UTICA UNIVERSITY

Office of Educator Preparation

Utica University Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA)

A Guide for Teacher Candidates

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1. Introduction

The Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) at Utica University was developed to measure teacher candidate performance by utilizing multiple assessment measures and assessors, while aligning with the NYS Teaching Standards and the Culturally-Responsive Sustaining Education (CRSE) framework. It was developed in the 2022-2023 academic year by a committee composed of various stakeholders, including P-12 administrators, classroom teachers, university supervisors, experts in CRSE, learning design, and the Educator Preparation Program.

This guide is designed to walk teacher candidates (i.e., students completing the education program seeking initial certification) through the TPA submission process from start to finish.

Training and support will be provided to each cohort of teacher candidates prior to their TPA submission semester and questions are welcome and encouraged at any point during the assessment. Utica University recognizes that adjustments to the design may be needed. Feedback is encouraged for the purposes of improving the TPA. Feedback, questions and concerns may be submitted to education@utica.edu.

2. Why TPA?

A formal Teacher Performance Assessment is required by the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) for all candidates seeking initial certification beginning in the fall 2023 semester. Every Educator Preparation Program in the state was tasked with designing a local TPA in April 2022 when NYSED removed the national edTPA certification requirement. In accordance with this mandate, Utica University has designed this assessment and piloted the assessment in the fall 2023 semester.

The focus of the Utica University TPA is providing meaningful, formative feedback to the candidate. It is designed with the time constraints of all parties involved in mind and utilizes existing measures as part of the assessment process.

3. Timeline and Components of TPA

The Utica University Teacher Performance Assessment consists of the following components:

a. Context for Learning

The “context for learning” component of the TPA is the first task you will be asked to complete. It will involve answering questions about the classroom, building and district. Its purpose is to help familiarize yourself with the classroom environment and design, as well as to prompt some research about the district. Your school-based teacher educator (cooperating teacher) or first year mentor will be your best asset to help complete this, as they should have an understanding of the classroom and district. The assessors of the context for learning will be your instructors in student teaching or apprenticeship seminar, depending on the program (EDU 471/671 or EDU 507). It will be due after the first two weeks of the placement. Student teachers will therefore submit two context for learning assignments. Your university supervisor will also need a copy.

An assignment in Student Learning and Licensure (SLL) will contain instructions and submission fields. Once you submit your assignment, it will go directly to your seminar professors for assessment. After doing so, it is best practice to export a copy of the finished context and share with your university supervisor. To do so, go to the activities section of SLL under seminar, and click on the arrow button next to the Context for Learning activity to export the file as a PDF. Then, attach the PDF to an email and share it with your supervisor.

b. Planning

By this point in your education program, you should have had practice designing lesson plans using the Utica University Lesson Plan Template. As part of TPA, you will be asked to write a lesson plan using this template and teach the lesson while being observed by your supervisor. All sections of the template should be completed, and please discuss with your supervisor what exactly they would like to see in this plan. It should incorporate the CRSE principles mentioned earlier in this guide. This will be the lesson plan that your supervisor observes for the observation component of the TPA.

Your TPA lesson plan and observation is largely dependent on your supervisor and your own schedules and levels of comfort. In some cases, with student teachers or teacher residents, the TPA plan and observation may occur during the first placement of student teaching, but it is recommended that you complete this later in the semester, when your comfort level and knowledge of the classroom is greater. This flexibility also means that there is time to do a second TPA lesson plan and observation, if things didn't quite go as planned.

You will have a chance to demonstrate your use of formative assessment to guide future instruction later in the TPA and through subsequent observations and lesson plans. **The TPA lesson plan will need to be submitted the Friday prior to your planned TPA observation by your supervisor.**

c. Observation

After your TPA lesson plan has been submitted to your supervisor, you will be formally observed teaching the lesson. The supervisor will be taking notes and observing your teaching practice in-person for this observation. Note that in some cases, the observation may have to take place virtually or via an alternative method due to factors like inclement weather or distance. Try to teach the lesson as you would if you were not being observed. Your supervisor may provide you with some pre-observation prompts that they think will be helpful for a successful observation.

After the observation, the supervisor will record their observation using the observation report form, and then, just like the context for learning, you will receive an email receipt of the observation. The feedback should help guide future planning, instruction and assessment. Take careful note of the feedback and if you have questions, be sure to ask your supervisor. It is common practice for supervisors to hold a post-observation meeting, so some of the feedback may be discussed in-person if there are items on the observation report that require clarification or prompt further discussion and questions. The observation report contains qualitative feedback and a rating on the HEDI scale (4- Highly effective, 3 - Effective, 2- Developing, 1 - Ineffective).

d. TPA Reflective Assignment

In addition to submitting a lesson plan in the Utica University Lesson Plan Format, you will be required to write a reflection **focused specifically on the TPA lesson that was observed.** You will have a lot of practice with writing these reflections, as they are due every Friday along with your lesson plans for the following week. The only difference between the TPA reflective assignment and the normal weekly reflection is that the week of your TPA observation, **the reflection should focus solely on the TPA lesson and successes and challenges associated with that specific lesson.**

The reflection (as well as your TPA lesson plan) will be assessed using a grading rubric in SLL. Again, this process should be familiar to you by the time you are ready to submit your TPA reflection. Use best reflective writing practices when completing it, and be

open and honest about challenges you experienced, if applicable.

e. ICAN Video Portfolio or Recorded Lesson

In addition to your first observation, you will be required to complete one of the following:

Option 1: A video portfolio of four short video clips that demonstrate effective teaching and answer the following ICAN statements:

- ICAN deliver content effectively (I, III.)
- ICAN differentiate instruction (I, III.)
- ICAN utilize formative assessment (V.)
- ICAN implement effective classroom management strategies (IV.)

The ICAN video clips should be five minutes in length and should be named according to each ICAN statement. (I.e. ICAN deliver content.mp4) They should provide enough context for your supervisor to understand what is being observed.

The video clips should then be uploaded to your Panopto Folder. You should notify your supervisor (or share the video files via Panopto) once they are ready for review. In an ideal scenario, the ICAN video clips should be completed after your TPA observation, and demonstrate that you have received and acted upon the feedback provided by the first TPA observation.

This option may be attractive because shorter video files tend to be less of a nuisance when uploading them, and you can also be very selective about which videos and clips you use. You can show off your best instructional practice with this option.

Option 2: A video recording of a 20-30 minute lesson. This option would require recording and uploading the entire video to Panopto. The lesson should demonstrate similar competencies, including but not limited to:

- Content delivery
- Differentiated instruction
- Culturally-responsive teaching
- Formative assessment
- Classroom management techniques

It should also be a follow-up to the teaching that was observed during your first TPA observation.

Regardless of the option that you choose for this element, you must ensure that a video release form is in place prior to any recording of students in your classroom. You will be provided with an opt-out video release form by our program, but you may also use a district-format video release form if it's preferred. This is extremely important as we require all teacher candidates enrolled in our program to remain compliant with student data privacy laws.

The ICAN portfolio OR the recorded lesson will be used as a second TPA observation, and feedback will be provided similar to your first TPA observation.

f. Summative Assessment

The final element of the TPA is the summative assessment. It is an extensive evaluation of your teaching and is aligned to the NYS Teaching Standards. This is an evaluation that is typically completed SLL. For student teachers, it requires all three parties (the supervisor, the school-based educator and yourself) to complete the assessment. It is measured on the HEDI scale and is due the second to last week of your second student teaching placement. For transitional-B students and teacher residents, the evaluation will be due the second to last week of the semester. As was described above, you should make your best effort to provide an honest self- assessment.

4. Getting Started

When starting any project or assignment, it can often feel daunting and stressful to think about. The best advice before getting started is to remain calm and know that the TPA is designed to be conducive with your clinical experience, observations, and assignments that are already required of your program. In other words, **do not panic.**

There are a few items before you get started that may be helpful in preparing for the TPA:

- As soon as you know where you will be student teaching or completing a residency, or working as a transitional-B certified teacher, you should reach out to your school-based teacher educator (cooperating teacher) or first year mentor in the case of Trans-B. **Introduce yourself** and ask to have a meeting with them to begin to get to know the school district, classroom, and your colleagues.

- **Communicate and introduce yourself to your university-based teacher educator (aka supervisor).** They will be largely responsible for assessing your TPA, and will also be your best resource for successful completion of student teaching, residencies and transitional-B mentoring sections. Your supervisor will be trained to administer and assess the TPA, and can serve as a first point of contact for questions. They also have a great deal of classroom teaching experience, with most supervisors being retired classroom teachers. Make sure to utilize that experience and knowledge, and be accepting of constructive criticism and feedback.

- Research the district that you are placed or employed at. Familiarize yourself with the administration, parent's bill of rights, and other contextual information about the district.

- Test out a recording device (phone, tablet, digital video recorder) and try to upload a test video to Panopto (www.utica.edu/panopto). Test the connectivity and WIFI you have available at both your district and at home, or wherever you would plan on uploading a large video file. Once the test video is uploaded, make sure that it is playable from Panopto. Check for audio quality, video quality, and camera angle. Your supervisor or school-based teacher educator may be able to assist with recording. This is a common area that candidates find challenging, as video files, especially larger ones can be difficult to upload.

- Familiarize yourself with the Student Learning and Licensure (SLL) assessment platform. Everyone preparing to complete TPA should already have an SLL account and some familiarity in terms of use during EDU 111/511, *Introduction to Teaching* and subsequent coursework.

- Attend and pay close attention to any orientation events and training that focus on TPA. Take notes and ask questions often if anything is unclear. Questions are welcome, as is feedback on the TPA.

- **Practice reflective writing.** You will have a weekly reflection assignment that is due, and one of them will be used as a TPA assessment measure. This generally involves taking time to think about how a lesson or learning activity went, and what could be improved upon. Pointing out your own mistakes or challenges can be difficult for some candidates, and please know that you will not be penalized for reflecting upon what could be improved upon. Do not be afraid to put yourself, and your thoughts out there.

- **Review Culturally-Responsive Sustaining Education best practices and think of ways to incorporate CRSE into your lesson plans**. A slide deck will

be provided to you as a refresher. You may have also completed EDU 340 as part of your education program, which focuses specifically on CRSE.

- **Rate yourself fairly when asked to complete self-assessments.** Scores of 4 - highly effective are not common, and you will likely fall under 2- developing or 3 - effective in most areas that are assessed. This ties in to reflective practices. You are not expected to be rated 4-highly effective during your clinical experience or first year of teaching as a transitional-B certificate student. Likewise, do not take offense to scores of 2-developing and 3-effective, they are acceptable and even desirable scores. **Scores of 2-3 (and perhaps even a 4 in some rare circumstances) in all areas is an indication of a passing score on TPA.**
- **Review the feedback that is provided during TPA**. It is meant to inform your preparation, and to help you in areas where you are still developing skills and gaining experience.

5. Verification of completion and next steps

Once all TPA components have been submitted, your university supervisor will complete a TPA verification form. This form attests that you have successfully completed TPA and requests summative feedback from the supervisor on each element, as well as a HEDI score for each.

Based on a cumulative review of your TPA, the supervisor will then recommend that you pass or do not pass TPA. The verification form is powered by Microsoft Forms, as well, and you will receive notification of your status via email from your supervisor or the educator preparation program.

What happens if I do not pass? First, it should be noted that your supervisor will alert the program to any issues that need to be addressed prior to getting to the point of not passing TPA. Every effort will be made by our program to support your success, even if it means instating a professional improvement plan to get you across the finish line.

In the event that you do not pass TPA, you will then have to retake or redo the component(s) of TPA that were identified as unsatisfactory. Per NYSED, candidates will not be recommended for certification without verification of a successful TPA submission.

6. Acknowledgements and Contact Information

The Utica University TPA design is a direct result of faculty, staff, and P-12 stakeholders' collaboration, feedback and hard work. In no particular order, Utica University's Educator Preparation Program would like to thank Dr. David Rufo, Mrs. Katie Hanifin, Dr. Margaret Hemstrought, Dr. Meredith Madden, Mrs. Melissa Leiguarda Lowell, Mrs. Caitlin Fenton, Dean Ahmed Radwan, President Todd Pfannestiel, Dr. Laurence Zoeckler, Dr. Joanne Shelmidine, Mr. Rocco Migliori, Mrs. Ellen Moon, Mr. Dick Moon, Dr. Xinyue Liu, Dr. Thomas Diana, Dr. Megan Foster, Mrs. Sandra D'Onofrio, Mrs. Paula Trombetta, and Mr. Kyle Riecker.

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If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback regarding the TPA or this guide, please contact education@utica.edu or Mr. Kyle Riecker at kyriecke@utica.edu.