
Revision Responsibility: Professional Education Council (PEC)
Responsible Employee: Certification Officer for Educator Licensure

Purpose:

To outline the policy for selecting students for admission into undergraduate, initial licensure teacher preparation programs at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Policy:

The Gold Card serves as documentation that a student has met all admission requirements and has been officially admitted into an undergraduate, initial licensure teacher preparation program within the Professional Education Unit at The University of Southern Mississippi.

The following requirements must be met for the Gold Card:

- Completion of a core curriculum of pre-major coursework
- *A minimum grade point average of 2.75 on the 44 semester-hour core curriculum of pre-major coursework
- A grade of “C” or better in freshman English Composition I and II
- Good academic standing at Southern Miss (a student on probation, probation continued, or suspension status cannot be admitted to teacher education until the transcript reflects good academic standing)
- A clear background check via CastleBranch at <https://mycb.castlebranch.com>, the system currently selected by the Southern Miss Professional Education Council. Students who pass the background check process will be issued a background check badge.
- All candidates must subscribe to the Tk20 assessment system. Tk20 provides an electronic portfolio and storage system for students as well as tracks, stores, retrieves, and analyzes data for accreditation purposes.
- Successful completion of a nationally normed ability/achievement assessment OR a teacher education normed entrance test:
 - Nationally Normed Ability/Achievement Assessment:
 - An ACT composite score of 21 or higher. If the student did not take the ACT, an equivalent SAT score of 1060 or above satisfies requirements as well.
 - Teacher Education Normed Test:
 - Acceptable scores on the Core Academic Skills for Educators Test (CORE): Reading Test Code 5712 with a score of at least 156, Writing Test Code 5722 with a score of at least

Date Adopted by PEC: 1940s

Date Last Modified: September 1, 2013 to reflect new CORE test; March 4, 2014 to remove BTLE; January 2017 to reflect new ACT score;

162, and Mathematics Test Code 5732 with a score of at least 150. This is the most recent teacher-normed test approved by the State of Mississippi. MDE will begin accepting this test 9/1/2013 with it becoming mandatory as the new test starting 1/1/2014.

*While a student must only have a 2.75 GPA for admission, the cohort of students accepted at the time of a student's admission must have at least a 3.00 GPA average as a whole. Thus, an individual student could be denied admission should their individual GPA bring down their cohort of students' GPA average to less than a 3.00. For the purpose of this policy, a cohort refers to all students accepted during a particular term of enrollment (i.e.: Fall, Spring, Summer).

Furthermore (and pending Mississippi approval), in order to be in compliance with *CAEP Standard 3.2 Admission Standards Indicate That Candidates Have High Academic Achievement and Ability*, the cohort's average performance on a nationally normed ability/achievement assessment such as the ACT or SAT must be in the top 50% from the 2016-2017 distribution; the top 40% from the 2018-2019 distribution; and the top 33% by the 2020 distribution.

Except for the Background Check that allows for a two-week extension into the first semester (see Background Check Policy), all requirements must be met **prior** to enrollment in restricted teacher education courses.

Any student with a question about these requirements should be directed to the College of Education and Psychology Dean.