

Section 1

Rule 20 Institutional Contextual Narrative

Institutional Background

York University operates under a mission that represents the type of institution it is: a small, private, Christian University. York University was founded in 1890 by the United Brethren Church. In 1954, control of the institution passed to the City of York, and soon after the University became affiliated with the churches of Christ. From 1954 until 1989, York operated as a 2-year University, granting associate degrees to its students. In 1989, the University was approved to grant BA degrees and was formally accredited as a four-year institution in 1994 by the Higher Learning Commission, maintaining accreditation since that time.

Enrollment is approximately 500 students, in numerous programs leading to various Baccalaureate and Associate degrees. York University, now in its second century and affiliated with churches of Christ, continues to grow in service to students from around the corner and the planet, to the York community, and churches of Christ throughout North America and the world.

Students come from about 20 states and 35 countries. York University has undergone several changes over the past 15 years. The university has increased in diversity in the student population and can claim the most diverse university in Nebraska statistically speaking. Because of the ethnic background of York University students, the education department can recruit students who are diverse for the teaching force. While the population of York, Nebraska is not considered diverse overall, the university student population is diverse.

<https://www.york.edu/registrar/student-diversity.php>

Through leadership from the Education Department, York University cultivated and supports diversity on campus through the student group, Better Together. This group, chaired by the Education Department Chair educates and celebrates diversity on campus for students, faculty, and staff through an array of events hosted throughout the academic school year. This group and the learning events assist in the growth of all to be aware of bias and to seek to understand others from the diverse world we live in.

Purposes

1. To provide Biblical teachings and spiritual nurture for each student.

York University is committed to the Bible as God's inspired, infallible, complete will for humankind. Believing that there is no substitute for personal study of the Bible, York University offers a wide variety of textual studies in both the Old and New Testaments. Other experiences, which influence the student's moral and spiritual development are a daily chapel, devotionals, and numerous aesthetic, athletic, and social activities in which attitudes and conduct are based on spiritual principles.

York University is committed to the relevance of the Bible to the moral and spiritual values of modern humankind. It is with this in mind that York University stresses that God's standards as

revealed in the Bible are necessary to productive, happy lives and relationships. York University recognizes each student as a person of dignity and worth and values each student as the center of the educational process.

2. To provide a strong liberal arts preparation in every academic discipline.

Liberal arts education seeks to develop the inner resources of the individual. It is designed to liberate the mind and spirit of the student. A Christian liberal arts education is as much concerned with *being* as with *doing*. A person with a liberal arts education will be active for the common good and will bring this perspective to bear upon all experiences and relationships.

The liberal arts offerings at York University are designed to help students become more objective, analytical, and critical, to become more articulate, and to lay a foundation in the humanities and the social, physical, and natural sciences on which to build a continuing education. The liberal arts also promote a sensitivity for the human condition, and a concern for the *how* and *why* of human behavior. With this balance, the liberal arts at York University promote a more disciplined and balanced life.

3. To provide an environment where tolerance, dialog, and the pursuit of truth are honored.

The pursuit of truth is embodied in the very nature of liberal arts. York University believes truth must be pursued in all aspects of life. The significance of liberal arts offerings at York University lies in their being consciously permeated with a Christian worldview.

Properly developed moral and spiritual values will lead each individual to cultivate social skills, function constructively in community affairs, and prepare for family living. This environment encourages each student to understand oneself and the world, to relate to others, to serve others in local and global environments, and to think independently.

The importance of this purpose in the overall mission of York University may also be seen in its concern for the stability of the family and for integrity in all aspects of life. Higher education in a Christian environment promotes within students a sense of civic, personal, and social integrity.

Through the mission, the university focuses on four values: Transform, Educate, Equip, and Serve.

Transform - York University exists to support God's transformational work in the lives of people. Curricular and co-curricular programs and experiences are intended to lead the entire community to a positive expression of spiritual values. Educate - Academic discovery is a God-honoring endeavor characterized by the pursuit of truth and inquiry within the context of intellectual disciplines. The responsible handling of academic freedom provides Christian scholars opportunities to explore both a diverse world and their faith. Equip - A rapidly changing professional, social, and technological environment dictates that each student is encouraged to think critically, integrate knowledge skills, and evaluate changing circumstances in the context of faith. Serve - Service is how people of God live out their faith. Christ calls us to lives of service

expressed by faith, both locally and globally, as we respond to opportunities to the needs of others.

The shared values and goals are evident in the program outcomes and program assessments that are incorporated throughout the candidate's undergraduate program. Outcomes are assessed during the candidate's freshman year, through field experiences, throughout his or her student teaching, and post-graduation into the first years of teaching. Education professors use the program goals to guide their course content and engage the students in real-life experiences to prepare the candidate for the role of an educator in their diverse communities of service.

<https://www.york.edu/about/mission-statement.php>

Academic Information

A solid liberal arts program is the core of the curriculum at York University. The liberal arts curriculum provides the broad-based knowledge so vital to advancing in all disciplines and careers. Your basic courses in Bible, English, mathematics, social sciences, history, science, religion, and fine arts not only prepare you for further study in specific areas but also develop critical thinking as well as an enhanced awareness of your interests and goals. Tomorrow's most important careers require a diversity of knowledge rather than narrowly focused training. From communication and computer science to pre-professional programs such as pre-engineering, pre-law, and pre-medicine, the Christian higher education you will experience at York University prepares you well for a host of options.

York University offers programs leading to master's, baccalaureate, and associate degrees. While these programs have specific requirements, they do allow you a great deal of flexibility. With the help of your Academic Advisor, the faculty member specially assigned to assist you in making the best choices possible, you will plan the program that best prepares you to meet your goals. Our faculty advisors are experts at helping you plan your studies to succeed in your ultimate degree objectives and career goals. <https://www.york.edu/about/quick-facts.php>

York University offers over 24 bachelor's degrees (45 areas of studies), and two master of arts degrees. The education department offers a bachelor's degree in education with endorsements in the following areas:

Business, Marketing and Information Technology	7-12 field endorsement	
Secondary English	7-12 subject endorsement	
Elementary Education	K-8 field endorsement	
History Education	7-12 endorsement	
Mathematics Education	7-12 field endorsement	
Physical Education	K-12 subject endorsement	With supplemental Coaching endorsement 7-12

Social Science Education	7-12 field endorsement	
Special Education	K-12 Generalist (field and subject)	
Vocal Music Education	K-12 subject endorsement	
Principal	Field PK-12. PK-8, 7-12	
Supplemental Endorsements		
Coaching	7-12 supplemental	
Speech	7-12 supplemental	
Theatre	7-12 supplemental	
Reading and Writing	7-12 supplemental	

The York University Education Department follows outcomes aligned with the InTASC Standards, which are model core teaching standards for teachers and embedded into course and departmental assessments. These are the learner and learning, content knowledge, instructional practices, and professional responsibility. In addition, these are embedded in the conceptual framework and the guidelines of NDE.

[Anticipated and new changes to the program:](#)

[York University added the licensing Principal field endorsement through the online Masters of Arts in Education. The university received state approval for this program in the 2021-2022 school year with the first completers \(3\) in the 2022-2023 school year.](#)

[In addition to the principal endorsement, York University Masters of Education is seeking approval for the Early Childhood endorsement that would be paired with the Masters of Education in Early Childhood. The university anticipates approval in the spring of 2024 for this program. The Bachelor to Master's Program, allows education majors at the undergraduate level to take up to 18 hours of a master's of education program at York University. Ideally, allowing an elementary education major or special education major to add the endorsement of early childhood to their program.](#)

 [Bachelor to Master 2023.pdf](#)

York University Education Program Goals

The York University Education Department's goals are the InTASC standards. The InTASC standards were developed to serve as a resource for candidate education programs, candidates, and others as we develop policies and programs to prepare, license, support, and evaluate today's candidates.

(<http://www.ccsso.org>)

The program goals for the candidate education candidates can be described into four main areas: the learner and learning, content knowledge, instructional practices, and professional responsibility. The program goals are assessed during the candidate's freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years. They are assessed through a candidate interview, observation of teachings, and portfolios.

Standard #1: Learner Development

The candidate understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences

The candidate uses an understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: Learning Environments

The candidate works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Standard #4: Content Knowledge

The candidate understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to ensure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: Application of Content

The candidate understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Standard #6: Assessment

The candidate understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the candidate's and learner's decision-making.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction

The candidate plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies

The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop a deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

The candidate engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration

The candidate seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, and to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth and to advance the profession.

The following is the conceptual framework and the philosophy of the education program and the curriculum for teacher education.

Content:

Content Knowledge: The candidate understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to ensure mastery of the content

Application of Content: The candidate understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Learner Development and Learning:

Learner Development: The candidate understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Learning Differences: The candidate uses an understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Learning Environments: The candidate works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Instructional Strategies

Planning for Instruction: The candidate plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Instructional Strategies: The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop a deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Assessment:

The candidate understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their growth, monitor learner progress, and guide the candidate's and learner's decision-making.

Professional Learning and Ethical Practice:

The candidate engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Effective Christian Educators and Leadership Through Service:

The candidate seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, and to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth and to advance the profession.

Field Experiences:

Interwoven throughout each program in Teacher Education are intricately placed *Field Experiences*. These experiences place candidates in classrooms where they have the opportunity to work with experienced classroom teachers who model the best in theory and practice. During these field experiences, a candidate has the opportunity to solidify his/her decision to become an educator, as well as, to become an *Effective Christian Educator*.

Diversity

Diversity is a strength in the educational system. The candidate will prevent discrimination and promote diversity in the classroom to promote safe and supportive schools for all learners. The topic of diversity is incorporated in all education classes.

General Education

York University provides a strong liberal arts foundation in every academic discipline. Liberal arts education seeks to develop the inner resources of the individual. It is designed to liberate the mind and spirit of the student. A Christian liberal arts education is as much concerned with being as with doing. A person with a liberal arts education will be active for the common good and will bring this perspective to bear upon all experiences and relationships. The liberal arts offerings at

York University are designed to help students become more objective, analytical, and critical, to become more articulate, and to lay a foundation in the humanities and the social, physical, and natural sciences on which to build a continuing education. The liberal arts also promote a sensitivity to the human condition, and a concern for the how and why of human behavior. With this balance, the liberal arts at York University promote a more disciplined and balanced life.

Christ-centered Education

The base and mission of York University is to transform lives through Christ-centered education and to equip students for lifelong service to God, family, and society. This mission is exemplified through every aspect of York University. To support the mission of York University, students are required to attend daily chapel that helps connect students to the Father, Son, and Spirit with fellow believers. In addition to daily chapel, students have opportunities to attend evening devotionals and Bible studies. All students are required to take 6 Bible courses, that are aligned with general education. <https://www.york.edu/student-life/spiritual-life/index.php>

Conceptual Framework:

 Conceptual Framework (1).pdf

Program changes since the last state approval review:

The Masters of Education Online Program has been a robust addition to the University. In addition, the approval of the certifying program of the Principal (all levels) has been new since the last review. In addition, the anticipation of adding Early Childhood endorsement through the online Master of Education program will offer options to undergraduates as an add-on endorsement.

Due to low numbers of enrolled students to endorsements or no completers for several years, the university canceled the endorsement areas of Secondary Science and K-12 Art, Secondary Psychology, Middle School Programs, and most recently Reading and Writing. This was decided at the Provost Level of Leadership.

Additional program changes are reviewing and fine-tuning the admission interview. The interview was conducted in the freshmen year tied to the Introduction of Education course. After discussions in Education Department Meetings, the faculty noted that several students each semester in Introduction to Education changed their major. In addition, some candidates struggled with the interview due to not having enough experience in the coursework or field experience. So, in the Fall of 2023, all interviews were conducted in the sophomore-level field experience course. Preliminary interviews and faculty responses are favorable to the process change.

