

Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice (Initial-licensure Level Programs)

a. Component R2.1 Partnerships for Clinical Preparation

At Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA), we have established strong partnerships with an array of educational institutions to support our initial certification programs (Masters of Art Teaching (M.A.T.) and Undergraduate Programs). These partnerships extend beyond traditional P-12 schools to include:

- District offices (e.g., Jefferson Parish School District, Charter Management Organizations, Private/parochial schools)
- Community organizations Grow Your Own (GYO); Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (APEL Teacher Union), Louisiana Educators Association LEA-insurance)
- Other educational entities (NASA, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), Science Lab, Louisiana Department of Education, New Orleans Public School Board, Xavier University if Louisiana undergraduate Student services)

Our partnerships are formalized through the Divisional of Education and Counseling (DOEC), which meets monthly to ensure alignment between our clinical experiences, program goals, and partner needs. Key features of our partnerships include:

1. Co-designed Experiences: We collaborate with partner schools and organizations to create authentic experiences that align with program standards, workforce development needs, state educational requirements, and address teacher experiences in education. This is evidenced by our Field Practicum handbook, Residency handbook, communication records with school leaders and stakeholders, and collaborative practicum experiences documentation.
2. Reciprocal Professional Development: Our faculty provide workshops for partner organizations, while practitioners contribute their expertise to our coursework through invited expert speakers who provide evidence-based and best practices to teacher candidates.
3. Collaborative Problem-Solving: Candidates collaborate with partner organizations to identify and address specific educational challenges benefiting both the candidates and the partner institutions. This is demonstrated through internships, observations, student teaching, and Louisiana Department Of Education Rubric Training.

Evidence of our effective partnerships includes:

- DOEC meeting minutes, letters, emails, and action plans
- Partner feedback surveys and time revising documents.
- Documentation of reciprocal professional development activities
- Xavier Field Practicum handbook
- Collaborative practicum experiences documentation
- Norman C. Francis Teacher Residency (NCFTR) records
- Summer mentor teacher training materials
- (NCFTR) Match-day records

These partnerships demonstrate our commitment to co-constructing mutually beneficial arrangements for clinical preparation and sharing responsibility for continuous improvement of candidate preparation.

b. Component R2.2 Clinical Educators

Standard 2.2 – Clinical Educators

Stipulation: Met with Weakness – Seeking Downgrade to AFI

The EPP and its partners have implemented significant improvements to ensure the co-selection, preparation, evaluation, and support of high-quality clinical educators. These enhancements are documented in our revised systems and supported by both state-aligned processes and local practices.

The EPP has formalized its **co-selection process** in collaboration with district and school leaders, ensuring that all mentor teachers meet rigorous selection criteria. As documented in the *Guiding Principles for Clinical Education Excellence*, potential mentors are vetted using evidence-based qualifications, including two years of Highly Effective Compass ratings, TAP experience, National Board certification, or recognition for teaching excellence. These criteria align with state waiver eligibility, ensuring the continued quality of mentors even when credential waivers are granted.

Mentor teachers are jointly selected through a structured **application and attestation process**, verified by both the principal and the EPP. The Mentor Waiver process, used judiciously, requires district nomination, principal attestation, and verification of qualifications. Artifacts such as the *Candidate's Mentor Waiver Application* illustrate the high level of documentation, collaboration, and quality assurance involved in placing mentors who hold waivers.

Artifacts supporting these improvements include mentor application records, waiver documentation, professional development certificates, and attestation forms.

Disaggregated mentor data is provided in appendices:

- Credential Status (Appendix A.4.1)
- Candidate Load and Placement (Appendix A.4.2)
- Mentor PD Participation (Appendix A.4.1)

The EPP has also improved the **preparation and support of clinical educators**. Mentor teachers participate in professional development aligned to the Louisiana Mentor Teacher Assessment Series, with required completion of 15 hours of training. PD artifacts, such as *LAER Session 3 Certificates* and *EE PASS credentials* for EPP faculty, demonstrate our commitment to ongoing learning, adult coaching strategies, and performance-based evaluation. All mentors are encouraged to pursue state-approved mentor certification or the provisional license, and the EPP regularly tracks their progress and provides guidance throughout.

To ensure continued effectiveness, the EPP collects **mentoring attestation forms** at the end of each residency. These forms, completed by the candidate, mentor, and school system, verify that the mentoring relationship included co-teaching, planning, formal observations, and alignment with Bulletin 996 expectations. University supervisors, trained in educator evaluation protocols (e.g., through EE PASS), regularly engage with mentors and candidates to monitor alignment with preparation competencies.

Together, these systematic improvements meet the intent of Standard 2.2 and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Narrative Accompanying Disaggregated Mentor Data (Appendix A.4)

To support continuous improvement and alignment with CAEP Standard 2.2, the EPP has developed a system to collect and disaggregate mentor data across multiple categories. The disaggregated tables in Appendix A.4 (A.4.1–A.4.2) present mentor credential status, candidate-mentor assignment ratios, placement contexts, and professional development participation. These data are tracked annually and analyzed by site, certification status, and candidate population to ensure equitable access to high-quality clinical educators.

Additionally, the EPP uses performance feedback surveys from both candidates and university supervisors to evaluate mentor effectiveness. These feedback tools, along with the training tracker, provide evidence that mentors are not only qualified, but actively supported and retained. This comprehensive approach supports the EPP’s request to move Standard 2.2 from a stipulation to an Area for Improvement.

c. Component R2.3 Clinical Experiences

CAEP Standard 2.3 Rejoinder Narrative

Standard 2.3: Clinical Experiences

Stipulation Response – Submitted for Reconsideration

In response to the stipulation issued for CAEP Standard 2.3, Xavier University of Louisiana (Xavier) provides the following documentation and analysis to demonstrate the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of our clinical experiences. This rejoinder confirms that our clinical preparation system now reflects a coherent, scaffolded sequence of field-based learning experiences that are jointly developed with partners, grounded in strategic placements, and measured using a valid and reliable performance assessment tool.

I. Clinical Experience Design, Breadth, and Sequence

Teacher candidates at Xavier progress through a well-defined clinical sequence that includes:

1. Initial Practicum – Embedded in early methods coursework, candidates complete structured observation hours, small group teaching, and reflective journals.
2. Teacher Education Program (TEP) – Includes lesson design, formative assessment cycles, and site-based coaching.
3. Yearlong Residency – Under the guidance of a certified mentor teacher, candidates teach in varied, high-need schools while completing capstone assessments.

This sequence is outlined in our *Guiding Principles for Clinical Education Excellence* and consistently monitored through structured mentor attestation documents, practicum logs, and candidate clinical assignments. The full design is embedded in the **XULA Quality Assurance System (QAS) Handbook (2025–2028)**, which is currently being designed and will provide an integrated framework for ensuring alignment between clinical experiences, candidate evaluation, and continuous improvement processes, beginning Fall 2025. The QAS outlines clear expectations for placement diversity, field supervision, stakeholder input, and data review cycles, reinforcing our commitment to rigor and parity.

II. Partner Collaboration and Mentor Alignment

Xavier's mentoring model is aligned to Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) expectations. All mentors meet BESE-approved criteria or receive waivers through a documented process. Mentor credentialing and waivers are tracked through LDOE's SurveyMonkey Apply system. Mentoring Attestation Forms ensure that co-teaching, feedback, and observation cycles are occurring and verified at the school system level. Mentor compensation and reporting are aligned to EdLink 360 data systems and documented in-state policy.

We collaborate closely with our partner LEAs to ensure that mentors are selected based on credentials, instructional effectiveness, and readiness to support varying candidates.

III. Valid Assessment of Candidate Effectiveness

Xavier transitioned from a locally developed rubric to the Louisiana Aspiring Educator Rubric (LAER) in Fall 2024. The LAER Rubric is used to conduct formal observations in the field and is aligned with Louisiana's educator competencies and certification requirements. Faculty observers are trained in the LAER framework, with documentation of certification and participation in calibration sessions (see Exhibit A.3.5). Observations are conducted using LAER across planning, instruction, differentiation, and data-based decision-making.

IV. Continuous Feedback and Stakeholder Input

We gather input from mentor teachers, district leaders, and school administrators to refine placements and field expectations. Past employer surveys affirm the readiness of Xavier candidates in assorted settings, while new data collection cycles (Fall 2024) now include rubric-based summaries and candidate reflections. Faculty meet regularly to discuss observation trends and norm scoring practices using common video artifacts and planning samples.

Conclusion

Through strategic revisions to our assessment system, rigorous mentor selection, and scaffolded, standards-aligned field experiences, XULA has addressed the expectations of CAEP Standard 2.3. Our clinical model now reflects depth, diversity, and continuous candidate growth as documented across the appended exhibits.