How Our Certification Only Program Works

A distinctive of Judson is the sequence of Four Gates that mark the progress of all teacher candidates in all certification programs. These gates are described below.

Our program begins with a sequence of Gate 1 activities, all of which are very unique to Judson. The initial component is a course entitled Explorations in Education (EDU 101) which will help you identify, understand, and develop key traits of effective educators as identified by research. Those who complete the course with a grade of B- or better will be allowed to participate in the culminating Day of Assessments during which you will have the opportunity to demonstrate these key teacher traits in a group interview, impromptu writing sample (sans computer!), and an oral reading. Those successfully completing the Day of Assessments will be invited to apply for admission into the School of Education.

Gate 2 is a multifaceted process for becoming formally admitted into the School of Education, a process that is monitored in EDU 201: Strategic Education. Requirements include a written application (2 pages), three references, TB test, fingerprint/background check (although this may be required as a part of Gate 1, depending on your program), a grade point average of at least 2.750 with no grades lower than a C in any teacher-certification-related courses, and a preliminary portfolio examination. (The portfolio, which demonstrates growth over time, will be explained and begun in EDU 101.) Prospective educators will also complete two “practicum” experiences (IIE and IIH) for a minimum of 65 hours in classrooms. To complete this gate, demonstration must be provided of passing all four Tests of Academic Proficiency (TAPs). At this point you will be considered a “teacher candidate,” a status that is required before beginning any “methods” courses.

Gate 3 begins early in the s-semester “methods” sequence with another application…for Practicum III and Student Teaching. This “paperwork” is required six to 10 months before the actual experiences begin to allow sufficient time for a placement to be requested and hopefully secured, but all placements are at the discretion of local school districts. (Please…do not take any actions to try and obtain your own placements!) While Judson has a good track record of placing teacher candidates, many district accept only those who are exceptionally well qualified, so you should always be striving to do your best. In addition to the written application, the same grade and grade point average from Gate 2 (better than C, greater than 2.750, respectively) must be maintained and, prior to student teaching, the appropriate Content Area exam for your area of certification must be passed. At the conclusion of the “methods” coursework will be the Practicum III experience. Typically in April or May, this is a 4-week, full-time, “mini student teaching” opportunity where you will be actually writing lesson plans and delivering instruction for at least two
subjects per day for the 4-week period. With a successful completion of this experience (as determined by both your cooperating teacher and university field supervisor) and a satisfactory portfolio review, teacher candidates move on to the final gate in the certification program.

Gate 4 requirements are typically completed during the 14-week student teaching experience. A major student teaching requirement includes the intensive, multifaceted Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). This first of two state assessments for this gate includes the videotaping of a series of lessons that you teach and lots of writing and reflection about the planning, instructional delivery, and assessment activities that are incorporated into your videotaped lessons. Additional Gate 4 components parallel those in previous gates: an application (this one from the state for your state-issued teaching license and any endorsements for which you may be qualified), grade and grade point checks (with the same better-than-C and GPA ≥ 2.750 expectations), favorable recommendations from your cooperating teacher and field supervisor, a final portfolio evaluation, and yes...one last written test, the Assessment of Professional Teaching (APT). With all of the i’s dotted, t’s crossed, grades submitted, assessments completed, and bills paid, congratulations! You are now at the end of the path that leads to your initial teaching licensure!

While every effort has been made to ensure that this this and all other documents and materials describing the programs and expectations in the School of Education are accurate and up to date, there is an obligatory disclaimer: All requirements, including but particularly those that come from the state, are subject to change.