

**James Madison University  
Survey of Completers (2015-16)**

In Fall 2017, 259 graduates from 2015-16 were contacted to complete the survey. Of those contacted, 18 emails were returned, resulting in 241 usable emails. Of these, 38 responded (16% response rate). The VDoE list provided in June 2017 was used as the basis of the contact list.

**Areas of weakness**

Overall, JMU students felt prepared to teach students with disabilities, work with English Language Learners, participate on IEP teams, work with low-income students and teach in rural schools. The only area in which JMU graduates felt less prepared, as indicated by less than half of the respondents indicating agreement, was working in urban schools (about 47% agreed they felt prepared to do this). These ratings were borne out in comments. Respondents also mentioned that JMU's instruction had not adequately prepared some candidates for working with special-needs students in the classroom. Ability to use technology and teach reading were not covered in preparation. Also, concerns with placements were provided.

**Areas of Strength**

Graduates of JMU teacher education programs felt most prepared to provide instruction to students from low-income families (82% felt prepared to do so). The quality of professors was cited as a program strength, as was providing instruction on formative assessment and lesson planning.

As new teachers, JMU graduates felt prepared to demonstrate professionalism, provide a positive student-centered environment that is conducive to learning, 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.

Survey of Completers (2015-16)  
Aligns with CAEP Standard 4: 4.4

**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.**

37 responses

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

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

Question	Strongly Disagree %	<i>n</i>	Disagree %	<i>n</i>	Neither Agree nor Disagree %	<i>n</i>	Agree %	<i>n</i>	Strongly Agree %	<i>n</i>	Don't Know/ Not Applicable %	<i>n</i>	Total
... teach students with disabilities effectively.	10.5%	4	18.4%	7	13.2%	5	44.7%	17	13.2%	5	0%	0	38
... participate as a member of individualized education program (IEP) teams.	7.9%	3	29.0%	11	10.5%	4	23.7%	9	26.3%	10	2.6%	1	38
... effectively teach students who are limited in English proficiency.	7.9%	3	29.0%	11	7.9%	3	36.8%	14	15.8%	6	2.6%	1	38
... provide instruction to students from low-income families.	2.6%	1	5.3%	2	10.5%	4	31.6%	12	50.0%	19	0%	0	38
... effectively teach in urban schools.	10.5%	4	13.2%	5	7.9%	3	26.3%	10	21.1%	8	21.1%	8	38
... effectively teach in rural schools.	2.6%	1	0%	0	5.3%	2	42.1%	16	42.1%	16	7.9%	3	38

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

**Special Needs**

I had the privilege of teaching at Harrisonburg City High school, as well as Montevideo middle school, both schools having their own challenges with either varied income levels, or language proficiency. Because of the multiple challenges, I became the better teacher.

I would have benefited from SPED classes while being at JMU. I had to learn how to read IEP while being a new teacher: I also would have benefited learning how to better support students with learning disabilities, especially when students are not identified but still need a lot of accommodations. I felt very prepared for my first year teaching from being at JMU. A lot of what I learned while being a first year teacher was from experiencing my first year, I'm not sure I could have learned it in the JMU Classes. I do believe being exposed to more classrooms would have been helpful for me, if I started earlier on in my education classes. I did not get to see a sped class at all while being at JMU.

My program was educational leadership, which did not largely focus on these areas. I would have benefited from a special education for educational leaders class.

I wish there was a class dedicated to special education even if you are the general education teacher.

The JMU program does a good job helping us to learn to teach the average student. The program missed all the others. I left JMU with little preparation to teach students with disabilities, ESL, or gifted students.

**Limited English Language Proficiency**

It was also hard to be prepared from ELL students [...].

**Rural/Urban Schools**

I have never taught but in a rural school.

It was also hard to be prepared [for] [...] urban schooled students.

**IEPs**

I wish we had covered IEP language more in depth at JMU. Differentiation was one of the most beneficial classes that I took at JMU.

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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	26.3%	10	73.7%	28	38
Develop instructional planning to meet the needs of all students	2.6%	1	34.2%	13	63.2%	24	38
Use a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs	2.6%	1	18.4%	7	79.0%	30	38
Utilize relevant student data to measure student progress and guide instruction	5.3%	2	31.6%	12	63.2%	24	38
Provide a positive student-centered environment that is conducive to learning	0%	0	18.4%	7	81.6%	31	38
Demonstrate professionalism	0%	0	5.3%	2	94.7%	36	38
Have a positive impact on student learning through effective teaching	0%	0	15.8%	6	84.2%	32	38

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

It is very important for our future teachers [to] understand the essential knowledge skills aspects of the SOLs. Many professors do not emphasize the importance of this component. The essential knowledge is the driving force behind all state assessments. Also, they need assistance in looking at data and how to adapt their teaching and lessons according to that data.

I know how to do the stuff I marked as sometimes but I have so much else on my plate at the school and in trying to maintain a good work life balance that I find it hard to do it all the time. I've taught 4 different classes in these two years, with three different courses my first year, so I don't feel completely comfortable with my courses yet to do all the other things to make them better.

It would have been beneficial to have learned a little more about the variety of assessments that are used in VA, along with how to implement them and use the data collected. (ex: NWEA MAPs, SOL scores, Fountas and Pinnell, PALs)

**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	8.1%	3	48.7%	18	43.2%	16	37
Use technology effectively to collect data to improve teaching and learning	8.1%	3	48.7%	18	43.2%	16	37
Use technology effectively to manage data to improve teaching and learning	8.1%	3	43.2%	16	48.7%	18	37
Use technology effectively to analyze data to improve teaching and learning	8.1%	3	54.1%	20	37.8%	14	37

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

I am reflecting on the answers from the time I was a new teacher at the completion of my undergraduate educational studies.

Technology has been a vital piece to my pedagogy. Because of my education on varying types of technology uses in the classroom and out of it, I have been a guide for many on my CTs.

I do not have a lot of access to technology within Henrico county. I had more access to technology at JMU.

I was in the educational leadership certification program. It would have been nice to be able to discuss ways to use technology in the leadership capacity. We never discuss the importance of data collection as a leader of a building. The instructors did not appear to be able to use technology very efficiently. As a leader, you should know the basic understanding of SPED and ELL laws, but it was not discussed in this program.

I think a lot of the above questions depends on how well off the district you teach in is. I teach in a district where I have no technology in my classroom at all, so these questions become irrelevant to me.

I loved the technology we learned in school.

Though I know a lot of tech tools, I had difficulty finding ways to a blended classroom during my first year.

Students need to know how to use a variety of technology into their classroom especially how to use a SMARTBOARD.

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

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
Yes	18.4%	7
No	81.6%	31
Total	100%	38

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

I found it difficult to register for classes and get information from those at JMU who worked outside the Educational Leadership program.

The amount of miscommunication about assignments, deadlines, and expectations for me sometimes made it difficult to be successful. It ended up teaching me about how to be effective in difficult situations, but it was often extremely frustrating.

The reading classes did not prepare me for teaching reading at all. It was also difficult to work with professors who had been out of the classroom for so long. Even though they were experts, I did not feel prepared for classroom management and that was one of the pitfalls my first year of teaching with 29 students.

The schedule of classes during the grad year made it difficult to be a Graduate Assistant. Also, it is an “expensive” major to have due to gas to drive to practicum/student teaching, fees for licensure tests, time required etc. As a student who had to pay for school herself, it was difficult to find time to work due to the demands of the major between traveling to/from practicum, all the time and money spent during student teaching, purchasing professional clothes for practicum and student teaching etc.

The JMU program did not effectively teach us how to create guided reading groups, which are so essential to the students' learning. Every teacher who I have talked to pulls small groups to focus on a skill. While some of the JMU courses on reading were helpful for the Praxis II, they did not give us tools to actively use during student teaching or during actual teaching, in terms of helping students become better readers.

I was a non-traditional student and the program was very rigid. Professors changed schedules with little notice. Grades and feedback were slow coming. Work schedules and other obligations for non-traditional students were not taken into account for internships, travel distances were only considered after much discussion. Summer semester as mandatory made it very difficult for financial aid purposes. I worked 2-3 part time jobs while going to school and balancing family. JMU was not prepared to work with students like me.

The unpaid semester of student teaching, especially because I'm out of state so I did not have the option to live at home. I had to work from 4-12am often during student teaching to be able to afford rent. Please don't punish students for having to work while teaching as some schools do but if there is any way to help those of us in that situation please do so and advertise it prominently.

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

The instructors were very knowledgeable in their field. I would like to have had more information on the necessary ways to help in passing the leadership exam.

I am extremely pleased with the educational opportunities I have received through JMU, both as an undergraduate and as a graduate.

One strength of JMU's education programs is that I felt very well prepared to plan and implement engaging and effective lessons, as well as assess and differentiate. I also had many good ideas for parent communication.

I felt prepared to be a teacher, and other teachers have commented on how excellent JMU's program is. I wish that I had been required to take more classes about integrating technology, differentiation, and just generic reading strategies that I could implement in my classroom. I miss taking classes and finding out about new strategies and research! I hope sometime soon I can have a student teacher from JMU who can teach me all sorts of wonderful things.

Strengths: Lesson plans Formative Assessment Weaknesses: Summative assessment Classroom Management techniques Analyze Data from summative assessments Knowledge of the VDOE SOL essential knowledge (it is a must in the SOL testing grades and curriculum)

Strength: having practicums around Harrisonburg gave me many experiences with ELL students and other groups of diverse people. Another strength: having the ability to student teach in the county I wanted to teach in. This gave me invaluable experience that helped me have an upper hand during my first year teaching.

Strengths - JMU gave us a lot of really awesome science activities to teach our students. They were fantastic about that. My district is also being introduced to some of the math concepts that I have already learned, through JMU. Weaknesses - Data collection could have used more of a focus. Actually grading papers and knowing how to use that data to inform our decisions would have been a helpful addition to our studies. It's easy to give a test or a grade, but not as easy to look at that data and determine - well now what? Do I go back and reteach? Do I have time? Or should I move forward and what about those students who are left behind? I'm still grappling with how to balance that. At JMU, we are encouraged not to let anyone fall behind, but in actuality, there are some students who just are not going to get the information as quickly as we can. It would be nice to know that it is not always the teacher's fault. Special Ed - I was not prepared for these students. I went out of my way to take a course on classroom management, which had a small focus on special ed, but JMU really did not prepare me for handling bigger outliers to the classroom. I was given a student who was low and a student with autism and was told to teach them writing and science./social studies. For the latter, that was more hands-on, so I could work with that, but I did not feel as equipped as I should have been. Reading groups - As mentioned before, I think the JMU Program could really benefit from teaching future educators how to pull in reading groups. That is SO important and I feel like I could be so much better of a teacher if I had known how to pull those groups. Rather than trying to figure it out now, I could have come in with those tools in my tool belt and a solid foundation. Instead I have to build that foundation from scratch, after already graduating with a master's.

I absolutely loved my experience and time at JMU. I was a commuter and adult learner and I was made to feel equal to everyone else. I can't thank my professors enough for all that they taught me! Always a Duke! :)



## Survey of Completers (2015-16)

### Aligns with CAEP Standard 4: 4.4

The program focuses too much on Middle school in the secondary ed classes and in the classes all we students have to take it focuses on elementary way too much, almost to an irritating and isolating extent. I felt like I got a good amount of experience in the classroom but I was also able to sub while in school which could effect my perception.

I think the program is stuck in the past and the professors were inconsistent in the way they taught courses. I really enjoyed many of my professors and connected with them but they seemed to be out of touch with the real classroom. We were taught not to teach to the SOL or put much emphasis on it. Sadly that is not reality and I was lost trying help my students prepare for the SOL or interweave it throughout the year

I think the math department was the biggest strength to the program. They gave us many different strategies to teach concepts many of which I use with my students. The professors were consistent between courses and they used the same strategies and language which made the transition between the different math classes easier. The amount we were in the classroom was another strength. We had many opportunities to be in the classroom and learn from some amazing teachers.

I think overall I received a fantastic education at JMU. I felt very prepared going into my first year of teaching, and had a great year. I would like to add however, the TWS (teacher work sample) was overall a waste of time, and isn't something I feel was useful for my profession today. Instead, give future educators experience. I felt more than prepared for lesson planning, classroom management, assessments, etc., I just needed more experience to really become a professional. I wish I could have used more time creating engaging lessons and really diving deep into my student-teaching experience, rather than working on the TWS.

The variety of practicum placements and span of grade levels covered was helpful to determine which grade levels interested me the most. Many principals commented that they appreciated the variety of experiences. The mathematics department in the college of education did a great job preparing me to teach math at any grade level, but I did not feel as prepared for reading instruction.

### **Classroom Management**

Behavior management should be split up based on level. Being in a class with elementary teachers was pointless. I was studying to become a high school teacher, I didn't need strategies to get my kids to stand in a line effectively.

Overall, I feel well prepared from my profession with one exception. As a secondary math teacher, I do not believe I had adequate training for teaching students with disabilities and co-teaching with a special education teacher.

JMU thoroughly prepared me for teaching in the classroom! I loved learning about creativity, diversity, and play in the classroom. I would have loved to have learned more about differentiation, assessing, and special education.

One weakness was that I was not at all prepared to manage my students' behaviors or earn their respect for my authority. I attended one or two seminars on classroom management, but this was not enough for me. One text I can recommend is Conscious Classroom Management by Rick Smith. It addresses many of the concerns and challenges I had and reading it made me a much better teacher. I recognize that most of good classroom management comes from experience, but I didn't even have the tools to weather the experience until I read this book. I highly recommend it for new teachers!

Classroom management is another thing this program is lacking. That was one of the hardest things in the classroom yet we do not learn about it in the program.

### **Technology**

I also wish technology had been split up based on content, a lot of technology that is effective for some content areas isn't as useful as others. Especially in mathematics, I feel like there is so much technology out there that is helpful but it's specific to mathematics and I wish I'd had a class that was specific to how to use technology in the mathematics classroom. Especially because I now teach in a 1-1 school district.

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Another missed opportunity was the professors lack of technology use. Almost all our classrooms had smart boards yet not one professor used them. We were told to explore and learn to use 21st century technology to engage students. Yet our professors were using simple PowerPoints to teach.

### **Reading**

I wish I had better instruction in small group reading.

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Another area where I still wish I knew and understood more is Special Education/Inclusion classrooms. At JMU, I learned a lot about the importance of inclusion classrooms, but I was not given any of the knowledge or skills to work with this population of students.

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I was not prepared to teach reading whole group or small group. I was lucky and had a Title I reading specialist at my school to teach me.

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I did not feel as prepared for reading instruction.

### **Special Needs**

I wish I had learned more about the process for identifying students with special needs and getting them the services they need. I also wish I had learned about some of the different ways that, as a general education teacher, I can co-teach effectively with the special education teacher in my classroom. I also wish I knew more about the "dos and don'ts" (i.e. what am I responsible for? Not responsible for? Obviously, I want to do what is right by my students regardless of the law, but I still want to know what laws are in place. I work in Fairfax County and I have heard several stories of well-intentioned teachers who lost their jobs for some of these reasons.)

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I think the greatest weakness of the program is the lack of preparedness for teaching students with special needs.

Survey of Completers (2015-16)  
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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?

<b>Answer</b>	<b>%</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Yes	89.5%	34
No	10.5%	4
Total	100%	38

### 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)

## Survey of Completers (2015-16)

Aligns with CAEP Standard 4: 4.4

- 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.

Survey of Completers (2015-16)  
Aligns with CAEP Standard 4: 4.4

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