to meet claim 3), and in the diversity course (to meet TEAC's multicultural cross-cutting theme) exceed the program expectation of "a grade of C or better."
6. Student teaching evaluations provide evidence for graduate success in meeting all three program claims as well as TEAC's cross-cutting themes of learning to learn and multicultural perspectives. The evaluation form is organized in five areas: planning skills, instruction and management skills, skills in providing the learning environment, evaluation skills, and professional skills. Selected categories in these five areas are used to demonstrate success in meeting the program's claims. Reported mean

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scores from both cooperating teachers and university supervisors range from 2.71 to 3.00 on a 3-point scale.

7. Analysis of student teaching placements reports on 18 student files containing information on student teaching placements with the following results:

	% in racially diverse placements	% in economically diverse placements	% in linguistically diverse placements
Elementary (K-5) 10	50%	60%	60%
Middle Schools (6-8) 5	40%	40%	40%
High Schools (9-12) 6	50%	50%	33%
Total 18	55%	61%	55%

NOTE: some candidates had dual placements.

8. Initial teacher preparation survey for instructional leaders – Although adapted from an instrument created at the University of Florida, 40 of the 45 items relate to the three University of Richmond program claims and TEAC’s cross-cutting themes. (The first five items yield demographic information.) On a 5-point scale (5 = outstanding), University of Richmond graduates scored means ranging from 3.47 to 4.44.

The faculty discussed the validity of its measures in terms of content validity, the established and historical use of the measure, and reliance on the research of others for state-mandated and state and nationally-created instruments. Faculty ran reliability analyses on the program-created student teaching evaluations and program-adapted survey for instructional leaders. The faculty reports positive correlations among measures it investigated that result in some confidence in the evidence presented to support its claims.

Internal audit:

All the full-time program faculty participated in an internal audit of the quality control system by examining the seven elements in TEAC Capacity Standard 4.0. They followed an audit trail by tracking evidence included in the files of 15 current students and 15 graduates from the 2006-07 academic year, in each case five students are from the undergraduate option and 10 are from the post-baccalaureate option; 20 are preparing to become elementary teachers and 10 are preparing in for secondary or comprehensive endorsements. The findings were compiled and the three main authors of the *Inquiry Brief* prepared the final internal audit report for the faculty. The conclusion of the University of Richmond internal audit is that the quality control system generally works as intended, although faculty noted the need to re-establish a

Teacher Advisory Committee, modernize some classrooms, and standardize electronic and paper record-keeping.

Commitment:

In each category of Evidence of Capacity, the faculty reviewed evidence to show that the teacher preparation program and the university as a whole were comparable and that the program has the capacity to provide a quality program of teacher preparation to its candidates. In terms of instructional faculty with terminal degrees, use of part-time faculty, and male/female ratio, the teacher preparation program is not in parity with the institution as a whole. Teacher preparation depends, however, on knowledgeable and experienced practitioners to provide candidates an introduction to the “real-world” of teaching and practitioners are by definition part-time faculty and often do not possess terminal degrees.

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:**

The program includes undergraduate and post-baccalaureate options in elementary (pre-K-6), secondary (6-12), and comprehensive (K-12) education in art, French, German, Latin or Spanish, and Virginia, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program’s graduates.