

EPP ADEPT Program Evaluation and Assurances Initial Teacher Preparation 2024-2025

Please note:

A separate Program Evaluation and Assurances plan is required for *each* Program Type offered at the below-named EPP. (This is not a change in requirements.) You can find the templates for these plans inside SCLead.org or online here: <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/educator-effectiveness/educationpreparation-providers-epps/adept-plan-templates/>

Upload the completed Program Evaluation and Assurances in your EPP portal on [scllead.org](https://ed.sc.gov/educators/educator-effectiveness/educationpreparation-providers-epps/adept-plan-templates/). The deadline for submission is *July 1, 2024*.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP)	<u>University of South. Carolina -Aiken</u>
Date of submission of ADEPT report/plan	<u>6/26/2024</u>
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The above-named educator preparation program (EPP) submits the following assurances in compliance with the ADEPT-related requirements specified in State Statute (§§ 59-26-30 and 59-26-40 of the SC Code of Laws); State Board of Education Regulation 43-205.1; and the State Board of Education-approved ADEPT Guidelines.

The current South Carolina ADEPT Support and Evaluation System Guidelines are available online at [Education Professions Committee Synopsis Expanded Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching Support and Evaluation System Guidelines for Classroom-based Teachers](#)

The current Policy Guidelines for South Carolina Educator Preparation Units are available online at [Education Professions Committee Attachment for South Carolina Educator Preparation Guidelines](#)

SECTION I: Statement of Assurances

By submitting this assurances form, and unless otherwise noted, the EPP agrees to implement the ADEPT requirements listed below. Additionally, the EPP agrees to maintain supporting documentation verifying that the institution has met these requirements and to make this documentation available at the request of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) or during an onsite visit.

- **Assurance #1: SCTS 4.0 Domains.** The EPP will integrate the SCTS 4.0 Domains throughout each candidate's course work, field experiences, and clinical practice so that candidates understand and are able to apply these standards.
- **Assurance #2: Clinical Practice (Student Teaching).** Prior to the beginning of the clinical practice—the capstone ADEPT experience—the EPP will provide candidates with a comprehensive orientation to the practicum so that the candidates understand what they have to do in order to achieve success. At a minimum, the orientation will include both oral and written explanations of the assistance and evaluation processes, the ADEPT-related expectations, the *Standards of Conduct for South Carolina Educators*, and the EPP's requirements for successful completion of the clinical practice. Additionally, the EPP will design and implement the clinical practice according to all applicable policy guidelines to ensure that candidates receive full opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- **Assurance #3: Supervision of Candidates.** The EPP will provide candidates with effective guidance and support during the clinical practice. The EPP ensures that each candidate is supervised (1) by one or more EPP clinical faculty members who have preparation both in the supervision of education and in the candidate's teaching major and who are ADEPT trained (2) by one or more school-based clinical faculty (cooperating teachers), each of whom is ADEPT trained. All EPP supervisors and cooperating teachers will hold certification as an ADEPT evaluator or trainer, or they will have successfully completed an ADEPT seminar that follows the SCDE-recommended structure and format. Additionally, the EPP will provide all supervisors and cooperating teachers with training related to the institution's requirements and procedures for evaluating and supporting candidates.
- **Assurance #4: Feedback to Candidates.** The EPP will ensure that, throughout the clinical experience, supervisors provide each candidate with accurate, appropriate, and ongoing formative feedback that enables the candidate to improve his or her teaching performance and effectiveness. Additionally, the EPP will assign ratings and grades aligned with the EPP's stated policies and that truly represent the quality of each candidate's teaching performance and effectiveness.

- **Assurance #5: Continuous ADEPT Program Improvement.** The EPP will gather **qualitative and quantitative** data to determine the impact of the program on the teaching performance and effectiveness of the institution's candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains and will use these data to guide future program planning.

SECTION II: EPP ADEPT Program Evaluation and Improvement

By submitting this program evaluation and improvement plan, and unless otherwise noted, the EPP agrees to maintain supporting documentation verifying that the institution has gathered **qualitative and quantitative data** on the effectiveness of its ADEPT Program implementation and to make this documentation available at the request of the SCDE or during an onsite visit.

Instructions to the EPP: Please respond to each of the following questions.

1. **Based on 2023-24 qualitative and quantitative data, what are the EPP's strengths in terms of promoting the teaching performance and effectiveness of its candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains? *In this response, please indicate how faculty and staff identified these particular strengths. Attach any supporting data.***

Upon review and analysis of the AY2023-24 SCTS 4.0 data (Tables 1 and 2), our EPP found that USC Aiken teacher candidates are strongest in the domains of *Professionalism* and *Learning Environment*. Across the academic year, the candidates scored highest in the two domains overall (average of 3.40/4 in *Environment* and 3.41/4.0 for *Professionalism*), as well as the highest average score for a number of individual programs. This data is consistent with the prior 5 years of data that demonstrated *Professionalism and Learning Environment* as our candidates' area of strength. The data also reflects the employer survey data (Spring 2023; N=9) where administrators found our 1-3rd year graduates' strengths were in professionalism (lifelong learner and preparedness) and learning environment (content knowledge and pedagogy). Additionally, the SLO AY 2023-24 data (Tables 3-5) indicated that our candidates have met in all of the ADEPT domains, as the candidates averaged 2.28-2.32/3.0 in student population, historical trend data, and alignment of standards. Further, certain program earned perfect or near perfect scores. In the fall 2023 semester, the Special Education Aiken (N=1) and the secondary candidates (N=3) earned 3.0 scores on all SLO indicators. In the spring 2024 semester, the Aiken campus Elementary candidates (N=5) earned 2.67/ 3 and all Elementary candidates (N=11) scored 2.55/3.0 in all areas, the highest amount of program area candidates and scores for the Spring Semester. Clearly our completers demonstrate strengths across all four SCTS 4.0 domains (Instruction, Planning, Environment, and Professionalism). Candidates and programs met or exceeded targets in all domains.

2. **Based on 2023-24 qualitative and quantitative data, what are the areas of growth in terms of promoting the teaching performance and effectiveness of its candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains? List any changes the EPP plans to make in order to address those areas of needed growth. *In this response, please indicate how faculty and staff determined the need for these changes. Attach any supporting data.***

Areas for growth on the Rubric 4.0 student teaching evaluation were in *Instruction* and *Planning* but still fell above target scores of 3.0. In the spring of 2024, secondary (N= 3) and fall 2023 middle level candidates (N=1) fell below the target of 3 in professionalism, instruction or planning. We updated and revised the practicum CT lesson observation form and integrated the 4.0 formative observation forms for all practicum/methods course instructors. Further, we revised the Lesson Plan template and requirements to focus on more intentionally planning and implementation of lesson(s) with differentiation for diverse learners.

At the fall 2023 retreat, our SoE faculty analyzed our SCTS 4.0 and SLO data to re-assess our 2022-23 programs and revise our 2023-24 program area and EPP-wide goals. The EPP faculty meets each semester to review program and EPP-wide assessment data. In reviewing this data, we determine if changes need to be made in the content delivery, practicum experiences, or ways of collecting assessment data. For example, the elementary program has revised existing (SS Unit Plan and Diversity and the Arts Project) and created new assessments (Equity Issue Project, Science of Reading Intervention, and TDA Unit Plan) to meet the SCEE Standards and to better prepare elementary students to teach diverse elementary students. We then set goals for program and EPP improvements. At each semester retreat, we also review previous goals that have been made so that we are engaged in a continuous cycle of program improvement.

The teaching evaluations, Expanded ADEPT (Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching) system using South Carolina Teaching Standards (SCTS) 4.0 Rubric instrument, as well as the Assessment Case Study, Child Study, HIP projects, Equity Issue projects, Service-Learning Mentoring Project, and Adolescent Advocacy Project provide a comprehensive approach to examining candidates’ professionalism and pedagogy. The Student Learning Objective (SLO) project, Lesson Plan, and Assessment Case Study emphasize to our candidates the importance of the combination of planning, teaching, and assessing student achievement. We have increased the emphasis on using formative assessments to guide instruction throughout all programs. We have provided students increased opportunities for interactive classroom experiences through a tightly focused equity projects in practicum school contexts.

3. What changes has the EPP made in preparation and partnerships with neighboring districts for using Expanded ADEPT and the SCTS 4.0?

We conduct 4.0 CT trainings for our practicum and internship CT’s. We continue to forge strong professional development school partnerships to ensure that our candidates transition from pre-service to highly qualified practicing teachers using the SCTS 4.0 and expanded ADEPT evaluation system. Three **new** PDS partnerships were developed over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years in the elementary program. The new PDS partnerships with Warrentonville Elementary School and East Aiken School of the Arts in Aiken has been focused on intervention work, research, and training to improve Tier III student learning growth in reading and math. The PDS partnership with Alice Drive Elementary in Sumter has a STEM focus of USCA teacher candidates.

Table 1. Fall 2023 SCTS 4.0 Data

N = 18	Instruction	Planning	Environment	Professionalism	Composite Mean
Fall 2023					

ECE AIKEN N=6	3.28	3.33	3.58	3.63	3.46
ECE SUMTER N=0					
ECE ALL (N=6)	3.28	3.33	3.58	3.63	3.46
Elem Aiken N=4	3.23	3.25	3.38	3.38	3.31
Elem Salk N=0					
Elem Sumter N=2	3.0	3.29	3.44	3.44	3.33
Elem All (N=6)	3.15	3.26	3.4	3.4	3.32
Middle Level (N=1)I	3.0	3.0	2.75	3.0	2.94
Secondary (N=3)	3.75	3.67	3.92	3.77	3.78
Special Ed. Aiken (N=1)	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.33
Special Ed (PC)	3.67	3.67	4.0	4.0	3.83

(N=1)					
Special Ed. (All) N=1	3.59	3.33	3.75	3.67	3.58
Aiken	3.34	3.26	3.43	3.42	3.35
All Campuses	3.33	3.24	3.41	3.40	3.34

Table 2. Spring 2024 SCTS 4.0 Data

N = 31	Instruction	Planning	Environment	Professionalism	Composite Mean
Spring 2024					
ECE AIKEN (N=8)	3.55	3.65	3.70	3.85	3.69
ECE SUMTER (N=2)	3.29	3.08	3.44	3.5	3.33
ECE ALL (N=10)	3.5	3.53	3.65	3.78	3.62
Elem Aiken (N=6)	3.33	3.19	3.33	3.65	3.38
Elem Salk					
Elem Sumter	3.12	3.11	3.15	3.2	3.19

(N=5)					
Elem All (N=11)	3.23	3.11	3.25	3.45	3.26
Middle Level (N=3)	3.29	3.52	3.63	3.6	3.37
Secondary (N=3)	2.92	3.0	3.65	2.93	2.93
Music Ed (N=10)					
Special Ed. Aiken (N=0)					
Special Ed (PC) (N=4)	3.55	3.0	3.63	3.61	3.57
Special Ed. (All) N=2	3.55	3.0	3.63	3.61	3.57
Aiken	3.23	3.22	3.40	3.42	3.32
All Campuses	3.22	3.21	3.39	3.39	3.30

<i>High average score = >3.5 – 4.0</i>
<i>Median average score = 3.0 – 3.49</i>
<i>Low average score = <3.0</i>

Table 3.

[illegible]

N=6										
Middle Level N=1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Secondary N=3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Special Education Aiken N=1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Special Education PC N=1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Special Ed All Campuses N=2	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Averages Aiken	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33
Averages All Campuses	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28

Table 4.

[illegible]

High average score =>2.5	Met Average score => >2.26< 2.5	Average score =>>2.0< 2.25
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SECTION III: EPP’s Expanded ADEPT Program Documentation

By submitting this chart of data supporting the EPP’s implementation of the SCTS 4.0, and unless otherwise noted, the EPP agrees to make this documentation available at the request of the SCDE or during an onsite visit. *These documents may include specific course syllabi, agendas, candidate handbooks, cooperating teacher handbooks, program evaluations, etc.*

<i>SCTS Domain</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>Introduced</i>	<i>Reinforced</i>	<i>Mastered</i>	<i>Evidence Provided</i>	<i>Change from 2023-24?</i>
<i>Instruction</i>		<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Planning</i>		<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Environment</i>		<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Professionalism</i>		<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>

SECTION IV: EPP Feedback

1. What additional training and/or resources would best support the EPP’s implementation of SCTS 4.0 in a way that best prepares candidates for the classrooms they face upon graduation?

Continue offering TOT and CT 4.0 training.

2. For the 2022-23 academic year, NIET revised the Environment Domain of the South Carolina Teaching Standards based on their research to update some of the indicators and descriptors to better reflect an emphasis on student engagement, safe and positive environment, and equitable access to learning. Implementation of these revisions was required for districts in the 2021-2022 AY, and for EPPs in the 2022-2023 AY. Your responses to these questions inform how we can best assist and support you and the pipeline after your integration of the revised Environment domain.
 - What have been your successes in recruiting underrepresented teacher candidates (men for elementary, candidates of color)? What obstacles have you encountered?

Table 6. Historical Enrollment Data

Historical Data- Enrollment Across Programs (Completers)							
Demographics (Self-Identified)	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-23
Female	49	47	59	49	59	49	56
Male	6	3	10	6	11	6	7
African American	8	6	9	8	14	8	4
Asian	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	2	0	1	0	1	2	2
Mixed Race	0	0	3	1	1	0	0
White/Caucasian	43	43	52	44	51	41	56
Other	2	0	4	2	2	4	0
Total candidates	55	50	69	55	70	55	63

Of note, the data indicate that the last six academic years have shown an upward trend in the enrollment number of diverse candidates admitted into the professional program. From fall 2017 through spring 2023, the ethnic and racial diversity of the EPP candidates averaged 20.4% (AY 2017-18: 6% male and 14% diverse candidates; AY 2018-19: 15% male and 25% diverse candidates; AY 2019-20: 11% male and 22% diverse candidates; AY 2020-21: 16% male and 23% diverse candidates; AY2021-22: 8% male and 18% diverse candidates; AY2022-23: 12.5% male and 18% diverse candidates). At the program level, from fall 2017-spring

2023 diversity percentage trends ranged from 18-25% for all programs. Of particular note is the EPP's recruitment of male and diverse candidates. To further improve male and diverse candidate enrollment, the EPP collaborated with Aiken County Public Schools, Aiken Technical College and the Call Me Mister scholarship program. The first Call Me Mister cohort was admitted in the 2019-20 academic year at USCA. The EPP also focuses on the critical needs areas in South Carolina including special education, Secondary (science and math) and middle level (all content areas). Further, the EPP's Aiken Scholars program recruits high school students identified as gifted in STEM areas. The students engage in advanced high school classwork and undergraduate level STEM courses at USCA. The EPP also has a well-established Teaching Fellows program that recruits the highest caliber of high school seniors who are interested in entering the field of education. Throughout the professional program, EPP candidates' dispositions are tracked and monitored for growth. An EPP-wide diversity focus has allowed more proactive and effective mentoring of candidates. Over the past three years, a phenomenon has occurred at our institution that was marked by an increase in the number of first-generation college students. While we value all these dimensions of diversity, our recruitment and retention plan is focused for now on setting benchmarks related to gender and race. Using this criteria, our goal is to continue increase the number of diverse, highly qualified teacher candidates across all programs.

3. How has your program addressed CAEP and state standards reflecting culturally responsive teaching and cultural diversity in your recruitment practices? How does your program address culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices?

Data continues to show that our candidates are teaching more diverse populations with a variety of needs. In AY 2022-23, there was implementation of equity assessments across programs. All teacher candidates can support their students' interests, identities, and learning through caring that is grounded in knowledge and understanding of their communities (Kiefer & Ellerbrock, 2012; Williams, 2018). Early Childhood candidates complete child and family study projects and in Special Education, candidates develop high impact practices (HIP) projects designed to support the families of exceptional students. In the elementary program, the Equity Issue Project allows students the opportunity to research building the connection between home and school with diverse students' families. Candidates create plans of action and professional development that foster an inclusive, equitable, and anti-bias education. Data continues to inform our instruction as we monitor candidates' diversity and the arts project work to ensure that they are inclusive & equitable for all students. In the Middle Level and Secondary programs, grade 7-12 teacher candidates demonstrate their knowledge that diversity has implications for the development of adolescents. They are responsive to adolescents' individual experiences and identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, language/dialect, gender, culture, age, appearance, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family composition). Middle level and secondary teacher candidates successfully model practices that affirm the diversity of all young adolescents. These candidates plan and teach to support young adolescents in specific contexts, they can draw on students' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and engage in culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris, 2012). All programs made a significant change to our lesson plan assignment. For example, our previous lesson plan included diversity, differentiation, accommodations, and modifications — but all were combined in the same category. We now have a separate category called "Culture and Diversity" which explicitly requires students to align their lesson to adolescent interests and cultural heritage. Candidates learn how to make accommodations and differentiate instruction to challenge and support students from

diverse backgrounds and abilities. Based on the data, we recently made some changes to the course content to address learners' individual differences, identities, and funds of knowledge. We now introduce culturally responsive teaching, ant-racist/anti-bias language, and pedagogical strategies to specifically support English Language Learners.

All EPP Candidates are expected to facilitate the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students as follows: understand other cultures and their impact on student learning; understand and use various teaching strategies to accommodate diverse populations of students; is respectful, compassionate, and free of bias when working with students from diverse backgrounds (demonstrates cultural competency). All EPP candidates engage in critical reflection and discourse about culture, pedagogy, and classroom practice in a series of three diversity workshops focused on anti-bias education practices and cultural competency for preservice teachers. All teacher candidates are also required to take diversity courses in their primary program of study. In addition, all EPP student teacher interns participate in a required Diversity Conference and complete reflection papers as an internship requirement. The data from academic years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 indicate a 100% passing score on all interns' diversity reflection papers. In addition, in AY 2021-22, the SoE offered a diversity conference on the USC Aiken campus for all USC Aiken interns. Presentation and workshop themes included: trauma-informed teaching, strategies for teaching ELL's, working with students in poverty, and culturally responsive instruction for diverse learners. Employers have also expressed that EPP completers are well-prepared to teach diverse populations. Further, the EPP Lesson Plan was revised to ensure candidates can design lessons that meet the needs of all children. All EPP candidates are also placed in diverse field and clinical experiences as preparation for becoming culturally competent educators who positively impact diverse P-12 students. Diversity is met by showing a range of differences in at least three of the five identified categories of gender, ethnicity/race, socioeconomic status, academic exceptionalities (SPED and GT), and language diversity (ELL). Candidates participate in a variety of field experiences throughout our program in both rural and suburban placements as part of their preparation. USC Aiken's teacher education programs require field experiences that provide a variety of progressive experiences in multiple settings. Field and clinical experiences are planned through our collaboration with our school and district partners. Aiken County Public School District (ACPSD) has had an increasing ELL population over the last 5 years and now exceeds the state average with over 9% of their total population considered ELLs (ACPSD ESOL Department personal communication). On numerous occasions over the last few years, the EPP has discussed incorporating

more culturally relevant pedagogy for ELL's and children of poverty. It remains a growing need but with the current mandated requirements from the University, state and national levels, we are still trying to determine a path forward. The EPP offers ESOL endorsement classes at the graduate level every semester to school districts around the state. ACPSD has a high concentration of Title I schools in the county. Thirty-one of forty-two Elementary schools (74%) are categorized as Title I schools. This is where the majority of EPP candidates are placement for field experiences. The USC Aiken School of Education continues striving to meet its diversity goals for teacher candidates (understanding different cultures and teaching impact, differentiating instruction for P-12 diverse students, and cultural competency). Through the ongoing continuous improvement efforts in diversity, the EPP acknowledges its strengths and challenges in this area. Culturally responsive instruction and critical multicultural education will continue to be an area of focus for our EPP.

Include any additional feedback about your EPP's ADEPT program in the space below.

Two areas of focus for the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) School of Education (SoE) continuous improvement efforts in academic year (AY) 2023-24 were serving P-12 diverse students and their families and student research projects and presentations. Applying research to practice is another integral part of our teacher education programs. Our elementary candidates develop action-research projects in their practicum contexts and present at the COPLAC – SEURSCA Conference each spring. Each year middle level and secondary education candidates engage in research and professional development. Our teacher candidates routinely present at state-level conferences (e.g., SC Council of Teachers of Mathematics (SCCTM), South Carolina Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE), and the SC Association for Middle Level Education (SCAMLE)). For the past two years, candidates in Math Methods (EDSE A450) have co-authored published state-level peer-reviewed journal articles with the instructor. Each year special education majors engage in research and professional development. Our teacher candidates routinely present at state-level conferences (e.g., SCATE, ATE, CEC) and provide professional development to local school districts. During AY 2022-23, three of our special education candidates earned the Magellan Scholar Research award in which they administrated a pre- and post-survey to special area (e.g., art, PE) teachers in a local district about how those teachers implement inclusive strategies. They created an intervention (professional development) based on the pre-assessment results. Additionally, our Aiken teacher candidates present at Scholar Showcase, an annual poster session of research conducted by USC Aiken students. In addition, 2 graduate students in our M.Ed. programs presented at the DiscoverUSC Conference and multiple M.Ed. candidates have presented their equity issue projects at regional and national conferences with faculty of the M.Ed. program. Finally, our Call Me Mister (CMM) male teacher Elementary, Early Childhood, Middle Level, and Secondary candidates of color presented at the Fall 2022 South Carolina Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE) and the Spring 2023 Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) conferences (state and national).

