

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Mission:

An inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning. Aurora University is an independent, private, comprehensive and co-educational university offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and specialized courses, with 40 undergraduate majors, 12 master's degree graduate programs, and a Doctor of Education degree. The university vision is to be known and experienced as an exemplary institution of higher learning, one that draws upon the values of integrity, citizenship, continuous learning and excellence.

Teacher Preparation Programs:

Aurora University offers initial teacher certification through either a bachelor's degree program or a Master of Arts in Teaching with certification in elementary, secondary (Biology, English, Mathematics, Social Studies/History) and special education. A post-baccalaureate program offers the secondary majors, Biology, English, Mathematics, and Social Studies/History an opportunity to earn secondary education certification. A special teaching certificate K-12 in Physical Education encompasses a middle school health endorsement and a state required coaching endorsement from the American Sport Education Program. Aurora University also offers graduate level preparation for certification as Reading Specialist, Educational Administration (principal and superintendent), School Social Work, and Special Education LBI. The University supports sponsoring partners who prepare teachers for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification.

Student Characteristics:

In the College of Education, 96% of undergraduates are Illinois residents of which 65% are traditional college age, with 97% attending full-time. In the graduate program, approximately 74% of the students attend part-time. Seventeen percent of all students in the teacher preparation programs are minorities. Extensive financial aid packages are available to qualified applicants.

Admissions Requirements:

Admission to Teacher Education Program: For bachelor's and master's programs with initial certification, candidates must have passing scores from the Illinois Basic Skills Test, pass a FBI fingerprint screening, have a current TB test, and have a minimum 2.75 GPA. Master's program also requires three letters of recommendation

Admission to Student Teaching: Candidates must have completed all courses, undergraduates must have a 2.75 and graduates must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA, passed the appropriate Content Area Test(s), completed the application, and received approval from the Initial Certification Program Committee. Secondary Education requires a 3.0 GPA in the content area.

Accreditation:

Aurora University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to offer baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. All of the university's professional preparation programs are approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.(ISBE) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Teacher Education Vision:

The Shared Vision for Teacher Preparation: "Excellence through collaborative communities of learners." In this vision, the distinctive feature of teacher preparation at Aurora University is the collaborative community of learners. These communities enhance the teaching-learning relationship by providing an environment that is inclusive of all learners' needs and aims to develop each student personally and academically.

Excellence in learning is demonstrated when professional educators utilize a variety of effective instructional strategies to provide positive, safe, and caring environments, to create effective curricula, to work collaboratively with parents, the community and other professionals to ensure all children reach their potential.

Best Practices:

- A West Aurora (CUSD 129) Partnership School on the University campus provides an authentic school environment for pre-service candidates enrolled in methods courses. Their interaction with 4th and 5th grade children helps them develop positive attitudes about college and offers the children a higher level of individualized learning and feedback, according to the school principal.
- Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) re-accredited the university's athletic training education program. Accreditation validates program quality. Faculty were commended by CAATE for commitment toward the students' well-being and success as they matriculate through the program. They also found a personal approach evident in all phases of the program including the dedication of clinical instructors both on campus and off.

Notable Features and Accomplishments:

- Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Don Wold reports, "Our Teacher education programs are NCATE accredited. These rigorous national standards for teacher candidates at AU, better prepare them for the professional challenges and for demanding licensing processes."
- Eight Ed.D. graduates have begun their appointments as superintendents in Illinois School Districts.
- Thirty-two graduates of the Educational Leadership Program serve as building principals in local area schools.
- The Special Education program expanded to offer LBS I certification, undergraduate (BA) and graduate level (MA). Candidates may also pursue an endorsement. Another popular choice at the undergraduate level is to combine a minor in special education with another certification program; this choice allows the candidate to receive advanced standing in the AU MA program at a later date. Despite this growth, we are committed to keeping class sizes small!
- Aurora University applied for and was awarded four Illinois Math & Science Partnership grants: Elementary Education Math and Science; Middle School/High School Mathematics, Middle School/High School Earth and Space Science and Middle School/High School Biological Science. Master's Degree programs in these areas have been developed and were offered in fall 2008. The goal is to build flexible, highly qualified math and science teacher leaders in Aurora University partner school districts.
- Over 100 AU students are working in the AU Afterschool Program providing guidance, math, and reading skills to 1000 middle school students.
- AU's Master of Arts in Reading Instruction has grown by 66%, offering area teachers the reading specialist designation.
- Meeting the demands of area districts, AU has over 100 enrolled in the ESL/Bilingual endorsement program. Over 55 recently completed their coursework and received endorsements in ESL/BL education.

**Program Information for Aurora University
2007-2008**

S.1 Total number of students admitted into teacher preparation, all specializations, in academic year 2005-2006	123
S.2 Number of candidates in supervised student teaching in academic year 2005-2006	242
S.3 Number of faculty members who supervised student teachers:	
➤ S.3A Full-time faculty in professional education	3
➤ S.3B Part-time faculty in professional education but full-time in the institution	15
➤ S.3C Part-time faculty in professional education, not otherwise employed by the institution	35
S.4 Total faculty student teaching supervisors	53
S.5 Student teacher/faculty ratio (Divide total given in S.2 by the number given in S.4)	5:1
S.6A The average number of student teaching hours per week	40
S.6B The total number of weeks of supervised student teaching required	16
S.7 Average total number of hours required	640