

**Guidelines, Procedures and Directions**

**For the Comprehensive Portfolio**

**Demonstrating Achievement of Advanced Competencies:**

**A Requirement for the**

**MAEd and MAT in Comprehensive Education**



**College of Education and Allied Professions**

**Western Carolina University**

## **The Master's Comprehensive Portfolio**

### **Definition:**

The Master's Comprehensive Portfolio is an organized set of documents and artifacts illustrating the graduate teacher candidate's growth, as a self-directed, reflective practitioner.

### **Rationale:**

The Master's Comprehensive Portfolio is intended to provide evidence that the candidate has addressed each of the Professional Education Core Themes of the graduate Comprehensive Education program. The portfolio also acknowledges the North Carolina Standards for Graduate Teacher Candidates advanced competencies required for licensure. The Master's Comprehensive Portfolio is a carefully selected, organized set of entries demonstrating achievement of each of the state standards and professional core themes.

### **Professional Education Core Themes:**

WCU's graduate program in Comprehensive Education has identified of the following themes as important to the development of advanced professional education knowledge and skills. These themes were established based on the feedback from school leaders, the expertise of the faculty, and an examination of the North Carolina Standards for Graduate Teacher Candidates. The core themes are: Assessment, Differentiation/Diversity, Leadership and Research. Technology is a theme that is evident in each of the core theme areas.

### **Professional Education Core Theme Goals:**

The goals described below must be addressed in a meaningful way in the Master's Comprehensive Portfolio.

#### Assessment

In the area of assessment, graduate teacher candidates will ...

1. develop effective approaches to assessment, evaluation and diagnosis.
2. use research to assess the teaching/learning environment and inform their practice.
3. evaluate and select appropriate resources and materials to support student learning.
4. communicate with parents, students and other appropriate audiences about assessment policies, plans and outcomes.
5. use technology to collect, analyze, and interpret assessment data

#### Differentiation/Diversity

In the areas of differentiation and diversity graduate teacher candidates will...

1. understand and implement the principles of Universal Design for Learning.
2. meet the needs of diverse learners by differentiating content, activities and assessments.

3. implement culturally responsive curriculum, pedagogy and classroom management practices that model caring and respect.
4. create collaborative partnerships with families, schools, and communities to promote a positive school culture.
5. use technology to differentiate instruction for learners with varied needs.

### Leadership

In the area of leadership graduate teacher candidates will demonstrate an understanding of...

1. how teacher leaders use effective communication, collaboration and team-building to facilitate the development of an inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible educational environment.
2. how teacher leaders use knowledge, skills and dispositions to promote an educational culture that values reflective practice.
3. how to set goals and establish priorities to promote collaborative partnerships with families, schools and communities to positively affect student learning.
4. professional learning communities and how they function within an educational setting.
5. how teacher leaders encourage information literacy through continual professional development.

### Research

In the area of research, graduate teacher candidates will...

1. describe the fundamental assumptions, goals, and practices of educational research.
2. understand and use the research process to adapt instruction and promote student learning.
3. identify commonalities and distinguishing features of various research traditions in education (including non-experimental, experimental, qualitative, program evaluation, and action research).
4. interpret and critique published research in order to inform practice.
5. use current tools to support the research process to bring about applied solutions for educational change.

### **Format and Kinds of Portfolio Entries:**

Portfolio entries can take a variety of forms. None are excluded, but they must be submitted electronically. Printed materials may need to be scanned. Candidates could include digital video or audio clips of teaching or other professional activities; computer software, photographs, drawings or other examples of their learning, such as: lesson plans, teaching materials, photos of student projects, evaluations by supervisors, journal entries, printed programs of student presentations, etc.

### **Source of Portfolio Entries:**

Portfolio entries may come from the candidate's academic and/or professional career. Entries may include course assignments, such as: papers, presentations, projects, etc. from graduate courses. Entries may also include products of activities in the student's

working career. Entries that are not course assignments should come from the same period as graduate study and must relate directly to the core themes.

**Portfolio Product Guidelines:**

1. Candidates should prepare portfolios for presentation with care. Contents should be organized with a table of contents at the beginning.
2. All portfolio entries must be submitted electronically, via the college's assessment management system (TaskStream).
3. The entire portfolio should be viewable in two hours or less including any video or audio files, etc.
4. The names of pupils in classes should be deleted. Candidates are responsible for securing written permission from the school or organization to use materials that may identify students or participants of a program.
5. One entry must be included for each core theme area. Each core theme area must have one specific and unique artifact that addresses that particular theme. At minimum, one artifact must also address the common thread of Technology in the core themes.
6. Each entry should have a one- to two-page introduction from the candidate with the following information.
  - a) Statement of the Core Theme.
  - b) Listing of the Entry for the Core Theme. List the title of each entry and describe its format. For example, "Agricultural Influences of 19<sup>th</sup> Century America – research paper" or "Parent Workshop on Curriculum – video file."
  - c) Statement of How Entries Address the Core Theme. State how the core theme is addressed by the entry. Write only one paragraph for each core theme.
  - d) Strengths of Entries. Include a short paragraph (200 words maximum) stating the strengths of these entries in relation to the core theme. Write only one paragraph for each core theme.
  - e) Weaknesses of Entries. Include a short paragraph (200 words maximum) stating the weaknesses of the entry in relation to the core theme. Write only one paragraph for each core theme. It is not acceptable to state that there are no weaknesses.

**Portfolio Presentation Procedures:**

1. Candidates must present a satisfactory portfolio meeting all core theme areas before graduation requirements are met. The portfolio should be submitted electronically and available to the program faculty no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester of expected graduation and no earlier than completion of 24 semester hours.
2. Portfolios should be presented to the candidate's advisor during the fall or spring semester. *Portfolio submission during the summer session may only occur with prior written approval from the candidate's advisor and major department head by the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the spring semester.* (Faculty are generally not employed during the summer session and thus, may not be available to review portfolios.)

**Final Portfolio Evaluation:**

Final evaluation of a portfolio will involve the following steps:

1. Candidates' portfolios will be viewed and evaluated in the college's assessment management system (TaskStream).
2. Candidates who have completed at least 24 semester hours should submit the portfolio no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the fall or spring semester in order to graduate at the end of that semester. Portfolios may not be accepted for final evaluation during the summer except with prior approval from advisor and/or department head. Candidates completing their programs during the summer should be prepared to submit their portfolio for final evaluation during the last spring semester or wait until the next fall semester. Once an advisor receives notice of portfolio submission, it will be presented to the program's portfolio committee for evaluation.
3. Projects for each core theme are evaluated independently by at least two reviewers. This committee may be comprised of graduate faculty members and/or a practicing public school professional.
4. After all entries for a core theme are reviewed, each reviewer rates the core theme on a scale of 1 – 4. Candidates must achieve a score of 3 (proficient) or more for each core theme.
5. If each core theme receives a passing score by all of the reviewers, the portfolio is formally accepted and the candidate is notified that the portfolio is satisfactory. For any core themes that do not receive a passing score, the candidate is notified of the reviewer's findings and suggestions for remediation are provided. Changes to these portfolio entries should be corrected and the portfolio should be resubmitted for additional review. Any requested changes must be made within one additional regular academic semester.

## **Evaluation Rubric:**

### **1 Developing**

Entry fails to address the core theme, addresses none or few of the elements of the core theme. Entries are not original work; entries are substantially commercial products, reprints from published materials, or clearly the work of others. Core theme contains incomplete entry. Entry is used to address another core theme area. Entry is inaccessible to reviewer.

### **2 Emerging**

Entry only marginally addresses the core theme or addresses less than most of the elements of the core theme. Entry is poor quality; entry contains inaccurate information. Entry is superficial. Entry is sloppy; contains errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Entry fails to meet guidelines. Entry does not include an explanation page with listing of core theme, entry, strengths, and weaknesses. Entry is excessive in length (too many words, takes too long to review, etc).

### **3 Proficient**

Entry clearly addresses most or all elements of the core theme. Entry is graduate level quality; entry contains accurate information. Entry is clearly original work and mostly free of commercial products. The work of others is appropriately cited and does not comprise a major part the entry. The entry is not used for any other core theme. Entry includes an explanation page with listing of core theme, entry, strengths, and weaknesses. Entry is mostly free of errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Entry is clearly identified and easily accessible to reviewer. Time to view entry for the core theme is appropriate and viewing the portfolio does not take more than two hours.

### **4 Accomplished**

Entry comprehensively addresses the standard. Entry is high quality, and contains accurate information and original thinking. Entry demonstrates a significant contribution to the growth of the candidate and to the profession. Entry is varied, original, and appropriate to the core theme. Entry has qualities that go beyond expectations. The entry is not used for any other core theme. Entry includes an explanation page with listing of core theme, entry, strengths, and weaknesses. Entry is free of errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Entry is clearly identified and easily accessible to reviewer. Entry is well-organized and easily accessible to the reviewer. Entries are appropriate in length.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **NC Standards for Graduate Teacher Candidates**

The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission developed teaching standards based on a “new vision of teaching” in light of 21<sup>st</sup> century opportunities, needs and demands. The following five graduate program standards are parallel to and expand upon those standards. These are advanced standards, appropriate for teacher education programs to use as guidelines in developing their graduate level teaching programs.

Teachers granted the advanced license are expected to be teacher leaders in their specialty area, to facilitate the creation of healthy educational environments, to have deep knowledge and skills in their content and curriculum, to use research in making decisions about effective practice for student learning, and to be continuous, reflective practitioners who model the values of lifelong learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and innovation.

#### **Standard One.**

Teacher Leadership: Teacher leaders assume the roles and responsibilities of collaborative leaders in schools and communities. Teachers demonstrate leadership in their classrooms, schools and professional organizations; they advocate for students and effective educational practices and policies; and they are role models for ethical leadership. Teacher leaders will know and be able to:

- Demonstrate effective ongoing communication, collaboration, and team-building among colleagues.
- Facilitate mentoring and coaching with novice teachers.
- Set goals and establish priorities while promoting educational initiatives that positively affect student learning.
- Participate in professional learning communities.

#### **Standard Two.**

Respectful Educational Environments: Teacher leaders model leadership by establishing a positive and productive environment for a diverse population of students, their families, and the community. Teachers are knowledgeable about cultures and global issues and how they are contextualized locally. Teachers help colleagues develop effective strategies for students with special needs. They encourage positive, constructive relations among colleagues and students. Teacher leaders:

- Facilitate the development of inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible educational communities.
- Create collaborative partnerships with families, schools, and communities to promote a positive school culture.
- Facilitate and model caring and respectful treatment of individuals within the learning community.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of diverse world cultures and global issues.
- Encourage high expectations for all students.

- Collaboratively design and implement curriculum and instruction that is responsive to learner differences.

### **Standard Three.**

Content and Curriculum Expertise: Teacher leaders have a deep knowledge of the subjects they teach and understanding of curriculum theory and development. They value collaboration and the interconnectedness of disciplines. They understand the importance of curriculum relevance in engaging students in content. Teacher leaders:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Model the integration of 21<sup>st</sup> century content and skills into educational practices.
- Develop relevant, rigorous curriculum.

### **Standard Four.**

Student Learning: Teacher leaders facilitate student learning through evidence-based practice informed by research. They understand and apply research in child and adolescent development, cognitive development, and general and specialized pedagogy. They encourage critical reading, writing and thinking in the learning process. They foster instructional and evaluation methods that embrace variety and authenticity. They promote student reflection and self-assessment. They encourage colleagues and students to take on leadership roles and work in teams. Teacher leaders:

- Seek out and use existing research to inform school practices.
- Design action research to investigate and improve student learning and school policies and practices.
- Model technology integration that supports student learning.
- Critically analyze student and school performance data to determine needs and plan instruction that is rigorous, coherent, and substantiated within a theoretical and philosophical base.

### **Standard Five.**

Reflection: Teacher leaders contribute to systematic, critical analysis of learning in their classrooms and beyond. They are lifelong learners who model and support ongoing professional development. Teachers embrace critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation. Teacher leaders:

- Promote an educational culture that values reflective practice.
- Model the development of meaningful professional goals.
- Model personal and professional reflection to extend student learning and school improvement.