

## EPP ADEPT Program Evaluation and Assurances Initial Teacher Preparation 2021-2022

**Please note:**

A separate Program Evaluation and Assurances plan is required for *each* Program Type offered at the below-named EPP. (This is not a change in requirements.) You can find the templates for these plans here: <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/educator-effectiveness/teacher-preparation-ihes/ihe-expanded-adept-templates/>

**Upload the completed Program Evaluation and Assurances in your EPP portal on sclead.org. The deadline for submission is *July 1, 2021*.**

<b>Educator Preparation Program (EPP)</b>	<u>University of South Carolina - Aiken</u>
<b>Date of submission of ADEPT report/plan</b>	<u>July 17, 2021</u>
<b>Name of person completing report/plan</b>	<u>Judith Collazo, PhD</u>
<b>Title/position of person completing report/plan</b>	<u>Accreditation Coordinator</u>
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<b>Institution:</b> USC - Aiken	<b>SCDE Reviewer:</b> Beverly Flythe
<b>Program Type:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADEPT for Classroom-Based Teachers
	<input type="checkbox"/> ADEPT for School Librarians
	<input type="checkbox"/> ADEPT for Speech-Language Professionals
	<input type="checkbox"/> ADEPT for School Counselors

## Overall Findings

*Accepted.* The IHE is authorized to implement its ADEPT Plan, as submitted, for the 2020-2021 academic year.

*Modifications required.* Prior to implementation, the IHE must revise and resubmit its 2020-2021 ADEPT Plan on or before 9/30/2020

The following section(s) should be addressed in the revision and resubmission, as indicated.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

*Not received.* The IHE must submit its completed 2020-2021 ADEPT Plan on or before [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

### Section II

IHE ADEPT Program Evaluation and Improvement

In terms of (1) the IHE's strengths, (2a) the IHE's areas of growth, and (2b) the IHE's proposed changes:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> based on the findings, the IHE's plan includes a summary of all elements. No follow-up is needed.
<input type="checkbox"/> does not adequately address all elements of this program evaluation section. Follow-up is needed.

### Section III

ADEPT Documentation: The IHE's plan includes a description of the types of documentation that support its ADEPT program and a list of the ADEPT-related documents by title and date.	The IHE's plan:
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> includes documentation. No follow-up is needed.
	<input type="checkbox"/> does not include adequate documentation. Follow-up is needed.

### Section IV

IHE Feedback

SCDE is working to establish an EPP roundtable to collaborate and support one another as a means of continuous improvement. SCDE is working on SLO training and support for EPPs.

The above-named educator preparation program (EPP) submits the following assurances in compliance with the ADEPT-related requirements specified in State Statute (§§ 59-26-30 and 59-26-40 of the SC Code of Laws); State Board of Education Regulation 43-205.1; and the State Board of Education-approved ADEPT Guidelines.

*The current South Carolina ADEPT Support and Evaluation System Guidelines* are available online at <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/educator-effectiveness/expanded-adept-resources/https-ed-sc-gov-educators-educator-effectiveness-expanded-adept-resources-educator-evaluation-guidance-2018-19/2018-19-expanded-adept-guidelines-april-2018/>

*The current Policy Guidelines for South Carolina Educator Preparation Units* are available online at [http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/educators/educator-preparation/educator-units/081012Standards\\_Policies\\_Procedures\\_Board\\_Approved\\_2015\(1\).pdf](http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/educators/educator-preparation/educator-units/081012Standards_Policies_Procedures_Board_Approved_2015(1).pdf).

## SECTION I: Statement of Assurances

By submitting this assurances form, and unless otherwise noted, the EPP agrees to implement the ADEPT requirements listed below. Additionally, the EPP agrees to maintain supporting documentation verifying that the institution has met these requirements and to make this documentation available at the request of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) or during an onsite visit.

- **Assurance #1: SCTS 4.0 Domains.** The EPP will integrate the SCTS 4.0 Domains throughout each candidate's course work, field experiences, and clinical practice so that candidates understand and are able to apply these standards.
- **Assurance #2: Clinical Practice (Student Teaching).** Prior to the beginning of the clinical practice—the capstone ADEPT experience—the EPP will provide candidates with a comprehensive orientation to the practicum so that the candidates understand what they have to do in order to achieve success. At a minimum, the orientation will include both oral and written explanations of the assistance and evaluation processes, the ADEPT-related expectations, the *Standards of Conduct for South Carolina Educators*, and the EPP's requirements for successful completion of the clinical practice. Additionally, the EPP will design and implement the clinical practice according to all applicable policy guidelines to ensure that candidates receive full opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- **Assurance #3: Supervision of Candidates.** The EPP will provide candidates with effective guidance and support during the clinical practice. The EPP ensures that each candidate is supervised (1) by one or more EPP clinical faculty members who have preparation both in the supervision of education and in the candidate's teaching major and who are ADEPT trained (2) by one or more school-based clinical faculty (cooperating teachers), each of whom is ADEPT trained. All EPP supervisors and cooperating teachers will hold certification as an ADEPT evaluator or trainer, or they will have successfully completed an ADEPT seminar that follows the SCDE-recommended structure and format. Additionally, the EPP will provide all supervisors and cooperating teachers with training related to the institution's requirements and procedures for evaluating and supporting candidates.
- **Assurance #4: Feedback to Candidates.** The EPP will ensure that, throughout the clinical experience, supervisors provide each candidate with accurate, appropriate, and ongoing formative feedback that enables the candidate to improve his or her teaching performance and effectiveness. Additionally, the EPP will assign ratings and grades aligned with the EPP's stated policies and that truly represent the quality of each candidate's teaching performance and effectiveness.
- **Assurance #5: Continuous ADEPT Program Improvement.** The EPP will gather **qualitative and quantitative** data to determine the impact of the program on the teaching performance and effectiveness of the institution's candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains and will use these data to guide future program planning.

## SECTION II: EPP ADEPT Program Evaluation and Improvement

By submitting this program evaluation and improvement plan, and unless otherwise noted, the EPP agrees to maintain supporting documentation verifying that the institution has gathered **qualitative and quantitative data** on the effectiveness of its ADEPT Program implementation and to make this documentation available at the request of the SCDE or during an onsite visit. *Instructions to the EPP: Please respond to each of the following questions.*

- 1. Based on 2020-21 qualitative and quantitative data, what are the EPP's strengths in terms of promoting the teaching performance and effectiveness of its candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains? In this response, please indicate how faculty and staff identified these particular strengths. Attach any supporting data.**

Prior to responding to the questions set forth in this ADEPT Assurances Report, we must acknowledge that due to the Covid-19 pandemic our student teacher interns were impacted by an ever changing teaching format (fully virtual hybrid, face-to-face) and intensive safety protocols, while they endeavored to teach academic content and promote student learning and wellness. Upon review and analysis of the SCTS 4.0 2020-21 data, our EPP found that USC Aiken teacher candidates are strongest in the domains of *Professionalism* and *Learning Environment*. The candidates scored highest in the two domains overall (average of 3.31-3.49/4 in *Environment* and a mean of 3.53/4.0 for *Professionalism*), as well as the highest average score for a number of individual programs in both semesters as noted in the Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level and Special Education programs with scores in the *Professionalism* domains that ranged from to 3.33 to a perfect score of 4.0. This data evidence is consistent with the AY 2019-20 data that demonstrated *Professionalism and Learning Environment* as our candidates' area of strength. The data evidence also reflects the employer survey data (Spring 2021; N=27) where administrators found our 1-3<sup>rd</sup> graduates strengths were in professionalism (lifelong learner and preparedness) and learning environment (content knowledge and pedagogy). Additionally, SLO fall 2020 data (scored on a 3-point scale) indicated that our candidates have strengths in the domains of *Instruction* and *Planning*, as the candidates averaged perfect scores (3/3 points) in pre and post assessments and alignment of standards. Further, all candidates scored 2.5 or above on all SLO indicators with the exception of elementary and middle level in the area of progress monitoring (formative assessment). Formative assessment is an area of weakness for all programs that has been noted across the past three academic of assessment and survey data. That said, USCA completers earned near perfect scores (ranging from 2.75 – 3.0) in growth targets and historical trend data. Clearly our completers demonstrate strengths across all four SCTS 4.0 domains (*Instruction, Planning, Environment, and Professionalism*). The SLO data scoring differences occurred due to different senior seminar instructors between the fall 2020 and the spring 2021 semesters and the training each received with the rubric. Target scores were 2.0 average overall for each category, candidate, and program. Due the pandemic, the elementary program candidates were unable to complete their mini SLO in their assessment course and the MLE and secondary candidates completed assessment data analysis from provided data and not through practica assessment work with actual students. Therefore, the elementary, MLE, and secondary averages fall slightly below the target of 2.0 overall and for 2-3 SLO rubric indicators.

Our School of Education faculty reviewed the available data at the conclusion of the 2020-21 academic year. We revised and reviewed our teacher candidate progress based on the data trends. Over the 2020-21 academic year, the EPP faculty met as a whole and by program area to evaluate our continuous improvements based on the emerging data. The goal setting/evaluation evidence is available upon request. Further, at the fall 2021 retreat, our SoE faculty will analyze our 4.0 and SLO data to re-assess our 2021-22 program area and EPP-wide goals.

*SCTS Rubric 4.0 Results*

	Instruction	Planning	Environment	Professionalism	Composite Average	Composite Weighted
<b>Fall 2020</b>						
ECE (N=6)	2.95	2.83	3.31	3.33	3.12	3.04
Elem Aiken	2.97	3.31	3.33	3.2	3	3.06
Elem Salk	2.83	3.33	4.0	4.0	3.62	3.49
Elem Sumter	3.25	3.33	3.25	3.5	3	3.08
Elem All (N=12)	3.11	3.01	3.67	3.6	3.36	3.27
Middle Level. (N=1)	3.0	3.0	3.25	3.4	3.17	3.09
Secondary (N=3)	2.6	2.56	3.08	3.03	2.82	2.74
SpEd – Aiken	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.17	3.05
SpEd - PC	3.58	3.25	4.0	4.0	3.55	3.39
SpEd - All (N=2)	3.29	3.17	3.5	3.75	3.47	3.35
Music (N=1)	3.25	3.33	3.5	4.0	3.55	3.39
All	3.01	3.0	3.39	3.51	3.25	3.15

\*TRENDS – AREAS OF STRENGTH - PROFESSIONALISM AND ENVIROMENT - INSTRUCTION AND PLANNING TARGET BUT LOWEST AVERAGE

SCTS RUBRIC 4.0

Highest average school = >3.5 – 4.0
Median average score = 3.0 – 3.49
Lowest average score = <3.0

SCTS Rubric 4.0 Results

N = 43	Instruction	Planning	Environment	Professionalism	Composite Weighted	Composite Mean
<b>Spring 2021</b>						
ECE AIKEN	3.13	3.1	3.54	3.49	3.24	3.23
ECE SUMTER	2.94	3.17	3.44	3.15	3.1	3.1
ECE ALL (N=18)	3.09	3.11	3.52	3.41	3.21	3.34
Elem Aiken	3.38	3.26	3.57	3.66	3.43	3.5
Elem Salk	3.67	3.67	4.0	4.0	3.77	3.83
Elem Sumter	2.6	3.0	3.25	1.8	2.72	2.45
Elem All (N=9)	3.21	3.31	3.61	3.16	3.3	3.26
Middle Level (N=4)	2.83	2.92	3.0	2.8	2.88	2.85
Secondary (N=3)	3.17	3.0	3.33	3.27	3.18	3.42
Special Ed. Aiken	3.37	3.4	3.45	3.38	3.39	3.39
Special Ed (PC)	3.56	3.25	3.75	3.75	3.56	3.62
Special Ed. (All) N=9	3.47	3.33	3.6	3.55	3.46	3.5

Fall 2020 (SLO Data) Program and EPP Means	STUDENT POP.	CLASSROOM ENVIRON	HISTORICAL AND TREND DATA	BASELINE DATA	POST ASSESS	PROGRESS MONITOR PLAN	LEARNING GOAL	STANDARDS	GROWTH TARGETS	Instr. Strat.	TOTAL AVG.
Early Childhood	2.67	2.59	2.83	3	3	2.67	2.67	3	2.77	2.58	2.78
Elementary	2.8	2.69	2.96	3	3	2.34	2.86	3	3	2.84	2.85
Middle Level	2.5	2.56	3	3	3	2.42	2.58	3	2.95	2.62	2.76
Secondary	2.67	2.5	3	3	3	2.83	2.67	3	2.75	2.75	2.74
Special Education	2.66	2.59	2.95	3	3	2.57	2.7	3	2.87	2.7	2.78
<b>TOTALS</b>	2.67	2.59	2.83	3	3	2.67	2.67	3	2.77	2.58	2.78

SLO Fall 2020

Highest average score = >2.5

Lowest average score =/ < 2.5

Spring 2021 (SLO Data) Program & EPP Means	STUDENT POP.	CLASSROOM ENVIRON	HISTORICAL AND TREND DATA	BASELINE DATA	POST ASSESS	PROGRESS MONITOR PLAN	LEARNING GOAL	STANDARDS	GROWTH TARGETS	Instr. Strat.	TOTAL AVG.
Early Childhood	2.32	2	2	2.1	2.14	2.24	2.17	2.22	2.18	2.81	2.18
Elementary Average	2.11	1.89	2	2	2	2	1.85	2	1.69	1.84	1.91
Middle Level Average	2.08	2	1	2	2	1.67	1.5	2.5	1.7	2	1.81
Secondary Average	2.33	2	2.17	2	2	2.11	1.33	2	2	1.67	1.96
Special Education	2.37	2.22	2.22	2.17	2.17	2.37	2.11	2.11	2.11	2.28	2.21
TOTAL MEANS	2.24	2.0	1.88	2.06	2.06	2.1	1.8	2.17	1.94	2.12	2.01

SLO Spring 2021

Highest average score =>2.0	Lowest average score =< 2.0
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2. Based on 2020-21 qualitative and quantitative data, what are the areas of growth in terms of promoting the teaching performance and effectiveness of its candidates and graduates relative to the SCTS 4.0 Domains? List any changes the EPP plans to make in order to address those areas of needed growth. *In this response, please indicate how faculty and staff determined the need for these changes. Attach any supporting data.*

In the spring of 2021, the SoE faculty reviewed the available AY 2020-21 data and compared the data to the program area and EPP-wide goals set for 2020-21. In the fall of 2021, the EPP will meet to revise the program area and SoE 2021-22 goals based on all AY 2020-21 data. As part of this review the faculty will focus on how we could best analyze the data with an emphasis on continuous program improvement and teacher candidate quality across the 4 domains of the SCTS 4.0 Rubric and the expanded ADEPT Standards. Our EPP programs endeavored to strengthen candidates' planning and instruction by incorporating the SCTS Rubric during the professional program as formative observation instruments during junior and senior block with mastery expected during internship.

**Specific Weaknesses Identified AY 2020-21:**

- Lesson Planning
- Setting Expectations
- Formative Assessment
- Learning Environment (behavioral management).
- Long Range Planning



The following is a sample of our program area goal setting for academic year 2021-22:

Elementary Goal Progress and Looking Ahead (AY 2021-22):

**Goal 1: *Integrating Technology & Teaching – Long Range Planning*** (e-portfolio begin Spring 2022, unit plan, aligning technology and actual classroom application)

**Goal 2: *Curriculum Alignment*** -assessments, integrating diversity, teaching ELL’s, and technology throughout coursework

**Goal 3: *Teaching Diverse Learners with a Focus on ELL’s***

Identify and implement opportunities to integrate instructional strategies for ELLs throughout coursework/curriculum. Foster. 2 new PDS Partnerships (Belvedere - Aiken and Millwood – Sumter)

**Goal 4: *Diverse Field Placements*** Continue to purposefully plan placements, work toward a yearlong internship – Sr Block & Internship (Sumter – Millwood; Aiken – JD Lever or Belvedere?)

Over the past three years, multiple faculty were certified as SCTS 4.0 Trainers and all of our University Supervisors have been trained in the 3-day evaluation to use the SCTS 4.0. Faculty in our professional program classes introduce and evaluate teacher candidates using the SCTS 4.0 instrument (see chart in Section III) and the Cooperating Teachers received web-based introductory instruction. We continue to work with our School Districts to ensure our cooperating teachers are fully trained in the SCTS Rubric 4.0 by their 5-year contract renewal.

**3. What changes has the EPP made in preparation and partnerships with neighboring districts for using Expanded ADEPT and the SCTS 4.0?**

<i>SCTS Domain</i>	<i>4.0 Introduced</i>	<i>Reinforced</i>	<i>Mastered</i>	<i>Evidence Provided</i>	<i>Change from 2020-21?</i>
<i>Instruction</i>	<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Planning</i>	<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Environment</i>	<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>Block I</i>	<i>Block II Block III (SpEd)</i>	<i>Internship</i>	<i>Course syllabi, major handbook</i>	<i>No</i>

We continue to forge strong professional development school partnerships to ensure that our candidates transition from pre-service to highly qualified practicing teachers using the SCTS 4.0 and expanded ADEPT evaluation system. Three new professional development partnerships have been signed in elementary, special education, and early childhood settings (2 - Aiken campus and 1 – Sumter campus) beginning in AY 2021-22.

## **SECTION IV: EPP Feedback**

1. What additional training and/or resources would best support the EPP’s implementation of SCTS 4.0?

Thank you for supporting our EPP’s implementation of online training 4.0 TOT (3-day) asynchronous and virtual synchronous modules we held a fully virtual training in collaboration with Lander University for university supervisors at multiple institutions in AY 2020-21. Thank you for providing online cooperating teacher SCTS 4.0 training. We appreciate your support moving forward.

Include any additional feedback about your EPP’s ADEPT program in the space below.

As the UofSCA earned full CAEP accreditation status with no AFI’s or stipulations (2020-27) in the fall 2020, our continuous improvement efforts and strategic planning aligned to the five ADEPT assurances remain integral to our EPP’s candidates’ preparation. Evidence of strategic planning and continuous improvement aligned to CAEP and state expanded ADEPT and SCTS Rubric 4.0 standards are available upon request.

2. For the 2021-22 academic year, NIET has updated the Environment Domain of the South Carolina Teaching Standards based on their research to maintain the same indicators, but update some of the descriptors to better reflect an emphasis on student engagement, safe and positive environment, and equitable access to learning. Implementation of these revisions will be required for districts in the 2021-2022 AY, and for EPPs in the 2022-2023 AY. We wanted to give you ample opportunity to explore the changes prior to integration, but we want to hear from you regarding your particular experience. Your responses to these questions inform how we can best assist and support you and the pipeline.
  - o What have been your successes in recruiting underrepresented teacher candidates (men for elementary, candidates of color)? What obstacles have you encountered?

Beginning in the Fall 2016 the USC Aiken School of Education Recruitment and Retention Committee developed a strategic plan to increase our numbers of diverse, highly qualified teacher candidates and to identify ways to retain them by providing them with additional support. The committee identified six goals along with specific strategies to address each goal. The 2016-2021 goals and strategies were as follows:

**Goal 1:** Evaluate the diversity levels in our programs and among completers

**Strategy:** Recruit and retain diverse, highly qualified teacher candidates

**Goal 2:** Determine clear language about diversity goals

**Strategy:** Initially focus on tracking race and gender enrollment data across programs; establish projected enrollment targets for the next three years

**Goal 3:** Recruit at the K-12 level, college level, and in high needs areas

**Strategies:**

- a. Recruitment efforts at the K-12 level include:
  1. Teacher Cadet program
  2. Teaching Fellows program
  3. Admissions tours
  4. Open Houses
  5. Athletic Recognition Nights
  6. K-12 field trips to the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center
  7. Aiken Scholars Academy
  8. Outreach to middle and high schools
  9. Pro-Team program
- b. Recruitment at the college level include partnering with Aiken Technical College and becoming more visible on the USC Aiken campus, especially for undecided or undeclared majors
- c. Recruit in high needs content areas, especially Special Education and STEM
- d. Recruit in high needs geographical locations such as USC Salkehatchie and USC Sumter

**Goal 4:** Extend financial resources available to teacher candidates and make them visible in our recruitment efforts

**Strategies:**

- a. Call Me MISTER
- b. Teach Grant
- c. South Carolina Teacher Loan Program
- d. Numerous local scholarships

**Goal 5:** Improve retention of diverse teacher candidates by providing more student support

**Strategies:**

- a. Proactive professional advising
- b. Early intervention referral system
- c. Dispositions Report and Professional Growth Plan
- d. Praxis CORE preparation
- e. Improve communication
- f. Strengthen cohort model

**Goal 6:** Develop stronger infrastructure to monitor how these efforts are being addressed across the School of Education programs

**Strategies:**

- a. Number and demographics of new applicants
- b. Retention during and after freshman year
- c. Retention during and after sophomore year
- d. Number of students on academic probation and suspension
- e. Percentage of students passing the Praxis CORE
- f. Percentage of students entering internship with a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- g. 4-year and 6-year graduation rates

Our committee has compiled enrollment data to track race and gender trends across programs. The three tables below summarize our School of Education’s data for our Aiken, Salkehatchie, and Sumter completers. Moving forward we will track enrollment, retention and completion data.

**Table 1a. Completers (Aiken)**

Historical Data- Completers Across Programs (Aiken only)					
Demographic	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Female	49	47	59	49	59
Male	6	3	10	6	11
African American	8	6	9	8	14
Asian	0	1	0	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	2	0	1	0	1
Mixed Race	0	0	3	1	1
White/Caucasian	43	43	52	44	52
Other	2	0	4	2	2
Total candidates	55	50	69	55	70

**Table 1b. Completers (Salkehatchie)**

Historical Data- Enrollment Across Programs (Sumter only)					
Demographic	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Female	0	0	0	1	4
Male	0	0	0	0	1
African American	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Race	0	0	0	0	0

White/Caucasian	0	0	0	1	5
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total candidates	0	0	0	1	5

**Table 1c. Completers (Sumter)**

Historical Data- Enrollment Across Programs (Salkehatchie only)					
Demographic	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Female	0	0	0	1	4
Male	0	0	0	0	1
African American	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Race	0	0	0	0	0
White/Caucasian	0	0	0	1	5
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total candidates	0	0	0	1	5

We also began tracking numbers related to recruitment strategies, such as Teaching Fellows:

**Table 2. Teaching Fellows at UofSC Aiken (enrollment, not completers)**

	Male	Female	Non-White	White	TOTAL
2016-2017	2	9	1	9	11
2017-2018	2	11	2	11	13
2018-2019	2	16	3	13	18
2019-2020	2	24	2	24	26
2020-2021	3	21	3	21	24

The plan for 2021-22 and forward is being revised based on the above data.

Further, the data indicate that the three academic years (2017-18 through 2019-20; 2020-21 data is still being collected and aggregated) have shown an upward trend in the enrollment number of diverse candidates admitted into the professional program. From fall 2017 through spring 2020, the ethnic and racial diversity of the EPP candidates averaged 21% (AY 2017-18: 6% male and 14% diverse candidates; AY 2018-19: 15% male and 25% diverse candidates; AY 2019-20: 11% male and 22% diverse candidates). At the program level, from fall 2017-spring 2020 diversity percentage trends ranged from 21-25% for all programs. Of particular note is the EPP's recruitment of male and diverse candidates. From AY 2017-18 through AY 2019-20, there was an 270% increase in male candidates (from 3 in 2017-18 to an average of 8 from 2018-20) and % increase (from 7 candidates or 14% in 2017-18 to an average of 14.5 or 23% diverse candidates from academic years 2018-20) in diverse candidates. To further improve male and diverse candidate enrollment, the EPP collaborated with Aiken County Public Schools, Aiken Technical College and the Call Me Mister scholarship program. The first Call Me Mister cohort was

admitted in the 2019-20 academic year at UofSCA. The EPP also focuses on the critical needs areas in South Carolina including special education, science, math, literacy, middle level (all content areas), and ELA/English and literacy. The EPP is working on developing dual degree programs for science and teacher education majors. Further, the EPP's Aiken Scholars program recruits high school students identified as gifted in STEM areas. The students engage in advanced high school classwork and undergraduate level STEM courses at USCA. The EPP also has a well-established Teaching Fellows program that recruits the highest caliber of high school seniors who are interested in entering the field of education. Throughout the professional program, EPP candidates' dispositions are tracked and monitored for growth. An EPP-wide diversity focus has allowed more proactive and effective mentoring of candidates. Finally, the EPP participates in the Rural Teacher Initiative, providing significant financial assistance to candidates who agree to teach in a high need area of the state upon graduation.

- How has your program addressed CAEP and state standards reflecting culturally responsive teaching and cultural diversity in your recruitment practices? How does your program address culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices?

All EPP Candidates are expected to facilitate the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students as follows: understand other cultures and their impact on student learning; understand and use various teaching strategies to accommodate diverse populations of students; is respectful, compassionate, and free of bias when working with students from diverse backgrounds (demonstrates cultural competency). All EPP candidates engage in critical reflection and discourse about culture, pedagogy, and classroom practice in a series of three diversity workshops focused on anti-bias education practices and cultural competency for preservice teachers. All teacher candidates are also required to take diversity courses in their primary program of study. In addition, all EPP student teacher interns participate in a required Diversity Conference and complete reflection papers as an internship requirement. The data from academic years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 indicate a 100% passing score on all interns' diversity reflection papers. In addition, in the spring 2021, the SoE offered a diversity conference on the UofSCA campus for all spring UofSCA 2021 interns. Presentation and workshop themes included: trauma-informed teaching, strategies for teaching ELL's, working with students in poverty, and culturally responsive instruction for diverse learners. Employers have also expressed that EPP completers are well-prepared to teach in diverse populations. Further, the EPP Lesson Plan was revised to ensure candidates can design lessons that meet the needs of all children. All EPP candidates are also placed in diverse field and clinical experiences as preparation for becoming culturally competent educators who positively impact diverse P-12 students. Diversity is met by showing a range of differences in at least three of the five identified categories of gender, ethnicity/race, socioeconomic status, academic exceptionalities (SPED and GT), and language diversity (ELL). Candidates participate in a variety of field experiences throughout our program in both rural and suburban placements as part of their preparation. UofSC Aiken's education programs require field experiences that provide a variety of progressive experiences in multiple settings. Field and clinical experiences are planned through our collaboration with our school and district partners. Aiken County Public School District (ACPSD) has had an increasing ELL population over the last 5 years and now exceeds the state average with 8.65% of their total population considered ELLs. ACPSD ESOL Department personal communication). On numerous occasions over the last few years, the EPP has discussed incorporating more culturally relevant pedagogy for ELL's and children of poverty. It remains a growing need but with the current mandated requirements from the University, state and national levels, we are still trying to determine a path forward. The EPP offers ESOL endorsement classes at the graduate level every semester to school districts around the state. ACPSD has a high concentration of Title I schools in the county. Thirty one of forty two Elementary schools (74%) are categorized as Title I schools. This is where the majority of EPP candidates are placement for field experiences. The USC Aiken School of Education continues striving to meet its diversity goals for teacher candidates (understanding different cultures and teaching impact, differentiating instruction for P-12 diverse students, and cultural competency). Through the ongoing continuous improvement efforts in diversity, the EPP acknowledges its strengths and challenges in this area. During the AY 2020-21, our EPP

faculty worked to integrate culturally responsive lesson(s), modules, and resources across programs and the EPP. Culturally responsive instruction and critical multicultural education will continue to be an area of focus for our EPP.

Include any additional feedback about your EPP's ADEPT program in the space below.

Further evidence provided upon request.