



School of Education

UNC School of Education

UNC BEST Minor

2026-2027

For Students, Supervisors, and Clinical Educators

Program Webpage: <https://ed.unc.edu/academics/programs/unc-baccalaureate-education-in-science-and-teaching/about-the-program/>

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Introduction to the UNC BEST Minor

The BEST Minor program offers a fast-track path for undergraduates pursuing a bachelor's degree in science or math to gain the knowledge and licensure to become middle or high-school teachers. By combining deep content expertise, a real-world student-teaching experience, and expert mentorship, our graduates leave Carolina licensed and prepared to make real impact in North Carolina classrooms.

The Baccalaureate Education in Science and Teaching Minor program is designed for students passionate about teaching science or mathematics and eager to make a real impact in North Carolina classrooms. This 24-credit hour pathway enables Carolina undergraduates to pursue a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in Biology, Chemistry, Geological Science, Physics, or Mathematics, and then take education courses and complete a student-teaching internship — leading to teaching licensure in just four years.

UNC BEST Calendar

Fall 2026	
Dates	Responsibilities
Aug. 17	First Day of UNC Classes (FDOC)
Aug. 25	UNC BEST Fall Launch
Sept. 7	Labor Day Holiday - No classes
Mid-September or October (before fall break)	Contact your CE Introduce yourself and ask for a brief phone or Zoom meeting to have a conversation.
Sept. 21	University Wellbeing Day - No classes
Oct 6	University Wellbeing Day - No classes
Oct 16-Oct 17	Fall Break – No classes
Mid-October or November (after fall break)	Contact your CE Ask your CE if you may visit the school one time or if they would like to meet you for coffee.
Nov. 25-Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Holiday - No classes or fieldwork
Dec. 2	Last day of classes (LDOC)
Dec. 13-Jan. 6	UNC Winter Break We recommend that students attempt their Praxis and Pearson exams during winter break.

Spring 2027	
Note: Interns follow school district calendar for holidays, teacher workdays & spring break. See Appendix A for UNC and district calendars	
Dates	Responsibilities
Jan 6	First Day of Classes (FDOC) at UNC
Jan 6-Jan 8	UNC BEST Program Spring Launch & edTPA Bootcamp Location: CCEE Time: 9 am - 3 pm
Jan. 11	First full day in student teaching placements

Jan. 18	Dr. MLK Jr. Day - No School
Jan TBA	Special Topics Seminar at the CCEE
Feb TBA	Special Topics Seminar at the CCEE
Spring Break:	See individual school district calendars for exact dates for spring breaks, holidays, and teacher workdays, etc.
March TBA	Special Topics Seminar at the CCEE
April 1	EdTPA Deadline Completed edTPA Portfolio uploaded to Pearson website by 11:59 p.m.
April 26	Last Day of Classes (LDOC) and in student teaching placement
May 8	School of Education (SOE) Commencement *The SOE commencement ceremony is held on May 8
May 14	Praxis/Pearson Licensure Exam Deadline UNC institution code is #5816

Coursework

Designed with initial North Carolina teaching licensure in mind, the UNC BEST program pairs education coursework with a student-teaching internship. Coursework is intentionally designed to connect educational theory, research, and evidence-based instructional practices with authentic classroom experiences. Through rigorous academic study and sustained clinical practice, candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to support diverse learners and thrive as beginning educators.

Full course descriptions can also be found on our [Curriculum and Courses](#) page.

UNC BEST Launches, Seminars, & Reflection Expectations

Attendance and participation at all orientations, seminars, and meetings is a required part of the UNC BEST program. Though absences may be excused according to the University attendance policy; students must fill out the Internship Absentee Form [<https://go.unc.edu/internabsence>] as soon as they are aware they will be absent and are responsible for obtaining information from a colleague or their supervisor. To familiarize all stakeholders with the program structure and expectations, a variety of semester “Launches” and seminars will be held, as follows:

- **Program Entry Orientation (all students):** Upon acceptance to the BEST minor, there is a required orientation for the entire cohort. The agenda includes an overview of the coursework and internship and provides an opportunity for students to ask questions about all aspects of the program.

- **UNC BEST Program Fall Student Teaching Launch (seniors only):** During the start of the Fall semester, there is an Intern/student teaching launch meeting for the senior year UNC BEST cohort. The agenda will include: a review of the program and yearlong calendar, introduction to various School of Education services, and preparation for fieldwork (e.g., schedule, observations, expectations for professionalism of student interns in the field, and university supervisor meet and greet).
- **UNC BEST Program Spring Student Teaching Launch (seniors only):** Similar to the Fall Fieldwork Launch and before entering full-time student teaching, there is an Intern/student teaching launch meeting for the entire senior UNC BEST cohort on January 6, 2027. Topics will include goal setting, creating a lead teaching schedule, and the observation/evaluation expectations (including edTPA).
- **Weekly Supervisory Seminars (seniors only):** Spring 2027 semester includes a 1-hour weekly seminar with supervisors (supervisors will schedule these individually by group). These meetings are an integral part of the interns' fieldwork practice. These will be scheduled by each individual supervisor for approximately 1 hour per week. The purpose of these seminars is for the interns to take charge of their learning by participating in reflective discussions about their practice, guided by supervisors and, at times, program faculty. It is the intern's responsibility to maintain a Reflection Journal weekly and bring it to all seminars to share with peers, supervisors, and instructors. Interns are expected to participate fully and meaningfully in these seminars through contributing to discussions, offering their own problems of practice, and/or sharing their reflective journal with the seminar group.
- **Special Topics Seminars (STS):** Monthly Special Topic Seminars (STS) will be scheduled throughout the Spring semester and are meant to bring the UNC BEST and MAT communities together to discuss problems of practice and prepare for programmatic milestones. The topics covered in these seminars will vary depending on the desire and needs of the UNC BEST and MAT community. Typical seminar topics include: building sustainable teaching practices, navigating edTPA, translating methods course instruction into classroom practice, and working with students and CEs in novel ways. All interns are excused from their placements early in order to attend STS each month. Supervisor Seminars will not be held during STS weeks. Both weekly supervisor meetings and special topics seminars are required components of EDUC 746.

In addition to participation in the orientations and seminars, interns are expected to engage in regular, reflective practice about their classroom experiences, interactions, and teaching practices. This happens throughout the internship experience through conversation with the intern's clinical educator, colleagues, and supervisor. To document this reflective practice, interns are required to create at least one formal reflection journal entry per week, either about a formally observed lesson or about their teaching practice more broadly. Supervisors will provide prompts throughout the spring semester. It is the intern's responsibility

to maintain the reflection journal weekly and bring it to all supervisory seminars to share with colleagues, supervisors, and instructors.

Student Teaching Internships

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill teacher education programs are built on research based best practices, provide early and extensive clinical experiences, and engage practicing teachers in collaborative inquiry. The internship provides candidates for licensure with an opportunity to integrate theory and practice, to demonstrate skills in a structured, supportive environment, and to enhance their strengths and set goals for their continued development. It is the most important component of the program and is a requirement for state licensure.

The following terminology will be used in this handbook to refer to program stakeholders:

Intern: The term “Intern” refers to the BEST students who are student teachers; Interns are also sometimes referred to in the field as “pre-service teachers” or “teacher candidates”.

- **Clinical Educator:** The term “Clinical Educator” will be used in this handbook to refer to the classroom teachers who serve as mentors to the Interns. In the field, Clinical Educators are sometimes referred to as “mentor teachers”, “cooperating teachers”, or “clinical teachers”. An Intern may have one or more Clinical Educators depending on the classroom structure.
- **Supervisor:** The term “Supervisor” in this handbook refers to the university-based Supervisor who will oversee the Intern’s progression through the program. Each Intern will be assigned a Supervisor who will be the main contact for field observations and general support related to field placements. An Intern may have one or more Supervisors depending on the choice of completing an add-on. Note: edTPA support may or may not be provided directly by the Supervisor, depending on program strand.
- **Triad:** A triad is made up of the supervisor, the intern, and the CE. A triad meeting, which is often just referred to as “having a triad,” is a meeting between the three members.

Student teaching internship assignments, or “placements”, are made collaboratively between the UNC BEST program and district partners, guided (though not guaranteed) by placement preferences provided by UNC BEST students at the time of program orientation. Field experiences usually occur within a 40-mile radius of Chapel Hill, and students are expected to provide their own transportation to field sites; carpooling, where possible, is encouraged.

The qualifications and teaching schedules of clinical educators (cooperating teachers or CEs) are aligned with state requirements and carefully reviewed to ensure high quality, developmentally appropriate placements. No change in the student teaching internship assignment (either for partial or whole day) can be made without permission of the MAT Program Director, Assistant Dean for Educator Preparation and Accreditation, and the district placement liaison.

All formal observations are planned using the UNC BEST/MAT Lesson Plan Template ([Appendix B](#)), documented using the QRC Observation Protocol ([Appendix C](#)), shared

with the Intern during a post-observation conference, and uploaded to the student teaching portfolio platform.

Semester	Observer	Minimum Formal Observations
Spring 2027	Clinical Educator	3 or more
Spring 2027	Supervisor	3 or more

During the spring semester, interns are required to attend their student teaching placements full-time Monday through Friday during the same contract hours as their CEs for the entire UNC spring semester. Interns will follow their school district's calendar through the last day of fieldwork in April (see [Appendix A](#) for District Calendar links). Interns, in consultation with their clinical educators and supervisors, will take responsibility for one content area or instructional block at a time, “ramping up” (See [Appendix E](#) for sample ramp up schedule) to full-time lead teaching in their primary program of study content area for a minimum of 6 weeks as approved by the primary clinical educator and supervisor. After their successful 6 weeks of full-time lead teaching, interns will ramp down, slowly handing instruction back over to their CEs. During this ramp down time, interns may wish to visit other teachers and schools to observe within and outside of their grade level(s) or content area(s).

While teaching full-time, interns are responsible for all the planning, teaching, assessing, and other classroom duties that the clinical educators would normally perform. This includes, but is not limited to maintaining regular, appropriate communication with students’ families to keep them informed of any relevant classroom activities or issues. During this time, interns and CEs may continue working in a co-planning and co-teaching manner according to school protocols; at times, it is expected that the CE may leave the classroom and work in an accessible nearby space to provide the intern with the feel and responsibility of teaching fully independently. During the semester, interns will follow the school system’s calendar, including spring break and teacher workdays and are expected to attend all teacher workdays, grade level (e.g., PLC) meetings, and professional development trainings with their CEs. IEP, 504 and other meetings should also be attended as needed/appropriate. Interns will be formally observed by both the clinical educators and supervisors according to the schedules described below.

UNC BEST Clinical Educator and Supervisor Support

At the beginning of the school year, the School and UNC BEST Program faculty will also provide several options for both University Supervisor and Clinical Educator training to facilitate successful mentorship of interns throughout the year. During these experiences, supervisors and clinical educators will: learn about the UNC BEST Program’s approaches and pedagogies; review the schedule, requirements, and benefits of being a supervisor or clinical educator; and network with other supervisors and/or clinical educators across schools and districts. Completion of this training is required each year to serve as a supervisor or clinical educator, even if training has already been completed in a prior year (due to programmatic changes and updates).

Spring Triad Meetings & Informal Pop-In

Triad conferences (Clinical Educator, Supervisor, and Intern) will be conducted three times during the internship: at the beginning of the semester (Jan), in the middle, and the end of the semester. See below for details about each triad meeting:

- During the first two weeks of school, supervisors will schedule and facilitate an initial triad meeting between the intern, clinical educator, and supervisor. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss expectations for the semester among the triad and set initial goals related to North Carolina Teacher Candidate Evaluation Rubric (NCTCER) (See [Appendix C](#)). It is also recommended that the dates for observations are established for all members of the triad at this meeting.
- In addition to the initial triad meetings, supervisors will also plan an informal pop-in visit to their interns' classrooms, allowing them to get acquainted with the school and classroom community as they prepare to support their interns through more formal observations.
- The mid-point triad conference is a crucial time during which all targeted areas for improvement must be identified and a remediation plan put in place, if necessary, to ensure Interns make adequate progress toward proficient ratings on the [LEA/IHE Certificate of Teaching Capacity Form](#) (see [Appendix F](#)). In rare cases, Interns may be placed on an MAT Action Plan at this time, though any concerns about progress should be identified and communicated to the Supervisor and Intern prior to this meeting. If necessary, these action plans may include extending the internship to allow for sufficient time to reach proficient on the LEA/IHE Certificate of Teaching Capacity Form.
- At the summative three-way conference, Teacher Candidates must be rated proficient or above in every rubric to successfully meet the requirements and pass student teaching, unless other arrangements are made to extend student teaching experiences. Documentation of proficiency will be recorded on the LEA/IHE Certificate of Teaching Capacity Form distributed via Qualtrics; to be recommended for licensure, interns must be rated as proficient or higher on a preponderance of items.

Clinical Educator Observations & Expectations

The role of the clinical educator (CE) is to be the intern's professional mentor. This includes modeling research-informed practices and helping interns develop within their new environment. CEs will include interns in conversations and opportunities to engage in all parts of the profession. CEs help interns see themselves in the role of teacher, rather than just a classroom assistant, to help them begin their transitions to full-time teaching in the spring.

We know that our clinical educators will be observing most lessons the interns conduct and will be providing ongoing feedback which is vital for intern development. The School of Education asks clinical educators to perform three or more formal observations of the intern teaching lessons – planned using the MAT Lesson Plan Template – and document their observation and feedback using the QRC Observation Protocol.

Formal observations will be shared with the intern during a post-observation conference and the formal observation document(s) will be uploaded to the student teaching portfolio platform required by the Clinical Partnerships and Licensure Office. After interns plan and teach the lesson, they will create an entry in their reflection journal to reflect on the experience. Completing this reflection right after the lesson observation and debriefing conversation is highly recommended.

Supervisor Observations & Expectations

The supervisor serves as the intern's School of Education liaison, advocate, and evaluator. During the spring semester, the Supervisor will perform three or more formal observations of the Intern teaching lessons – planned using the MAT Lesson Plan Template – and document their observation and feedback using the QRC Observation Protocol. These formal observations will be shared with the Intern during a post-observation conference and the formal observation document will be uploaded to the student teaching portfolio platform required by the Office of Educator Preparation and Accreditation. After Interns plan and teach the lesson, they will create an entry in their reflection journal to reflect on the experience. Completing this reflection right after the lesson observation and debriefing conversation is highly recommended.

Fall and Spring Methods Course Connections

Interns are expected to become an integral part of the classroom. Active participation – including observing and reflecting on pedagogical practices discussed in disciplinary methods classes and teaching small or whole group lessons when appropriate – are ways to connect with the students and clinical educators. Interns will also be expected to plan and execute lessons connected to their methods courses.

University & School of Education Expectations & Regulations

As with any professional educator preparation program, the regulations and policies pertaining to student teaching are continually evolving due to the dynamic nature of professional organizations, legislation, and licensure. General regulations and policies that govern undergraduate and graduate internships may come from local public school district partners (Boards of Education) and the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education.

Questions regarding the undergraduate and graduate internships may be directed to the UNC BEST Program Director and the Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation and Accreditation, located in the Office of Student Affairs in Peabody 103.

UNC-Chapel Hill and the School of Education have established certain regulations that will help Interns work more effectively with Clinical Educators. Regulations require Interns to adhere to the following:

- Observe the same hours required for teachers while on assignment in schools, which may include duty stations, extracurricular activities, grade level meetings, and other professional developments (PDs).
- Follow the local school calendar during the Spring semester, including all holidays and breaks.

- Become a member of the school faculty throughout the student teaching internship. Participate in official school functions such as faculty meetings, in-service training programs, teacher workdays, parent meetings, etc.
- Note that while it is beneficial for the Intern to be left alone in a room for short periods, the Clinical Educator must always be accessible and on campus for the Intern during the internship.

Intern Expectations & Professional Conduct

As a professional teacher preparation program, we expect that Interns will:

- Always act in a professional manner, including appropriate communication, dress, conduct, and interpersonal boundaries. In addition, Interns are expected to conform to the same professional standards as the regular staff members of their placement school and uphold the Code of Ethics for NC Educators. Interns should consult with their Supervisors and Clinical Educators (CEs) if they have questions about professional standards in their placement schools.
- Adhere to the Standards of Professional Conduct adopted by the NC State Board of Education for all professional educators.
- Adhere to attendance policies. Arrive at the school at the same contracted time as the teachers and expect to spend the full school day and any additional planning or meeting time as the Clinical Educator requests. If unforeseen circumstances should cause the Intern to be tardy for school, the Intern must contact the Clinical Educator and the Supervisor as soon as possible; excessive tardiness is not permitted and may require the implementation of an MAT Action Plan (see [Appendix D](#)).
- Uphold an asset-based mindset and recognize the potential in all students and their families. Comment favorably on the good things happening in the school and contribute positively to the school community and culture.
- Respect the confidentiality of all students in conversations with colleagues, in written assignments, and on any form of social media per the NC School Boards Association social media guidelines.
- Report concerns in a timely manner. To maintain everyone's privacy and safety, it is expected that an Intern reports any actual or suspected breach of confidentiality to both their Clinical Educator and Supervisor as soon as it is discovered and does not discuss it with peers or school colleagues. If an Intern is unsure about a situation regarding the ethics of data protection/privacy, they are advised to ask their Clinical Educator and/or Supervisor, or the Program Director. Unprofessional communications regarding district placements, teachers, or students are not permitted and may warrant the implementation of an action plan or dismissal from the UNC BEST program.
- Proactively seek advice from other professionals, including Clinical Educator, Supervisor, and/or UNC BEST Program Director.

Instructional Practice Expectations

The following guidelines are provided to guide the Intern's instructional practice. Interns are expected to, in conjunction with their Clinical Educator (CE)'s and Supervisor's support:

- Collaborate with the CE to consult the NC standard course of study and school district pacing guide to plan for instruction that will meet the needs of the learners in their classes. Consider students' background and individual learning needs as they develop instructional plans.
- Maintain a record of lesson plans throughout the fall and spring internships that can be easily shared with the CE and Supervisor.
- Regularly engage in reflection on their teaching practice and observations in both written and oral formats.
- Create lesson plans and instructional activities that draw upon available resources (from coursework, CEs and the placement school, and from peers) that yield original instructional plans that meet the learning needs of their students. Modify and extend prepared lesson/unit plans and cite resources, as appropriate.
- Be proactively involved in every step of the educational process from planning to instruction to assessment. Contribute to the grading of assignments, posting grades, lunch duty, IEP meetings, parent communications, parent meetings, open house, PLC meetings, teacher workdays, professional development, etc.
- Consult with their CE on significant curriculum, policy, and discipline decisions.
- Help support students during the course of the typical school day as needed, in a variety of contexts.
- Consult with their CE to arrange to observe other teachers in the school during non-instructional time and engage with other members of the school community.
- Attend various extracurricular activities, such as school plays, musicals, or sporting events, to learn more about their students and to develop a better sense of the school community and culture.

Policies Governing Student Teaching Absences

Consistent attendance at the internship site and at required seminars is critical to teacher candidate development and for the continuity of classroom instruction for the Clinical Educator and her/his P-12 students. Absences for valid reasons are excused only by the Supervisor. It is the Intern's responsibility to notify their Clinical Educator of the absence and submit an Internship Absentee Form [<https://go.unc.edu/internabsence>] to her/his Supervisor in advance of the absence or as soon as the Intern realizes an absence is necessary. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism is not permitted (see below).

If for some reason the Clinical Educator needs to lead instruction during an Intern's absence, it is the responsibility of all Interns to provide all instructional plans and materials for the period of the absence before they take a leave.

Excusable Absences:

- Attendance in court: documentation required.
- Interview with an employing official (principal or HR): prior confirmation by Supervisor required.

- Job fairs: documentation required if the job fair is outside of those offered by UNC. If an Intern chooses not to attend a job fair promoted by UNC, they are expected to report to student teaching placement and follow their regular schedule.
- Professional meetings/conferences/workshops: documentation required
- Voting in local, state, or national elections: reasonable time off will be granted to allow students to vote. Advance notice to the Supervisor is required.
- Religious holiday/observance.
- Scheduled medical/health care appointments: documentation required.
- Illness: If an Intern is sick and unable to attend school, s/he must contact the Supervisor and the Clinical Educator before the start of the school day or the day before.
- Serious immediate family illness/Death. In this case, wherever possible, the Intern must contact the Supervisor and the Clinical Educator as soon as possible, preferably before the start of the school day that will be missed.

Interns who anticipate being absent for a medical appointment, religious holiday, or some other valid reason must receive prior approval from their Supervisor and their Clinical Educators. Interns are encouraged to make ALL non-emergency appointments outside of school hours.

Regardless of reasons for the excused absences, Interns are required to make up any days over three days in the semester. The Clinical Educator and the Supervisor will arrange for the Intern to make up the missed days. Grades will be held until these days have been made up.

Unexcused Absences:

An unexcused absence occurs when an Intern is absent for any reason not included in the list of excused absences above and/or does not attend school and/or fails to communicate the absence to the Supervisor via the Internship Absentee Form (<https://go.unc.edu/internabsence>). An unexcused absence is cause for termination of the internship.

The School of Education can automatically terminate the internship for any Intern who misses more than a total of five days during the internship without a plan for making up missed days, whether or not the absences are excused. Students must follow the University appeals process to be readmitted to the UNC BEST Program.

A Note About Travel:

The UNC BEST program understands that, on rare and unavoidable occasions (e.g., funerals), unexpected travel may conflict with a student's fieldwork and/or coursework obligations. However, Interns are expected NOT to schedule vacations, family events, weddings, or other travel which will take you away from your placement or coursework during the UNC BEST program. Interns are expected to consult the program schedule, UNC's Academic calendar, and their placement district's academic calendar prior to making any travel arrangements. If a travel absence occurs, it should be reported using the Internship Absentee

Form (<https://go.unc.edu/internabsence>) and will be considered an unexcused absence and must be made up.

Action Plans, Modifications & Termination of the Internship

Action Plans

Intern performance will be assessed regularly by their Clinical Educator (CE) and Supervisor. If an Intern is evaluated as not making adequate progress, as assessed on the QRC rubric, the NC Teacher Candidate Rubric, or the Intern Expectations and Professional Conduct outlined above, an Action Plan will be collaboratively developed by the UNC BEST Program Director, Clinical Educator, and Supervisor. In addition to the Supervisor, Clinical Educator, and Program Director, the completed Action Plan will be shared with the Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation and Accreditation and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and archived in the Intern's Internship portfolio. Improvements to the Action Plan will be led by the Supervisor and Clinical Educator with regular input from the UNC BEST Program Director. Failure to make the performance improvements outlined in the Action Plan may lead to modification or termination of the student teaching internship and jeopardize the teacher candidate's ability to successfully complete the program of study. A sample Action Plan is available in [Appendix D](#).

Modification of the Internship

Circumstances other than poor performance may require modification of the student teaching internship. It is important for the Supervisor to inform the UNC BEST Program Director, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, the Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation and Accreditation, and the Clinical Partnerships and Licensure Managers, in writing, when an intern is unable to follow the regular student teaching schedule and meet the instructional and professional expectations of the internship site. The intern, supervisor, clinical educator and UNC BEST program director must sign and date a copy of the letter, which will be submitted to the student's Internship portfolio and filed with the Office of Student Affairs. The intern will receive a copy of the letter for his or her files. Please be aware that modifications may also include additional documentation from a medical provider or other campus resources.

Termination of the Internship

If a UNC BEST Intern is terminated from their student teaching internship by either the School of Education or the District Partner for performance or professional conduct related issues, the candidate will earn a "F" (Fail) in the student teaching internship.

Leave of Absence and/or Withdrawal

If a student qualifies for a medical withdrawal from the university during the student teaching internship, it may be possible to return in a future term and finish the remainder of their internship and program. All requests to do so will be reviewed by the UNC BEST Program Director, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and the Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation and Accreditation. Interns should also consult the Graduate School Handbook for more details.

Program Completion and Licensure

At program completion, the School evaluates Intern performance on four metrics to make the final determination regarding program completion and the associated recommendation for licensure. These metrics include successful completion of the following, each of which is discussed in the sections below:

- NC Teacher Candidate Rubric & LEA/IHE Certification of Teaching Capacity
- edTPA
- NC Licensure Exams
- Program Grades & Eligibility

NC Teacher Candidate Rubric & LEA/IHE Certificate of Capacity

The student internship is completed near the close of the spring semester. At that time, a Final Triad Meeting is held with the Intern, the Clinical Educator, and the University Supervisor to discuss the student's performance during student teaching and the "LEA/IHE Certification of Teaching Capacity" ([Appendix F](#)) form is completed and signed. These forms are aligned with the School of Education Principles and Dispositions, as well as with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and licensure requirements.

edTPA

All UNC Interns are required to successfully complete an edTPA portfolio in their content/licensure area. The supervisor, methods instructor, and/or Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation and Accreditation will explain the edTPA process in detail to ensure Interns are knowledgeable of the edTPA requirements and prepared to develop their portfolios.

Students will engage in edTPA preparation throughout the program. Pearson provides explicit instructions about types of feedback on edTPA that is allowable from supervisors, mentor teachers, and colleagues here (<https://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/GuidelinesForSupportingCandidates.pdf>).

Ultimately, edTPA completion is the responsibility of the student intern to be proactive, pace yourself, and you will be successful.

All edTPA portfolios completed by UNC Interns are required to be officially scored by Pearson, the operational partner of SCALE at Stanford University. For the 2026-2027 academic year, the School will provide each Intern with a voucher to cover the cost of official scoring by Pearson (worth approximately \$300). All UNC Interns must submit their portfolios directly to Pearson by April 1, 2027.

If the edTPA is not successfully passed on the candidate's first attempt (this is rare) or if condition codes prevent full scoring by Pearson, the candidate is responsible for paying the necessary fees for rescoring (\$100 per task; maximum \$300). For this reason, it is imperative that the student teacher take advantage of all opportunities provided by the program related to edTPA support and completion.

Passing Score for edTPA is Established by the NC DPI

All UNC Interns must pass the edTPA teacher performance assessment to be recommended for licensure. The edTPA must be completed during the student teaching internship and the passing criteria are listed on the NC DPI website.

Note: all assessment rubrics are scored on a 5-point scale where 5 is the high end of the scale. Candidates will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit portfolio items and will be on a tight 7–10-day turnaround to remediate and resubmit to edTPA for official scoring. Cost for resubmitting tasks for rescoring are the responsibility of the teacher candidate. Failing to earn a passing score on the edTPA will not prevent students from graduating but will prevent students from meeting UNC-BEST requirements and being eligible for a North Carolina Teaching License.

Praxis Exams

UNC requires all Interns to complete all licensure exams required by NCDPI for NC Licensure prior to program completion and prior to recommending the candidate for initial teacher licensure. Students are required to list University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (school code #5816) as the score recipient. Review [Appendix G](#) for Praxis Exam costs.

Licensure exams differ based on the licensure area and are determined by the State Board of Education; information as of the date of the publishing of this Handbook is presented below. For the most current licensure information, visit the UNC SOE Licensure website, <https://ed.unc.edu/academics/licensure/testing-required-for-nc-licensure/>

To be recommended for NC licensure in the Content Areas in grades 6-9 and/or 9-12, the following are required:

Successfully passing the following tests based on the grade level:

- **Middle Grades Licensure (6-9)**
 - Must pass appropriate content test offered by Praxis:
 - Mathematics (Test 5164)
 - Science (Test 5442)
- **Secondary Licensure (9-12)**
 - Must pass appropriate content test:
 - Mathematics (Test 5165)
 - Comprehensive Science (Test 5435)

Program Grades & Eligibility

The following scale will be used to determine semester grades for undergraduate level students:

- 90% or above = A
- 80-93 P (Pass)
- 70-79 L (Low Pass)
- BELOW 70 -F (Fail)

A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 is required at the time of application, as mandated by the State of North Carolina for licensure eligibility. Applicants who do not meet the 2.7 GPA requirement will not be recommended for licensure. Please note that the state mandates the 2.7 GPA requirement, which is not negotiable.

Accessibility Resources & Services

If you have a medical condition/disability that may require reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this program, please contact the Department of Disability Services at 919.962.8300, on the internet at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/eligibility> or via email at disabilityservices@unc.edu. We recommend that you initiate engaging with accessibility resources as soon as possible immediately following acceptance of your offer of admission to the MAT and matriculation into the MAT. This will allow adequate time for services to be established, particularly if you are enrolling in summer classes. We also recommend that you alert your instructors about your accommodations prior to the beginning of the summer term, where applicable, to ensure services can begin, even if an official accessibility plan through the Department of Disability Services has not yet been established.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the deadline for _____ or when is _____ being held?

- The full [UNC BEST calendar](#) can be found above and will be updated as necessary during the course of the year
- For course specific information, please refer to your syllabi and course instructors for support.

When will I know my student teaching placement?

- Our district partners work hard to support the process in Intern/Clinical Educator (CE) matching and they must receive all necessary paperwork (NC Health Form & District Background Check) in a timely manner to ensure and confirm placement assignments. Only after Interns' paperwork is reviewed and accepted by the district partners can the Office of Clinical Partnerships and Licensure send official Intern/CE match emails.

Am I allowed to work during the UNC BEST Student Teaching semester?

- While we cannot require you not to work during the UNC BEST program, we strongly discourage it. The UNC BEST program is an intensive, program that brings with it significant time commitments toward coursework, fieldwork, and homework. The rigorous demands of the coursework, readings, and writing are simultaneously combined with the professional obligations of your fieldwork placement, which leaves little time or energy for work outside of the UNC BEST.

What if I need to miss a day of my Student Teaching placement?

- Email your Clinical Educator and Supervisor prior to the absence. Then, submit the form found at <https://go.unc.edu/internabsence>

Who can provide support for Praxis and edTPA?

- The UNC BEST Program will hold multiple Special Topics seminars and workshops to support students throughout the year.
- Faculty will also provide edTPA support, during coursework or select phases during the edTPA portfolio completion process.
- Interns may elicit direct feedback from their Clinical Educators and peers.
- Supervisors may ask you questions or provide prompts for reflection, but they may not provide direct edits or specific writing suggestions.

When do I need to complete licensure tests and how do I know what tests I need to take?

- We recommend you take your Praxis exams after completing your fall UNC BEST coursework while the information is still fresh.
- Go [HERE](#) for additional information about scheduling your exams

When will I get my NC teaching license?

- If you are set to graduate in May, you are eligible to apply for NC licensure after they received their degree-awarded transcripts, typically in late-May. To assist with the job hunt, the School's Educator Preparation and Accreditation team will prepare Program Verification letters for student teachers that indicate their good standing in the program.

Does the teacher candidate have the same legal standing as a regular teacher?

- UNC SOE advises that although teacher candidates do not have the same legal standing as regular teachers, many of their responsibilities and protections are the same. G. S. 115C-307 imposes upon teacher candidates the same responsibilities and grants them the same authorities regarding discipline as regular teachers. G. S. 115C-309 grants teacher candidates the same legal protection as a full-time contracted teacher. It provides that the teacher candidate under the supervision of a licensed teacher or principal shall have "the protection of the laws accorded the licensed teacher."

What are the health requirements for teacher candidates?

- All teacher candidates and graduate Interns are required to file a completed Health Examination Certificate with the Office of Educator Preparation and Accreditation prior to visiting schools. Additionally, Criminal Background Checks may be required for each school system.

Appendices

- A. UNC and District Partner Academic Calendars
- B. UNC BEST/MAT Lesson Plan Template
- C. NCTCER and QRC Observation Protocols
- D. UNC BEST/MAT Student Teacher Action Plan

- E. Example Spring Ramp-Up Schedule
- F. LEA/IHE Certificate of Teaching Capacity
- G. UNC BEST Licensure Exam Cost Chart

Appendix A: UNC and District Partner Academic Calendars

As an emerging teaching professional, it is the Intern's responsibility to access and follow their placement district's academic calendar in conjunction with the UNC academic calendar and MAT program schedule, where appropriate. We highly encourage Interns to consult these calendars prior to making travel plans or purchasing airline tickets for holidays and breaks.

UNC's Academic Calendar: <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-calendar/>

District Partner Academic Calendars:

- [Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#)
- [Chatham County Schools](#)
- [Durham Public Schools](#)
- [Orange County Schools](#)
- [Person County Schools](#)
- [Wake County Public School System](#)

Appendix B: UNC BEST/MAT Lesson Plan Template

UNC BEST/MAT Lesson Plan Template	
Teacher Candidate:	Grade Level:
Lesson Title/Focus:	
Date:	Time:
NCDPI/Common Core Learning Standard(s):	
Objective/Focus (e.g., "I Can" Statement/Essential Question):	
Materials Needed:	
Adaptations for Special Needs (EC, ELL, IEP, 504):	
Adaptations for Diverse Learners:	
Grouping Strategies:	
THE LESSON (what teacher and students will do)	
Introduction ("Before"):	
Instruction for Learning and Engagement ("During"):	
Engagement and Practice ("During"):	
Closure ("After"):	
ASSESSMENTS	
Formative:	
Summative:	

Appendix C: NCTCER and QRC Observation Protocol

North Carolina Teacher Candidate Evaluation Rubric (NCTCER)

- [North Carolina Teacher Candidate Evaluation Rubric \(NCTCER\)](#)

Quality Responsive Classrooms (QRC) Rubric:

Student Domains and indicators to look for during observation

1) Students take an active role in creating and maintaining classroom norms and protocols.

- **1.1** Students know how to **use/access resources (materials & one another) and know where** to get materials, whether provided by the teacher or within the larger learning space.
- **1.2** Students have **internalized and follow classroom/activity norms and expectations**, and prompt and **remind one another** when necessary.
- **1.3** Students appear to be **self-directed and engage productively in the learning task** without waiting for continual teacher direction.

2) Students generate and/or participate in the process of meeting learning goals and assignments.

- **2.1** Students have appropriate **options in how to meet learning goals or fulfill learning tasks**, e.g., multiple ways to represent, solve, and/or respond to a problem or question, and/or appropriate choices within the context of the lesson.
- **2.2** Students **ask one another questions** regarding learning activities to clarify expectations or assignment procedures.
- **2.3** Students can **monitor their individual and collective** progress toward learning objective(s).

3) Students participate in learning and support each other in building understanding or knowledge.

- **3.1** Students **volunteer relevant background knowledge and/or experiences**.
- **3.2** Students **seek out opportunities to extend** their understanding of the content (e.g., asking questions beyond those posed by teacher, bringing in outside materials or references to academic topics).
- **3.3** Students **use their first language and/or vernacular** ways of speaking to support their peers **academically**, to clarify their thinking, and to build bridges to academic ways of talking.
- **3.4** Students are **productively, actively, and appropriately engaged** in learning activities most of the time (not just behavior compliance, but active engagement in learning).
- **3.5** In general, students have **opportunities to collaborate** with peers and are **actively engaged in academic talk**.

Teaching Domains and indicators to look for during observation

1) Focuses on clear and challenging learning goals.

- **1.1** Sets and **conveys clear content and skill objectives** as well as clear **language objectives**.
- **1.2** Learning objectives include **higher order thinking** language (e.g. apply knowledge, engage in dialogue, make predictions, synthesize, evaluate, and analyze).
- **1.3** Refers to **“big ideas” and key learning** and emphasizes/reminds students of them **throughout the lesson/unit**.
- **1.4** Selects **appropriate learning materials and tasks** for learning objectives.
- **1.5** Communicates and reinforces **procedural directions and lesson structures in clear and concise ways** that move the lesson forward in a timely fashion.

2) Engages students in content and learning activities in a responsive way. • 2.1 Makes lesson's content relevant/useful to the lives of their students. ☐ • 2.2 Shows regard for student experiences and integrates multiple perspectives/lenses to encourage students to think critically (optional ways to solve/think, divergent thinking, look at it from a different viewpoint). ☐ • 2.3 Engages in feedback loops (more than one back-and-forth interaction with substance) that include higher order thinking questions to probe and gain knowledge of students' understanding. • 2.4 Fosters and pushes students to engage in metacognition (e.g., thinking aloud, discussing thought processes). • 2.5 Responsive to student questions/concerns and takes advantage of "teachable moments" to clarify students' understanding of learning goals of lesson/unit.
3) Supports students in their academic progress. • 3.1 Paces instruction based on student learning needs. • 3.2 Scaffolds information/tasks to meet students' needs, so all students can access information and meet goals (e.g., breaks projects/tasks down, differentiates). • 3.3 Builds varied and engaging opportunities for meaningful application of content (e.g., projects, thematic instruction, connections to community and/or culture outside of school). • 3.4 Permits/supports meaningful peer interactions and conversations regarding academic content. • 3.5 Facilitates development of increased student responsibility for learning (e.g., goal setting, note taking, peer and self-assessment with rubrics).
4) Strategies are present for supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners. • 4.1 Links vernacular to academic language/discipline-area terms. • 4.2 Makes strategic use of students' first language or oral traditions. • 4.3 Integrates instructional strategies to support language development (English language learners & transitions from vernacular to academic language)

Classroom Community Domains and indicators to look for during observation

1) Physical characteristics of the classroom support academic learning. • 1.1 Learning and language objectives visibly displayed in the classroom, including nonlinguistic representations. • 1.2 Student work respectfully and thoughtfully displayed. • 1.3 A resource-rich environment has been created that supports student learning (e.g., word walls, charts and pictures of key content learning, book centers, paper or other materials needed for learning tasks, etc.). • 1.4 Teacher strategically uses the space to be conducive to learning (e.g., desk arrangements for different groupings, organization of materials and resources in classroom). • 1.5 Teacher moves around the classroom, attends to most students (may include students with unique learning needs).
2) Socio-emotional climate of the classroom supports student engagement and belonging. • 2.1 Teacher-student and student-student interactions seem cohesive, supportive, safe, and often characterized by humor and warmth. • 2.2 Teacher communicates a belief that students can succeed both academically and personally, and the teacher will not give up on students. • 2.3 Regarding students' culture and use of their native language, the teacher is sensitive, responsive, and accepting. • 2.4 Teacher demonstrates and promotes caring interactions, e.g., personal knowledge of students (names, families, learning needs), greeting students, fostering a climate where students know one another. • 2.5 There is an absence or intolerance of bullying and teasing.

3) Classroom management reflects a commitment to fairness, justice, and promotes a low-conflict environment.

- **3.1 Teacher** has established **positive relationships, effective routines, and norms of conduct** that foster a **positive learning community**.
- **3.2 Teacher** is **respectfully assertive** and **attends to behavior issues promptly** and appropriately.
- **3.3 In** the presence of disruptive behavior, there is evidence of an established **progressive discipline plan** that **consistently and respectfully** reinforces **expectations and/or consequences**.
- **3.4 Conflict** (teacher-student and student-student) is **mediated respectfully** with a resolution maintaining everyone's dignity.
- **3.5 Absence of teacher-student power struggles** or harmful confrontations with or in front of students.
- **3.6 Teacher** shows **no bias, favoritism, or preferential treatment**

Appendix D: UNC BEST/MAT Intern Action Plan Template

UNC BEST/MAT Intern: _____

University Supervisor: _____

Clinical Educator: _____

Description of Specific Area(s) for Improvement and/or Action: _____

Action Plan

Required Action	Target Date	Assessment Method & Criteria	Observed by:	Follow-Up & Notes
Is there anything else you'd like to add?				

Source: Adapted from *Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers* by Rudney and Guillaume.

Signed and Dated: _____

UNC BEST/MAT Intern _____ Date _____

University Supervisor _____ Date _____

Clinical Educator _____ Date _____

UNC BEST Program Director _____ Date _____

Action Plan Reflection:

Individually reflect in writing on why each item might help improve your teaching practice. Please consider the following questions and respond below:

- How might this action plan be valuable for my practice as a teacher?

- How might it be valuable for my efforts to support my students' learning?
- Is there any specific support that I need from my supervisor or CE as I work to meet these goals?
- Are there any action items you feel are missing? Add any other items in a new row.

After reflecting in writing and discussing the document with your CE and Supervisor, please sign and return via email.

- Your CE and Supervisor will sign *after you do*, and we will work together to implement the action plan!

Appendix E: Example UNC BEST Spring Ramp-Up Schedule

*Note: This is a sample ramp up calendar. Please consult your district calendar for accurate teacher workdays and student breaks.

January							February							Sample Timeline	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Submit edTPA
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Student Teaching Launch	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Observe & Assist	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Teach 1 Class	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								Teach 2 Classes	
March							April							Teach 3 Classes	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Teach 4+ Classes	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4	No School	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	No Students	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	First Day in Placement	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Last Day in Placement	
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30				

Appendix F: LEA/IHE Certificate of Teaching Capacity

LEA/IHE Certification of Teaching Capacity

Candidate Name: _____ School: _____

Cooperating Teacher Name: _____ Grade: _____

LEA: _____ IHE: _____

In addition to all other state and institutional requirements, the candidate must meet each of the descriptors identified in this document to be recommended for licensure.

Standard/Element	Proficient Descriptor	Rating
Professionalism		
1e. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards.	1e.1 Upholds the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> .	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
Classroom Climate/Culture		
1a. Teachers lead in their classrooms.	1a.3 Maintains a safe and orderly classroom that facilitates student learning.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
	1a.4 Uses positive management of student behavior, including strategies of conflict resolution and anger management, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate seclusion and restraint.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
2a. Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.	2a.1 Maintains a positive and nurturing learning environment.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
2c. Teachers treat students as individuals.	2c.1 Maintains a learning environment that conveys high expectations of every student.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4g. Teachers communicate effectively.	4g.1 Uses a variety of methods to communicate effectively with all students.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
	4g.2 Consistently encourages and supports students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
Instruction		
2b. Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world.	2b.1 Appropriately uses materials or lessons that counteract stereotypes and acknowledges the contributions of all cultures.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
	2b.2 Incorporates different points of view in instruction.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met

Standard/Element	Proficient Descriptor	Rating
3a. Teachers align their instruction with the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> .	3a.2 Integrates effective literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and across content areas to enhance students' learning.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
3b. Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty.	3b.2 Encourages students to investigate the content area to expand their knowledge and satisfy their natural curiosity.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
3d. Teachers make instruction relevant to students.	3d.1 Integrates 21st century skills and content in instruction.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4c. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods.	4c.1 Uses a variety of appropriate methods and materials to meet the needs of all students.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4d. Teachers integrate and utilize technology in their instruction.	4d.1 Integrates technology with instruction to maximize students' learning.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4e. Teachers help students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.	4e.1 Integrates specific instruction that helps students develop the ability to apply processes and strategies for critical thinking and problem solving.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4f. Teachers help students to work in teams and develop leadership qualities.	4f.1 Organizes student learning teams for the purpose of developing cooperation, collaboration, and student leadership.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
Evaluation/Assessment		
1a. Teachers lead in their classrooms.	1a.1 Evaluates the progress of students toward high school graduation using a variety of assessment data measuring goals of the <i>North Carolina Standard</i>	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
4h. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned.	4h.1 Uses multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to monitor and evaluate students' progress and to inform instruction.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
	4h.2 Provides evidence that students attain 21st century knowledge, skills and dispositions.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
5a. Teachers analyze student learning.	5a.1 Uses data to provide ideas about what can be done to improve students' learning.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
Impact on Student Learning		
1d. Teachers advocate for schools and students.	1d.1 Implements and adheres to policies and practices positively affecting students' learning	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
2d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs.	2d.1 Cooperates with specialists and uses resources to support the special learning needs of all students.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met
	2d.2 Uses research-verified strategies to provide effective learning activities for students with special needs.	☐ Met ☐ Not Met

Appendix G: MAT Licensure Exam Cost Chart

**as of July 2026*

MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION (6-9)

Science (Middle Grades)

5442	Praxis II Middle School Science	\$130
	Total Cost	\$130

Mathematics (Middle Grades)

5164	Praxis II Middle School Mathematics	\$130
	Total Cost	\$130

SECONDARY EDUCATION (9-12)

Science (Secondary)

5436	Praxis II General Science: Content Knowledge	\$130
	Total Cost	\$130

Mathematics (Secondary)

5165	Praxis II Mathematics	\$130
	Total Cost	\$130