

**Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the
Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at
Notre Dame de Namur University**

Division of Standards, Accreditation, and Workforce Investment

June 2026

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at Notre Dame de Namur University April 19-22, 2026. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation** is made for the institution.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions
For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution**

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Met
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	Met
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Met
4) Continuous Improvement	Met
5) Program Impact	Met

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject with Intern	7	6	1	0
Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs with Intern	7	7	0	0
Preliminary Education Specialist: Extensive Support Needs with Intern	7	7	0	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence

- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Accreditation Team Report**

Institution: Notre Dame de Namur University

Dates of Visit: April 19-22, 2026

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation

Previous History of Accreditation Status

Accreditation Reports	Accreditation Status
May 20, 2019	Accreditation
May 18, 2018	Accreditation with Stipulations

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, completers, and local school personnel. The team obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All general preconditions and preconditions for all credential programs were **met**.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential with Intern programs were **met**, except for **Program Standard 3, which was met with concerns**.

All program standards for the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential: Mild to Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs with Intern programs were **met**.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were **met**.

Overall Recommendation

Given the above findings on preconditions, program standards, and common standards, the review team recommends an accreditation status of **Accreditation**.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements:

- Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential with Intern
- Preliminary Education Specialist Credential: Mild to Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs with Intern

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Notre Dame de Namur University continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
- Notre Dame de Namur University be permitted to propose new educator preparation programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation

Accreditation Team

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Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Program Review Addendum
Course Syllabi and Course of Study
Candidate Advisement Materials
Accreditation Website
Faculty Vitae and Job Descriptions
Candidate Files
Assessment Materials

Candidate and Employee Handbooks
Survey Results
Performance Expectation Materials
Precondition Responses
Performance Assessment Results
Examination Results
Accreditation Data Dashboard
Advisory Council Agendas and Surveys
Faculty Recruitment Materials
Cooperating Teacher Workshop Materials

Interviews Conducted

Constituencies	TOTAL
Candidates	40
Completers	11
Employers	1
Institutional Administration	17
Program Coordinators	3
Faculty	12
TPA Coordinator	1
TPA Faculty	7
Field Supervisors – Program	18
Field Supervisors – District	10
Field Placement Coordinators	2
Credential Analysts	2
Advisory Board Members	8
Community Partners	3
University Collaborators	3
TOTAL	138

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed more than once due to multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background Information

Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) was founded in 1851 and is a WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredited, private, Catholic, coeducational master's and undergraduate degree completion university located on the San Francisco Peninsula in Silicon Valley. NDNU strives to broaden the perspectives and outlook of its students by exposing them to peers with diverse backgrounds, cultures and world views. NDNU's core values include community, diversity, excellence, goodness, integrity, justice, learning and service.

NDNU is in the process of transformation and renewal. Faced with significant enrollment decline and other challenging factors, the institution began a transition in 2021 to operate primarily as a graduate university and adopted a mostly hybrid or online mode of instruction. University programs were reduced to three schools offering programs in clinical psychology, education, and business. In 2025, the Board of Trustees sold the physical campus property, thus generating resources to eliminate debts and continue the transition. The tuition of select programs has been reduced by 30% to make them more competitive for potential students.

NDNU's strategic plan includes goals associated with fiscal sustainability, market recognition and brand awareness, multimodal educational excellence, community and student-centered experiences, and new external partnerships and alumni relations.

Education Unit

The mission of the School of Education (SOE) is to prepare compassionate, competent, and culturally responsive educators who are committed to fostering equitable learning environments. SOE faculty and staff are dedicated to four key initiatives that guide their programs and reflect their commitment to excellence in teacher education:

- Nurturing the whole child by equipping educators with skills in social-emotional learning, cultural competence, and human-centered pedagogy,
- Developing strong partnerships regionally and internationally by collaborating with partners on residency programs that support district teacher education pipelines, including in special education,
- Reaching a broader audience by adopting online modalities that increase program accessibility and inclusivity to meet diverse candidate needs, and
- Preparing educators to effectively leverage artificial intelligence (AI) that is ethical, human-centered, and that recognizes AI as a tool to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

The SOE is led by the Dean and two Program Directors lead the credential programs with the support of two credential analysts. The SOE offers Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential Programs and the Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Programs for Mild to Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs. All programs offer intern pathways. In 2024-2025, NDNU issued 41 credentials. Candidate demographics include: 57.2% female, 39.1% male, 0.8% nonbinary, and 2.9% declined to state; 47.1% White, 29.2% Hispanic/LatinX, 8.5% Asian, 5.5% Black or African American, 3.7% Two or more races, 2.2%

Declined to State Race/Ethnicity, 2.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1.5% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. NDNU employs 47 part-time faculty and staff as course instructors, university supervisors, and placement coordinators to support candidates' success in their programs.

Table 1: Enrollment and Completion Data

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2024-25)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2025-26)
Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject	9	72
Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs	10	21

The Visit

This site visit was conducted virtually. Institutional and program constituencies were interviewed via technology. The visit proceeded in accordance with all normal accreditation protocols.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

After reviewing all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be **met**.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Preliminary Multiple Subject with Intern and Preliminary Single Subject with Intern

Program Design

Notre Dame de Namur University's Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential Program are located within the School of Education (SOE). The leadership structure consists of a dean, followed by one program director for each program, along with placement coordinators and clinical field supervisors. Faculty members and cooperating teachers in K-12 schools collaborate closely with program staff to facilitate placements. The multiple subject program offers two pathways: traditional and intern. A new residency pathway is beginning this summer with 10 multiple subject candidates. The single subject program offers two pathways: traditional and intern. The single subject program includes the following content areas: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, World Languages, Physical Education, Art, Music, Dance, and Theater.

Candidates receive support from clinical field supervisors and faculty who work in partnership with cooperating teachers, intern mentors, and administrators in the K-12 settings. Cooperating teachers, district mentors, and administrators collaborate regularly with clinical field supervisors who work closely with program leaders. Cooperating teachers are offered the opportunity to participate in monthly professional development.

Communication within the credential program and the larger education unit is structured through regular monthly meetings for each program and the entire SOE. The executive assistant to the dean sends out regular updates to faculty and a monthly electronic newsletter to candidates. At the end of each spring semester, the program director convenes faculty during the annual education retreat to review program data, reflect on the academic year, and plan for the year ahead. Input from constituencies and partners is sought through the Advisory Council, which meets biannually with K-12 administrators and community partners to discuss feedback and common goals. Additionally, SOE hosts workshops each semester for cooperating teachers and district liaisons to share information and plan for the upcoming academic year.

The program has gone through a significant transition in the past two years regarding course modality. The program has shifted from primarily in person to primarily online or hybrid courses. This move has been supported by a technology team that facilitated training for faculty on the new platform with an emphasis on continued engagement for candidates. Faculty noted that although the transition was new, they were able to collaborate regarding best practices and provide clear formatting for course offerings. The program was certified for the SB488 literacy requirement in September 2025. Additional single subject dance and theatre credential programs were approved by the Committee on Accreditation in 2025.

SOE leadership emphasized a revitalized commitment to fostering a strong sense of community among candidates, faculty, and partners that is grounded in social, emotional, and cultural competencies with a human-centered approach to teaching and learning. This focus is strengthened through new partnerships with the Statewide Residency Technical Assistance Center (SRTAC), the California Department of Education Foundation Residency Lab, and the Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child at NDNU. SOE leadership anticipates that these partnerships will support programs in deepening relationships among program leadership, faculty, and candidate development. Over the past two years, the program has expanded its impact through four regional residency partnerships supported by Commission grants. One grant will focus on multiple subject residents in a single district. Efforts to increase accessibility and inclusivity have included expanded online course offerings, a 30% reduction in tuition, and the addition of evening classes to better meet candidates' needs. SOE leadership also noted the institution's growing emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI), innovation, and digital transformation, highlighting the use of AI as a supportive instructional tool and the importance of ethical teaching practices with AI. To support continuous improvement, the program is investing in faculty professional development for online tools to enhance formative feedback and has begun the gradual integration of AI-assisted technology (such as Edthena) into clinical practice observations.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The NDNU credential programs are structured in a three-semester format. Candidates may begin the program in fall, spring, or summer. Currently, candidates complete coursework primarily in synchronous online classes with clinical practice in person at assigned school sites. All multiple subject and single subject candidates take four foundation courses prior to their specific credential area methods courses in their second semester. This semester provides the foundation for the next two semesters of methods courses and student/intern teaching seminars and placements. One course specifically prepares candidates to support English learners by developing students' academic language, comprehension, and content knowledge across the core curriculum, introducing English Language Development (ELD) standards, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies, and legal requirements, while addressing dual language development, linguistic structures, and sociocultural influences. The course also emphasizes scaffolding, differentiation, assessment, and literacy-focused field experience.

For single subject candidates, the second semester centers on the integration of pedagogy, curriculum design, and initial clinical practice. Candidates engage in both shared and discipline-specific learning experiences, where they develop cross-disciplinary instructional strategies, incorporate emerging tools such as artificial intelligence for planning and assessment, and refine subject-specific pedagogy under the guidance of credentialed mentors. This work is applied in supervised classroom placements, supported by structured performance assessment preparation. In the third semester, candidates deepen their clinical practice through increased teaching responsibilities while the methods courses include content-area literacy, academic language development, and data-informed instruction. Emphasis is placed on applying research-based strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners, alongside the continued use of

formative and summative assessment to guide instruction and demonstrate readiness for independent teaching practice. Faculty discussed the integration of methods course assignments with clinical practice requirements, noting that candidates were able to practice these skills and reflect on them when back in class to develop a stronger understanding of pedagogy and instructional practices.

One course (EDU 4405 Teaching and Pedagogy) is structured as a single course with multiple subject-specific sections (e.g., English, Math) rather than separate courses for each credential area. This model allows flexibility in offering sections based on enrollment while maintaining a shared course framework. The course includes both “in common” sessions and subject-specific seminars. In the shared sessions, candidates across all content areas engage in universal pedagogical strategies, including the integration of tools such as artificial intelligence for planning, instruction, and assessment. These sessions emphasize collaboration and the interconnectedness of knowledge across disciplines. Following the common session, candidates break into content-specific groups led by credentialed faculty mentors who focus on subject-specific pedagogical skills. Course planning is coordinated between the lead instructor and content mentors to ensure alignment between shared and specialized instruction, supporting both general teaching competencies and discipline-specific expertise.

For Multiple Subject candidates, the final two semesters are designed to integrate the methods courses with supervised clinical practice. In the second semester, candidates focus on foundational instructional strategies in literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science, applying these approaches in their classroom placements while receiving structured support for performance assessment requirements. In the third semester, candidates build on this foundation by extending their literacy instruction into upper elementary grades and strengthening their assessment practices to inform and differentiate instruction. Across both semesters, there is a consistent emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between coursework and clinical practice, ensuring candidates can effectively translate pedagogical theory into responsive, standards-aligned teaching for diverse student populations.

Multiple subject candidates complete two semesters of clinical practice. One is typically in a primary elementary setting and the second in an upper-elementary grade. Interns are in the same placement for the entire academic year. Single subject candidates typically complete one semester at the middle school level and one at the high school level, unless they serve as interns. At least one placement occurs in a diverse, multicultural K-12 setting serving English Learners and students from varied socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

The Program Director and placement coordinators meet regularly to review candidate needs and cooperating teacher availability before making placements. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are in place with approximately 60 partners, including school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education.

The program offers clinical practice assignments in three phases: supervision, advisement, and evaluation from both university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Clinical experiences are organized into three progressive phases—observation, guided practice, and independent

teaching. During the observation phase, candidates engage in focused classroom observations guided by the cooperating teacher while candidates assist on a limited basis. During guided practice, candidates gradually assume teaching roles and receive feedback from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Six formal visits are conducted during the semester, including formal observation reports and mid-term and final evaluations. In the independent teaching phase, candidates assume full responsibility for instruction with support.

Candidates receive frequent feedback from both the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, with formal evaluations conducted at midterm and final using a standardized assessment tool. The supervisor and cooperating teacher regularly communicate to monitor progress and ensure consistency in evaluation. Additional structures are in place to address concerns, including formal intervention and conflict resolution processes when needed.

Assessment of program competencies occurs throughout candidates' progression, with specific evaluations tied to coursework and clinical practice. During the recruiting process, the program director meets with potential candidates to explain assessment requirements, including the teaching performance assessment, assessment timelines, and evaluation methods. Once admitted, candidates create a digital folder to store their work. Candidates work with the program director to create a personalized program plan, which they review at mid-term each semester to ensure the candidate stays on track. Candidates are advised throughout the program by the program director, faculty, and their university supervisors.

In interviews, candidates described their experience in the program as both supportive and well-structured. Candidates shared that expectations were clearly communicated through detailed rubrics. Assignments were thoughtfully connected to clinical practice, encouraging reflection on and demonstration of their learning. Many candidates appreciated the emphasis on collaboration, noting that group work, although not their favorite activity, had clear instructions and expectations. Exemplars for assignments provided by faculty contributed to candidate success. Opportunities to teach their peers and receive feedback from both classmates and instructors were particularly meaningful.

Candidates highlighted the program's supportive environment. Faculty were described as approachable and responsive, especially in helping candidates navigate challenges such as language barriers or personal responsibilities. Candidates valued the flexibility offered through office hours, scheduling support, and availability of summer courses.

The Education Committee, composed of experienced SOE faculty, monitors candidate progress across credential programs. Candidates may be referred to the committee by the program director, advisors, instructors, cooperating teachers, or field supervisors. The committee meets with referred candidates and collaborates with them to develop individualized plans for improvement. Support for struggling candidates include regular check-ins with the program director. Multiple resources are available for academic support, including tutoring and mentoring. Candidates provide feedback on their experiences through surveys and informal discussions, which help program leadership assess program effectiveness.

Candidate assessment is structured and comprehensive. Coursework includes assignments linking research and pedagogy to practice, classroom observations, tutoring, and field experiences. During student teaching or internship, candidates are observed at least six times by a university supervisor, in addition to receiving mentoring from cooperating teachers or district mentors. Mid-semester and end-of-semester three-way conferences between the university supervisor, district mentor and candidate are designed to review progress toward meeting the Teaching Performance Expectations. NDNU places emphasis on TPE 7, Effective Literacy Instruction where four of the twelve required observations focus on literacy, supported by NDNU-developed literacy feedback tools.

While cooperating teachers had knowledge of the 10 hours of orientation and training requirement, they believed participation was not required in the meetings and were unable to confirm they had provided information to the program to verify their training regarding cognitive coaching, adult learning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices. Program leadership shared that they provided the training but were unable to verify cooperating teacher attendance and completion of the requirement. They acknowledged there was an oversight in consistently documenting attendance and compiling evidence of completion in the standardized verification form format over the past two years.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates are assessed through coursework assignments, professional behavior checklists, supervised teaching based on the teaching performance expectations (TPEs) and CalTPA. Candidates are provided with a program handbook and an individualized progress monitoring document that outline the program expectations and requirements for the preliminary credential recommendation. For coursework assessments, candidates are provided with the assessment directions and rubric in the assigned course.

Faculty and university supervisors described assessment as performance-based and aligned to the TPEs across coursework and clinical practice. Candidates engage in assignments that involve planning instruction, teaching lessons, assessing student learning, and reflecting on their practice within clinical placements. While TPEs are introduced early, the emphasis is on learning to teach children, not just standards. Coursework is connected to clinical experiences, with candidates applying learning in classrooms and bringing back lesson plans, evidence, and video reflections to analyze their progress. Faculty and supervisors collaborate regularly to review candidate development and assessment alignment with the TPE elements.

Candidates confirmed that clear, detailed rubrics were consistently provided for all assignments. Literacy expectations (TPE 7) are explicit and supported, particularly within the single subject methods coursework, with attention to alignment between instruction and expectations. The use of exemplars provides clarity on assignment criteria and expectations. Faculty were praised for modeling and scaffolding instructional practices, allowing candidates to experience these strategies as learners and apply them in their own teaching.

Candidates are monitored throughout their progress, with personalized interventions implemented by the program directors and faculty when challenges are identified. The structured support system ensures that candidates have access to the necessary resources to achieve their goals and meet state requirements effectively. The first intervention comes from the instructor or university supervisor. The director is the next line of support who may call in the academic success center. The Education Committee meets as needed to provide a formal improvement plan. One supervisor noted that the program is committed to their candidates, “when they [the program] picks you, they will get you to the exact place you need to be.” Another supervisor shared, “community is an action word in this program.”

Candidates reported multiple opportunities to provide feedback on program support, including course evaluations and exit interviews. They described consistent access to faculty and university supervisors, noting open communication, responsiveness, and an understanding of candidates’ full-time work responsibilities. Candidates also indicated that support structures such as small class settings, community-building efforts, and individualized guidance helped them navigate program and state assessment requirements. One candidate shared, “the university does a good job curating a great support team. [The] intentional pairing of the supervisor and candidate helped me grow and make other connections”.

Employers are provided the opportunity to review program assessment data through their advisory meetings with the Dean. The program director disseminates information to faculty and university supervisors. Faculty and supervisors have monthly meetings where program information is shared and discussed. There is an annual combined meeting where data are shared and information is solicited from both groups to inform program improvement.

District-employed supervisors shared that they did not have details regarding program assessment, but the university supervisor readily discussed their candidate and any needs the individual candidate had during their assignment. Candidates did share their course assignments and communicated with faculty if the cooperating teacher had any questions.

Program leaders regularly review assessment data to identify trends and areas for improvement. These data inform programmatic changes to enhance candidate support and success rates. For the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), the program utilizes the California TPA model. The oversight and coordination of this assessment fall under the responsibilities of the TPA coordinators, program directors and course faculty. Candidates are informed of the TPA requirements during their orientation, meetings, and coursework. The program provides a CalTPA handbook with detailed information regarding appropriate materials, appeal processes, and remediation policies.

Candidates are provided in class support for assessment completion and submission. If they are not successful, they are offered a one-time remediation meeting at no cost by a faculty member who provides feedback and guidance. If the candidate requires further support, they are asked to enroll in the CalTPA Support Course and pay the corresponding tuition fee.

Notre Dame de Namur University has a 5-year pass rate of 86% for the CalTPA. In 2024-25, the pass rate was 82.4% with a first-time pass rate of 67.6 %. First time pass rates have increased over the past 5 years from 57% to the current 67.6%. Overall pass rates have declined in the past 3 years. First time pass rates are on par with the state averages. However, the overall pass rate is below the state averages. Single Subject pass rates trend higher than multiple subject pass rates.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, intern teachers, faculty employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential with Intern Program except for the following:

Program Standard 3: Clinical Practice – Met with Concerns

The team was unable to verify that the program ensures that district employed supervisors remain current in the knowledge and skills for candidate supervision and program expectations. The team could not verify that the program provides district employed supervisors a minimum of 10 hours of initial orientation to the program curriculum, effective supervision approaches such as cognitive coaching, adult learning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices.

Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate Support Needs with Intern and Preliminary Education Specialist: Extensive Support Needs with Intern

Program Design

The Education Specialist Credential Program offers two areas of study, mild to moderate support needs (MMSN) and extensive support needs (ESN), with traditional, intern, and residency (beginning May 2026) pathways. The MMSN and ESN programs are part of the larger Education Department within the School of Education (SOE). There are multiple ways to enter the program. Candidates may begin the program in fall, spring, or summer. Courses are offered online, primarily synchronously. Most candidates are interns.

The SOE leadership structure begins with the dean, followed by the program director, placement coordinator, clinical field supervisors, and faculty, in partnership with cooperating teachers and administrators at K-12 schools. The cooperating teachers and administrators liaise with the clinical field supervisors and placement coordinators. Program faculty, the placement coordinator, and clinical field supervisors report to the program director, who in turn reports to the dean of the SOE.

The organization is designed to provide regular communication amongst all personnel. The Special Education program holds regular monthly meetings with the placement coordinator and clinical field supervisors to discuss candidates' progress in placements. This information is then

communicated to the dean and other program directors at regular monthly meetings of the entire SOE, which include all faculty and staff, the dean's executive assistant, and the credential analysts. Program directors regularly communicate with the credentials analyst in addition to department meetings. The program director communicates on an ongoing basis throughout the school year with clinical field supervisors, the placement coordinator, K-12 administrators, cooperating teachers, and the credential analysts to ensure that placements are running smoothly and following Commission requirements. Interview evidence demonstrates that communication is abundant, and expectations, announcements, and updates are communicated effectively.

The program director holds an annual retreat to debrief the academic year, analyze data, and plan for the upcoming academic year. The retreat serves to showcase programs, encourage deeper thinking rather than information sharing, and provide opportunities for constructive feedback from program constituents.

The department also provides ongoing office hours throughout the year so that cooperating teachers or district liaisons supporting interns can connect with program leaders to discuss questions or concerns. Both university supervisors and district partners reported that the ability to reach program personnel is unparalleled. Consistent responses included the ability to “Zoom, call, or text at any time” with anyone to get a response or problem solved. The availability of communication was a consistent finding from interviews. Additional outreach includes the Advisory Council, which meets twice a year and brings together K-12 administrators and community partners to solicit feedback, share concerns, and work toward problem-solving on common goals and interests.

Candidates complete evaluations of faculty at the end of every course, as well as evaluations of cooperating teachers and clinical field supervisors at the end of each of two semesters of fieldwork. Interview and survey data demonstrate that candidates feel they were able to voice concerns and receive support from the program. Interviews with past and current candidates indicate that the rapport they built with program personnel enables them to provide candid feedback to SOE leadership.

The program has undergone significant changes in course modality recently, moving to a primarily online format. This move was enthusiastically supported by faculty and university supervisors, with no complaints mentioned during candidate interviews.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

All candidates start the program with foundational courses that are theoretical and grounded in research in education. This foundational coursework covers critical areas such as multiculturalism and the support of English Learners. There is a strong collaborative element with multiple subject candidates throughout the program. Coursework continues to cover specific content pedagogy (including literacy), assessment, and program management. Candidates described the sequencing of classes as “pertinent and purposeful.”

Education specialist candidates must complete clinical experiences across K-12 grade levels and across the range of education specialist programs. MMSN and ESN candidates complete two semesters of clinical practice. Typically, one semester is in a primary elementary setting and one is in an upper-elementary grade, unless they hold an intern credential. At least one placement occurs in a diverse, multicultural K-12 setting that serves English Learners and students from varied socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Education specialist credential candidates without a general education credential must complete 50 hours of observation in the general education program before entering the Education Specialist Program.

Fieldwork occurs concurrently with seminar courses and curriculum courses, which are practical and hands-on. During this time, the candidates apply what they learned in their courses and refine their practice. Field experience provides opportunities for candidates to observe a variety of classrooms and settings and select focus students for deeper observational study, including students who are dual language learners and who may exhibit typical/atypical behavior or other types of learning needs. Fieldwork also provides opportunities for candidates to observe teachers using productive routines and effective transitions for students' academic and socio-emotional growth and development. Interview data indicates a strong connection between coursework and fieldwork, with candidates indicating there was no busy work. One candidate described the curriculum as "meaningful and transformative. I gained theoretical knowledge and practical strategies that I routinely apply to my classroom."

Placements are made by the special education placement coordinator. There is a strong emphasis on literacy (TPE 7). Four of the 12 required observations focus on literacy, supported by NDNU-developed literacy feedback tools.

The program director and placement coordinator meet regularly to review candidate needs and cooperating teachers availability before making placements. The program director meets with prospective and admitted candidates throughout the year to review Commission requirements, course sequencing, assessment processes, fieldwork requirements, and credential recommendation procedures. Program plans are created upon admission and reviewed regularly. Candidates may adjust their pace to balance coursework with professional or personal commitments. Most candidates elect to move through the program at a slower pace, often taking a part-time load (e.g., candidates working full-time on intern credentials).

Survey and interview data with candidates, district supervisors, and university supervisors indicate a solid system of support for field experiences, from advisement to evaluation. SOE personnel are viewed as always available for consultation and problem-solving.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidate assessment is systematic and comprehensive. Coursework integrates assignments that connect research and pedagogy to practical application, including classroom observations, tutoring, and field experiences. During student teaching or internships, candidates are observed at least six times by a university supervisor and receive ongoing mentoring from cooperating teachers and district supervisors. Midterm and final three-way conferences are held to evaluate progress toward meeting the TPEs using the Evaluation of Candidate form.

Candidates receive abundant TPA support through two seminar courses and an optional summer course for remediation. Candidate interviews indicate strong support for the TPA and clearly indicate that the support seminars, the TPA coordinator, and instructor support were vital to their completion of the CalTPA. Components of the TPA are integrated throughout the program, with each syllabus explicitly outlining how course content aligns with and supports TPA requirements.

At monthly meetings with the program director, supervisors review the progress of each of their candidates, based on their observations and feedback from cooperating teachers and district supervisors. If a challenge arises, the program director checks with faculty who have the candidate in their seminars to establish a complete picture of the candidate's progress, strengths, and areas needing support.

Assessment of program competencies is embedded throughout candidates' progression, with targeted evaluations aligned to both coursework and clinical practice. During recruitment, the program director meets with prospective candidates to outline assessment expectations, including the TPEs, timelines, and evaluation methods. In collaboration with the program director, each candidate develops an individualized program plan, which is reviewed each semester to monitor progress and ensure timely completion. Ongoing advising is provided by the program director, faculty, and university supervisors.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data, including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, intern teachers, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Education Specialist: Mild to Moderate and Extensive Support Needs with Interns programs.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) is a private, Catholic, co-educational university located in Belmont in Silicon Valley. The university was founded in 1851 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. NDNU is the third oldest university in California and the first to offer baccalaureate degrees to women. The institution provides transformative education designed for learners who reflect the diversity of California and work to transform the world through values-based professional work and community-based action for social justice. NDNU is an inclusive learning community guided by its seven hallmarks and eight core values.

Given the challenges faced by NDNU during the past few years, the institution's leaders, faculty, and staff should be commended for their resilience and optimism as they plan and implement a new future for their historic university. The quality and thoughtful design of their educator preparation programs and significant partnerships with constituents will serve the schools of their region in California. The hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur learning community are clearly evident in the School of Education programs and operations.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	<i>No response needed</i>
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among, and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California's adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant constituencies in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Consistently
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	Consistently
The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/instruction, field based supervision and clinical experiences.	Consistently

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.	Consistently
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	Consistently
The institution employs, assigns and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	Consistently
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Based on review of documents and interviews with university leadership, faculty, staff, school partners, candidates, and completers, the team finds that Notre Dame de Namur University and its School of Education (SOE) offer effective teacher preparation programs that result in qualified individuals earning California Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist teaching credentials.

The School of Education is “committed to building a candidate-centered environment which honors the richness of diversity in the human population.” Programs apply research on social-emotional learning, culturally relevant pedagogy, teaching the whole child, educating students with disabilities, and effective coaching. They draw from the work of Gay, Dueck, Aguilar, Bloom, Brookhart, CEEDAR, Gardner, Love, Darling-Hammond, and others.

Monthly meetings allow all faculty and staff to be involved in coordination and decision making for educator preparation programs. These include a monthly SOE meeting for all faculty, university supervisors, staff, and the dean. Program directors meet monthly with the Dean and also with program faculty to address program specific issues. The Dean is on the Council of Deans which is responsible for all aspects of academic programs across units. The Dean and

faculty represent the SOE to the institution and serve on university committees on enrollment, strategic planning, budget, scholarships, diversity, student success, labor management and faculty governance.

An SOE Advisory Council with representatives from school districts, educational organizations, and community partners provides one venue for collaboration of SOE faculty with PK-12 colleagues and community members. Full and part-time faculty reported involvement with area schools and educational organizations, with many part-time faculty also holding positions in PK-12 schools. The Dean serves on the San Mateo Induction Advisory Board and the Compass High School Advisory Board.

The SOE partners on grant funded teacher residencies with five school districts to recruit and prepare new teachers. Interviews with SOE personnel and with district and county office staff highlighted the importance of these partnerships and indicated that the SOE is a valued and flexible partner. New online and hybrid courses are attracting additional candidates and growing enrollment. Collaboration with marketing, enrollment management, and financial aid offices has resulted in securing financial incentives for most candidates.

Unit and institution leaders indicated that adequate funding is provided to effectively operate SOE programs. The unit has authority to adjust faculty assignments and to plan and make changes and improvements to its programs. The School of Education budget includes funds for professional development of faculty and staff, supporting faculty participation in the California Council on Teacher Education and for bringing speakers to campus to provide professional development sessions. NDNU supports faculty in transitioning to online learning through its relatively new Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning providing learning on resources, course development, and other expectations.

Formal policies and procedures are applied to recruit, retain, evaluate, and promote tenure and non-tenure track faculty, as confirmed through documents and interviews. Course evaluations completed by candidates, candidate comments, and course syllabi are among data available for reviewing faculty performance. Human Resources documents and interviews showed that policies and procedures support recruiting for diversity and excellence across all areas of employment.

The unit has a well-developed process for candidates to document completion of program and CTC requirements. The credential analyst, assisted by the credential data analyst, determines candidate qualifications and tracks candidate completion of requirements. During orientation candidates learn about the Canvas Document File where they collect required documents. The data analyst designed the Canvas File and a digital communication system to increase credentialing efficiency. Prior to enrollment in student or intern teaching the placement coordinator reviews candidate progress. In the final semester, the credential analyst explains the credential recommendation process and meets individually with each candidate to complete the credential audit form. Two individuals review each recommendation before it is submitted to CTC.

Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	Team Finding
Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.	<i>No response needed</i>
The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.	Consistently
The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.	Consistently
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of program requirements.	Consistently
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Evidence from documents reviewed confirmed that the unit provides clearly stated admissions requirements based on multiple assessment measures. Clear criteria are provided for applicants seeking a Preliminary Multiple Subject, Single Subject, or Education Specialist Credential. Criteria include multiple measures such as formal assessment, subject matter competency, a statement of intent, grade point average, and recommendations.

The unit has developed a strong recruitment process. Faculty are involved in the recruitment of potential candidates, which is focused on individuals who represent the diversity of the school communities as well as those who are paraeducators from underrepresented groups. Additional recruitment occurs through school district partnerships.

Candidates are provided with multiple opportunities to access support services. Support begins at entry to the credential programs via small group and individual meetings. Admissions staff and faculty follow up with potential applicants and continue contact through text, email, and phone/Zoom calls throughout the admissions process. Candidate support is further provided through New Student Orientation.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs offer a high-quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators and grounded in current research on effective practice. Coursework is integrated closely with field experiences to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows candidates to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required of the credential they seek.	Consistently
The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to the program.	Consistently
Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	Consistently
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	Inconsistently
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	Inconsistently
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently
For each <i>program</i> the <i>unit</i> offers, candidates have significant experience in <i>California public schools</i> with diverse <i>student</i> populations and the opportunity to work with the range of <i>students</i> identified in the <i>program</i> standards.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Evidence from documents reviewed and interviews conducted confirmed that the unit provides clinical practice experiences that include initial and end-of-school year activities for candidates. Placement coordinators work with districts and schools to provide experiences with diverse and multilingual populations. Candidates engage in practical application of course content. The unit

has established terms for district and school administrator responsibilities. MOUs confirm that site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. However, aside from a signed MOU, there is no other evidence of site-based supervisor certification or experience.

Site-based supervisors complete a Verification of Professional Development to record their professional development activities. University Supervisors meet with their respective site-based supervisors to review their joint roles in mentoring candidates and collaborate when evaluating candidate progress. The unit effectively evaluates candidate practice. Workshops provide candidates with information related to instructional methods and policies and procedures related to fieldwork and clinical practice. The programs require that placements have a diverse student population, including multilingual learners, a curriculum focused on Universal Design for Learning, and a cooperating teacher with an appropriate credential.

Intern candidates obtain site approval from the Placement Coordinator and Program Director prior to accepting an intern position. Intern placements must meet the same criteria as traditional clinical practice placements. Candidates employed in a private school are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours in a diverse school setting using a California-aligned curriculum.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Consistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Consistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completion data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Consistently
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key constituencies such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The education unit demonstrates a structured, multi-layered, continuous improvement process operating at both the university and program levels. Evidence indicates that data are regularly collected, reviewed, and used through established cycles, including monthly meetings, end-of-semester reviews, and an annual retreat where faculty analyze trends and determine programmatic adjustments. These processes reflect a consistent effort to assess effectiveness across coursework, clinical practice, and candidate support systems.

Multiple data sources are systematically gathered to inform decision-making, including course evaluations, candidate performance assessments, Teaching Performance Expectations evaluations, CalTPA results, exit interviews, and surveys. Faculty reported using these data to monitor candidate progress and provide targeted support. At the program level, data have informed curriculum revisions, such as expanded coursework on assessment practices and the development of targeted supports.

The institution also demonstrates an intentional approach to using operational data to drive improvements. Recent changes, including the transition to electronic documentation systems and the development of Canvas-based candidate-tracking tools, were driven by needs identified by faculty, staff, and candidates. These efforts reflect a clear and direct link between data analysis and action.

Constituents reported regular engagement with the program through the Advisory Council, annual meetings, and regular meetings with supervisor leads. During such conversations, constituent input has shaped initiatives such as partnerships and candidate support structures. Overall, the institution has a well-developed continuous improvement system characterized by ongoing data collection, collaborative analysis, and data-informed programmatic and operational changes.

Common Standard 5: Program Impact	Team Finding
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California's students.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The institution demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring that candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to support diverse learners and meet California state standards through a combination of structured coursework, field-based experiences, and community partnerships. Evidence shows that candidates engage in applied practice through required literacy-focused fieldwork embedded across multiple courses.

A notable example of program impact is the sustained partnership with Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS), which has provided candidates with extensive, culturally responsive teaching experience since 2014. Through this work, candidates support English learners in literacy development while building relationship-based instructional practices. The university also maintains a 10-year partnership with a local unified school district that funds about five candidates annually to earn their teaching credentials. An executive leader from the district noted that this partnership has been sustained due to the consistent quality of program graduates, describing them as among the strongest new teachers hired. Graduates are reported to demonstrate a strong understanding of standards, effective pedagogical skills, and the capacity to teach diverse student populations, indicating a positive programmatic impact on candidate learning. In addition, the San Francisco Unified School District residency program is a more recent partnership. NDNU and district teams meet twice monthly to collaborate, reflecting the university's high level of accessibility and responsiveness. A district leader emphasized that university supervisors consistently go above and beyond in supporting candidates.

Regarding program impact, candidates report indicators such as increased student independence, improved engagement, the development of positive relationships, and growth in students' social-emotional skills. Similarly, completers describe their ability to apply instructional strategies, adapt to diverse student needs, and foster inclusive classroom environments. These reflections suggest that candidates are developing competencies aligned with program goals and positively influencing student experiences. Overall, the evidence suggests that the program provides strong experiential learning opportunities and fosters candidate readiness to support diverse learners.