NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE



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NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

PROFESSIONALS WHO ACHIEVE. PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE.

INFANT TODDLER STUDIES PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Fall 2026

Table of Contents

WELCOME TO NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY **3**

YOUR TEAM **4**

INFANT TODDLER STUDIES PROGRAM **6**

ILLINOIS GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY CREDENTIALS **8**

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATOR PREPARATION DEPARTMENT POLICIES **9**

LATE WORK POLICY 9

REQUIREMENTS FOR WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS 9

OFFICE OF FIELD EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK 9

FIELD HOUR TIMESHEET ACADEMIC POLICY 10

NOTABLE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES 10

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS **10**

STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN **11**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES **14**

WELCOME TO NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

National Louis University was founded on the principle that a quality education can transform lives, careers and communities.

The Undergraduate College Department of Educator Preparation at National Louis University welcomes you! The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the university courses, policies, procedures, and services related to your undergraduate educator preparation program at NLU. It is our hope that you will use this handbook to help guide you in your work as you begin your professional pathway toward becoming a teacher.

The mission of the Undergraduate College is to provide a rigorous, technology-enhanced, affordable college education in a supportive environment that respects diversity, in order to help all students meet and surpass their personal, academic, and career goals. In educator preparation, we do this through engaging classes, varied field experiences, intensive coaching, and professional identity building. We are a team of committed professionals with rich experiences from the field, and we are excited to share with you our learning and passion about education. We plan to be with you every step of the way in your professional and academic journey at NLU. We are looking forward to helping you succeed and become the best teacher you can be!

If you have questions about what you read in this handbook, feel free to ask your Student Success Coach/Advisor or any one of the knowledgeable undergraduate educator preparation team members. You can also find further information at the Educator Preparation Website.



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INFANT TODDLER STUDIES PROGRAM

Infant-Toddler Studies Program Description:

The undergraduate major in Infant-Toddler Studies provides undergraduate students with a solid foundation in early childhood development and significant concepts necessary for supporting healthy infant and toddler growth, learning, and development from prenatal to age three. Students who pursue this major are interested in working in a variety of settings that support best practices for children and families prenatal to age three. Topics in this major include best practices in curriculum, early intervention, assessment, culturally relevant pedagogy, infant mental health, trauma-informed practice, and other relevant topics necessary for supporting infants, toddlers, and families across a wide spectrum of programs, communities, and funding streams. Candidates who complete the BA in ITS will be eligible to apply for the Early Childhood Level 5 credential and the Infant-Toddler Level 5 credential awarded by Gateways to Opportunity (Early Childhood Credentialing System in Illinois). Candidates will also earn the Early Intervention Developmental Therapist credential through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

Program-Specific General Education Courses
EDU 200: Applied Educational Psychology, 5QH
EDU 220: Children's Literature for Educators, 5QH

UG Education Core Courses
EDU 210: Educational Philosophy- A Historical Account, 5QH
EDU 290: Ethics in Education, 5QH
EDU 299: Child Development, 5QH
EDU 305: Equity in Education, 5QH
ECE 334: Language and Early Literacy Development, 5QH
EAL 400: Educational Foundations for Learning English as an Additional Language, 5QH
EAL 431: Cross Cultural Studies for Working with English Language Learners, 5QH

Infant-Toddler Studies Major Courses
EDU 350: Teacher Preparation Curriculum and Assessment, 5QH
ECE 324: Integrated Pre-Primary Methodology in Early Childhood Education, 5QH
ECE 301: Understanding Infants and Toddlers, 5QH
ECE 302: Health, Safety and Wellness in Infant/Toddler Environments, 5QH

ECE 303: Issues, Trends and Leadership in Early Childhood Education, 5QH
ECE 321: Curriculum and Assessment, Infant/Toddler Settings, 5QH
ECE 341: Early Intervention and Screening for Infants & Toddlers, 5QH
ECE 342: Culturally Responsive Infant/Toddler Settings, 5QH
ECE 400: Infant/Toddler Mental Health and Trauma Informed Practice, 5QH
ECE 480: Internship in Infant-Toddler Studies, 10QH

Concentration Options for ITS Majors
Preschool Teaching and Learning
SPE 445: Foundations of Special Education: Dignity, Rights, and Advocacy, 5QH
EDU 480: Methods of Teaching Mathematics, 5QH
ECE 483: Inquiry Based Teaching Methods, Science and Social Studies, 5QH
Early Care and Education Administration
ECE 311: Administration I: Leadership Strategies and Staff Development, 5QH
ECE 312: Administration II: Managing Center Operations and Finance, 5QH
ECE 313: Administration III: Implementing and Evaluating the Program, 5QH
General Psychology
Choose 3 courses in the UGC's General Psychology concentration

Infant Toddler Studies Program Credentialing Information:

Completion of ITS Program earns students the following:
• Level 5 ECE Credential through IL Gateways to Opportunity *(requires application to Gateways)* • Level 5 ITC Credential through IL Gateways to Opportunity *(requires application to Gateways)* • Early Intervention/Developmental Therapist Credential through Illinois Department of Human Services *(requires application to Provider Connections)*
Students earn the following with the addition of the ECE Administration Concentration:
• Illinois Director Credential (IDC) Level 2 through IL Gateways to Opportunity *(with submission of application and work experience form to Gateways)* • AIM4Excellence National Director Credential



ILLINOIS GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY CREDENTIALS

The Undergraduate Educator Preparation Program at National Louis University is entitled for the following Gateways to Opportunity Credentials:

- The Illinois Director Credential (IDC), Levels 1 and 2
- The Family Specialist Credential (FSC), Levels 2 - 5
- The Infant Toddler Credential (ITC), Levels 2 - 5
- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credential, Levels 2 - 5

See the Gateways to Opportunity website for more information on the Gateways Credentials: http://www.ilgateways.com/credentials

- *All ECE, ECL, ITS, and AES candidates are eligible to apply for the ECE Level 5 credential upon completion of their program.*
- *ITS candidates can apply for the ITC Level 5.*
- *Early Care and Education Program Administration concentrations can apply for the IDC Level 1 or 2 (depending on program and work experience).*
- *AES candidates can apply for the Family Specialist Credential Level 5.*

Students in the ECE, ITS, or AES programs who complete the Early Care and Education Administration concentration are also eligible for the AIM4Excellence National Director Credential. The AIM Credential is administered by the NLU McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership.

McCormick Center
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP
AT NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATOR PREPARATION DEPARTMENT POLICIES

LATE WORK POLICY

Each instructor has the current Undergraduate College Late Policy in their syllabus. It is the responsibility of the student to read the policy and clarify any questions with their instructor. The late policy has been written with your success in mind. You must adhere to deadlines and due dates in various circumstances as educators. Turning work in on time is a professional disposition that is expected and valued by the Undergraduate Educator Preparation Department and our partners in the field. Additionally, as future educators, we want you to recognize that all of your courses have been purposefully designed so that the content builds upon what was introduced and completed earlier, making it critical that assignments are completed in order. Please reach out to your instructor if you have questions about the Undergraduate College Late Policy.

REQUIREMENTS FOR WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Prior to entering a field placement on behalf of NLU, you will be required to pass a criminal background check. Background checks require fingerprinting and evidence of identification. Some sites may require additional items such as TB testing or mandated reporter training. Please work with your prospective site for specific requirements.

Common Requirements could include, but are not limited to:

- Criminal Background Check
- TB Test
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Adult Physical
- Resume
- Vaccinations
- Evidence of Health Insurance
- Documentation of U.S. Citizenship or eligibility to work in the U.S.

OFFICE OF FIELD EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK

Review the handbook for the Office of Field Experience found here.

FIELD HOUR TIMESHEET ACADEMIC POLICY

For courses that require field hours to be completed, a timesheet will be required to be submitted in D2L to document completed hours. If a timesheet is not received by the final day of the course, the grade for the course will be an automatic D and the course will need to be repeated.

NOTABLE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Appeals:

Please see the university policy regarding academic appeals here.

Academic Honesty:

Please see the university policy regarding academic honesty here.

Disruptive Classroom Behavior:

Please see the university policy regarding disruptive classroom behavior here.

Standards of Student Conduct:

Please see the university Standards of Student Conduct in the Student Guidebook here.

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Please see the Student Rights and Responsibilities in the Student Guidebook here.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

All students who have been approved to receive academic access accommodative services are entitled to those services as a means of ensuring an equal opportunity to complete all of the requirements of their respective majors. Please note that accommodations that fundamentally alter the stated objectives and/or learning outcomes of a particular course or program may be denied on that basis. As such, some accommodations that are deemed reasonable within the traditional classroom environment may not be deemed reasonable in a field experience setting. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the provision of ADA accommodations in the field experience setting are welcome to contact the Center for Student Accessibility Resources at CSAR@nl.edu.

STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN

On occasion, students require additional support because of challenges they have within their classes or their field placement. The Educator Preparation Department is committed to helping students through the creation of a Student Success Plan (SSP). Department leadership gathers input from applicable program faculty (including teacher development coach, department chair/director, and/or course manager) and field representatives (may include mentor teacher and/or principal) to develop the SSP. This process is designed to openly discuss any concern[s], provide assistance, and facilitate a decision regarding the concern[s]. Written documentation is created to reflect the results at each stage of the plan.

Please Note, the SSP includes a few stipulations for special circumstances:

- If a principal/administrator requests that a teacher candidate be removed from a linked placement site, the Director of the Educator Preparation Department, and appropriate program faculty will be contacted and the process will move immediately to Step 3.
- If a teacher candidate is removed from two field placements, at the request of a site administrator, the Director of the Educator Preparation Department, and appropriate program faculty will be contacted and the process will move immediately to Step 4.
- If a student is removed from a placement in the middle of a term, they are immediately placed on a SSP and may not be reinstated in a field placement for at least one full term. The student is asked to take their time out of the field to engage with the SSP and participate in reflection sessions with a Teacher Development Coach (focused on the development of their Professional Dispositions).

Step 1 – Verbal, Summarized Plan

This step is designed to provide an opportunity for the student and faculty member to engage in productive conversation about an issue that may have arisen in the university or field setting. This step is reserved for minor issues that can be discussed productively, with action steps easily identified and acted upon. Typical causes for this first step would be disagreements between students in the university setting, continued documented examples of plagiarism, or continued late submissions. Faculty provide guidance at this step for the student and help the student outline several action steps that they can complete to rectify the situation. The faculty member summarizes the notes, action steps, and required follow up via email. This step is documented in EAB by the faculty as well.

Step 2 – Formal, Written Plan

This step is designed for those issues that were not able to be rectified during Step 1 OR for difficulties that faculty feel cannot be resolved at Step 1 through open and professional communication. The student, faculty member, and department chair/director will develop a written SSP to clarify the nature of the concern[s], the agreed upon action steps and outcome[s], and the timeline for implementation. A copy of the written SSP will be shared with the student, faculty member, coach/advisor, department chair, field experience leadership (if applicable), and the director of educator preparation. This step is documented in EAB by the faculty or staff person as well. The plan is uploaded into EAB.

Step 3 – Formal, Written Plan with Consequences

If the matter as defined in Step 2 remains unresolved, intensifies, or is not able to be resolved with intervention from the university as defined in Step 2, the student, department chair and/or faculty member, field experiences leadership and/or teacher development coach (if applicable), director of educator preparation, student success coach/advisor and Student Affairs will meet to review the case. In other cases, especially those related to the development (or lack of development) of the Professional Dispositions required for teaching, students may be placed on a Step 3 Plan. Depending on the nature of the concern and the progress toward meeting desired outcomes in the SSP, the following consequences are possible:

- Removal of student from course and/or field experience, with the option to repeat the course and/or field experience the next time it is available or the student and team feels the student can be successful.
- A new SSP is created that outlines revised or new action steps for the student. This SSP will be considered the final plan before the student successfully completes the action steps OR is removed from the course/program/field experience.
- Removal of student from course, field experience, and/or program *without* the option to repeat. This option is reserved for only the most serious of concerns (i.e. potential and/or documented harm to children; hostile altercation between the student and instructor, another student, teacher development coach and/or mentor teacher).
- Progression to Step 4 is deemed necessary as a consequence of a Step 3 SSP when a student has been asked to leave a placement and/or if the student has not developed the Professional Dispositions required for teaching. NOTE: It is expected that Teacher Candidates develop Professional Dispositions over time and that program faculty, staff, and university leaders see progression of the development of these Dispositions, especially prior to student teaching.

Step 4 – Written Notice, Removal from Program

When the decision is made to remove a student from the program, the student is required to cease attending courses and/or the field placement. At this step, the Director and Associate Dean inform the student of the decision both in a meeting and in writing. The student's student success coach/advisor will determine follow up steps with the student, as deemed necessary. The student can appeal the Step 4 decision in accordance with the Undergraduate College Academic Appeal Policy.

Special Circumstances

- A maximum of two classroom placements may be made for teacher candidates while under an SSP. If a teacher candidate is asked by a field site to leave a field placement twice (in either the same field experience OR in two separate field experiences) the student will automatically progress to Step 4. In some cases, the team may recommend progression to Step 4 after one removal, depending upon the nature of the circumstances surrounding removal from a field site.
- Physical violence, harm to children, drug or alcohol use and/or any other circumstances under which a teacher candidate puts themselves or others in harm's way will warrant immediate progression to Step 4.
- Failure to demonstrate the Professional Dispositions needed for teaching prior to student teaching and/or a progression toward demonstrating the Professional Dispositions prior to student teaching may result in progression to Step 4.
- Appeals must be made within 15 days of removal from the program, after which time it is up to the discretion of the Associate Dean to determine if an appeal can be made.



UNIVERSITY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES

The following undergraduate and university information can be found at the listed sites:

ADA Accommodations

Advising Resources

Bookstore

Career Bridge

Commencement

D2L Support

Degrees/Diplomas

Learning Support

Office of Registrar

Online Course Schedule

Online Registration Form

Remote Learning Resources

Student Finance

Undergraduate Academic Catalog

University Library