

Survey of Completers (2014-15)

Aligns with CAEP 4.4, 5.3, cross cutting theme of technology

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In Fall 2016, 172 graduates from 2014-15 were contacted to complete the survey. Of those contacted, 25 emails were returned, resulting in 147 usable emails. Of these, 32 responded (22% response rate). The VDoE list provided in June 2016 was used as the basis of the contact list.

Areas of weakness

The areas in which JMU graduates felt least prepared, as indicated by less than half of the respondents indicating agreement, were participating on an IEP team (~44% felt prepared), and teaching students with limited English Proficiency (~34% felt prepared). Comments reinforced this and also mentioned that JMU's instruction on teaching reading had not adequately prepared some candidates for the classroom.

Areas of Strength

Graduates of JMU teacher education programs felt most prepared to: teach in rural schools (88% felt prepared to do so), teach in urban schools (~59%), and provide instruction to students from low-income families (~78%). The quality of professors was cited as a program strength.

As new teachers, JMU graduates felt prepared to demonstrate professionalism, and have a positive impact on student learning through effective teaching. These competencies align with Virginia's Teacher Performance Standards, on which they are evaluated in service. Some candidates indicated that they felt prepared to utilize technology in the classroom, while others indicated they did not feel prepared.

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1. Your feedback is valuable and needed in order for us to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We would like to get in touch with you during the first three years following program completion to meet the requirements of the Virginia Department of Education and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). It would be very valuable if you could provide us with reliable contact information so that we may communicate with you through email or traditional mail.

32 responses

To preserve the privacy of our respondents, contact information has been omitted for this report.

2. As a result of my JMU preparation in professional education, as a teacher I was prepared to ...

Question	Strongly Disagree %	n	Disagree %	n	Neither Agree nor Disagree %	n	Agree %	n	Strongly Agree %	n	Don't Know/ Not Applicable %	n	Total
... teach students with disabilities effectively.	0%	0	31.25%	10	15.6%	5	37.5%	12	15.6%	5	0%	0	32
... participate as a member of individualized education program (IEP) teams.	0%	0	37.5%	12	18.8%	6	28.1%	9	15.6%	5	0%	0	32
... effectively teach students who are limited in English proficiency.	0%	0	50.0%	16	12.5%	4	25.0%	8	9.4%	3	3.1%	1	32
... provide instruction to students from low-income families.	3.1%	1	0%	0	18.8%	6	40.6%	13	37.5%	12	0%	0	32
... effectively teach in urban schools.	6.3%	2	6.3%	2	18.8%	6	31.3%	10	28.1%	9	9.4%	3	32
... effectively teach in rural schools.	0%	0	3.13%	1	3.1%	1	37.5%	12	50.0%	16	6.3%	2	32

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3. Please use this space to elaborate on any of your above answers, if you wish. (Responses have been grouped by topic)

Limited English Proficiency:

It's based on the location of JMU- more rural than urban. More low income and ELL {...}, especially in my placements in Rockingham County and Staunton City.

I felt really prepared coming into my first and second years of teaching. I have been told many times by my administrators that I was well prepared and am an effective teacher because of my college preparation. I do feel as if I am lacking in my abilities to teach ESL students, however.

I was in the ELED program, and did not take any courses directed toward students with {...} ELL students. However, [...] I also had a student who moved to the country and spoke no English when he entered my classroom.

Special Education / IEPs:

As an undergraduate and graduate student, I was never required to take a class on teaching students with disabilities, therefore I had minimal experience teaching students who had IEPs, 504s, etc. I learned most of this through teaching itself.

I was in the ELED program, and did not take any courses directed toward students with disabilities [...]. However, I have had students identified with disabilities while in my room and it would have been nice to be better equipped to help them [...]

It's based on the location of JMU- more rural than urban. More [...] SPED, especially in my placements in Rockingham County and Staunton City.

4. As a new teacher, to what extent were you prepared to do the following? (Note: These questions align with the 7 Virginia Teacher Performance Standards.)

Question	Never / Rarely %	n	Sometimes %	n	Often / Always %	n	Total
Provide relevant learning experiences for your students	0%	0	12.5%	4	87.5%	28	32
Develop instructional planning to meet the needs of all students	0%	0	28.1%	9	71.9%	23	32
Use a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs	0%	0	9.4%	3	90.6%	29	32
Utilize relevant student data to measure student progress and guide instruction	0%	0	25.0%	8	75.0%	24	32
Provide a positive student-centered environment that is conducive to learning	0%	0	9.4%	3	90.6%	29	32
Demonstrate professionalism	0%	0	0%	0	100%	32	32

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Have a positive impact on student learning through effective teaching	0%	0	3.1%	1	96.9%	31	32
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5. Please use this space to elaborate on any of your above answers, if you wish.

Instructional planning to meet ALL learners goes hand in hand with not having a lot of ELL/SPED experience. The data monitoring is way more magnified in the school I work in now compared to my field placements.

6. As a new teacher, to what extent were you prepared to do the following?

Question	Never / Rarely %	<i>n</i>	Sometimes %	<i>n</i>	Often %	<i>n</i>	Total
Integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction	0%	0	18.8%	6	81.3%	26	32
Use technology effectively to collect data to improve teaching and learning	3.1%	1	31.3%	10	65.6%	21	32
Use technology effectively to manage data to improve teaching and learning	3.1%	1	34.4%	11	62.5%	20	32
Use technology effectively to analyze data to improve teaching and learning	6.3%	2	34.4%	11	59.4%	19	32

7. Please use this space to elaborate on any of your above answers, if you wish.

I definitely felt tech savvy as a JMU grad. It's the way of our generation, so it was easy to use it in my instruction.

JMU's program gave me A TON of resources that I utilize daily in my classes. My school has one-to-one computers, which has been great for all the websites we learned about in the technology course.

I do not feel as if we did a whole lot with technology other than learn how to make a blog or create a SMARTBoard lesson.

I feel we did not need to learn to use technology in the program.

The school I am working at currently trained me on how to use google drive, Interactive Achievement, Power School, etc.

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8. Is there anything that made it difficult to complete your teacher education program?

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
Yes	19.4%	6
No	80.7%	25
Total	100%	31

8a. If you answered YES to the above question, please explain:

The music education program is essentially 1.5 degrees-a degree in music performance and the half a degree in education. This made it almost impossible to complete all my course work in 7 semesters and then student teach and graduate in 4 years. I took an average of 12 classes a semester and I know some of my classmates took more. This is crazy. The program needs to be made into a 5 year program similar to the elementary ed major. If another semester was added, I could have taken more elective classes in classroom management, teaching ELL students and explored the many other course options JMU offered. Instead I only took one class outside of my course requirements during my 4 years at JMU.

Personal factors

Completing the Teacher Work Sample and Student Teaching at the same time

I had one professor who told me that they didn't believe I was cut out to be a teacher - this was an incredibly hurtful and was told to me in a very unprofessional and nonconstructive manner. If JMU is promoting teachers to create a positive environment in classrooms, ALL the professors need to set this type of example and be on-board with the positivism movement. There is a way to tell people how to improve in their field, and the method utilized was NOT helpful nor inspiring. During this time in education, uplifting and nurturing new teachers is so incredibly important. We are few and proud of who we are and who we aspire to be, and by tearing me down after working so hard at not only on my content, but also my lesson plans, was so discouraging. I am so happy I decided to finish the program after talking to my geology professors about the situation - I am now teaching in the 7th ranked school in Virginia and very proud to be a Wildcat! I really hope that someone actually reads this feedback and I hope this situation has not happened to anyone else since I graduated.

Student teaching while also completing the TWS seriously burnt me out... which is not great before even beginning one's career. I almost decided not to go into the field because of the overwhelming experience. Fortunately I found a school I felt compelled to teach at and have grown significantly since then. That said, I think my student teaching experience would have been more valuable and worthwhile if I could have focused on that full time job without also trying to go to class, plan, and write a TWS simultaneously.

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9. If there is anything you'd like to tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of our programs, please do so in the space below.

Program Feedback

Dr. Doubet is an AMAZING professor. I utilize the strategies I learned in her class almost daily. I really enjoyed the summer program and having the hands-on experience in student teaching away from Harrisonburg. In general, the professors in this program are very knowledgeable. As a science teacher, I wish that the program had a little more differentiation for the sciences. I felt a lot of the methods focused on in my classes were for history or english - while I realize that the majority of my colleagues were in those fields, it would have been nice to have a couple more methods I could utilize in my classroom.

STRENGTHS: getting experience in planning thorough lessons and backwards planning units; creating a welcoming learning environment; integrating technology; teaching low income students; saving student teaching for grad school since we are more focused

I feel like JMU was the best school to prepare me for teaching in the classroom, and probably a reason that I found a job in Virginia Beach the summer after graduating.

A classroom management course would have been helpful.

JMU strongly prepared me to teach in Northern Virginia, or anywhere else. They have a great reputation for creating teachers that are well-prepared for any challenges that show up in their classroom and especially good at helping us understand how to create an environment that is the most conducive to learning. JMU's elementary education program is fantastic!

I think a significant amount of the skills necessary to be a successful teacher can only be acquired in the classroom. I enjoyed my coursework at JMU tremendously, and think it helped me become a successful teacher, but I wish I had not been required to take quite as many classes and instead had additional experience in classrooms. I was a Music Education Major, for reference.

I loved my experience at JMU and feel it prepared me adequately. I think I could have been better prepared if there had been more of a "student teaching" type of experience early on in the program. So much of the program seemed irrelevant at the time because I had not ever truly been in the classroom. And what I'm suggesting is not more practicum time, I mean a chance to really go all in and experience the difficulties of teaching early. That would make the program so much more beneficial and authentic.

The professors are amazing. Practica experiences are extremely valuable.

Strengths - all of the professors were great Weaknesses - Limited options on what kinds of courses that we could take; too many courses taught by adjunct professors

Reading

I would recommend if possible using the book Guided Reading Strategies by Jan Richardson as a book in the Elementary Education reading classes. I have had to read it for professional development in my county this year. It is so helpful in writing small group reading plans and feel it would be a great book to read before teaching.

Also, more instruction on how to teach reading. That is the area I feel as though I was most unprepared for.

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WEAKNESSES: I felt least prepared to teach Reading & Writing. Our counties (and many in NOVA) use the Lucy Calkins curriculum, so having some familiarity with different curriculum that are out there as well as the different assessments (PALs, DRA, Running Records, Jan Richardson, Words their Way, Kathy Ganske, etc) for reading and writing would have been helpful

I did not feel prepared to instruct guided reading lessons. I learned how to successfully run a literature circle, however this is just one of many methods used to instruct reading groups. It is now my third year of teaching and I finally feel like I have a good understanding of what I need to do to be a responsive teacher during guided reading time. I give this credit to Jan Richardson and her book The Next Steps in Guided Reading. The reading instruction is my biggest qualm about JMU's educational program.

Special Needs

I feel like I could have been better served by having some exposure to the Special Education courses and ELL courses, as I struggled initially to help those students in my 1st and 2nd years in the classroom.

Please provide teachers more experiences with students with disabilities. Allow teachers to IMPLEMENT their plans for differentiation within their practicum placements and continue to give students new and innovative ways to differentiate.

Technology

It might be helpful to provide more instruction on technology in the classroom. With the digital conversion going on in Rockingham County, a class or some lessons on how to integrate technology into the classroom would have been very helpful and good to mention in interviews.

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10. Would you be willing to host current JMU students for a visit, or to return to campus to share your experiences as an educator?

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
Yes	84.38%	27
No	15.63%	5
Total	100%	32

Questionnaire for the Analysis of Key Assessments (QAKA)

Please use this questionnaire to evaluate your survey. The questions are based on the CAEP Assessment Rubric.

1. ADMINISTRATION AND PURPOSE (informs relevancy)

- The point or points when the assessment is administered during the preparation program are explicit
- The purpose of the assessment and its use in candidate monitoring or decisions on progression are specified and appropriate
- Evaluation categories or assessment tasks are tagged to CAEP, InTASC or state standards.

This survey is administered following completer employment. Each summer the EPP receives a file from the Virginia Department of Education of newly licensed teachers for the previous academic year that lists the completer by name, endorsement(s), employing school division and assigned school. Email addresses are not included on this list. Due to the timing, the list is of completers who graduated and received their license from Virginia the previous summer. During their second or third year of employment, the EPP locates an email address for each completer on the list.

The data from the instrument is used to provide feedback on completer satisfaction to the EPP and, depending on responses, to individual licensure program. The EPP considers the feedback when determining candidate admission and retention requirements as well as the review and revision of curricular offerings and clinical experiences.

The survey items are aligned to Virginia's 7 teacher performance standards.

2. INFORMING CANDIDATES (informs fairness and reliability)

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- The candidates who are being assessed are given a description of the assessment’s purpose
- Instructions provided to candidates about what they are expected to do are informative and unambiguous
- The basis for judgment (criterion for success, or what is “good enough”) is made explicit for candidates

The first sentence of the survey provides the survey recipient information regarding the purpose of the instrument and asks for continued participation: *“Your feedback is valuable and needed in order for us to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We would like to get in touch with you during the first three years following program completion to meet the requirements of the Virginia Department of Education and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). It would be very valuable if you could provide us with reliable contact information so that we may communicate with you through email or traditional mail.”*

Survey questions ask candidates for their perception of their preparation in areas related to working with students with disabilities and ESL, differentiation, use of technology and preparedness for the 7 Virginia Teacher Performance Standards that are used to evaluate all new teachers. They are encouraged to answer honestly because the survey responses are anonymous and the nature of the questions do not require any correct answers.

6.a. SURVEY CONTENT

- Questions or topics are explicitly aligned with aspects of the EPP’s mission and also CAEP, InTASC or state standards
- Questions have a single subject; language is unambiguous
- Leading questions are avoided
- Items are stated in terms of behaviors or practices instead of opinions, whenever possible
- Surveys of dispositions make clear to candidates how the survey is related to effective teaching

Survey items were aligned to the behaviors and practices described in seven standards contained in the Virginia Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers as well as items in the Title II report. Each question is clear, singular and stated in objective terms.

6.b DATA QUALITY

- An even number of scaled choices helps prevent neutral (center) responses
- Scaled choices are qualitatively defined using specific criteria aligned with key attributes identified in the item
- Feedback provided to the EPP is actionable
- EPP provides evidence that questions are piloted to determine that candidates interpret them as intended and modifications are made, if called for
- Scoring is anchored in performance or behavior demonstrably related to teaching practice
- Dispositions surveys make an explicit connection to effective teaching
- EPP provides evidence of survey construct validity derived from its own or accessed research studies

All questions are aligned with either the federal requirements contained in the Title II report or with the Virginia Teacher Performance Assessment Standards (VTPAS). Feedback is provided to the EPP and individual licensure programs (where appropriate given subgroup n's) and are used to review and revise programs' admission and retention requirements, curriculum, and field experiences.

A purposeful decision was made to provide an odd number of scaled choices because the content of the questions did not lend itself to forced choices.

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