

**Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the
Provisional Site Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at
Alder Graduate School of Education**

Professional Services Division

October 2022

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the provisional accreditation site visit conducted at **Alder Graduate School of Education**. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation** is made for the institution.

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

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

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Preliminary Multiple Subject	6	6	0	0
Preliminary Single Subject	6	6	0	0
Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs	6	6	0	0

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

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Initial Institutional Approval Provisional Site Visit Team Report**

Institution: Alder Graduate School of Education

Dates of Visit: October 11-13, 2022

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation

Rationale:

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

Preconditions

All preconditions have been determined to be aligned.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Preliminary Multiple Subject credential and Preliminary Single Subject credential programs were **met**.

All program standards for the Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential program were **met**.

Common Standards

All common standards have been found to be **met**.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found that all Common Standards were met and that all standards were met for the Preliminary Multiple Subject credential and Single Subject credential programs and the Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential program, the team recommends **Accreditation**.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution’s response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Alder Graduate School of Education be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation once the Commission advances the institution from provisional approval to full approval status.

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

Preliminary Multiple Subject
Preliminary Single Subject
Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs

Provisional Site Visit in Stage V of Initial Institutional Approval

During Stage V of the initial institutional approval (IIA) process, a new institution hosts a Provisional Site Visit (PSV). The site visit team is composed of program leaders for that type of program as well as experienced Board of Institutional Review members. Because this PSV is based on a routine sixth year accreditation site visit, the team makes decisions on all common and applicable program standards as well as an accreditation recommendation and any stipulations, if appropriate. While Alder previously offered services through a partnership with the University of the Pacific, a Commission-approved teacher preparation program, they have operated for the past two years as a provisionally approved institution with educator preparation programs under the name of Alder Graduate School of Education.

Accreditation Team

Team Lead:

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Programs Reviewers:

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Common Standards:

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Staff to the Visit:

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Documents Reviewed

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

Candidate Files
Assessment Materials
Candidate Handbooks
Survey Results
Performance Expectation Materials
Precondition Responses
TPA Results and Analysis
Examination Results

Interviews Conducted

Stakeholders	TOTAL
Candidates (Residents)	101
Completers	50
Mentor Teachers	79
Employers	25
Institutional Administration	10
Full Time Faculty	9
Adjunct Faculty	40
Clinical Faculty (Partner Directors)	16
Program Field Supervisors	15
Student Services Staff	4
Credential Analysts and Staff	4
Advisory Board Members	4
TOTAL	357

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

Background Information

The Alder Graduate School of Education was founded in 2010 as part of the University of the Pacific's Benerd School of Education. The program was started to prepare teachers who stay in the profession longer and are more demographically representative of the TK-12 students served than has been the case historically. In the academic year 2022-2023, the program is in its third independent cohort since earning provisional accreditation from the Commission.

Alder Graduate School of Education's home office is in Redwood City, California, and serves residents in the Bay Area, Central Valley, Central Coast, and Southern California. The share of Alder GSE residents from historically underrepresented communities is 83% in the 2021-2022 cohort. 53% of residents are Pell Grant recipients and 66% are first-generation college graduates. Alder currently serves over 300 residents with the goal of eventually enrolling a class of 500 residents each academic year.

The Teacher Residency at Alder is a full-time program that leads to a preliminary credential recommendation and a Master of Arts in Education degree in one year. Four days of the week, residents co-teach with a mentor teacher, sharing responsibility (allocated through a gradual release model) for duties involved with a full-time teaching position. Residents are expected to attend their TK-12 school staff retreats, plan lessons, communicate with families, perform recess duty, maintain the classroom space, analyze data/student work, grade assignments, etc. One day each week, residents attend a full-day Alder resident seminar course in their region.

Residents participate in their graduate coursework in three ways: full-day, in-person courses during the summer and one day every three weeks during the fall and spring; weekly seminar classes; and online courses. The training year begins with orientation in June and ends with the TK-12 school year the following June.

Education Unit

The Teacher Residency program at Alder offers three credential programs: Preliminary Multiple Subject; Preliminary Single Subject in English, Mathematics, Foundational-Level General Science, Science: Biological Science, Science: Chemistry, Science: Geosciences, Science: Physics, Social Science and World Languages in Spanish and Mandarin; and Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate support needs.

In the 2022-2023 school year Alder enrolled 326 teacher residents. Alder's faculty include nine content specialist faculty primarily dedicated to teaching content-area courses and five administrative leaders (Dean, Senior Director of Academic Programs, and three Regional Managing Clinical Directors) primarily dedicated to overseeing course and clinical work. There are also twenty-six Alder Partner Directors who have a joint appointment with partner districts and Alder and are primarily dedicated to overseeing clinical work and teaching weekly seminar courses. Alder also hires adjunct course instructors and adjunct clinical supervisors as needed for staffing courses and clinical visits.

Table 1: Program Review Status

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2021-22)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2022-23)
Preliminary Multiple Subject	54	149
Preliminary Single Subject	53	90
Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs	38	87

The Visit

The visit proceeded in accordance with all normal accreditation protocols. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site visit was conducted virtually. The team and institutional stakeholders were interviewed via technology.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

After review of all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be met.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject

Program Design

The unit's organizational chart and leadership roles are designed based on meaningful integration of theory and practice. The leaders of the program are the educational unit's dean and senior director of academic programs. The unit's content-focused faculty lead students' engagement with educational theory and research, and report to the dean.

Evidence reviewed and interviews conducted confirmed that three regional managing clinical directors guide the work of the unit's 17 partner directors who play the keystone role connecting the Graduate School of Education to the P-12 school partners, lead the clinical side of the credential program, and report to the senior director of academic programs. Although the partner directors are formally employed by the local education agencies (LEA's), Alder pays part of the salary for the partner directors. They work closely with the dean, senior director of academic programs, and regional managing clinical directors on a nearly daily basis. The partner directors also work as faculty and facilitate weekly seminars for residents and mentors, conduct observations, and provide ongoing formative and summative assessment both in the P-12 classrooms and in seminars.

The program is also supported by an operations and services team to meet the needs of program residents and to maximize their opportunities for successfully completing the program.

Evidence reviewed and interviews conducted confirmed that the unit uses a variety of methods to ensure open and clear communication between the credential programs and the institution. In addition to promoting a culture of responsive communication including prompt email response and regular phone/text communication, the unit also communicates formally as follows:

- faculty, dean, and clinical leaders meet regularly.
- financial aid, registrar and credentials, enrollment, student services, and the admissions team meets monthly.
- The unit publishes a weekly newsletter across the institution with reports from each department.
- The dean and senior director of academic programs meet bi-weekly with the president, chief operating officer, chief financial officer, and other senior leaders.
- The entire institutional community gathers monthly for an "Aldergether" meeting to share news, celebrate successes, and connect with one another.
- The unit holds two in-person retreats each year with all stakeholders.

- Additionally, there is a committee system established for the board, faculty, and staff.

The unit's residency program is fundamentally an apprenticeship model in which critical resident learning takes place under the tutelage of a mentor teacher in a P-12 classroom within one of the partner local education agency schools and with the support of the partner director. Evidence reviewed and interviews conducted indicated that the program provides residents with a developmental and sequential set of activities that is integrated with the program's coursework and that extends the resident's learning through application of theory to practice with P-12 students in California public school classrooms. The program provides a 12-month residency program in which residents experience over 860 clinical hours spread across four terms. Residents complete 34 course credits towards a preliminary teaching credential and Master of Arts in Education.

Clinical practice field experiences provided by the program total more than 860 hours, beginning with supervised field experiences, co-planning, and co-teaching. Residents develop their teaching skills in their P-12 practicum classrooms, under the supervision of their mentor teacher. During interviews, residents and faculty described a process in which residents are gradually released to undertake greater teaching responsibility as they are increasingly ready to be successful, working within each resident's zone of proximal development.

The residency program was originally part of a Commission-approved credential program at a private university from 2010-2020. The unit was granted provisional accreditation by the Commission in June 2020 and has made the following modifications over the last two years, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to better serve its candidates in rural districts and hard-to-fill credential areas such as world languages, the unit applied for and was granted approval by the WASC Senior Colleges and Universities Commission to offer some of its courses as needed in the synchronous online modality. The program began employing this modality with candidates in some rural districts and hard-to-fill credential areas in summer 2022.

The program has reconfigured what was once a four-week term in May to become part of a longer spring term and has adjusted some of the content methods courses to align with that change. This adjustment streamlined the spring courses while keeping the same content and made the program slightly less complex for students to understand. Summer session now occurs over a 20-day period beginning in late June and accounts for holidays. During interviews, candidates expressed a high level of satisfaction with this new format.

In order to increase the face time between instructors and residents, in 2022-2023 the program began implementing afternoon synchronous sessions for specific courses. This change was in response to resident feedback that the asynchronous content courses would be improved with more instructor connection and synchronous instruction. When interviewed, both candidates and instructors spoke very positively of this increased face time.

Beginning in 2022-2023, the program modified its method course series in order to add more emphasis to its content instruction for multiple subject residents in the areas of social science, science, physical education, health, and the visual and performing arts.

The unit gathers partner input through a number of mediums, including, but not limited to:

- Resident input: Residents complete mid-term “pulse check” surveys, final course evaluation surveys, and mid-year and end-of-year program quality surveys.
- Faculty input: Faculty complete mid-year and end-of-year surveys about Alder program quality and are able to offer suggestions and ideas for improving the program throughout the year.
- District partner input: Program leaders meet at least annually with leaders in each partner local education agency to share data and to gather their input and ideas in order to promote sustainable improvement.
- Additionally, partner directors share an appointment in their home school district and with Alder GSE. In this role, they meet regularly with school leaders and district personnel to hear their feedback and input. Partner directors communicate frequently with Alder personnel and the program makes appropriate adjustments that result from that communication.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

Residents begin co-teaching alongside mentors on the first day of school when students are present in their classrooms. Residents co-teach with their mentor teacher four full days-a-week, sharing responsibility for duties involved with a full-time teaching position and gradually taking on additional responsibility over the course of the year. Residents attend a full-day Resident seminar class in their region one day-a-week for three weeks per month, during the fall and spring terms. During the school year, residents continue to participate in graduate-level online courses via Canvas, the unit’s online learning platform, in addition to in-person courses and seminars. In June of each year, residents begin in-person graduate-level summer intensive courses with the program as well as professional development activities with their partner local education agency teachers.

Mentors also begin training during the summer. Over the training year, residents take on increasing responsibility as their role evolves along with their learning and their readiness to be successful. During interviews, mentors and residents both described the value of this process. In order to graduate, residents must pass the edTPA, master’s oral examinations, and all graduate courses.

The program’s scope and sequence of learning experiences for residents is a designed curriculum involving both subject matter and professional preparation that covers subject matter and pedagogy at gradually more sophisticated levels.

The course calendar is designed to inform, enrich, and empower the resident’s fieldwork in their P-12 classroom with their mentor teacher. The pacing and sequence of the online, in-person, and hybrid course structures are aligned closely with school calendars and the gradual

release model of teaching experiences for residents. During site visit interviews, both single subject and multiple subject candidates commented very positively with regard to how the coordination of fieldwork and coursework is explained throughout the program. Candidates expressed a very high level of satisfaction with program support and communication.

Specifically designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies are employed throughout the program. Residents participate in coursework in all critical areas called for in the Teaching Performance Expectations, including:

- working with multilingual students (students designated as English learners),
- working in school communities with diverse cultures and languages, and
- working with students with learning differences in a variety of settings, especially in inclusive classroom environments.

In their primary placement, residents spend four days each week working alongside carefully selected mentors. Coursework is designed to complement field experiences. Most course assignments involve application in the classroom and analysis of actual student work or experience from fieldwork. Residents are placed with the same mentor teacher (district-employed individual) throughout the entire residency year. As part of that partnership, the mentor teacher engages in daily informal coaching and at least one weekly formal coaching cycle with the resident, exceeding the required five hours weekly. The formal coaching sessions include advisement and evaluation and are enshrined at regular checkpoints in the culminating assessment, the Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE).

For program personnel supervision, residents engage in coaching from their program director at regular intervals (typically a coaching cycle every three weeks on their school site). These visits involve instructional coaching and advisement leading to important assessments via the Alder resident evaluation described above. Most supervision is conducted by the program director; in instances where this individual does not have the relevant content expertise for the credential, the unit hires a content-aligned program supervisor to coach the resident at least six times during the lead teaching term (spring term).

Assessment of Candidates

Program supervisors, mentors, and clinical faculty monitor and support residents during their progress towards mastering the teaching performance expectations (TPEs) throughout the 12 months of the residency. This assessment happens regularly, with mentors conducting a formal coaching cycle each week, and clinical faculty conducting a cycle every two-to-four weeks. The major assessments for each course are mapped to both the intended program and student learning outcomes and the teaching performance expectations (TPEs). This begins in summer courses and continues across the school year. During site visit interviews, faculty detailed the value of these connected assessments.

The major assessment of clinical work is the Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE), a cumulative and comprehensive assessment that offers an ongoing performance evaluation in which candidates are evaluated on a variety of measures aligned directly with the TPEs. In addition to the course

assessments and the Alder Resident Evaluation, both of which are aligned to California's TPEs, other major assessments include the master's oral examination (capstone project for the master's degree) and the teaching performance assessment (edTPA). Data reviewed and confirmed by the team indicated that 92% of the 2019-20 cohort passed the edTPA on the first attempt.

Information about assessment is disseminated before the program begins via the resident handbook and catalog. During interviews, candidates praised these information sessions highly. Further support is offered during orientation and in weekly seminar classes, where residents learn about all major program assessments.

Several assessments are administered as part of course assignments and are detailed in the course syllabus. Candidates are informed of results of assessments as quickly and transparently as possible by course instructors. For the master's orals exam, candidates learn the results immediately after they finish their oral examination. For the edTPA, candidates receive scores from Pearson. The unit's partner directors and edTPA coordinator ensure that candidates are aware of the date they will receive the score and offer to meet with each resident to review their scores.

In preparation for the edTPA, residents take methods and seminar courses taught by clinical faculty. During interviews, residents confirmed that courses they take include multiple activities that help prepare them for the edTPA. Candidates who do not pass the first time may re-take the edTPA according to the edTPA guidelines for resubmission and can opt for an extended term if needed.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, supervising practitioners, and community partners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential programs.

Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs

Program Design

The Alder Graduate School of Education (GSE) offers participants the opportunity to earn their Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential and a Master of Arts with a Concentration in Special Education through a year-long residency. The program is designed as an apprenticeship under the supervision of an experienced mentor teacher. The program partners with local education agencies across California to offer a residency program that will expand and diversify the teaching population. Interviews with both Alder and partner local education agencies confirmed a strong collaborative partnership.

Alder employs three full time education specialist faculty members with one who serves as the lead and co-chairs the Academic Program Committee. The lead also supports assembling a team of qualified education specialist faculty to ensure all course sections are fully staffed. Alder's three regional managing clinical directors guide the work of the 17 partner directors with whom Alder partners. The partner directors, although formally employed by the partner local education agencies, work closely with Alder's dean, senior director of academic programs, adjunct faculty and the regional managing clinical directors to support residents and mentors.

Interviews with community partners revealed that the program was providing consistent communication. The program directors, who work closely with Alder leadership to support both residents and mentors, connect the GSE to the P-12 school partners. Additional communication includes:

- Residents receive regular information about the credential requirements before they begin the program, and their progress is tracked and shared.
- Credential requirements listed on the Preliminary Credential Checklist are shared with students during summer term orientation and through a spring term webinar.
- Monthly newsletters are emailed to all residents, mentors and community partners.
- Lead special education faculty member and dean meet regularly.
- Bi-weekly all-faculty meetings.
- Monthly mentor seminars to ensure mentors have a clear understanding of the coursework and access to the readings and assignments.
- Coursework is hosted on the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS).

The program is a cohort-based model where residents complete 37 graduate level units of coursework across four terms while experiencing over 860 clinical hours in a California public school classroom. The program provides residents with a developmental and sequential set of activities that is meant to extend the resident's learning through application of theory to practice with P-12 students. Residents are paired with a mentor and begin by co-teaching with their mentor and then progress, via gradual release, toward a full takeover/co-teaching experience. Both residents and mentors confirmed that they have voice and choice before the partnership is established.

Alder has made several major modifications, mainly in response to COVID-19, over the last two years such as: as-needed distance learning sections for rural and small cohorts, term adjustment, and synchronous online afternoon sessions.

During site visit interviews, education specialist faculty confirmed that over the past two years the program has revised their education specialist coursework to align to the new California Education Specialist Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) and incorporate a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). Since all education specialists enrolled after July 1, 2022 must complete a TPA, Alder selected the edTPA model.

The unit gathers community partner input through a number of mediums, including, but not limited to:

- Resident input: Residents complete mid-term “pulse check” surveys, final course evaluation surveys, and mid-year and end-of-year program quality surveys.
- Faculty input: Faculty complete mid-year and end-of-year surveys about Alder program quality and offer suggestions and ideas for improving the program.
- District partner input: Alder leaders meet annually with leaders in each partner local education agency to share data and to gather input and ideas in order to continuously improve. Partner directors meet regularly with school leaders and district personnel to hear their feedback and input about Alder’s program. Partner directors report findings to one of the three Alder regional clinical directors.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

On the first day of school that students are present, residents begin co-teaching alongside mentors. Residents co-teach with their mentor teacher four full days a week, sharing responsibility for duties involved with a full-time teaching position and gradually taking on additional responsibility over the course of the year. One day a week for three weeks per month, during the fall and spring terms, residents attend a full-day resident seminar class in their region. Residents continue to participate in graduate-level courses via Canvas learning management system throughout the school year.

Alder has designed a scope and sequence of learning experiences for residents that is a carefully designed curriculum involving both subject matter and professional preparation that covers subject matter and pedagogy at gradually more sophisticated levels. In June of each year, residents begin in-person graduate-level summer intensive courses as well as professional development activities with their partner LEAs teachers. Mentors also begin training during the summer. Over the course of the four terms, the education specialist residents take 14 general education courses and three (3) special education specific courses for a total of 17 courses equaling 37 graduate units. In the general education courses, the coursework is often differentiated specific to the education specialist resident. Education specialist faculty confirmed that they have input in the general education curriculum.

Residents have layers of support from their mentor, local education agency program director, Alder faculty and the Alder support services team. The pacing and sequence of the online, in-

person, and hybrid course structures are aligned closely with school calendars and Alder's gradual release model of teaching experiences for residents. Over the training year, residents take on increasing responsibility as their role evolves along with their learning and their readiness to be successful. Residents complete the following fieldwork requirements over the course of the program:

- Residents participate in at least 6 observations each term (live and video).
- Program Director observes and coaches the resident every 2 to 3 weeks; however, when the program director does not have the relevant content expertise for the credential, Alder hires a content-aligned program supervisor to coach the resident.
- Mentor conducts a formal coaching cycle each week.
- School principal observes the resident 2x/term (4 x year).

Once a month mentors gather for a full day seminar during which time the resident teacher is solo teaching (called "take over days"). Additionally, residents and their mentor engage in weekly "sacred meeting time" where they discuss goal setting, action items and lesson planning. The education specialist residents expressed appreciation for relevant coursework, diverse and approachable faculty and how the program taught them to love/seek feedback. Some residents expressed frustration with the number of requirements that were taking away from their time in the classroom; similarly, residents felt this broke the rhythm of their consistency in the classroom and how students saw them as teachers.

Alder's residents participate in coursework in all critical areas called for in the Teaching Performance Expectations, including:

- working with multilingual students (students designated as English Learners),
- working in school communities with diverse cultures and languages, and
- working with students with learning differences in a variety of settings, especially in inclusive classroom environments.

In their primary placement, education specialist residents spend four days each week working alongside carefully selected mentors. In order to meet the expectations of the new teaching performance expectations, residents engage in a variety of field experiences across grade levels and settings referred to as "exchange days." The exchange day is specific to the education specialist program and is a full day experience where the resident leaves their current setting/site to observe a different education specialist setting such as different grade/age group and/or a more restrictive setting. Residents are responsible for coordinating their exchange days each term, but the residents seemed to unanimously agree that exchange days are worthwhile and "an amazing experience."

Coursework is designed to complement field experiences. Most course assignments involve a practical application in the classroom and analysis of actual student work or experience from fieldwork.

As part of the resident-mentor partnership, the mentor engages in daily informal coaching with at least one weekly formal coaching cycle with the resident. The formal coaching sessions

include advice and evaluation and are enshrined in the Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE). Residents also engage in coaching from their program director at regular intervals (typically a coaching cycle visit every three weeks at their school site). These visits involve instructional coaching and advice and are part of the assessment in the Alder Resident Evaluation.

Assessment of Candidates

The suite of assessments that residents complete are focused on developing competencies with respect to Alder’s intended program student learning outcomes and the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). Much of the formal assessment evidence collected involves direct access to their performance in their classroom. Residents complete the following program-wide assessments over the course of the program:

- Teaching Performance Assessment (edTPA): Support is embedded within courses and seminars (exit requirement)
- Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE): Ongoing cumulative performance evaluation in which candidates are evaluated using multiple measures aligned with the six TPEs (3x/year)
- Master’s oral examination: Capstone project for the master’s degree (exit requirement)

Information about assessment is disseminated before the program begins via the resident handbook and catalog. During orientation and in weekly seminar classes, residents learn about the major program assessments. Some assessments are embedded in coursework and initially shared in the syllabus. Candidates are informed of results of assessments as quickly and transparently as possible. For the master’s orals exam, candidates learn the results immediately after they finish their oral examination. For the edTPA, candidates receive scores from Pearson. Alder’s partners directors and edTPA coordinator ensure that candidates are aware of the date they will receive the score and offer to meet with each resident to review their scores. Additionally, Alder has developed a high touch model of support called “grading for equity” in which there are no penalties for late work as long as the resident revises and communicates with faculty.

Alder provides edTPA information to candidates and to partner LEAs through published documents such as handbooks, webinars, and orientation sessions at the beginning of the program. Information about edTPA support and retakes is provided in the spring resident seminar syllabus. Residents who do not pass the first time will receive continued support from Alder faculty and staff and may re-take the edTPA according to the edTPA guidelines for resubmission.

In accordance with the new requirement for Education Specialist candidates to pass the TPA, Alder’s preparation of Education Specialist residents now includes edTPA preparation throughout the fall and spring semester. Fall coursework covers prerequisite skills, such as IEP file reviews, structured observations, collecting and analyzing formative data. Spring coursework delves into the methodologies for instructing students with mild to moderate disabilities. From January to March, the seminar course offers eight sessions that were designed to prepare education specialist residents for the edTPA. Special education faculty participate in these eight seminars to guide Ed Specialist residents through the required tasks.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, supervising practitioners, and community partners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs credential program.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

The Alder Graduate School of Education prepares effective teachers using a teacher residency model that provides students with the opportunity to earn a master’s degree and a teaching credential, and to apprentice in the classroom with an excellent mentor teacher. Alder’s vision is that: outstanding teachers and leaders change students’ lives and make the world better and more just. Their mission is: to create opportunity and cultivate success for every student by recruiting and educating excellent teachers and leaders who reflect our schools’ communities.

In the academic year 2022-2023, the program is training its third independent cohort since earning provisional accreditation from the Commission. Over this time period, Alder Graduate School has supported 665 candidates to the completion of their initial certification. A typical cohort size is between 250 and 300 residents. They are placed in school sites across the state. The Alder Graduate School offers preliminary preparation programs for students pursuing Multiple Subject and Single Subject credentials as well as Education Specialist credentials.

Evidence reviewed and interviews conducted indicated a strong track record of Alder Graduate School enrolling historically under-represented teacher candidates who successfully complete the program, are hired into full-time teaching positions and are retained in the field. Alder has a collaborative governance and operations structure in which educators from the Graduate School as well as educators in practical settings participate.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	<i>No response needed</i>
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among, and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California’s adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Inconsistently
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	Consistently

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

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The unit’s Vision and Mission statement are informed by current research in teacher education with a special focus on teacher residency models. The unit’s overarching framework for program development and implementation hinges on strong partnerships with schools and school districts, explicit opportunities to apply theory to practice, evidence-based strategies to attract, support, and retain diverse candidates, and coherence across program components, especially as this relates to strong and consistent implementation of high leverage practices.

The unit has created a governance structure and staffing structure that ensures tight connections and consistent communication across key partners. The unit’s internal governance structure demonstrated adequate representation of key partners on bodies (committees) that make significant decisions (e.g., student services, curriculum, faculty hiring and development, budget). Interviews with unit leaders provided further evidence of the collaborative and iterative approach to program development, budget development, faculty development, site

selection, resident recruitment and support. The unit has a strong system of regular communication (one-on-one meetings, program meetings, faculty assembly, committee meetings, etc.) as well as transparency about key decisions. For example, all programs contribute information and ideas during the budget development phase. The budget is then adopted by the board, but there is an opportunity during the first quarter for members of the unit to suggest changes to the budget. The unit further sponsors a standard series of events in which key partners gather to learn together, exchange ideas, and network (e.g., monthly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion meetings, Coffee and Conversation webinars, Alder Book Club). Finally, the unit surveys all members twice per year to generate feedback on institutional effectiveness and areas for improvement. While there is careful attention to including multiple partners and engaging them in meaningful, results-oriented discussions, additional formal supports could be in place to allow full participation of key roles (e.g., the Partner Directors) in the unit's governance bodies (e.g., committees).

The unit ensures systematic collaboration across segments in several ways. The unit uses an intentional recruitment process to engage district and school site partners. During this process, expectations for hosting a mentor as well as the benefits of such are clearly communicated. District staff and Alder staff work together to ascertain appropriate sites and mentors. Alder then provides a system of training and support to ensure that mentor teachers and their site leaders are well-equipped to perform their roles vis a vis the residency experience. Key in this process is the Partner Director, a district employee whose salary is subsidized by Alder. The Partner Director conducts his/her work in both the unit's graduate program (teaching the weekly resident seminar) and in the P-12 system (site visits, support to mentors via site visits, co-observations, and a monthly seminar). They are active liaisons who serve as connecting points between the educator preparation programs and clinical sites. They are intentionally integrated into important processes at Alder through the Alder Friday meetings, the annual retreat, and individual inquiries from content faculty seeking to create more connection to specific site and/or district contexts. There is also an expectation, stated explicitly in the Faculty Framework, that the unit's faculty maintain active and regular collaborations with P12 practitioners.

The unit's budget is based on tuition paid by residents, federal grants, and philanthropic gifts. The budgeting process is mission driven with multiple opportunities for important program and department leaders to articulate needs. Interviews with program (e.g., credential program) and department (e.g., student services) leaders confirmed that there are sufficient resources to meet programmatic and department needs. Key unit leaders described the values that they use when guiding budget decisions; these values were consistent with the unit's mission and vision and prioritized access of diverse residents over all other goals. They also provided examples of responding directly to specific and differentiated program needs as well as resident needs. For example, even though the special education program has more requirements, tuition is not higher due to this factor; thus, equitable access is maintained. Program and department leaders also expressed satisfaction with the resources available to them for maintaining reasonable ratios of staff to service populations (e.g., cohort sizes for faculty and student services staff, partner directors and number of sites/residents supported, etc.), for investing in staff and

faculty development, and for covering other program costs. Program and department leaders described resource-intensive support systems for residents and residents corroborated that they feel well-supported in a range of domains including meeting testing requirements, accessing financial aid of various forms, and managing the multiple demands of their respective programs.

Unit leadership includes a President/Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Managing Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Managing Director of Recruitment, and a Dean of Academic Programs. These roles are supported by additional specialists. Major reports (program reports, impact reports, budget reports) are developed collaboratively with key staff serving on topic related committees. These reports are ultimately presented to the Board of Directors by the President/CEO, for review and approval. Interviews with members of the unit's leadership team generated evidence that they engage in regular cycles of seeking input and feedback, analyzing data, consulting policy, and then developing and implementing plans that reflect these steps and align to their mission and vision. These leaders expressed appreciation for high levels of collaboration among team members, regular opportunities to give and receive feedback and input, and transparency in relation to decisions and their rationale. They also expressed strong efficacy with respect to the ability to make decisions and implement them with fidelity; this was attributed to strong norms of collaboration and shared accountability.

Faculty recruitment is pursued in a comprehensive and systematic manner using an implementation plan that is monitored by the Graduate School's Board of Directors. Some strategies in the plan include: utilizing its local education agency networks to intentionally reach out to diverse practitioners; publicizing opportunities in non-mainstream networks to connect with diverse applicants; evaluating applicants using specific metrics related to knowledge and disposition towards diversity; and, requiring applicants during the interview stage to demonstrate, via a prepared activity, the ways in which they advance diversity, equity and inclusion in their practice. These and other strategies have resulted in a significant increase in the diversity of their staff by 9% between 2018 and 2021.

The unit supports faculty development in a number of ways. First, all faculty develop a Professional Learning Plan that outlines annual and triennial goals and the support needed to attain them. The Professional Learning Plan and its implementation is a topic of discussion with the person's supervisor and is also a building block for program planning and unit planning. Different resources that can assist faculty in meeting their Professional Learning Plan goals include the Alder Book Club, topic-specific webinars, and mini-grants. Faculty development efforts could be amplified to include more intentional cross-training, allowing content faculty to systematically collaborate with clinical faculty, and more intentional on-boarding of adjunct content and clinical faculty so that they are firmly integrated into the program culture and activities.

Alder ensures that highly qualified faculty are employed using a number of strategies. Their job postings clearly delineate required qualifications, competencies, and dispositions, including

those related to content knowledge, knowledge/understanding of California public school contexts, assets-based orientations towards diversity and equity, and a track record of teaching excellence and scholarly activity. The unit implements a careful application review, interview, and demonstration process to ensure all relevant job criteria are met. Content faculty must all possess PhDs or the equivalent. Clinical faculty must possess master’s degrees and are typically drawn from district partners’ staff corps, assuring current practical knowledge as well.

The unit systematically tracks individual candidate progress towards meeting all credential requirements, specifically through the work of the credential analyst/registrar. In conjunction with enrollment managers, the credential analyst oversees a process that maintains current individual electronic records as well as a cohort dashboard that illuminates trends and patterns across a cohort. Each candidate can access his/her electronic profile in which a checklist is embedded. In addition, general informational emails are sent to cohorts with reminders about important due dates. Individualized informational emails with specific items needed are also communicated to residents from the credential analyst’s office. The credential analyst participates actively in the California Credential Analysts’ Conference and stays abreast of credentialing and program changes via various CTC communications. These mechanisms ensure that the unit recommends candidates only when all credential requirements have been met.

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

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The education unit recruits and supports candidates in all programs consistently in a manner to ensure success. The unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria, including multiple candidate qualification measures. Based on evidence and confirmed in interviews, candidates are initially “conditionally accepted” by partner schools in their residency program. The process for this includes an application, review, and joint interview. Once conditionally accepted, candidates then go through the second process with Alder. According to the documents and supported by interviews, this next step includes confirmation of transcripts and tracking of exam passage.

The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California. Evidence and interviews confirm that districts throughout the state recruit from within their communities specifically to have an educator workforce that represents the communities they serve. Alder cohorts have significant populations of first-generation and underrepresented candidates. The Alder faculty and staff intentionally provide support, advice, and assistance to promote successful entry and retention in the profession. Faculty and staff report multiple 1-1 touch points for candidates including student services, faculty, supervisors, and mentors.

While there is strong evidence of systematic support to candidates, particularly concerning meeting credential requirements and financial support, the team found inconsistent evidence that all partners understand the steps of a clearly defined process to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to demonstrate program competencies. There was some uncertainty among clinical supervisors, adjuncts, and directors regarding a standard process for supporting struggling candidates. Some interviews reflected confidence in this process while others were unsure. The unit could be strengthened in communicating this to everyone involved.

The university recruitment practices aim to increase the overall candidate pool and the number of candidates from underrepresented backgrounds. Employers consistently commended Alder for their success in providing diverse teacher candidates and candidates holding hard-to-fill credentials.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	Consistently

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

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Evidence and interviews confirm that the unit designs and implements a planned sequence of clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards. Alder’s residency model provides candidates with extensive clinical hours, and robust support and development for candidates to succeed.

Coursework begins in the summer and is carefully integrated throughout the residency year to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows them to learn, practice, and demonstrate the competencies required for the credential they seek. The unit and all programs collaborate closely with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors, and school sites, as appropriate to the program. Due to the residency nature of the program, candidates experience diverse schools at a deep level, creating opportunities for candidates to understand and implement research-based strategies appropriate to the context they are experiencing. However, the team has inconsistent evidence that robust systems and processes are in place to ensure communication and collaboration among those involved in supervising fieldwork and teaching courses.

Mentors and clinical faculty confirmed the matching process of candidates with appropriate mentors based on credential alignment and personality match. Additionally, these site-based personnel are trained in Alder-specific values and priorities. They are equipped with an understanding of competencies and expectations. They are evaluated intentionally and consistently, supporting the program's ongoing success.

The residency program model at Alder provides candidates with unique opportunities to complete extensive fieldwork and clinical practice in California public schools while earning a living stipend. This combination creates an effective training pathway and reduces common barriers to diversifying the educator pool.

The unit systematically evaluates the components of the fieldwork and clinical practice. Residents, supervisors, and mentors are evaluated by one another and the program directors. Regular meetings are scheduled to review this feedback with the appropriate parties. Interviews reflect this practice is consistent.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Consistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Consistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completion data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Consistently

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key stakeholders such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Alder programs complete a five-year program review cycle that incorporates annual data reports on key metrics (resident demographics, course evaluations, resident exit survey data, mentor survey data, resident hiring data, etc.), five-year trend data, and assessments from external reviewers. Data on candidate performance is collected from the time of application through their first year of employment. Performance data includes information from the Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE), course grades, performance on relevant credential assessments (e.g., RICA, EdTPA), and results from the Master’s Oral Exam. Data is also collected from mentors and partners at the end of each cohort cycle. Residents are surveyed as they exit the program and during their first year of employment.

Ample evidence was provided regarding the ways in which Alder faculty and staff engage with these data to better understand program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Specific committees are charged with using data to improve specific areas of unit operations (recruitment, student support, academic program, etc.). For example, the mentor feedback survey in recent cycles has provided insight into the effectiveness of the “sacred meeting time.” These data also highlighted the need for more support so that this is a standard practice across all sites and mentor/resident pairs and to ensure alignment with culturally affirming/sustaining protocols of practice. The team reviewed data from course evaluations which yielded positive ratings with over 90% of residents agreeing or strongly agreeing to positive evaluative statements.

School and district partners also noted that they have regular formal opportunities to provide input. Moreover, they shared examples of ways in which feedback they provided was explicitly incorporated into subsequent Alder practices. One example came from a district leader who suggested a community asset map as a mechanism for helping new teachers/residents connect with parents and families in the school community. This idea was later incorporated into a course assignment, demonstrating the way in which Alder’s continuous improvement cycles operate. In addition, the team saw survey data in which 95% of partner principals indicated that Alder-trained residents were “more effective” or “much more effective” than their peers during their first year of teaching.

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

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The unit tracks resident achievement of the TPEs using multiple measures including the Alder Resident Evaluation (ARE), which is aligned to the TPEs and used by the mentor teacher/partner director pair who are calibrated on the evaluation criteria and levels. Residents do not complete the program unless they achieve specific ratings on the ARE. Resident competence is also measured through performance in courses and scores on mandated performance assessments are also tracked. Data reviewed and confirmed by the team indicated that 92% of the 2019-20 cohort passed the edTPA on the first attempt.

The unit also develops an annual impact report. This report presents a range of data analyses, all aligned to the unit’s goals. The report details progress towards the goals for all programs and for each partner district. Metrics in the district impact report include profile of residents in the district (race, ethnicity, relationship to the district – e.g., community member, K-12 alumni), their performance on various program assessments (e.g., ARE, EdTPA), results of “pulse checks” from various constituencies (residents, mentors, etc.), percentage of residents recommended for credentials during the cohort cycle, and proportion of residents hired by the host district. Evidence reviewed and interviews conducted indicated a strong track record of Alder Graduate School enrolling historically under-represented teacher candidates (83% in 2021-22). A very high percentage of their candidates successfully complete the program (90%), are hired into full-time teaching positions (96%), and are retained in the field (62% still teaching after 8 years).

This impact report provides a “dashboard” view of the impact of residents in a district. Superintendents and human resource department directors expressed high levels of appreciation for the impact report. Several indicated that they anticipate the impact report meetings with enthusiasm. Others indicated they have used the report structure for other reports that they generate for internal and external audiences. Many shared that they also present the impact report to their board of trustees.

The unit also captures impact in terms of economic contributions to the district. Because the unit has a strong track record of recruiting district residents into its programs and then preparing them to be hired back into their home districts, the unit's programs make a material difference in community wealth over time. Though this is not a part of the standard, it is a novel frame for assessing impact.