AAQEP Annual Report for 2025

Provider/Program Name:	Utica University Educator Preparation
End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or "n/a" if not yet accredited):	June 30, 2030

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.

> The mission of the Educator Preparation Programs is to prepare educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to serve an increasingly diverse P-12 student population in a geographic area that encompasses urban, suburban, and rural districts of wide socio-economic variation with unique community challenges and opportunities. These provide opportunities for broad student experience in diverse contexts for fieldwork, student teaching, and ultimate employment.
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> The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) is part of the School of Health Professions and Education. The program is administered by the Dean of Health Professions and Education, Dr. Polly Smith and Associate Dean, and Dr. Patrice Hallock. The chair of the Educator Preparation Program is Dr. Laurence Zoeckler.

Public Posting URL

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

2. Enrollment and Completion Data

Table 1 shows current enrollment and recent completion data, disaggregated by program and license/certificate, for each program included in the AAQEP review.

Table 1. Program Specification: Enrollment and Completers for Academic Year 2024-2025

Degree or Program offered by the institution/organization	Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential granted by the state Note: If there were zero students in a certificate area, they were not included on this table.	Number of Candidates Enrolled in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 05/24)	Number of Completers in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 05/24)
Programs that lead to initial teaching credentials			
Bachelor of Arts	*Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)*	1	1
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Initial Certification: English as a New Language (ENL) (Grades K-12)	1	1
Bachelor of Science	*Initial Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)*	65	17
	Initial Certification: Early Childhood (Birth – Grades 2)	61	14
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	5	0

	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	14	2
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Initial Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	1
	Initial Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Initial Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	2	0
Master of Science	*Initial Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)*	16	4
	Initial Certification: Special Education (Grades P-12)	6	1
	Initial Certification: Physical Education (Grades K-12)	28	24
	Initial Certification: Health Education (Grades K-12)	28	24
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	11	6
	Initial Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Professional Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)	16	1
	Professional Certification: Special Education (Grades P-12)	6	1
	Professional Certification: Physical Education (Grades K-12)	28	24

	Professional Certification: Health Education (Grades K-12)	28	24
	Professional Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Professional Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	11	6
	Professional Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	1	0
Master of Science (Alternate Transitional-B Certificate Program)	*Initial Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)*	2	0
	Initial Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Initial Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	3	1
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades P-12)	14	0
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	7	2
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	9	4
	Initial Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Initial Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	8	2
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	4	1
	Initial Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	2
	Transitional-B Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)	2	0

	Transitional-B Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Transitional-B Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	3	1
	Transitional-B Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades P-12)	14	0
	Transitional-B Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	7	2
	Transitional-B Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	9	4
	Transitional-B Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Transitional-B Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	8	2
	Transitional-B Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	4	1
	Transitional-B Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	2
	Professional Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Professional Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Professional Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	3	1
	Professional Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades P-12)	14	0

	Professional Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	7	2
	Professional Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	9	4
	Professional Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Professional Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	8	2
	Professional Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	4	1
	Professional Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	2
Total for programs that lead to initial credentials		503	195
Programs that lead to additional or advanced credentials for already-licensed educators			
Master of Science in Education	*Professional Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)*	2	1
	Professional Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)	6	4
	Professional Certification: English Language Arts (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades P-12) **Note:** *Requires initial certification*	8	2
	Professional Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades P-12)	8	2

Total for programs that lead to additional/advanced credentials		28	10
Programs that lead to P-12 leader credentials			
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total for programs that lead to P-12 leader credentials		N/A	N/A
Programs that lead to credentials for specialized professionals or to no specific credential			
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total for programs that lead to specialized professional or no specific credentials		N/A	N/A
TOTAL enrollment and productivity for all programs		529	205
Unduplicated total of all program candidates and completers		232	80

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.)

The BS-Adolescence Education Spanish program was discontinued in the 2024-2025 academic year due to the content coursework not being available for students. We have refocused our efforts on preparing Spanish and World Language candidates at the graduate level.

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.
Our 24-25 program enrollment was 205. Please note that this doesn't include a feeder program that prepares health education and physical education candidates for our graduate program, but not certification.
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.
There were 80 unique program completers during the 2024-2025 year.
C. **Number of recommendations** for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.
196 recommendations for NYS teacher certification were entered in the 24-25 program year.
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.
77% of our graduate students completed their program within their expected timeframe, while 3% finished in 1.5 times the expected time frame. Approximately 20% of graduate students didn't finish the program, either withdrawing, becoming inactive, or transferring to another program or institution. Our undergraduate students are harder to accurately measure since our current Education Major programs are all under four years old. We examined the old, linked major model from 2021 and found that 72% of undergraduate students graduated within four years. No students within this cohort finished in 1.5 times the expected timeframe; however, five of the students didn't graduate. This could mean they were dismissed, transferred to another program, or simply stopped attending. We look forward to presenting data on the undergraduate education majors once it is available.
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%.
Our New York State Certification Exam (NYSTCE) pass rate is 89.19% for the 24-25 year when aggregated. When disaggregated, eight of the required NYSTCES were 100% pass rates. Three fell within the 90% range, and two were within the 80% range.

We did have four tests that were below the 80% threshold. We will provide the test and a rationale for each.

ELA and Earth Science content tests both averaged in the mid 70's and can be attributed to a low N of test takers. Both were below 10, which the state would exclude from their pass rate calculation.

The same is true of math, which had two candidates take it, one passed and one did not. For that reason, our math CST results are 50% for the 2024-2025 year.

The Health Education CST scored at a 70.50% pass rate, with 17 candidates taking it and 11 passing. While this is also a small N, this result requires further justification. It is our view as a department that our Physical Education and Health Education candidates mainly are interested in Physical Education and tend to discount the health education component as secondary. While they are required to complete content and pedagogical courses in both areas, it could be this lack of general interest in health education that is bringing down our health education CST scores. We will continue to work with our students to change the mentality that they are only PE teachers.

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

Following the plan outlined in our QAR (2023), we have surveyed our first and third year out candidates in a systematic fashion, using a program completer survey aligned with AAQEP standards.

Our most recent survey received ten responses, which is typical of our response rate. Reminders were sent to program completers and it was posted in our Facebook group.

The survey found that seven were employed as a classroom teacher in NYS (70%), one was attending graduate school, (10%) and 2 were not employed in an education-related field (20%). These findings are lower than the 87% employment rate that was reported by NYSED three months after this survey took place and indicates that our employment rate is higher than this survey's findings.

Our program strengths included "ability to use assessment data to inform practice ($\mu=3.57$ of 4), "knowledge of content" ($\mu=3.43$ of 4), and "knowledge of culturally responsive teaching practices" ($\mu=3.29$ out of 4). Areas that the program could improve upon according to respondents were "effective pedagogy ($\mu=3.14$ out of 4) and understanding the social, emotional and academic dimensions of learners ($\mu=3.14$ out of 4). It should be noted that even though these were rated lower than other areas, program completers still expressed satisfaction with their program in preparing them for these areas. What was telling were the qualitative findings of the survey. One respondent commented that our graduate electives for the MS programs were a "mess" to transfer in. This is partly because transferred courses need to "fit" the program of study, and the process of getting the transcripts from the institution providing the course(s) is sometimes slower than expected—and depends on the student requesting the transcript(s) be sent.

Since the students graduated, our program has taken steps to allow more graduate electives to be accepted in-house and discourages students from seeking permission to study at another institution for electives. This has strengthened the enrollment and our ability to offer graduate courses and has also allowed students to take coursework in related areas such as special education, classroom management, assessment, and inclusive practices.

Another respondent requested more time to be spent on "practical knowledge for early education skills like using scissors and fine motor development; knowledge to assess students with learning needs." This highlights the sometimes narrow concerns that arise in individual teaching situations and should likely be addressed in the student teaching experience if not in the required coursework. Assessment of learning needs is addressed in several required courses, and also through the graduate electives that can be taken. For example, a student could take a graduate level occupational therapy course if they are interested in fine motor skills development, or they could take EDU 525 as an elective, which is a course focused on special education and learning needs assessment.

Classroom management did not make an appearance on this survey, but it should be noted that classroom management is typically an area where many students express the need for more preparation. Our response to this concern in earlier surveys was to create two new classroom management courses. The graduate version has been added to the schedule and will run for a second time this spring. The undergraduate classroom management course hasn't run yet due to low enrollment, but our department intends to make it a requirement of the major. We will be assessing the effects of these courses on student satisfaction as data becomes available.

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

An employment satisfaction survey was conducted at two teacher recruitment events that Utica University hosts, which had dozens of partner districts attend. Of those who attended, eleven district representatives provided feedback.

The key findings from the feedback were that 100% of employers said they "definitely would" hire another Utica University candidate. Other strengths identified by employers included preparing students to foster relationships with students' families and caregivers, creating productive learning environments, practicing professional growth and development, and collaborating effectively with administrators and colleagues.

Our overall satisfaction according to the survey was 4/5.

Areas in need of improvement are classroom management (see F above) and engaging in culturally responsive teaching practices.

H. 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.

We recently received access to a trove of program completer data provided by NYSED. The most recent program completer report provided was from 2023-2024. Of the 63 program completers listed in the report, 87% were employed as classroom teachers in NYS. There are eight candidates that the state doesn't have employment information on. Four of those candidates attended graduate school during the 2024-2025 year. The department looks forward to analyzing these results further and working with the data that the state has provided.

I. Explanation of how the **staffing capacity** for program delivery and administration and quality assurance system monitoring have changed during the reporting year, if at all, and how capacity matches the current size of the program.

Our staffing capacity has decreased due to the elimination of the Accreditation and Residency Coordinator position. It should be noted that the individual who was in that position changed positions at the University and is still working for Educator Preparation but will be coordinating our Transitional-B program. The loss of this position impacts our capacity to complete annual reports, assessment of accreditation data, and administrative tasks. These duties now fall upon the Educator Preparation Program department faculty and the coordinator of partnerships and clinical practice.

In addition, we are down a full-time faculty line, with a gradual reduction in full time positions from a peak of ten in 2012 to five at present. Combined with maternity leaves and a sabbatical, it has put additional stress on our quality assurance system, specifically when it comes to academic advising. The program and its enrollment have continued to grow even as the faculty lines have been left unfilled when faculty retired or changed jobs and went to other institutions.

4. Candidate Academic Performance Indicators

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures (3 to 5 measures for each standard) of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program's expectations for performance (criteria for success) 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 (name and description)	Criteria for success	Level or extent of success in meeting the expectation
GPA in Pedagogical Education Courses	80% of students pass their pedagogical courses with a grade of B- or higher (the state minimum for pedagogical coursework for certification)	Our 2024-2025 program assessment focused on pedagogical knowledge. Our findings showed that nearly 98% of students received a grade of B- or better in their methods courses, with 87% earning grades in the A (or A-) range. This indicates that the students have a strong understanding of pedagogical content knowledge. When the data is disaggregated by program, we do not see any significant differences in performance depending on program, with students mastering the pedagogical content knowledge similarly across all programs. The following tables show program-specific data. Data was disaggregated by undergraduate/graduate programs and early childhood & childhood/adolescence programs.
Pass rates on NYS Content Specialty Test (CST)	80% or higher is the optimal pass rate.	Our program aggregate pass rate for the CST tests was 88.50%. This is slightly lower due to specific subjects and low n's mentioned previously in this report.

Pass Rate on EAS	80% or higher is the optimal pass rate.	Our program aggregate pass rate on the EAS was 97.8%, indicating that we effectively prepare our students to educate diverse learners in many settings.

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

Provider-selected measures (name and description)	Criteria for success	Level or extent of success in meeting the expectation
Program Completer Survey	Program Completers are highly satisfied with their preparation for the profession.	Our program completer survey indicates that teachers in their first year out were satisfied with their preparation, with a range of 3.14 - 3.57 out of 4.
NYSED Program Completer Data	80% of program completers are employed in a P-12 area.	87% of program completers were reported to be employed in a P-12 field, according to NYSED data. We hope to keep this high rate of employment moving forward and it demonstrates that our program prepares effective professionals.
Employer Satisfaction Survey	80% of employers rate our candidates as successful and indicate that they will continue to hire Utica University candidates in the future.	100% of employers surveyed indicated that they "definitely would" hire another Utica University student. Please see the evidence from employers' section for more information. In addition, 87% of our program completers were employed as classroom teachers in New York State.

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.

Despite significant challenges facing private institutions in our region, our enrollment increased overall as a program this year, with a noted spike in the Transitional-B Alternative certification program enrollment. It is largely due to the new students with disabilities Trans-B certification program that was introduced in 2025. It should be noted that student teaching cohorts (traditional programs) remain strong, with an average of 15-20 during the fall and 30-40 during the spring.

In addition to Trans-B candidates and student teachers, our program successfully placed five teacher residents in grant-funded residency positions at the Utica City School District. Our program will have filled seven of the ten slots allotted by this funding. While we wish that we could have filled 100%, there were delays in the partnership that decreased the amount of time required to place teacher residents.

As of Fall 2024, site-based coursework was rolled out at Westmoreland Central School District. The student teaching seminar courses now take place there, with two superintendents who co-teach the course and provide a robust program of guest speakers.

Our existing site-based course, EDU 314 Children's Literature, is being expanded via the use of federal work study (FWS) money available. This will allow candidates to complete fieldwork and receive FWS compensation for their time.

Our Little Falls CSD partnership continues to be a huge success, with four field trips taking place during the 2024-2025 year. We eagerly await every field trip that the district takes to our science facilities, where our chemistry department faculty lead STEM learning experiences for local elementary students while our teacher candidates assist.

Our clinical coordinator sits on two regional Teacher Center Policy Boards as well as a CTE steering committee at the Utica City School District. Through these connections, he receives feedback and can deliver any pertinent updates from the field to the department.