

VALENCIA COLLEGE

Educator Preparation Institute

Student Handbook

Welcome to the Educator Preparation Institute

Mailing Address:

Educator Preparation Institute (4-1)
Valencia College
1800 S. Kirkman Rd.
Orlando, FL 32811

Physical Address:

[West Campus](#)
1800 S. Kirkman Rd.
Orlando, FL 32811
Building 1, Room 255

EPI Website: <https://valenciacollege.edu/academics/programs/educator-preparation-institute/index.php>

Contact Information:

Kim Foster, Manager of Teacher Preparation
Phone: 407-582-5112
E-mail: kfoster8@valenciacollege.edu

Program Information:

“Educator Preparation Institutes or EPIs are offered by Florida postsecondary institutions or qualified private providers to provide instruction for non-education baccalaureate or higher degree holders under section [1004.85, F.S.](#), resulting in qualification for an initial Florida Professional Educator’s Certificate. EPIs are designed for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers.” The EPI program satisfies the Professional Education Competence and Professional Preparation Coursework requirements on an individual’s official Florida Department of Education Statement of Status of Eligibility.

Catalog Information:

The Educator Preparation Institute (EPI) provides a competency-based program that offers an individual with a bachelor’s degree (min. 2.5 GPA) in a discipline other than education the preparation to become a classroom teacher in Florida. Participants who demonstrate mastery of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) and present passing scores or qualify for exemptions on all sections of the Florida Teacher Certification Exams (FTCE) will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. Program course requirements designated by prefixes EDF, EDG, EEX or RED provide college credit, are part of a non-degree alternative certification program, and may be transferable to an upper-division institution. Program acceptance is required for participation in the EPI.

Program Outcomes for EPI students:

1. Create a student-centered learning environment.
2. Apply knowledge of core content and pedagogy to set goals and objectives for K-12 student learning.
3. Use the continuous improvement model in the instructional cycle.
4. Develop advocacy skills that promote student and teacher growth and well-being.
5. Demonstrate clear and proficient communication skills for varied audiences.
6. Fulfill the legal obligations to students, the public, and the education profession.

EPI's Two Pathways: one with the FL DOE Reading Endorsement and one without. Both are comprised of eight courses.

Candidates in the following subject areas must complete the full Reading Endorsement:

- Pre-K-Primary Grade 3
- Elementary Education K-6
- Middle Grades English 5-9
- English Language Arts 6-12
- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Exceptional Student Education

Course Progression:

The EPI program's eight required courses may be completed in a minimum of **three semesters**.

Program progression may be spread out beyond three semesters if the candidate's FL DOE and employer timelines allow. NOTE: Financial aid requires a minimum of six credits per semester.

The EPI program admits students without passing General Knowledge Test scores, but students may not progress beyond the first three classes without passing scores.

The Clinical Field Experiences are NOT offered in the summer semester.

Important information regarding EDF 3940, the Clinical Field Experience course:

All EPI students will take the clinical field experience course (EDF 3940), both teachers of record and pre-service teacher candidates. Before enrolling in the courses, EPI students submit a [Clinical Field Experience Intent](#) form (located on the EPI Field Experience Requirements [webpage](#)) to the EPI office by the deadline for the term they will complete their clinical field experience course(s). The clinical field experiences are offered in fall and spring semesters only as full-term courses. For more information, please see the Clinical Field Experience Handbook, also located at the EPI Field Experience Requirements [webpage](#). A review of the Clinical Field Experience Handbook will be required before registration overrides are provided.

EPI Reading Endorsement Progression (24 credits)	EPI Non-Reading Endorsement Progression (24 credits)
EDG 2413, Student-Centered Classroom Learning Environments – 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement	EDG 2413, Student-Centered Classroom Learning Environments – 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement
EDF 3609, Social & Historical Foundations of Education - 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement	EDF 3609, Social & Historical Foundations of Education - 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement
EDF 2051, Teaching & Learning Theory – 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement	EDF 2051, Teaching & Learning Theory – 3 credits - no prerequisite requirement
RED 3042, Introduction of Reading & Content K-12 -3 credits - no prerequisite requirement (15 hr. field experience) (RC 1 & 2)	RED 3042, Introduction of Reading & Content K-12 -3 credits - no prerequisite requirement (15 hr. field experience) (RC 1 & 2)
RED 4352, Differentiated Instruction and Assessment in Literacy, - 3 credits (prerequisite RED 3042) (15 hr. field experience) (RC 3 & 4)	EDF 3430, Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment - 3 credits – no prerequisite requirement
EDF 2291, Instructional Strategies - 3 credits (prerequisite EDF 2051)	EDF 2291, Instructional Strategies - 3 credits (prerequisite EDF 2051)
EDF 3940, Clinical Field Experience in Curriculum & Instruction - 3 credits (60 hr. field experience) – Final Semester	EEX 3084, Differentiated Instruction of Exceptional & Diverse Students – 3 credits – (prerequisite RED 3042)
RED 3940, EPI Clinical Field Experience in Reading - 3 credits (60 hr. field experience) (RC 5) – Final Semester	EDF 3940, Clinical Field Experience in Curriculum & Instruction - 3 credits (60 hr. field experience) – Final Semester
24 credits, 8 courses	24 credits, 8 courses

Steps to Enrollment

*Steps to **enrolling** in the EPI program: <https://valenciacollege.edu/academics/programs/educator-preparation-institute/how-to-enroll.php>

Enrollment is a **two-part** application process:

- application to the college.
- after acceptance at the College, application to the EPI program through MyVC.

*Learn more about submitting **residency documentation** at this link:

<https://valenciacollege.edu/admissions/florida-residency/steps.php>

*Investigate using **financial aid** at this link: <https://valenciacollege.edu/finaid/>

****Please note:** Valencia College uses multi-factor authentication for our platforms. Learn more and download the Microsoft authenticator app at this link: <https://valenciacollege.edu/campaign/multi-factor-authentication.php>

Registration Process for Classes in MyVC:

MyVC is Valencia's information portal for students. It is the tool used for college email, student account information, financial aid, payments, course registration or withdrawal, and records at Valencia. Once you have submitted your Valencia College application and paid the application fee, you should be able to set up your MyVC account after acceptance to the college, usually within 5 business days. It is your responsibility to understand how to use MyVC to register for classes, pay for

classes, check your schedule, and look up your course history. **Please check your MyVC email account regularly.** It is the communication system for the college and the EPI program, which protects your information in compliance with FERPA rules.

To **preview each term's classes**, follow the search directions listed below.

1. Go to the Valencia College website.
2. Enter "[Class Schedule](#)" in the search box and click on the link that populates.
3. Select the "Course Search" button (upper right side)
4. Select the term.
5. Enter the "Subject" (ex. EDF) or "Subject & Course Number" (ex. EDF 2051)
6. Click on the "Search" button (bottom of the page).
7. Expand the "Meetings Time" column for full details.
8. Record the CRN (Course Registration Number) for each course you intend to take; note the relevant dates, instructors, or modalities.
9. Contact the EPI Office for course overrides (permission to register) **each** semester: epi@valenciacollege.edu

How to Register for EPI classes:

1. Remember, you need to contact the EPI Office to obtain overrides (permission) for the classes you wish to take. Since our classes are only for EPI and select teacher professional development or recertification students, we must provide departmental approval in our data management system for registration.
2. Log in to your MyVC account.
3. Locate the **Tools** section on the left navigation panel.
4. Select **My Registration**, then click **Register for Classes**
5. Select the term in which you are looking for classes and submit.
6. Follow the prompts under "Registration" to add or drop classes using the CRNs.
7. A new screen will appear showing the classes you have registered for. If a class is full or if registration is prohibited, a red X will appear, and next to the class you are not registered for will be the course registration error message. If the error message is a Department Error, please contact the EPI Office at epi@valenciacollege.edu. Additionally, there may be holds for various reasons, including missing test scores or financial obligations.

Payment:

Note: You are responsible for paying for your classes before the payment deadline each semester. If classes are not paid for by the deadline, the data system will purge all unpaid classes. After the purge, it then becomes your responsibility to re-register for classes and make the payment that same day. You may not be able to re-register for the classes if they are full. This may delay the completion of the program. You may also incur a \$50 late fee to re-register after each semester's payment deadline.

Financial Aid Note: Please check your account in MyVC: under the **Tools** section in the left navigation panel, select **My Finances**, then click **My Financial Aid**. Additionally, please reference [this link](#) for FA disbursement information.

For **payment deadlines**, please visit the [“Important Dates and Deadlines” calendar](#).

You may pay for classes via your MyVC account through the **Tools** section on the left navigation panel. Select **My Finances**, then click **My Account Balance**.

Your Class Schedule:

To access your class schedule in MyVC, locate the **Tools** section on the left navigation panel, select **My Registration**, then click **View Registration Information**.

Troubleshooting:

1. If you have trouble logging into MyVC, call the Student Help Desk at 407-582-5444.
2. If the registration error you receive is a “Department” error, contact epi@valenciacollege.edu.
3. If you are prohibited from registering due to a hold on your account, you may call [First Stop](#) or the EPI office to have the hold removed.

First Stop phone number and email: 407-582-1507 and enrollment@valenciacollege.edu

Dropping/Withdrawing from Classes:

It is your responsibility to drop any classes you do not wish to take within the drop/refund period of the semester. This can be done through the **Register for Classes** link in the **My Registration** tab of the **Tools** section on the left navigation panel. If you do not drop before the drop with refund deadline, then you will not be reimbursed for your tuition. Please visit the [“Important Dates and Deadlines” calendar](#). If you remove yourself from a course after the drop/refund deadline, it is considered a withdrawal, and it counts toward an attempt for the class, and tuition is not refunded.

Class Cancellations:

If a class you have registered for is cancelled, you will be notified through MyVC e-mail. You must check the schedule for another class. It is not the responsibility of the EPI Office to register you for classes or drop/withdraw you from classes.

For returning students:

1. Check to make sure that you have a grade posted in MyVC for every class you have already taken. If you have received an “M” grade, please contact our office and the instructor you took the class with. If you have received an “I” grade, then you will need to complete the missing work for that class and submit it to your professor. **Note:** if the “I” grade is not changed to a passing grade by the end of the following semester, the “I” grade will automatically convert to an “F”. Consequently, the class will have to be retaken.
2. All Clinical Field Experience paperwork and intent forms must be completed and submitted via email to the EPI Office by the due dates.

📅 If you plan to enroll in the Clinical Field Experience course for the fall semester, paperwork is due around **March 1st**.

📅 If you plan to enroll in the Clinical Field Experience course in the spring semester, paperwork is due around **October 1st**.

3. If you have not already, you may need to take FTCE Exams: the General Knowledge, the Subject Area Exam, and the Professional Education Test. Please submit official scores to the EPI office for our records. Please refer to your Statement of Eligibility for your requirements.

4. Possible FTCE exemptions exist for:

- General Knowledge Tests (a master's degree or higher from an accredited institution; or district submission of a CT-134 form from your public-school employer)
- Subject Area Exam (a master's degree or higher from an accredited institution in the content area you are eligible to teach)
- Professional Education Test (a highly effective final evaluation rating (*student growth score* + *instructional practice score*) from a public school district in the year closest to EPI completion).

Program Completion:

1. Alert the EPI office that you have finished all requirements and are ready for your professional certificate with the FL DOE.
2. Complete the EPI Completion Application found in MyVC. Find detailed information about program completion and the completion application at the [EPI Completion Checklist webpage](#).

Tips and Reminders: To make communication with our office as quick and efficient as possible, please have the following ready when you call or email (from MyVC):

- Your VID number
- A call-back number
- CRN numbers for registration issues

EPI Student Responsibilities:

1. A criminal record may preclude you from being accepted for a clinical field experience and from being issued a teaching certificate. Please contact the EPI Office to determine your status.
2. It is your responsibility to register for courses using MyVC.
3. You must register and pay for a course before you can attend the course. You cannot enter a course once it has begun.

4. You must abide by the [student code of conduct](#) as outlined in Valencia's catalog, and you must behave appropriately and professionally. If you are disruptive or unprofessional, you may be dropped from the program without a refund.
5. It is your responsibility to pay for your courses and books by the assigned deadline as noted on the [college calendar](#). If dropped for non-payment, you may not be able to re-register for the course.
6. All EPI courses are usually fully online, and you will use Canvas, Valencia's online instructional platform, and you may use Zoom, which requires a computer, webcam, and Internet access.
7. If you have technical difficulties with Canvas or MyVC, contact Valencia's technical support at 407-582-5444.
8. Proficiency in using a word processing program and basic computer skills is expected. [MS Office 365](#) is available free to all students.
9. All Demonstrations of Learning, assignments, and discussions are to adhere to the highest standards of communication and scholarship and are graded accordingly. This means plagiarism is not permitted and may be grounds for removal from the EPI program. Please use APA style citation to credit the work of others (including any use of AI) in your writing and discussions.
10. You must attend/log in to each class, or you may receive an "F" for the course. The instructor can decide whether the absence is valid and assign appropriate make-up work, but it is the instructor's decision. Failing to log in and complete mandatory first-week assignments during the first week of classes will result in being reported as a "[no show](#)."
11. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor of failure to attend or to submit work. Please communicate with instructors. They make decisions regarding course management and grades.
12. You may have work exceeding 12-15 hours per week for each EPI course.
13. It is your responsibility to complete the necessary paperwork, fingerprinting, and background check to be eligible for the Clinical Field Experience course.
14. If you are a pre-service teacher candidate, it is your responsibility to arrange and complete volunteer/observation hours for courses other than the clinical field experience. If you do not complete the volunteer/observation hours, a grade of "F" will result for the courses.
15. You must receive passing grades on all courses (C or better), all Demonstrations of Learning (80% or better), and complete all clinical field experience Demonstrations of Learning to complete the EPI program.
16. It is your responsibility to keep track of the courses you have taken and the courses you will need to complete the EPI program. You can check on your completed courses through MyVC.

17. It is your responsibility to act appropriately and professionally in class, as well as in the clinical field experience placements in our partner school districts or settings. Lack of professionalism and improper conduct will result in removal from the EPI program.
18. EPI students may take courses without having all sections of the General Knowledge Test taken, but they must be passed or exempted before the EPI program is completed.
19. You will not be issued a Professional Certificate by the Florida Department of Education or be considered an EPI completer until you successfully pass or are exempt from all required sections of the FTCE Exam: the General Knowledge, the Subject Area Exam, and the Professional Education Test. The following is the link to the [FTCE testing website](#).

Technology Requirements:

A computer, webcam, and Internet are required. An external storage device or cloud-based storage is useful for storing class materials and Demonstrations of Learning. If you need assistance, check the [resources](#).

Online Courses: A course that has no face-to-face instructional delivery. In this course, the students experience instruction online via Canvas and may have occasional options for Zoom meetings. Students are expected to participate in online activities that apply and enhance the concepts gleaned from the texts and other resources. In Canvas, students are expected to complete learning modules, participate in online discussions, take online assessments, and submit Demonstrations of Learning weekly. You should expect to spend at least 12 to 15 hours per week, per course, on readings and online activities.

Volunteer/Field Experience Requirements for EPI Students:

If you are a pre-service teacher candidate, you must participate in 15 hours of volunteer/field experience work in a public, private, or charter school for each semester that you are registered in an EPI course, except for EDF 3940, Field Experience, which requires a minimum of 60 hours of classroom observation and demonstration.

The following links are to the volunteer homepages for Lake, Orange, and Osceola counties: [Lake County](#), [Orange County](#), [Osceola County](#)

Please note: Students who do not successfully complete volunteer/field experience hours will not pass the current term enrolled.

Internet Service:

A fast, reliable internet connection and a MyVC e-mail account are basic program requirements. All students need to obtain their internet access through an ISP that offers a reliable, direct connection to the internet. We recommend Microsoft Edge or Chrome for interface with Canvas and MyVC.

PROGRESSION IN THE EPI PROGRAM

General EPI Progression Requirements:

The Valencia College EPI faculty are dedicated to your successful progression in the EPI program. Each faculty member works hard to retain you in the course and the EPI program. Please notify your instructor if you are finding it difficult to accomplish the course objectives. For example, if you experience a significant life event (accident, hospitalization, death in the family, etc.), contact your instructor and/or the EPI office as soon as possible. Because our courses are mostly short 8-week terms, it is important that you work quickly and directly with the course instructor to identify your difficulties and determine a plan to support your learning.

The following are required to progress through the courses in the EPI program:

- 📌 A grade of “C” or higher is required by the Florida Department of Education for Professional Education Competence programs to obtain professional certification.

The grading scale used in the EPI program is:

A = 90-100
B = 80-90
C = 70-80
D = 60-70
F = Below 60

- 📌 EPI students demonstrate proficiency in the FEAPs as mapped in each course by obtaining a minimum grade of 80% on each summative assessment (demonstration of learning) in the program. All summative assessments must have at least an 80% grade to pass each class and complete the program successfully. Students are allowed up to two revisions to meet this standard, and point deductions may be applied if faculty feedback is not incorporated. If proficiency is not achieved after two attempts, a third attempt *may* be offered after a required meeting with the professor. Point deductions for multiple attempts will be at the professor’s discretion. Timely submission of demonstrations of learning is essential to ensure meaningful feedback and allow adequate time for resubmission, if necessary.
- 📌 Unsuccessful completion of **two EPI courses** will result in withdrawal from the EPI Program.

READMISSION FOLLOWING A COURSE WITHDRAWAL OR FAILURE OF TWO EPI COURSES:

Readmission to the EPI Program is at the discretion of the EPI Advisory Committee. No student is guaranteed readmission following a withdrawal (W) or failure of any two EPI courses (D or F). If limited spaces are available, criteria such as GPA, student conduct, and academic performance will be used to prioritize eligibility (this list is not all-inclusive). Please contact the program manager regarding your plan for readmission by utilizing the appropriate formats outlined below:

Progression Requirements for EPI Students Unsuccessful in Two EPI Courses:

To progress in the EPI program after receiving an unsuccessful grade (D, F, or W) in **two** EPI courses, the student must:

- a. Submit the readmission form found at this link:
<https://forms.office.com/r/k9R0UWsCSy>
 - b. This process will include a written portion outlining the following:
 - 1) Specific reason(s) for failure or withdrawal
 - 2) Behavioral changes that will ensure success if re-enrollment is approved. This may include study habits, time involved in outside activities, test review, study partners, family and friend support, etc.
 - c. Agree with the re-enrollment plans and requirements
- ** Students may also be required to meet with the course faculty member(s) or EPI manager to discuss plans for course success if re-enrolled

Appeal Process Procedure for an EPI Course Class Grade or Clinical Field Experience Grade

A student has the right, individually, to appeal an EPI course grade. To appeal, the student must:

- a. Discuss the concern with the course instructor.
- b. If the concern is not resolved from conversations with the course instructor, then discuss the appeal with the EPI program manager.
- c. If dissatisfied with the decision, the student may seek a change of grade through the Student Academic Grievance Committee using the [Academic Grievance Process](#) outlined in the catalog. (College Policy 6Hx28:10-13)

Note: Communication regarding a student's performance or academic standing should be between EPI Faculty/Administrators and the individual student. Students are expected to communicate their own concerns and not defer to family, significant others, peers, friends, and/or professional associates to speak on their behalf. Legal, ethical, and professional protocols limit the information that the faculty can share with anyone other than the student.

EPI PROGRAM SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Faculty Support

EPI faculty members direct their efforts toward assisting students to be successful in the theory and clinical aspects of the curriculum. To address the needs of students, the faculty work with individual students or in small groups, listen to and assess their concerns, help sort out alternatives, give suggestions for ways to improve study habits and to decrease test anxiety, review content & tests, and encourage positive attitudes. For issues needing additional attention, referrals are made to other support services within the college. Faculty are encouraged to refer students to the appropriate support services as soon as a need is identified.

Office for Students with Disabilities

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/office-for-students-with-disabilities/>

LIBRARY SERVICES

Valencia College offers a combination of resources and services to support student learning and faculty's educational efforts. There are also specific resources that support the objectives of the EPI program throughout the seven academic campus libraries. Each library supports student and faculty needs related to library instruction, reference materials, electronic materials, printing, photocopying, and scanning facilities, as well as computers for student use. Librarians are also available at the reference desks to assist students on an individual basis.

The mission of the Valencia College libraries is to provide a variety of learning centered resources, services, and facilities to support a diverse community; to encourage academic achievement, student success, and lifelong learning; and to enhance teaching excellence. To achieve this mission, the libraries provide the faculty and students with a complete range of learning resource materials and facilities that are adequate and accessible.

The library's collection can be searched by using the Valencia College Libraries online catalog and through our subscription databases. The library's online catalog can be accessed from anywhere through the Internet. After logging into your MyVC account, locate the **Pages** section on the left navigation panel. Select **Learning Resources**, then click **Library Resources and Services**. From there, you can click on **Search the Library**. Most books circulate for three weeks to both students and employees. Books may be renewed up to two times online or in person. Through the library's online databases, students and faculty have access to thousands of articles, videos, and eBooks. The library's databases are also accessible from anywhere after logging into MyVC. On the Valencia College Libraries Catalog page, the toolbar at the top of the page has several links to access the databases. Click on Databases A-Z or Databases by Subject to list the databases.

The library also offers an interlibrary loan service to both faculty and students, which provides access to resources not available at the Valencia library. In addition to having access to material at UCF through the interlibrary loan service, reciprocal borrowing privileges are available to faculty, staff, and students in the Florida State College System and the State University System. Valencia students and employees are eligible to borrow materials directly from the University of Central Florida (UCF) by means of this reciprocal borrowing arrangement. Reciprocal borrowers may check out the Circulating

Materials with a valid Valencia ID for Faculty and a Valencia ID and a print of the class schedule for students, which must be presented at the time of the loan transaction.

The “Ask a Librarian” feature on the library’s homepage provides a free online information service by Florida libraries. This service allows users to live chat with a Florida librarian.

The libraries also offer formal library instruction sessions to assist students in developing information literacy skills. These sessions can be scheduled for individuals, groups, classes, faculty, and staff. Faculty can schedule tailored information literacy and library instruction sessions for their classes, or they can have a librarian embedded in their Canvas courses to assist students with their research needs.

Reference Service

The focal point of reference service is the reference desk. Personal assistance is available to faculty, staff, and students during the libraries’ operating hours or through the “Ask a Librarian” service online. A librarian is readily available to assist students with individual research and can provide specific types of reference services including: choosing a topic for your research; identifying sources you will need for your research; finding and accessing sources using the library’s databases, catalog, or the Internet; locating items within the library; evaluating sources; and assistance with MLA and APA format.

All librarians hold a master’s degree in library science and have extensive experience in all phases of research, and are committed to student success.

Hours of Operation

Please refer to the Valencia Home Page for the hours of operation for [Library Services](#).

Learning, Writing and FTCE Testing Support:

Visit the following Valencia links for support in various subjects and disciplines to ensure successful completion of the EPI program:

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/online/keep-learning/>

<http://valenciacollege.edu/learning-support/>

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/learning-support/writing-consultations.php>

<http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/student-services/baycare-student-assistance-services/>

<http://valenciacollege.edu/veterans-affairs/>

Other useful links:

- Florida Department of Education Certification Webpage: <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/>
- CPALMS: <https://www.cpalms.org/Public/>

- Free GKT Test Prep Course from Osceola Learning Support:
<https://online.valenciacollege.edu/enroll/HER7NR>
- Florida Teacher Certification Exams (FTCE) Website: <http://www.fl.nesinc.com/>
- Florida Teacher Certification Exams (FTCE) Test Prep:
 - <https://thelearningliaisons.com/>
 - www.thetestcamp.com
 - [Partners | 240 Tutoring™](#)
- TECH ED.GOV Tool Kits <http://tech.ed.gov/futureready/professional-learning/>