AAQEP Annual Report for 2023-24

Provider/Program Name:	University at Buffalo Graduate School of Education
End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or "n/a" if not yet accredited):	Dec. 31, 2028

PART I: Publicly Available Program Performance and Candidate Achievement Data

1. Overview and Context

This overview describes the mission and context of the educator preparation provider and the programs included in its AAQEP review.

University Mission

The University at Buffalo is a diverse, inclusive scholarly community dedicated to bringing the benefits of our research, scholarship, creative activities and educational excellence to local, and global communities in ways that impact and positively change the world. We view the three traditional pillars of the public higher education mission—research, education, and service—as interdependent endeavors that continually enrich and inform each other. Groundbreaking research, transformative educational experiences, and deeply engaged service to our communities define the University at Buffalo's mission as a premier, research-intensive public university.

Graduate School of Education

The Graduate School of Education prepares scholars, researchers, counselors, administrators, library and media specialists, as well as personnel for school and district leaders, colleges, universities, community, and government organizations. Graduate degrees awarded include the Master of Education (Ed.M.), Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Library Science (M.L.S), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Additionally, the Graduate School of Education awards Certificates of Advanced Study. Further, it offers courses of study that prepare students for New York State certification in teaching, school and district leadership, school counseling and psychology, and library media specialist. There are four academic departments within the Graduate School of Education: Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology (CSEP), Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP), Learning and Instruction (LAI), and Information Studies (IS). Strong interdepartmental collaborations exist between the four departments to promote excellence across programs.

Learning and Instruction is the department most prominently involved with teacher education, offering students curricular options that lead to a recommendation for an initial and/or professional teacher certificate. Additionally, for in-service teachers who hold a valid NYS teacher certificate, the department offers additional curricular options.

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP) prepares students to assume a variety of roles including scholars, administrators and policy analysts who positively impact education and educational organizations in Western New York, nationally and internationally. For those students whose focus is PK-12 administration, ELP offers the Leadership Initiatives for Tomorrow's Schools (LIFTS) program which currently includes pathways to recommendation for the New York State Education Department School Building Leader (SBL) and School District Leader (SDL) certification.

In the 2023-2024 Annual Report, our teacher education programs are focusing on navigating their recent substantial growth, along with our recent change to a full-year residency model within our programs that lead to initial teacher certification. To this end, we are seeking to learn from this first cohort and to continue to refine our processes moving forward for future cohorts. Specifically, we are assessing and highlighting our students' abilities to teach using culturally responsive-sustaining practices, as determined by their university coaches and mentor teachers in the K-12 schools. Moving ahead, we aim to use our data from the current cohort to refine coursework, and clinical experiences in the coming years.

Within our LIFTS program which leads to K-12 administrator certification, the recent addition of an online-only option is providing new avenues for growth and refinement, as the program seeks to meet the needs of its growing base of students.

Part I of this report is posted at the following web address (accredited members filing this report must post at least Part I):

https://ed.buffalo.edu/about/accreditation/aaqep.html

2. Enrollment and Completion Data

Table 1 shows current enrollment and recent completion data for each program included in the AAQEP review.

Table 1. Program Specification: Enrollment and Completers for Academic Year 2023-2024

Degree or Certificate granted by the institution or organization	State Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential	Number of Candidates enrolled in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 08/24)	Number of Completers in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 08/24)
Programs that lead to initial teaching credentials			
Master of Education	Biology Education	12	7
Master of Education	Chemistry Education	5	3
Master of Education	Childhood Education	4	0
Master of Education	Childhood Education with Bilingual Ext	2	0
Master of Education	Early Childhood/Childhood Education	106	44

Certificate of Advanced Study	Earth Science Education	2	0
Master of Education	Earth Science Education	5	2
Master of Education	English as a Second Language Education	19	5
Certificate of Advanced Study	English Education	3	2
Master of Education	English Education	37	15
Master of Education	French Education	3	0
Master of Education	Mathematics Education	30	13
Certificate of Advanced Study	Music Education	3	1
Master of Education	Music Education	8	4
Master of Education	Physics Education	3	2
Certificate of Advanced Study	Social Studies Education	1	1
Master of Education	Social Studies Education	65	22
Certificate of Advanced Study	Spanish Education	1	0
Master of Education	Spanish Education	8	3
Total for programs that lead to initial credentials		317	124
Programs that lead to additional or advanced credentials for already-licensed educators			
Certificate of Advanced Study	Bilingual Education Extension	7	4
Master of Education	Biology Education	1	1
Master of Education	Childhood Education	6	2
Certificate of Advanced Study	Computer Science Education	6	1

Master of Education	Early Childhood Education	1	1
Master of Education	Early Childhood/Childhood Education	1	0
Certificate of Advanced Study	English as a Second Language Education	8	7
Master of Education	English Education	7	3
Master of Education	French Education	5	0
Certificate of Advanced Study	Gifted Education	5	0
Master of Education	Literacy Specialist Education	48	13
Master of Education	Mathematics Education	19	6
Master of Education	Music Education	25	7
Master of Education	Physics Education	1	0
Certificate of Advanced Study	School Building Leader	21	10
Certificate of Advanced Study	School District Leader	29	10
Master of Education	Social Studies Education	2	2
Master of Education	Spanish Education	5	4
Total for programs that lead to additional/advanced credentials		197	71
Programs that lead to credentials for other school professionals or to no specific credential - NA			
TOTAL enrollment and productivity for all programs		514	195
Unduplicated total of all program candidates and completers		489	184

Added or Discontinued Programs -

Any programs within the AAQEP review that have been added or discontinued within the past year are listed below. (This list is required only from providers with accredited programs.)

N/A

3. Program Performance Indicators

The program performance information in Table 2 applies to the academic year indicated in Table 1.

Table 2. Program Performance Indicators

A. **Total enrollment** in the educator preparation programs shown in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals earning more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.
489 enrolled students
B. **Total number of unique completers** (across all programs) included in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals who earned more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.
184 completers

C. **Number of recommendations** for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.

174 - teacher preparation
10 - school leader preparation

D. **Cohort completion rates** for candidates who completed the various programs within their respective program's expected timeframe **and** in 1.5 times the expected timeframe.

92% of program completers finished their degree within their respective program's expected timeframe

97% of program completers finished their degree within 1.5 times their respective program's expected timeframe

E. **Summary of state license examination results**, including teacher performance assessments, and specification of any examinations on which the pass rate (cumulative at time of reporting) was below 80%.

Teacher Preparation

Test Number	Test Name	Number Passed	Total Number	UB Pass Rate	NYS Pass Rate
160	Biology CST	6	6	100%	81%
161	Chemistry CST	3	4	75%	92%

162	Earth Science CST	1	2	50%	86%
003	English Language Arts CST	18	18	100%	73%
116	English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) CST	5	6	83.3%	92%
065	Literacy CST	7	7	100%	86%
004	Mathematics CST	11	12	91.6%	66%
211	Multi-Subject: Teachers of Early Childhood - Literacy	41	44	93.18%	80%
246	Multi-Subject: Teachers of Early Childhood - Math	44	44	100%	81%
245	Multi-Subject: Teachers of Early Childhood and Childhood - Arts and Sciences	44	44	100%	90%
221	Multi-Subject: Teachers of Childhood - Literacy	40	44	90.9%	81%

222	Multi-Subject - Teachers of Childhood - Math	41	44	93.18%	76%
165	Music CST	3	3	100%	98%
163	Physics CST	2	2	100%	86%
115	Social Studies CST	20	22	90.9%	84%
129	Spanish CST	3	3	100%	96%
201	Educating All Students - required for all candidates	116	121	95.86%	89%
Total Tests		**392**	**412**	**95.14%**	

School Leader Preparation

Test Number	Test Name	Number Passed	Total Number	UB Pass Rate	NYS Pass Rate
103	School District Leader - Part 1	3	3	100%	89%
104	School District Leader - Part 2	3	3	100%	90%
109	School Building Leader - Part 1	5	5	100%	91%
110	School Building Leader - Part 2	4	5	80%	90%
Total Tests		**15**	**16**	**93.75%**	**90%**

Two of the Content Specialty Test average scores are below 80% (i.e. chemistry and earth science). In both cases, one failed test score brought down the average test score below the standard of 80% passing, to 75% and 50%, respectively.

That said, given the small number of students who took the chemistry and the earth science CST (4 students for the chemistry and 2 students for the earth science), the average was unduly hindered by the one failing score. As a program, we will continue to work with our faculty to address any gaps in our students' coursework in hopes of raising the scores in these two tests.

F. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Teacher Education (initial and advanced):- Upon program completion, all teacher candidates are surveyed. In addition to a number of self-efficacy items (reported below in table 3), we asked candidates what program aspects contributed to their professional development as a teacher as well as areas of improvement. Student reported strengths of the program included: (1) collaboration with peers throughout coursework, (2) year-long residency model, (3) support of clinical coaches and staff, (4) use of the co-teaching model within placements, and (5) great mentor teachers.   Students reported that a primary area of growth is that of communication.   Specifically, more clarity was needed with partner schools about our expectations for lesson planning and substitute teaching during the residency year. In summer of 2024, we revisited mentor, student, and coach handbooks for consistency and clarity.   An additional residency checklist was sent to school administrators as well that outlined program expectations and procedures.   We will continue to monitor communication protocols.

Literacy Education (advanced): The literacy faculty have been actively creating a program completer survey. Our plan is to finalize the survey by March 2025 to be able to distribute it to program completers finishing the literacy specialist program in Spring 2025 and summer 2025. Then, in fall 2025, the literacy faculty will analyze the survey data to make program-level and course-level decisions and possible revisions to the literacy specialist program.

Education Leadership (advanced): Historically, survey data for the LIFTS program has been gathered on an inconsistent basis. An Advisory Team was created and will be working to develop and implement a statistically relevant survey that can be administered each year. This survey will comprehensively cover various areas such as curriculum, pedagogy, experiential knowledge, hybrid learning experiences, and JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) through strands, ensuring that we obtain accurate and meaningful insights. Further, interviews with students in cohort 30 and 31 were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the online model. Thematic analysis will occur and data points will be shared with the advisory board to inform the creation of a survey.

G. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from employers of program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Teacher Education (initial and advanced): For our initial teacher education programs, a district leader survey was sent to building administrators who hosted our residents. In addition to observing our residents, they often hire our residents for available positions within their building. Seven building leaders responded to the survey. Overall, 86% strongly agreed that UB residents should be hired, while the remaining 14% agreed. Of further interest is that all of the seven administrators reported benefits to PreK-12 student learning as a result of the residency program. While these results are promising, we realize that this is a small sample and representative of a small portion of districts that hires our program completers.

Literacy Education (advanced): The literacy faculty have been actively creating a survey that can be given to employers . Our plan is to finalize the survey by March 2025 to be able to distribute it to employers in Spring 2025 and summer 2025. Then, in fall 2025, the literacy faculty will analyze the survey data to make program-level and course-level decisions and possible revisions to the literacy specialist program.

Education Leadership (advanced): We are collaborating with Human Resource departments in component districts to create a survey that will provide the Graduate School of Education (GSE) and component districts with information on the effectiveness of education leadership program completers.

H. Narrative explanation of how the program investigates **employment rates for program completers**, with a characterization of findings. This section may also indicate rates of completers' ongoing education, e.g., graduate study.

Teacher Education (initial and advanced): In the 23-24 cohort year we did not collect this information due to the absence of a statewide data system in New York. The New York State Education Department recently presented information on the creation of online data dashboards that will provide EPPs data on program completers' entry into the profession, teacher retention, and teacher impact. The data dashboards are expected to go live sometime in 2025.

Literacy Education (advanced): 2024 graduates of the literacy specialist program have 100% employment within the field of education. Through an informal survey of graduates as they finish their program, they may have all indicated they are working in the field in various positions. Some have full-time classroom teacher positions, while others have teaching aid positions and substitute teacher positions.

New Year state requires a Master's to obtain professional certification and literacy specialist certification. Until students have completed the 36-credit literacy specialist program, they cannot obtain their professional certification and literacy specialist certification, which prevents them from obtaining a job as a literacy specialist in a NY state public school prior to graduation.

Education Leadership (advanced): We are working to develop a survey to send to program completers on a yearly basis that will inform LIFTS of the current employment status of the program completer, the job title, and length of employment.

4. Candidate Academic Performance Indicators

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program's expectations for successful performance and indicators of the degree to which those expectations are met.

Table 3. Expectations and Performance on Standard 1: Candidate and Completer Performance

Provider-Selected Measures	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
Teacher Education (initial) Student Teacher Assessment Record (Revised) One of our program goals was to revise our Student Teacher Assessment Record	Residents are scored on a four-point scale for STAR-rubric items. They are scored at three different points throughout the academic year (i.e. September to May). As they relate to the STAR survey, our programmatic goals for the residents	For each of the eight revised items we are referencing for the purpose of this report, our residents met our standard (3) by a considerable margin. Average rubric scores are presented for the Clinical

(STAR) to better evaluate initial teacher candidates' use of culturally responsive-sustaining practices. The STAR is completed by students' mentor teachers and their clinical experience coach. In 2023 - 24, eight rubric items were updated to include a more explicitly focus on culturally responsive-sustaining practices. The eight items were across the three domains of the STAR.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge
 #1 - Links content to culturally specific examples
 #6 - Adjusts instruction to address diverse learning needs
 #7 - Demonstrates high expectations and rigorous instruction for all students
 #8 - Features and highlights resources written and developed by traditionally marginalized voices
 #9 - Uses a wide variety of materials/ resources to critically engage with difficult topics

Assessment
 #2 - Incorporates assessment strategies and assignments that are responsive to students' portfolio of strengths and needs.

are two-fold: 1. We hope to see consistent growth over the course of the year, particularly as the residents are gaining more experience with each day. 2. We hope that by the final version of the STAR survey, our residents are meeting the standard score of 3 on all aspects of the survey. For each of the eight revised items we are referencing for the purpose of this report, our residents met our standard by a considerable margin.

Experience Coach (CEC) and Mentor Teacher (MT).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge:

Question	CEC	MT
1	3.42	3.47
6	3.53	3.54
7	3.65	3.63
8	3.31	3.52
9	3.64	3.57

Assessment:

Question	CEC	MT
2	3.46	3.49

Professional Qualities:

Question	CEC	MT
3	3.85	3.84
5	3.79	3.79

Professional Qualities #3 - Demonstrates a comprehensive level of awareness and respect for all forms of students' identities. #5 - Builds rapport with all learners.		
Literacy Education (advanced) Literacy Capstone Portfolio – Revised Literacy faculty actively worked in fall 2023 to revise the capstone and the new capstone was implemented in spring 2024 and beyond. The aim of the literacy portfolio is for the graduate student to show evidence and make the argument that they have met all the International Literacy Assessment (ILA) standards. The ILA standards are included in all literacy course syllabi. Students address the following seven standards: 1. Foundational knowledge 2. Curriculum and instruction 3. Assessment and Evaluation 4. Diversity and Equity 5. Learners and the Literacy Environment 6. Professional Learning and Leadership 7. Practicum / Clinical Experiences	Literacy faculty created and used a rubric to score each portfolio. Each portfolio is scored according to ILA standards. For each standard, the student must demonstrate and score in the 'proficient' range. If a student scores in the 'developing' range, that part of the portfolio needs to be revised. The Portfolio is sent back to the student to allow them to revise as necessary. For each standard, the literacy faculty determined that 'proficiency' is: clear and detailed evidence of learning that addresses the standard and all of its components. All artifacts are clearly and directly related to standards. Each artifact addresses no more than two standards. For each standard, the literacy faculty determined that 'developing' is: unclear or incomplete evidence of learning that may not address the standard and all of its components. Not all artifacts are	All literacy specialist students completed the capstone. 100% rate of passing in spring 2024. All literacy specialist students were able to provide artifacts from their classes, as well as an explanation of how the artifact demonstrates their understanding of that standard.

	clearly and directly related to standards. Insufficient artifacts.	
Literacy Education (advanced) Successful completion of state-required practicum hours. At UB, literacy students complete two practica in which they provide supervised literacy instruction one-on-one and in a small-group setting to an individual working below grade-level expectations in some area related to reading or writing. All lesson plans and instruction is supervised, and the instructor provides written and oral feedback to graduate students to help develop their ability to write lesson plans and implement literacy instruction. Literacy specialist students are expected to use assessment data to: (1) design appropriate literacy goals for instruction, (2) create developmentally-appropriate lesson plans, (3) implement evidence-based practices, and (4) assess their tutee(s) progress using formal and	Instructor-created rubrics were used to provide feedback and assess the graduate students throughout the course. Students must complete the two practices with a grade of B- or better.	100% of students enrolled in the spring 2024 practica passed with grades of B- or better. All literacy specialist students were able to use assessment data to design goals, create lesson plans, implement evidence-based instruction, and assess tutee progress towards meeting those goals.

informal assessments to plan future instruction.		
Educational Leadership (advanced): LIFTS Orals results The Orals process is designed to be a rigorous process that evaluates the candidate's academic and experiential knowledge. The candidate's explanation and responses to comments/questions from the committee demonstrate that the candidate understands and can defend what he/she presented in writing.	The rubric for development of the Leadership Platform is linked here. Additional attributes we look for in the oral presentation are listed below. ● Response to the case study and subsequent questions reflect the values, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors articulated in the Leadership Platform ● Oral presentation is consistent with and reflects what was in the case study response ● Responses to questions show thought, understanding, insight and knowledge of self as well as appropriate theories/ concepts/literature ● Demonstrates ability to consider alternatives, other points of view and 'think on his/her feet' ● Responses/comments are clearly articulated ● Avoids clichés, rhetoric and overuse of words/phrases such as "like", "you know", "okay", "and", "um" etc.	9 candidates participated in the Orals examination. 8 of the 9 candidates successfully completed the Orals with an exemplary or satisfactory rating. 8 candidates participated in internships. 7 of the 9 candidates successfully completed all of their internship hours.

Table 4. Expectations and Performance on Standard 2: Completer Professional Competence and Growth

Provider-Selected Measures	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
Teacher Education (initial) **Educating All Students Exam** We believe that one of the benefits of residency is time spent in community with children, teachers, families, and their communities. Our candidates spending more time in P-12 classrooms speaks directly to Competency 5 on the EAS Exam and that the rich experiential knowledge that our candidates will glean from their mentor teachers, students, and students' families will benefit future scores on this exam. The Educating All Students (EAS) Exam is a part of the New York State Teacher Certification Exams (NYSTCE) and is a requirement of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for the issuance of an Initial Teacher Certificate. The fifth exam competency (home-school relationships) assesses completers' understanding of effective strategies for	A rubric score of 3 or higher, demonstrates our completers' satisfactory command of relevant knowledge and skills to communicate and foster relationships with families/guardians/caregivers in a variety of communities.	For EAS Competency 5 - Home School Relationships, approximately 78% (94/121 candidates) met the expectation of success, scoring a 3 or a 4 on the exam. ● 11 candidates scored 4 = Proficient ● 83 candidates scored 3 = Competent ● 24 candidates scored 2 = Developing ● 3 candidates scored 1 = Emerging While our average on this competency is lower than that of the state (2.84-UB to 3.2-NYS), we will continue to seek ways to center community engaged work with families and schools in our program coursework and throughout the candidates' residency.

promoting positive and productive relationships and interactions between the school and home to enhance student learning, thus providing evidence of our completers' abilities to maintain effective communication with parents/guardians (i.e. accessible documents, use of interpreters, and reflecting cross-cultural understanding) and to encourage parents/guardians to participate in and contribute to their children's education.		The 2023-2024 cohort of students engaged in a year-long residency placement model for the first time in the program's history. The average age of this cohort's students decreased over previous years, due to our changing programmatic model. Reducing the average student age amounts to lesser life experience for these students, and it is not surprising that the students scored lower than we would have hoped on this component of the rubric; however, we as a program are continuing to work with our community partners to bolster this area moving forward.
Teacher Education (Initial) Mentor Teacher Surveys We developed and administered an end-of-year survey to garner feedback from mentor teachers regarding our residents' preparation to work in diverse contexts and their growth as developing professionals at the time of program completion. The mentor teacher survey included 10 items to assess residents' preparation to teach.	For the mentor teacher survey, 50 of 156 mentor teachers responded. Our expectation is that the average score is at least a 5 on every item (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree or disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7= strongly agree).	The following ten questions are taken from the larger survey, as they speak directly to how well the mentor teachers felt that our residents were prepared for teaching. | Question	Avg. Score
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Connects classroom learning to the students' real world.	5.58
Engages students in inquiry, problem solving, and reflection	5.32
Meets the instructional needs	4.77	

		of ELLs	
		Identifies and addresses special learning needs with appropriate teaching strategies	5.04
		Establishes and maintains a safe and respectful learning environment	6.28
		Creates a productive learning environment with high expectations.	5.71
		Makes subject matter accessible	5.36
		Plans instruction based on students' prior knowledge, academic readiness, language proficiency, cultural background and individual development	5.37
		Evaluates the effects of actions on student learning	5.34
		Works with colleagues to improve instruction	5.67

As a program, we are pleased that our students appear to be meeting the standards of their mentor teachers, as the average scores of 9/10 questions range between somewhat agree and agree - that the students are meeting the

		expectation. The lowest question falls between a 4-5 and deals with our students' abilities to teach ELLs. We are working to address this area within the students' coursework throughout each of our programs and will gauge our growth during the next cohort of students.
Educational Leadership (advanced): Completion of LIFTS internship	100% of LIFTS interns received outstanding ratings from their supervisors in 2023-24. LIFTS boasts a high placement rate for all certified graduates.	We will continue to work to increase our survey capacity to capture data of candidates at 3, 5 and 10 years.

5. Notes on Progress, Accomplishment, and Innovation

This section describes program accomplishments, efforts, and innovations (strengths and outcomes) to address challenges and priorities over the past year.

Teacher education programs have implemented key revisions designed to improve candidate outcomes. These include the implementation of cohesive culminating assessment (the Teacher Performance Assessment aligned to program values), expansion of yearlong co-teaching residency, modularization of courses to facilitate flexible and relevant delivery, and centering community engagement in both our initial and advanced teacher education programs. This reporting cycle was our first full year of implementation and we are recursively reviewing data and adjusting programs to better meet the needs of our students and our stakeholders. We will continue to refine the structural features of residency as well as reviewing curriculum and experiences for cohesion.

The redesign of our LIFTS program was completed in Fall 2024. At this point in time, our program is offered fully-online and incorporates feedback from students, professors, internship supervisors, and administrators in the field. Numerous meetings occurred with all parties to ensure a cohesive transition to an online platform.