



***CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY***

OF PENNSYLVANIA

Teacher Candidate Resources Guide

College of Education and Human Services

2019-2020

Disclaimer

This information is designed to supplement the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. Be sure to consult policies for specifics.

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At the California University of Pennsylvania, faculty and staff in the college of education and human services strive to support our teacher candidates in a variety of ways. Below are many of the resources available to teacher candidates to help them successfully complete their educational program.

TEACHER CANDIDATE RESOURCES

HOW DO I GET CLEARANCES?

COEHS Clearances All Teacher Education Students
Clearances must be submitted to Castle Branch
<https://portal.castlebranch.com/LS33>

ALL candidates (both incoming and current) are required to have a CastleBranch account for managing their clearances. The CastleBranch management system will allow students to apply directly, upload, maintain, and access their clearances from any electronic device. It is required that all candidates update their clearances by August 15th each year in preparation for the upcoming field experience(s). In accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations, all teacher education candidates who have direct contact with children must have current (not more than one (1) year old) Pennsylvania State Criminal Background (Act 34), Child Abuse (Act 151), PDE Arrest or Conviction (Act 24) and Federal Criminal History Record (Act 114, Fingerprinting) clearances. Additionally, the College of Education and Human Services policy requires the Mandatory Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training (Act 31) to be completed each year. This applies to all course-related observation, field, and clinical experiences, as well as student teaching. It is recommended that Teacher Education Candidates apply for these clearances during their first semester at Cal U and then each summer thereafter.

CLEARANCES WITH INFRACTIONS

Teacher Education candidates with any type of record, on any clearance, will require a meeting with the Teacher Education Subcommittee. See your Department Chair for more information. Cal U does not automatically deny Admission to Teacher Education because of any citation, but candidates need to be aware of future issues with the Department of Education and future employers. All Teacher Education candidates must be aware that the Pennsylvania Department of Education has the final decision on whether infractions on your record will impede the issuance of on your certification.

FREQUENT CLEARANCES QUESTIONS

- **Getting the CastleBranch account.** There are links on the Cal U website to CastleBranch. The first time will include purchasing your “Background Check and Compliance Tracker” account. After that, you will go back every summer for the “annual Recheck” to update your clearances.
- **Scanning and uploading:** For clearances that you get outside CastleBranch and upload into your account, you will need to save them as PDF files to upload. Many of you have software on your devices that will automatically save documents as PDF files. You can also go to the library and to other places on campus where you can scan documents and save them as PDF files to upload.
- **Fingerprint results:** Your fingerprint results will come to your email within two weeks after you get your fingerprints scanned at an appropriate location. The results will come in an email from **PA Safecheck**. Watch for that email address as you will not be getting an email from Identogo. The email will include a link to the results. The link can only be opened ONE TIME, so be sure to open it at a computer where you can print it out and also save it as a PDF. Do not open it on your phone. The link in the email is only good for 30 days so be sure to watch for it.
- **Other Clearance Questions:** Contact CastleBranch. They have help services through several formats such as email, phone, and chat to help you with all your clearance questions. There are links on almost all the CastleBranch pages in your account.

HOW DO I DO THE REQUIRED INFORMATIONAL TRAINING & RESOURCES IN D2L?

The purpose of the Required Informational Training Modules is to disseminate the most current information from the College of Education & Human Services (COEHS), for completion of checkpoints to progress through Teacher Education programs, for certification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

These are the checkpoints:

- Admission to Teacher Education
- Recommendation to Student Teach
- Graduation
- PDE Teaching Certification

You will be placed in a D2L shell appropriate to your level such as EDU 022 or 033.

On the Content Page in D2L, you'll see several documents that pertain to becoming certified to teach through one of the teacher education programs at Cal.

You will have successfully completed this training by doing the following:

- 1) Pass the quiz - Either "Not Admitted to Teacher Education Quiz" or "Admitted to Teacher Education Quiz." These quizzes are located in the Assessments folder, under Quizzes.
- 2) Pass the Teacher Candidate Handbook "Scavenger Hunt." This quiz is located in the Assessments folder, under Quizzes.
- 3) Upload your signed Admission & Retention Form to the Dropbox. This form is located in your module.

Additionally, this course shell is to be used as a reference library for documents, forms, and answers to commonly asked questions. Updated resources will be posted as changes occur, so check back often. Resources are always available to view.

Please begin the course by going to the Content tab, complete your appropriate module, and familiarize yourself with the reference modules

WHAT IS LIVETEXT?

LiveText is an internet-based tool that creates electronic portfolios, allows submission of assignments to courses to be scored with rubrics tied to standards, and tracks field experiences. It also does much more. All candidate portfolios and assignments are connected to a large database. This database allows Cal U to aggregate data from hundreds of project scores to be reported to PDE, national professional associations, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Over the last few years, this collection and analysis of data has resulted in many program improvements, making Cal U's programs stronger.

PURCHASING LIVETEXT

LiveText can be purchased two ways— at the Cal U Bookstore and online at the LiveText web-site. The price is the same either way. Teacher education candidates may use Financial Aid to purchase LiveText at the bookstore. Financial Aid is only available the first week of school. If LiveText is purchased at the bookstore, candidates must remember not to throw away the sealed brochure. It contains information needed for registering. If the brochure is lost, another license at full price must be purchased. The registration code inside the brochure can only be used once; therefore, purchasing an opened brochure from another candidate is not advised. It may have already been used and would now be useless.

To purchase LiveText online, with a credit card, go to: <http://college.livetext.com>. Candidates should be sure to purchase the version that includes the Field Experience Module. Candidates do not need to purchase the additional materials for video streaming options in Learn 360.

All new LiveText student memberships are seven year accounts: **Livetext by Watermark [including Field Experience Management]- \$139.00.**

All Cal U Teacher Education candidates; undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate, are required to purchase a LiveText account. Access to this on-line tool needs to be purchased one time; access is effective for 7 years.

HOW DO I FIND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FORMS?

There are many forms Teacher Candidates must complete to ensure their timely success and completion of their program.

The education forms are linked here: <https://www.calu.edu/inside/forms/index.aspx> Teacher candidates can go to this link, scroll down until they see College of Education Forms, and then choose which form they need to complete.

These forms are also linked into the **REQUIRED INFORMATIONAL TRAINING AND RESOURCES D2L** shell.

WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR DISPOSITIONS?

Faculty members at California University of Pennsylvania believe that the professional attributes of an educator influence their effectiveness as strongly as their content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Future teachers must be aware of the expectations we have for them and receive feedback to develop their strengths related to professionalism and reflective practice. While very few teachers ever reach the exemplary level in all areas, we are listing that level as a goal for our candidates. The following document was developed based on our own experiences, feedback from our professional development schools, the results of educational research, and standards of professional associations. This document provides examples of behaviors linked to each attribute. We recognize that behaviors and attributes are constantly developing so that individuals may not always be consistent in their demonstration of behaviors. We will focus on the levels that best describe a candidate's development at a particular point in time and provide this as feedback for ongoing personal and professional development.

Process:

- All faculty members in any courses: Faculty members are invited to provide information about teacher candidates that may be showing unsatisfactory behaviors. Information is sent to dispositions@calu.edu. Faculty members describe specific non-academic qualities and candidates understand necessary changes.
- Level 1 --- Introductory Course: Level 1 measurement occurs in the Intro course and is completed by the instructor. Faculty members rate candidates at baseline level focused on the emerging level and identifying unsatisfactory areas or areas of strength that are already developing. Unsatisfactory areas lead to intervention such as clarification of expectations, remediation, or ineligibility for education majors.
- Level 2 --- Field-Block courses: After conferring with the mentor teacher, the instructor rates candidates, focusing on the developing level, and identifying candidates with areas of weakness or areas of strength. This measure will take place in the following courses: SEC 420, CHD 413, ESP 349, ELM 411, TED XXX, MSE XXX.
- Level 3 --- Student Teaching: Cooperating teachers and supervisors' rate student teachers on all characteristics focused on the developing and target levels noting unsatisfactory areas as needed. After conferring with the cooperating teacher, the instructor completes the rating. A Corrective Action Plan will be developed for candidates who are rated below "Developing" at the Student Teaching level.

Professional Dispositions Rubric Link:

<https://www.calu.edu/inside/forms/files/education/dispositions-rubric.pdf>

Remediation Process: Each situation is different based on the nature of the behavior, the severity, and the frequency. Efforts to remediate range from clarifying expectations, remediation plans, to ineligibility for education majors.

Corrective Action Plan Link:

<https://www.calu.edu/inside/forms/files/education/corrective-action-plan.pdf>

WHAT ARE THE TEACHER CANDIDATE PROFESSIONAL SEMINARS?

The Professional Seminar Series is a professional development program for candidates at California University of Pennsylvania, designed to provide a foundation for the continuing education required in the teaching profession. By the end of the teacher candidate's program, a total of nine seminars are required to be recorded and scored in his or her LiveText® portfolio. Cal U offers a number of seminars each semester and teacher candidates are encouraged to attend professional activities on their own as well. Attendance at breakout sessions during professional conferences may also be used to meet these requirements. Webinars and videos from approved sites may be used on a limited basis. Undergraduate candidates may submit up to three (3) approved webinars.

The 3 areas of professional development include the following:

- Professionalism and Leadership
- Content Specialty
- Issues in Education

When you document your seminars, you will be expected to include:

- Title
- Date
- Description: This is written as a summary paragraph with details.
- Reflection: This paragraph describes how the seminar impacted your professional growth.

WHAT ARE SOME TEACHER CANDIDATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS?

- **The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)** hosts group home dances on campus, tutors students and participates in a variety of community fundraisers.
- **Sigma Pi Epsilon Delta (SPED)** is a special education honors fraternity that participates in volunteering and tutoring initiatives for individuals with disabilities.
- **SPSEA: Student Division of Pennsylvania's National Education Association:**
 - "The purpose of the Association shall be to develop in prospective educators an understanding of the education profession, to provide for a united student voice in matters affecting their profession, to influence the conditions under which prospective educators are prepared, to advance the interests and welfare of students preparing for a career in education, to promote and protect human and civil rights, and to stimulate the highest ideals of professional ethics, standards, and attitudes." More than 6,000 future educators studying at Pennsylvania colleges and universities are members of Student PSEA. As part of the next generation of educators, Student PSEA helps members hit the ground running through professional development workshops, service projects, and more.
- **TEAC (Technology Education Association of California) Student Club:** Join a professional organization for students majoring in technology education. TEAC promotes a better understanding of technology education and encourages engagement in local public service projects and mentorship programs. You'll also have the opportunity to travel to state, national and international conferences.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO TEACHER ED?

- Find form and print from website; complete the top of this form.
- Print unofficial transcript from VIP.
- Highlight your math courses, English comp., British/U.S. Lit course, and education introduction course.
- Complete your seminars and professionalism statement in LiveText and submit it for review.

How to Write Your Professionalism Statement

1. Review the **Pennsylvania Code of Conduct**. There is a copy of it on the Managing your Portfolio page that is already inside your portfolio as a resource. **Highlight key points** that get your attention so you can refer to those in your statement
 2. Review the Professional Dispositions rubric. There is a copy of it on the Managing your Portfolio page if you don't have a copy of your own. Think about how these areas relate to professionalism and our expectations for teachers.
 3. Reflect on your own thoughts and experiences about how teachers demonstrate professionalism. Consider good teachers you have seen, and teachers who could stand to improve related to professionalism. What would you want to see if you were a principal or a parent?
 4. Outline your thoughts on educator professionalism. You will not need to turn this in, but it will help you organize your thoughts since this is such a broad subject.
 5. Write a one-page statement answering the question, "**What does it mean to be a professional?**" that includes direct references to the **Code of Conduct**. It is easiest to write in a word processing product such as Word where you can spell check. Re-read your draft and check it for errors
 6. Paste your statement into the appropriate editing box on the Professional Responsibilities page in your LiveText portfolio. Be sure to save your changes.
- Print clearances from Castlebranch.
 - Collect all papers and set up a meeting with your advisor.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR STUDENT TEACHING?

- Go to meeting early in semester before student teaching.
- Print the application "Recommendation for Student Teaching."

- Print a copy of your unofficial transcript from VIP.
- Get a copy of your completed degree sheet to show courses completed or in progress.
Get a copy of your Praxis/PECT test scores
- Get a copy of your clearances. These must be good through end of student teaching and can be printed from Castlebranch. Fall student teachers will need to renew their clearances in the spring to have them ready when they apply.
- Get liability insurance through PSEA; this should be good through student teaching.
- Get a TB test and copy of your results.
- Complete seminars and goal statements in LiveText.
- Submit your portfolio to Student Teaching Portfolio in LiveText for review
- Gather all the paperwork and arrange to meet with advisor or reviewer.
- See deadlines in Policy Handbook.

How Do I Write My Professional Development Plan?

1. **Goal One** relates to either **Leadership or Collaboration**. Review the **Professional Disposition Rubric** looking at those two areas to make sure you understand how we are defining those here at CalU. There is a copy of the rubric as a resource on the Managing this Portfolio page insight your portfolio on LiveText.
2. Reflect on your abilities in **Leadership and Collaboration**. Consider feedback you may have received in classes, in field experience, or from friends and family. Decide which area you would like to focus on. Think about why you are choosing that area.
3. Set a goal for yourself related to your chosen area. You may wish to write it like an objective to be sure that you are creating a specific, observable goal.
4. Describe your rationale for setting that goal so we can see your reflection process and understand your motivation for setting that goal.
5. Research resources and expert advice that might help you reach your goal. Resources can include people, activities, books, websites, programs, etc. ERIC (through the library website) is an excellent resource for finding professional articles related to education topics.
6. Make a specific plan of action to reach your goal. Outline specific steps of activities that will be helpful to you. Decide which resources will be helpful to you.
7. Write your plan for the goal including:
 - Which area you chose (Leadership or Collaboration)
 - Your specific goal and why you set that goal (rationale)
 - The specific (actionable) steps you plan to take to reach your goal
 - The resources you plan to use to help you reach your goal
 Be sure to edit and check for errors

8. Copy your goal into your LiveText Portfolio in the appropriate area on the Professional Responsibilities page
9. **Goal Two** is written using the same process. This time, you can choose any of the other areas of the Professional Disposition Rubric. Repeat steps three through eight with your new area of the rubric.
10. Finally, remember to work on reaching our goal before and during student teaching. You will be reporting back in about your goal after mid-term.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

How Do I Contact Academic Advisors & Staff?

When candidates officially declare their intent to pursue a program in teacher education, they are assigned a qualified academic advisor in that area. Faculty advisors are available to assist them in planning an academic program. Candidates have the responsibility to meet all requirements for their degree and certification. Candidates are urged to take advantage of the advisory and consultation services available at Cal U. Candidates are free to consult with professors, academic advisors, department chairpersons, the deans, and the staff of the Office of Student Success. All of these university representatives maintain regular office hours for consultations. All candidates are encouraged to seek academic advising regularly. The Candidate is responsible for initiating advising contact and preparing for advising sessions. Advising relationships between Cal U candidates and their academic advisors are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) confidentiality.

Your academic advisor/ advisors are listed in the student information section of VIP, or you can look in Starfish too.

Additionally, you can contact your academic department; these are listed below:

- Department of Childhood Education, Keystone Hall 302; 724-938- 4135
- Department of Secondary Education and Administrative Leadership, Keystone Hall 408: 724-938-4140
- Department of Special Education, Keystone Hall 108-A; 724-938-4142
- Department of Applied Engineering and Technology; Coover Hall 105; 724-938-4085
- Field Experience & Student Teaching- 208 Keystone:
Fieldexperiences@calu.edu.
- Dean College of Education & Human Services: Keystone Hall, Room 200B 724-938-4125

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR BASIC SKILLS TESTS?

- You must show proficiency in reading, writing, and math. There are several ways to show proficiency including: SAT, ACT, PAPA, Praxis CORE, and MAT 130. It is possible to mix and match these things. Check the PDE information by Googling “PDE Certification Testing” or by going to <https://www.education.pa.gov/educators/certification/certtestingrequirements/pages/default.aspx>
- The Certification Test and Score Requirements is an Excel file. Choose the Basic Skills page.
- Be sure to note the difference between passing scores and minimum composite scores.
- Check your ACT and SAT subscores first to see if you passed any that way.
- Check score requirements in Excel document. To find this document, type the following into Google: “PDE Certification testing.”
- MAT 130 with a grade of B or higher can meet math requirement, but is not able to help with composite scoring.
- If you want to see if you can pass using composite scoring – go to the PDE Certification testing page and check on the composite score calculator. Enter all scores. If you pass – print the page to use with Admission to Teacher Ed. Packet.
- Register for Praxis CORE tests (reading, writing, math) at ETS.org
- Register for PAPA tests at ES Pearson
- Be sure to prepare using sample questions first.

WHAT IS THE BUTLER CCC PRAXIS PREP COURSE?

- Praxis Core / PAPA Prep
- PECT Pre-K Early Childhood and Special Education PreK-8.
- PA Praxis Middle Level 4-8 for Teachers and Teacher Candidates Subtests 5144 and 5155 and 4-8 Core Exams. Act 48 approved.
- Praxis II Mathematics Content Knowledge 5161 Grades 7-12
- We provide customized training workshops and courses at your choice of locations or online for traditional and alternative certification candidates.
 - Content-specific videos provided. • Any group size. We are flexible.
- Contact: Annie Lindsay, Praxis/PECT Coordinator Butler County Community College 724-287-8711, Ext. 8201 Register Now!
- Visit www.passpraxis.com

There are also Praxis/ PECT Test preparation materials in the library!

CONTACT OR VISIT THE CIRCULATION & RESERVE DESK LOUIS L. MANDERINO LIBRARY.

- 724-938-4091 or -4092 • Library Lobby
- Directions: 1st floor, enter library, on the left

WHAT IS THE CAL U VULCAN LEARNING COMMONS (VLC)?

“VLC: The student’s second most important place...after the classroom”

The VLC offers Cal U students free academic support services. VLC peer assistants work with Cal U students on reading, writing, speaking and course-specific content. As well, they assist students with study skills such as note taking, test taking, time managing, and text reading. The VLC is composed of two centers: the Foundry Writing Center and the Learning Assistance Center. Both centers are located in Noss Hall. The Foundry Writing Center is located in Noss 110. The Learning Assistance Center is located in Noss 115. Both centers are a safe and welcoming place for the student to study, learn, and get assistance from peer educators.

THE FOUNDRY WRITING CENTER (FWC) Services include: Individual consultation with student writers; face-to-face writing consultations; online writing consultations (synchronous and asynchronous); writing workshops; assistance to ESL students; assistance to master’s and doctoral degree students with their thesis and dissertation. To schedule a Writing session, contact the Foundry Writing Center by WCONLINE (see below), phone at 4336, by email at: vlc@calu.edu, or by visiting Noss 110. The Foundry Writing Center is open Monday – Thursday, 9 am – 6 pm and on Friday 9 am – 2 pm. Consultations start the 2nd week of the semester.

THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (LAC) Services include: Individual face-to-face tutoring; individual online tutoring; study groups (SG); supplemental instruction (SI); assistance with placements and proficiency exams (such as Praxis, etc.). We provide assistance in mathematics, statistics, computer science, computer information, natural science, electrical science, accounting, business courses, Cal U Math Placement, communication disorder, history, criminal justice, psychology, and study/learning skills. To schedule a tutorial session, contact the Learning Assistance Center via WCONLINE (see below), phone at 5893, email at vlc@calu.edu, or by visiting Noss 115. The Learning Assistance Center is open Monday – Thursday, 9 am – 8 pm, and on Friday 9 am – 2 pm. Tutoring starts the 2nd week of the semester.

WCONLINE – Both the Foundry Writing Center and the Learning Assistance Center use WCONLINE, a scheduling, recordkeeping, and reporting software. Students can self-schedule. They need to create an account when using the software for the first time. If a student needs help to create an account or to use WCONLINE, please stop by Noss 110/115 and one of the staff members will be glad to assist. CalU’s WCONLINE site is: <https://cal-u.mywconline.com/>. Please note that a student logging into WCONLINE must select FWC Fall 2019 (for writing assistance) or LAC Fall 2019 (for course-specific tutoring) and that schedules for both centers will be available on the 2nd week of the semester.

If there are any questions, please email Dr. Boukaabar (boukaabar@calu.edu).

What Other Help Is Available for Classes?

WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER?

<https://www.calu.edu/inside/student-resources/academic-success/index.aspx>

- The Academic Success Center is a centralized campus academic resource for all students. We offer students the opportunity to become engaged and competent learners by providing a path to develop and strengthen important academic skills for success. We proudly provide a wide range of student support services, one-on-one training, workshops, and academic resources that can be tailored to meet individual student needs.
- Become an engaged and competent learner with help from the Success Center in Noss Hall, Room 211. Here you can learn the academic skills that will allow you to set goals, achieve academic success and become the architect of your own future at Cal U and beyond.
- No appointment is needed - you can walk right in! The Success Center is open from 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Monday to Thursdays, and from 8:30 a.m.-noon on Fridays.
- At the Success Center, graduate assistants are available to answer your academic questions and help you with topics such as:
 - Work ethic, commitment and motivation,
 - Time management,
 - Note-taking and study strategies,
 - Test-taking and test anxiety,
 - Stress management,
 - Scheduling and registering for classes,
 - Communicating with professors (email and in person),
 - Your faculty adviser,
 - Academic procedures and forms,
 - Communication (social media, Cal U email)

WHAT IS SUPPORT FOR SUCCESS (S4S)?

- Support for Success (S4S) is designed for new students identified as those who would benefit from initial academic support. Students are notified of their participation through their acceptance letter from Cal U. During the summer, students receive additional information about the program and have the opportunity to meet with their Success Center Leaders. Throughout the fall

semester, students meet with their Success Center Leaders and attend workshops.

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES?

WHAT IS THE COUNSELING CENTER?

- The **Counseling Center** advises students on ways to make the best personal, social, psychological and career choices during a time of transition in their lives. The center can make referrals to a long-term treatment provider and direct you to other campus resources. Hours: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday
- Counseling Center: 724-938-4056: The Counseling Center in Carter Hall is staffed by one licensed psychologist and two licensed professional counselors. These therapists aim to help students overcome personal issues and stressful situations such as:
 - Relationship distress,
 - Academic difficulties,
 - Anxiety,
 - Depression,
 - Alcohol and/or drug use,
 - Trauma.
- You can feel comfortable about coming to the Counseling Center. Services are strictly confidential according to state and federal law, and there is no additional charge to California University students.
- Services provided in the Cal U Counseling Center include:
 - Drug and alcohol programs. The Counseling Center provides an education and intervention program for students with past or current drug and/or alcohol problems. If you need more intensive services, the center can provide assessment and referrals.
 - Psychological consultation. You may visit the Counseling Center for a psychological consultation or short-term counseling, a referral to a long-term treatment provider, or information about other helpful resources. Services are confidential; visit the center or call 724-938-4056 for an appointment.

- Crisis intervention. If you need help during a crisis, simply walk in to the Counseling Center during regular hours for an emergency psychological evaluation, or call to request a consultation with one of the center's therapists. After hours, call the California University Police Department at 724-938-4357 (HELP) for emergency assistance.
- The University has formal agreements with a local psychiatrist who is available for psychiatric consultations. During a mental health emergency, the psychiatrist may provide medical services beyond the scope of the Counseling Center. The psychiatric consultant, as well as selected professionals at local clinics, can provide a broad range of mental health, alcohol and other drug assessment and treatment services to assist during a crisis.
- There are many people to help you at Cal U, and our counselors have developed a strong referral system. For example, they can refer you to other campus offices for help with financial aid, tutoring and academic advising. Counselors also can make referrals to the Student Health Center, the Office for Students with Disabilities, the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Women's Center, and campus ministries.

WHAT ARE FERPA AND THE PARENT/GUEST PORTAL?

- The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects students' education records, and grants students the exclusive right to view and share their education records. Education records include, but are not limited to: transcripts, grades, class schedules, financial aid documents, and billing statements. Through VIP, students may register parents and other trusted individuals for the Parent/Guest Portal. The Parent/Guest Portal is Cal U's secure, online option for authorized parents and individuals to view student education records. Students may add and remove Parent/Guest Portal users at any time. For more information about FERPA and the Parent/Guest Portal, search *parent/guest portal* on our website. Students, parents, and guests with questions about the Parent/Guest Portal may email family@calu.edu.

WHAT ARE THE ACADEMIC SCHEDULING AND PLACEMENT TESTING CENTERS?

- **The Scheduling Center**, located in Noss 210, and open from 8am-4pm. The Scheduling Center serves to coordinate schedule development for all first-time and transfer students, registration in developmental courses, and the monitoring of successful completion of such work. The Scheduling Center also serves students who have not declared a major. The Academic Scheduling Center does not replace faculty advising, but helps to coordinate and supplement a student's academic experience.

- **The Placement Testing Center** ensures that students begin with courses that meet their academic needs. Students' SAT or ACT scores (or transfer credits) will determine whether they are required to take a placement test. Students who do not submit SAT/ACT scores or transfer credits must take placement tests. The Center serves to coordinate placement testing to determine students' level of ability in mathematics and writing. The Center also provides retesting opportunities for students after waiting a period of two weeks.
 - Students who do not achieve predetermined scores on these tests must enroll in appropriate **developmental courses**, such as ENG 100 English Language Skills and DMA 092 Introductory Algebra. Because these developmental courses are preparatory to a university academic experience, the credits awarded do not count toward the fulfillment of the number of credits for graduation, nor may they be used in fulfillment of General Education requirements. However, the grades achieved in these courses are used in establishing a student's grade point average, class standing, eligibility for financial aid, and eligibility for participation in co-curricular activities. Moreover, students who do well in preparatory courses also do well in college-level classes.
 - The University offers the opportunity to earn undergraduate credit through the **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)** and **DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)**. The CLEP Program is comprised of General and Subject Examinations. The General Examinations are a series of tests in four separate areas: English Composition, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Humanities, and Social Sciences/History. The Subject Examinations comprehensively test a single subject, such as General Psychology, Microeconomics, etc. A student who passes one of these examinations is awarded credit for a comparable course at the university.
 - The DSST Program offers over 30 different examinations on a single subject, such as Principles of Statistics and Fundamentals of College Algebra. A student who passes one of these examinations is awarded credit for a comparable course at the university.
 - The CLEP and DSST Programs are administered by the Placement Testing Center. A maximum of thirty (30) credits can be earned through CLEP and/or DSST. In addition to the test fee, there is a one-time fee of \$25.00 for evaluation and recording of the examination results on a student's transcript. For additional information, please call (724) 938-5779.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IN THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Meet the staff in the Office of Academic Success.

- Dr. Daniel Engstrom
Associate Provost/Associate Vice President of Academic Success
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WHAT IS PEER MENTORING?

- The Peer Mentoring program matches first-year students with upperclassmen, typically in the same major. Have a question? Ask your mentor! The peer mentor serves as a support and resource person who provides information, encouragement and guidance.
- It's a fact: Cal U freshmen who have mentors move on to their second year of college at a 10% higher rate than freshmen without mentors.
- The freshman or transfer student assigned to a mentor is called a protégé. The Peer Mentoring program offers each protégé:
 - A built-in resource/support person who can answer questions and tell you what to expect when you arrive on campus.
 - A guide to help you find your way around, before and after classes start.
 - A contact who can keep you up to date on requirements and deadlines in your major and show you how to get involved in campus life.
- Mentors are available to all first-semester students, both freshmen and transfer. Assignments are made on a first come, first served basis.

- To request a peer mentor, please email mentoring@calu.edu.

WHAT IS STARFISH?

- Starfish is Cal U's newest online software tool that provides you with a central location to connect to the people and services that can help you stay on your path to success. Students can access the Starfish system via the Vulcan Information Portal and click the Starfish link. Starfish will automatically provide you with connections to your current instructors, advisors, and campus services. If you have a question or need some help, you can "raise your hand" in Starfish. The mobile-friendly tool can help us support you when you need it and make it easy for you to find the right people and services to help you finish what you start.
- Starfish connects you to campus resources using your laptop or smartphone. Once you've set up your Starfish profile in VIP, you can "raise your hand" to ask for help with an academic or financial concern, or schedule an appointment with a professor during office hours.
- Starfish helps you stay on track toward graduation, with reminders about important deadlines and dates. The one-stop "Services" tab lets you reach staff in Academic Records, Financial Aid, Peer Mentoring and other offices. And it's a great feeling when a professor sends "kudos" to acknowledge a job well done.

WHAT IS FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE?

- **First Year Seminar** and **Intro to University Studies** provide the foundation for learning how to achieve academic success in college. These courses introduce topics that will enhance students' overall college experience, such as time management, career exploration, library resources and extra-curricular opportunities. Students also learn to develop and apply essential academic success skills, and enhance critical thinking and communication skills. Overall, this course is the first step to student academic success.
- First Year Seminar and Intro to University Studies are a one-credit course that all first-year students are required to complete as a component of the General Education menu. Transfer students are not required to complete either of these courses if they transfer an equivalent course, or transfer a total of 24 or more

credits. Transfer students wishing to enroll in either of these courses should contact the Office of Academic Success at (724) 938-1523.

WHAT IS THE FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION PLAN (FYGP)?

- The **Four-Year Graduation Plan (FYGP)** is a commitment to help students stay on track and reach their undergraduate college degree in four years. The no-cost program helps students set academic goals, create clear academic plans, and stay on track by following program guidelines and requirements. The plan provides eligible students with a unique combination of advising, priority course scheduling, and individual attention, which helps students stay on their path to success. Eligible students will be automatically enrolled after attending a New Student Orientation. During the fall semester, students must attend one mandatory meeting where a FYGP contract is completed and signed. Exploratory Studies students must declare a major by the last day of their first semester to continue enrollment in the FYGP program. The Four-Year Graduation Plan reinforces Cal U's commitment to student success.

WHAT ARE CAL U'S LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

- California University of Pennsylvania's (Cal U) Learning communities consist of a cluster of courses organized around a major in which a group of students are enrolled as a cohort. Each Learning Community cohort consist of three to five different classes. Students in the Learning Communities are enrolled in each class of the cohort. The Learning Community faculty facilitate work together as a team to coordinate classroom topics and assignments. In addition, Learning Community students also work together closely on group projects, study groups, and consequently develop stronger relationships with their fellow students.
- These intentional groupings of students enhance students' social and academic integration and provide opportunities for them to make interpersonal connections within the larger campus community. Many universities are making learning communities a key component of first-year initiatives. The interdisciplinary nature of the learning communities and the emphasis of social and academic development align with first-year experience theories.

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES?

- **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** allows certain students to receive academic credit for learning acquired through **qualifying life experiences** when they meet the goals of a particular Cal U course. Qualifying experiences may include: Work or military training, personal educational growth, volunteer work, and

independent certifications. Credit is awarded when a student is able to demonstrate **transferable learning**, or knowledge that can be applied to new or different situations. Contact Holly Vadella at vadella@calu.edu for further information and forms.

- **The Student Ombudsperson** is available to students who need information, general assistance, or encounter difficulties with processes, procedures, or people on campus. Established means of dealing with such concerns are used (i.e., students are informed of the appropriate processes or procedures to follow and are expected to use these). The Office of Academic Success monitors the concern(s) and becomes directly involved only if established means do not resolve the issue(s).
- **Exploratory Studies** is a major for students who are exploring career options before selecting a major program of study. The Office of Academic Success and the Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC) work collaboratively to help students discover a career path that best fits their values and interests. Whether working with an Academic Counselor to identify courses that may align with a potential career or meeting with a Career Coach to discuss various occupations, we are here to support you through the decision process.
- Students in First Year Seminar explore career options through the use of the FOCUS 2 Career Assessment and the development of Career Advantage Plans offered by the CPDC. A special course, XCP 194, Career Planning, is offered to assist students in confirming and/or clarifying career objectives.
- In addition, the Career and Professional Development Center is a great resource for students who have questions about their majors, the kinds of careers in their majors, the future availability of jobs in an area, or simply what they want to do in life.

Additional Information

WHAT ARE GOOD SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS?

It is important to consider your presence on social media when preparing to student teach. Consider the following:

- What am I posting on my accounts? Is it appropriate? Would I want my boss or students to see the things I am posting?
- Who all can see what I am posting?
- Are my accounts public or private?

Don't forget that many schools will check your social media accounts both before and after they hire you! Students will also often try to look you up on social media, so be mindful of what you are posting.

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR FIELD?

There are a few additional things to consider before entering your field placement. For example:

- **Transportation:** Do you know where the location of your school is? Will you need transportation to get there? Many students will carpool with one another if they have the same field placement site and find this to be a convenient means of getting there together. Communicate with your peers if you think carpooling would be a good idea, or if it is necessary for you to get to your site.
- **Professional Attire:** Keep in mind that when you are student teaching, you should be dressed professionally for the job. Dress modestly and appropriately; if you are unsure if an outfit is appropriate, ask someone else!
- **Professional Behavior:** Remember that when you are student teaching, you are representing CalU and the program overall. Behave professionally! This also means do not use your phone inappropriately or when you are not supposed to.