

Executive Summary: University of Nevada, Reno STEM Endorsement Program Application

Program Overview The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), College of Education and Human Development, is submitting an educator preparation program application for a Master of Science (M.S.) in Elementary Education with a STEM Endorsement specialization. This flexible degree plan is explicitly designed for licensed in-service teachers who already hold an early childhood, elementary, K-8, or PK-8 general education license. The program's mission is to develop inservice teachers' skills in mathematics and science content and pedagogy, equipping them to solve transdisciplinary problems and deliver high-quality STEM instruction.

Curriculum and Compliance The 36-credit (12-course) master's degree program is thoroughly aligned with Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391 regulations for a STEM endorsement, far exceeding the state's 12-credit minimum. The program's coursework is divided into the following categories:

- **STEM Content and Pedagogy:** The program provides 21 semester credits, exceeding the state requirement of 6 credits.
- **Instructional Materials and Assessments:** The program provides 6 semester credits focused on the development, selection, and use of STEM instructional materials and assessments, exceeding the state requirement of 3 credits.
- **Integrated STEM Instruction:** The program provides 6 semester credits of integrated STEM instruction, exceeding the state requirement of 3 credits. These courses require students to apply cross-disciplinary thinking to solve transdisciplinary problems, satisfying the NAC 391 definition.

Standards Alignment and Quality Assurance The proposed curriculum includes a detailed crosswalk demonstrating complete alignment with NAC 391 endorsement requirements, Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) Instructional Practice and Professional Responsibility standards, and InTASC standards. Furthermore, UNR maintains regional accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and achieved national AAQEP accreditation for its educator preparation programs in 2025. The program will be continuously evaluated using student surveys, faculty evaluations, and rigorous performance assessments to ensure high student outcomes and maintain accreditation.

Review process and Invitation for Comprehensive Review

Multi-Tiered NDE Review Process The application has been vetted through the following NDE regulatory tiers:

- **Administrative Review:** Internal processing and verification of application completeness.
- **Licensure Analyst Review:** Verification of compliance with state statutes and regulations.
- **SME Review:** Subject Matter Expert evaluation by the NDE office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) and the office and the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation, and Technology .
- **COPS Member Review:** Final oversight by select members of the Commission on Professional Standards.

Invitation for Comprehensive Review Commission members are invited to review the complete application and supporting documentation, which includes full course syllabi, faculty CVs, and reviews. To access the full application packet please contact Dr. Jackie Nygaard at Jackie.nygaard@doe.nv.gov.