

Student Services, Faculty of Education, Queen's University Concentrations and Alternative Practicums

This document describes the Concentrations that will be offered in 2024-25 and provides examples of where teacher candidates undertook their Alternative Practicum experience.

This document provides teacher candidates with information to review prior to completing the Concentration Preference Survey. The Faculty will use survey responses to enrol candidates in a Concentration.

Definition of Concentration

Concentrations provide pathways for teacher candidates to develop their professional interests. With choices across a wide spectrum of educational topics, the Concentrations allow for in-depth, rigorous, and critical examination of a particular field of study. As a result, a candidate will be well-prepared to be a leader in the area and to work within a collaborative teaching team.

A Concentration comprises two complementary courses: an Educational Studies (EDST) course and a Focus (FOCI) course. As well, the 3-week Alternative Practicum is an experience that is directly related to the area, and is approved by the FOCI instructor.

The EDST course will address the breadth of the area while also facilitating a deeper understanding of the relevant issues through discussions, readings, and assignments. Professional knowledge and skills in a specialized area will be developed. This course will have a more theoretical and conceptual orientation than the complementary FOCI course, and will also connect theory to practice through relevant literature, case studies, and implications for practice.

The FOCI course will operationalize the theoretical orientation of the EDST course through the practical application of theory, knowledge, and skills. This understanding will be enhanced through such avenues as discussions, activities, projects, field trips, and interactions with practitioners. It will connect teacher candidates directly to the field through an Alternative Practicum which will involve hands-on, immersive experiences. The FOCI instructor will play a critical role in supporting teacher candidates in identifying and securing appropriate Alternative Practicum placements.

In addition to the descriptions above, Concentrations also share other common features.

- The Concentration is open to PJ and IS teacher candidates. Division-exclusive Concentrations are created when it can be argued that the two contexts are markedly different.
- Alternative Practicum experiences can occur locally, provincially, nationally, or internationally.
- Alternative Practicum placements have multiple appropriate locations.
- If an Alternative Practicum occurs in a school setting, it must be in a specialized setting (e.g., resource room, international school, hospital school, unique programs)

Questions? Please contact Student Services, DMH B242, educstudentservices@queensu.ca

Concentration:	Arts and Learning
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 215/3.0 Arts and Experiential Learning Institutions</i> Introduction to arts-based education (including all arts disciplines). In cooperation with several selected institutions, teacher candidates will explore strategies for arts education found in schools and in museums, galleries, outreach and organizations using the arts as a place for the imagination and learning in expected, and unexpected contexts, to be explored. Design of studio/lab-based application activities, and curriculum planning relevant to a variety of institutional settings are emphasized.</p> <p><i>FOCI 215/3.0 Arts and Learning</i> This course is designed to present a view of schools and industry where imaginative/creative learning is dominant and practice, art activities and art environments form the focus for learning across all academic subjects. Topics may include arts and cognition; how arts programs can induce change in schools; the role of social learning and community knowledge; and arts-centered curriculum planning.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Arts Umbrella, Vancouver</p> <p>Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto</p> <p>Science Gallery, Ireland</p> <p>She Sings!, Kingston</p>

Concentration:	Assessment and Evaluation
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 210/3.0 Understanding Classroom Assessment and Evaluation</i> With the current accountability framework of K-12 education, teachers are required to use assessments to monitor and inform student learning, guide their instruction, and communicate student achievement. This course explores the complexities of enacting assessment policies and theories within contemporary teaching contexts. Varying philosophies and approaches to classroom assessment are explored with consideration for their pedagogical value. In addition, systemic assessment structures are examined to understand the impact and function of regional and provincial evaluation systems on teaching, learning, and policy decision-making. This course will provide teacher candidates with theoretical and philosophical positions from which to enact sound – reliable, valid, and fair – assessment practices.</p> <p><i>FOCI 210/3.0 Assessment and Evaluation Practices in the Classroom</i> Assessment is a central component of teaching and learning within elementary and secondary classrooms. Current mandates require teachers to integrate assessment throughout their instruction to support, monitor, and communicate student learning. In this course, teacher candidates will learn how to develop and use assessment to promote student learning within a positive classroom culture. Specifically, candidates will learn about Ministry policies, rubrics, feedback mechanisms, observations, portfolios, testing (i.e., teacher-made and EQAO) as well as peer-, self-, and collaborative-assessment. Throughout the course, candidates will link assessment practices to learning theories and to their evolving pedagogical approach. By the end of the course, candidates should be able to engage in professional discussions and decision-making related to assessment and student learning. This course will fundamentally strengthen the candidates' approach to teaching by connecting together educational and assessment theory, philosophy, and practice.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	Canada School of Public Service, Ottawa Freedom 55 Financial, Kingston Education Quality and Accountability, Toronto Residence Life, Queen's University, Kingston

Concentration:	At-Risk Adolescents and Young Adults
Division(s):	Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 291/3.0 Understanding At-Risk Adolescents and Young Adults</i> This course provides a foundational understanding of the social and psychological basis to the notion of “at risk” and explores various approaches to effect change in adolescents and young adults including cognitive behavioural theory, motivational interviewing, collaborative problem solving, and restorative practice. The impact of socioeconomic status, family dynamics, social factors, and biological markers will be examined.</p> <p><i>FOCI 291/3.0 Teaching At-Risk Adolescents and Young Adults</i> Teacher candidates will develop efficacy in applying the theoretical principles taught in EDST 291 to increase their students’ success academically, behaviourally, and socially. A wide range of situations that place students at risk including mental health issues, substance use and addictions, LGBT issues, and family dynamics will be explored, along with evidence-based strategies proven to facilitate self-control, motivation, and improved classroom management. Learning will occur through a variety of readings matched with guest presentations from professionals and those with lived experience.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Collins Bay Institute, Kingston</p> <p>Kerr Street Mission, Oakville</p> <p>Pathways to Education, Kingston</p> <p>Sutton Youth Shelter, Georgina</p>

Concentration:	Educational Leadership
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 275/3.0 Understanding Leadership in School Organizations</i> Intended to provide candidates with a comprehensive understanding of leadership concepts by integrating theory, research, philosophy, and practice in school organizational and social structures. Candidates will explore the roles that organizations play in society; critically analyze traditional and contemporary models of organizations; develop an understanding of organizational structures and leadership; examine the nature and effects of group behaviour and dynamics on individuals in organizations; and, consider some common relational problems that members of organizations experience and how they should be addressed.</p> <p><i>FOCI 275/3.0 Leadership in Schools</i> Intended for teacher candidates interested in working toward positions of added responsibility, such as team leader, department head, vice principal, principal, consultant, coordinator and supervisory officer. The course will prepare candidates for working in diverse organizational environments through an evidence-based approach to examining trends and issues regarding organizational development and transformation. Candidates will discuss the practical ways in which leadership concepts apply to schools; examine the tasks, contexts, attributes, and powers associated with leadership in school organizations; explore the related roles of professionals and individuals assuming leadership responsibilities in school organizations; and, build awareness of their own leadership skills and styles.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Assessment Centre, Hamilton</p> <p>Boys and Girls Club of Canada, Oshawa</p> <p>Living Positive Kenya/Dance Play, Kenya</p> <p>McArthur Theatre Troupe, Kingston</p>

Concentration:	Educational Technology
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 218/3.0 Understanding Educational Technology</i> This course examines issues related to the augmentative and transformational uses of educational technology in K-12 classrooms. The goal of the course will be for teacher candidates to build an intelligent and thoughtful disposition towards the use of educational technology in K-12 classrooms. Focus will be placed on the current array of educational technologies and how these should be used by teachers to support student learning. Through engagement in demonstrations and the development of curricular projects candidates will develop a deeper understanding of how educational technology can improve and potentially transform education for students. Candidates will develop a critical perspective on the use of computers and related educational technologies that are intended to address issues of teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>FOCI 218/3.0 Educational Technology by Design</i> This course engages teacher candidates in designing ways of using educational technology that address authentic teaching and learning problems. Emphasis is on the creative repurposing of educational technology to respond to substantive teaching and learning problems derived from sources in the field. Issues associated with using educational technology will be addressed through face-to-face seminars, workshops and group design projects. The goal of this course will be for candidates to develop a deep appreciation for the complexity of designing viable solutions to educational problems that utilize educational technology. Prototyped designs will be piloted in practice-based settings and final reports will be shared with educators via webpages and during an end of year Educational Technology Showcase that will be open to local teachers.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>McLachlan Woodworking Museum, Kingston</p> <p>Pact Urban Peace Program, Toronto</p> <p>Eenchokay Birchstick School, Pikangikum</p> <p>Sutton Aviation, Ottawa</p>

Concentration:	Environmental Education
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 243/3.0 Understanding Environmental Education</i> The term 'environmental education' means many things to many people. In this course teacher candidates will have the opportunity to explore various issues and practices related to environmental education. This course will be one of questions: What is the historical context of our relationship with the environment and hence the need for environmental education? What is, and what shapes the social and /or political views our society has about the environment? What is the role of education in the context of knowing about and solving environmental issues?</p> <p><i>FOCI 243/3.0 Environmental Education</i> This course focuses on enhancing teacher candidate's understanding and appreciation of the natural environment as a classroom, increasing their knowledge of environmental issues, and learning how to teach about them. Ways to integrate environmental studies across the curriculum both inside and outside the classroom will be investigated, and environmental programs and resources will be explored using hands-on approaches.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Bamfield Marine Science Centre, Bamfield</p> <p>Bermuda Aquarium, Museum & Zoo, Bermuda</p> <p>Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, Guelph</p> <p>Camp Outlook, Kingston</p>

Concentration:	Exceptional Learners
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 295/3.0 Understanding Exceptional Learners</i> This course addresses understanding research, resources, and practices relevant to teaching exceptional children and adolescents in the regular classroom. A range of exceptionalities are considered including students with learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), mental health concerns, developmental delays, giftedness, and behaviour and emotional difficulties. Teacher candidates consider how students learn, how to help exceptional students achieve success, and how to collaborate with parents and other professionals. The course emphasizes creating a classroom context where each student is valued.</p> <p><i>FOCI 295/3.0 Teaching Exceptional Learners</i> This course addresses teaching exceptional children and adolescents in an inclusive classroom. Exceptional learners include, among others, those with learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), mental health concerns, developmental delays, giftedness, and behaviour and emotional difficulties. The course offers opportunities to learn from: experience, workshops, reading, and peers; to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners; to develop competence and confidence in teaching exceptional learners; and to provide leadership in this area. The organization is experiential, self-directed, and collaborative, within a group that shares an interest in working with exceptional learners.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Sagonaska Demonstration School, Belleville</p> <p>Bialik Hebrew Day School, Vaughan</p> <p>Developmental Disabilities Association, Vancouver</p> <p>Kells Academy, Montreal</p>

Concentration:	Indigenous Teacher Education (taught in conjunction with the ITEP Program Track cohort)
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 201/3.0 Theory of Indigenous Education</i> This course provides a background into the history and theory of Indigenous Education. It will commence with a discussion of Indigenous identities and approaches to education from the pre-contact era into the present, as well as Western approaches to education through the lens of Critical Race Theory. The course will then move to Indigenous educational theory, including such topics as Indigenous concepts of the person and the learner; teaching as ceremony; Indigenous differentiated instruction; holistic learning; global Indigenous identities; language and education; and education for decolonization.</p> <p><i>FOCI 201/3.0 Indigenous Teacher Education</i> Prepares Indigenous Teacher Education candidates to include Indigenous curriculum as part of their classroom teaching. Explores Indigenous community-based curriculum development; a review of current Indigenous curriculum packages and other resources; curriculum planning and evaluation. An experiential learning approach with aspects of the course applied during the candidates' practice teaching rounds. Practicum experiences are explored during class sessions with such reflections providing the basis for further learning in the areas of curriculum planning and evaluation.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Six Nations Tourism, Ohsweken</p> <p>National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Winnipeg</p> <p>Katarokwi Learning Centre, Kingston</p> <p>Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa</p>

Concentration:	International Education
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 255/3.0 Understanding Teaching and Learning Abroad</i> This course supports scholarly and personal understanding of teaching and learning abroad as teacher candidates prepare for professional practice in international settings. The focus will be on theories that support teachers in their understanding of the complexities associated with teaching in cross-cultural contexts, such as cultural variables, “third culture kids”, service learning, professional development and diversity consciousness. These will be discussed by drawing on current literature in the field of overseas teaching and cross-cultural teaching and learning. Candidates will learn through structured classes, group discussions, guest speakers and personal research of topics specifically applicable to individual interests. This course helps candidates understand teaching and learning in ELL, multicultural, and diverse contexts in Canada or abroad.</p> <p><i>FOCI 255/3.0 Educators Abroad</i> This program focus supports teacher candidates’ scholarly and personal development as they prepare for professional practice in international schools, including candidates considering international teaching after gaining full-time teaching experience in Canada. Learning in this course occurs through a combination of structured classes, contact with professors, a self-directed independent study, and an Alternative Practicum. While an international Alternative Practicum placement is supported, it is not a requirement. Candidates are required to link their Alternative Practicum to their Educators Abroad independent study. This course helps candidates address the complexities of teaching and learning in ELL, multicultural and diverse contexts in Canada or abroad.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>International School, Italy</p> <p>Capital National Theatre for Children, New Zealand</p> <p>Private School, Nicaragua</p> <p>Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna</p>

Concentration:	Literacy in the Elementary School
Division(s):	Primary-Junior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 227/3.0 Understanding Literacy in the Elementary School</i> This course will examine how literacy learning is supported by the use of traditional and multimodal texts with children. It will explore the integration of children's literature across curricular areas for all students. Teacher candidates will read and discuss the major genres of literature used in elementary schools and develop criteria for judging the quality of children's literature.</p> <p><i>FOCI 227/3.0 Literacy in the Elementary School</i> This course will extend topics in reading and writing at the elementary level and provide teacher candidates with opportunities to examine word recognition skills and processes, comprehension strategies and theories, reading and motivation, issues of assessment, and current trends in literacy research. Teacher candidates will have opportunities to explore specific literacy programs and interventions, and consider various roles in literacy education across schools, school boards, and organizations that support reading and writing development.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>Big Words Little People, Kingston</p> <p>KidsAbility School, Cambridge</p> <p>Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Toronto</p> <p>Westmount Charter School, Calgary</p>

Concentration:	Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics - STEM
Division(s):	Primary-Junior and Intermediate-Senior
Courses:	<p><i>EDST 206/3.0 Understanding STEM Education</i> Humanity faces various challenges, problems, and opportunities that require diverse disciplines and ways of knowing. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education is one such approach. However, teaching STEM in an integrative and inclusive way to all students across all grade levels remains a crucial educational challenge. In this course, teacher candidates will examine a range of issues and practices related to STEM education. They will explore STEM education's constitutive elements and how they can integrate with each other and other disciplines (e.g., social studies, languages, and the arts) while using interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary lenses. Additionally, teacher candidates will investigate the connections between STEM education and other educational issues, including Indigenous education, sustainability, equity, diversity, and inclusion.</p> <p><i>FOCI 206/3.0 STEM Education</i> This course is designed to enhance teacher candidates' capacities to create authentic STEM activities using project-based and inquiry-based learning principles. In addition, teacher candidates will learn how to integrate STEM with other disciplines, such as social studies and the arts. Teacher candidates will have opportunities to explore STEM education in various settings and contexts, including nature walks, maker spaces, coding, space exploration, and theatre. Moreover, students will develop the ability to create culturally responsive activities that address various forms of diversity and inclusion, such as cultural and linguistic diversity, Indigenous education, 2SLGBTQ+ issues, and critical disability studies. The course will also explore the creation of authentic assessments within the context of STEM education.</p>
Alternative Practicum placement (sample):	<p>No.9 Gardens, Lyndhurst</p> <p>Ontario Science Centre, Toronto</p> <p>The Boundless School, Palmer Rapids</p> <p>Bill Mason Centre, Ottawa</p>