

Educator Preparation Institute (EPI)



Student Handbook and Policies

ACADEMIC YEAR 2010

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Application and Acceptance to the EPI Program

Any adult who holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally or nationally accredited institution approved by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) may be eligible for the program. Prospective participants do *not* need to be currently employed as teachers to be accepted into the EPI Program. Graduates of the Educator Preparation Institute, once certified by the Florida Department of Education, may teach anywhere in the state of Florida.

A new EPI course begins about every five weeks. Students may enter the program whenever a new course begins. The entire EPI program takes approximately nine months to complete, if all courses are taken in the identified sequence for the current academic year. Classes are offered primarily on Saturdays; selected EPI courses are offered partially online to encourage participation by adult learners with diverse personal and professional obligations.

The application process for the EPI Program was substantially revised in the spring of 2007, and is effective for all EPI applicants beginning their EPI studies on or after July 1, 2007. These requirements for admission include the following:

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally or nationally accredited institution acceptable to the FLDOE.
- Acceptance by the college as an SFCC student and completion of SFCC orientation.
- Verification of bachelor's degree, accomplished by sending official transcripts from the degree-granting institution directly to the SFCC Office of the Registrar.
- Acceptance by the EPI program, which is based upon the applicant having met each of the following criteria*:
 1. Submission of a formal EPI Application for Admission, resume, and three supporting letters of reference.
 2. Presentation of a valid Statement of Status of Eligibility letter from FLDOE indicating that the applicant is *currently eligible* for temporary certification in the state of Florida.
 3. Documentation of English language and math competency.
 4. Documentation of technology competency.
 5. Documentation of suitability of character and dispositions for a career in the teaching profession.
 6. Approval by the EPI student selection panel following formal interview.

Note: Applicants who meet all of these criteria are granted conditional acceptance into the EPI Program and may begin their EPI course work at any time, with the exception of the field experience. Unconditional/formal acceptance as an EPI student is subsequently achieved as the student completes Level 2 background clearance, fingerprinting, and drug testing through a local school district. EPI students may not begin fieldwork experiences until written documentation that they have passed these screening processes has been received by the EPI director.

All students admitted to the EPI Program are bound to comply with the provisions of the following:

- Current EPI Student Handbook
- Current SFCC College Catalog
- Current SFCC Student Handbook

It is the responsibility of the **student** to obtain and review copies of these documents, and to follow-up on questions pertaining to them. Copies can be obtained from the EPI director and/or the SFCC Office of the Registrar. EPI students are also responsible for the content of all e-mails sent to them by the EPI director and for news items and postings placed on EPI 1045 and individual EPI course Web sites on Panther Den/D2L. Accordingly, students are advised to make a habit of checking their Panther Den e-mail and the Panther Den 1045 Web site daily.

The EPI student information packet, EPI application and application checklist, and other related forms can be requested from the EPI director or accessed from the EPI Web site (www.southflorida.edu/educatorprep) under **Application Materials**.

Attendance, Absenteeism, and Tardiness

- Students must be committed to the program and must attend and actively participate in every class session. EPI face-to-face class sessions are viewed as extremely important by the EPI faculty and by the EPI Advisory Council- for the interaction of the instructor with the students, for student cohort interaction and sharing, for the opportunity they provide for student guided practice in teaching techniques, and for instructors to model diverse teaching strategies. These types of experiences cannot be duplicated through online interaction.
- Each EPI course typically meets for four or five Saturdays, 8 a.m. - approximately 5 p.m. Some EPI courses physically meet fewer times; however, additional hours are completed via Internet assignments or other independent study.
- Students are expected to be on time for class. Classes will not be delayed for tardy students. Make-up time will be required for tardy arrival and for early departure from class.
- All missed class time and class activities must be made up. Only the equivalent of one make-up day (eight hours total) *per curricular cycle* (the total of all EPI courses in the curriculum) will be allowed each student.

To make up this missed time, either a mandatory make-up day will be planned into the schedule for traditional EPI courses, *or* students will make up their work via online assignments, special papers, or projects tailored to their individual needs (and to the

content they missed in the course). The process and content for this individualized make-up work will be determined on an individual case-by-case basis by the course instructor in collaboration with the EPI director.

No more than the equivalent of one full class day (eight hours) will be allowed to be made up in this manner for any one EPI course. A student who misses the equivalent of more than one full class day (eight hours total or more) in any one EPI course must withdraw from the course and repeat it the next time it is offered. If the student does not withdraw as requested, a grade of F will be issued for the course, and the course must be repeated the next time the course is offered.

- A student who knows in advance of a schedule conflict that will cause them to miss a class day is to:
 - Notify the EPI director and request advance approval (non-emergency situations) to use the proposed date as the one allowable make-up event.
 - In emergency situations the student must discuss the specifics of the emergency with the EPI director as soon as practical. The EPI director will relay the student request for make up and the circumstances regarding the emergency to the instructor.
 - In all cases, the *course instructor* must authorize the make-up time and activities before the director will implement the make-up procedure.
 - If the EPI instructor approves the make-up event, the student will make personal arrangements with the EPI director to complete and document necessary make-up activities as outlined by the instructor.

Caution: Use the one allowed make-up day wisely! If additional EPI course time is missed beyond the one day allowed during the academic year, all additional missed time must be made up the next time the course is offered.

Students who have not been registered for and actively engaged in EPI courses and course completion activities for a period of 90 consecutive days will automatically be placed on inactive status. To resume EPI studies, inactive students must meet with the EPI director to review their files and reapply for re-activation of their status in the EPI Program, supply a new EPI application and other required documents and provide a valid Official Statement of Status of Eligibility letter (showing current eligibility for certification) in order to resume their EPI studies. Students who re-activate their status in the program must abide by all SFCC and EPI Program policies and procedures currently in place at the time they resume their EPI studies.

Students who have been inactive for more than 90 consecutive days and who no longer hold a valid Official Statement of Status of Eligibility letter (showing current eligibility for certification) must reapply for program admission under the admission criteria and procedures currently in place at the time they are seeking re-entry. Readmission is not

guaranteed. Students selected for readmission must abide by all SFCC and EPI Program policies and procedures currently in place at the time they are readmitted to the EPI Program.

Background Screening

- Fingerprinting and law enforcement Level 2 background clearance must be obtained prior to beginning any EPI fieldwork and prior to receiving unconditional acceptance into the EPI Program. The process of completing this clearance typically takes four to six, so students should allow adequate lead time to ensure that clearance documentation is obtained prior to their anticipated start of this studies and fieldwork.
- Beginning July 1, 2007, all students must pass Level 2 background screening and fingerprinting before they will be unconditionally accepted into the EPI Program and before they may begin EPI field experience studies.
- Local school districts have different policies regarding fieldwork placement. Check with the EPI director for details.
- The EPI director will supply information on the background screening process. Students are responsible for the costs associated with the fingerprinting and background clearance, which costs approximately \$61 (subject to change).
- Drug screening and clearance is also required, which is completed through local school districts. Students are responsible for the costs associated with drug screening- approximately \$35 (subject to change).
- A student who does not pass the mandatory Level 2 criminal background screening and drug clearance will not be allowed to continue in the program and will be referred to the FLDOE for determination of their eligibility for teacher certification and employment as a teacher in Florida. (A student who is subsequently given approval by FLDOE to seek certification and teacher employment may request readmission into the EPI Program.)

Class Schedule and Meeting Times

- Most EPI class meetings will occur in Room 113 of the SFCC University Center (the EPI teacher training laboratory) at the SFCC Highlands Campus in Avon Park unless otherwise announced or posted in EPI 1045 on Panther Den.

- Each EPI course typically meets for four or five Saturdays, 8 a.m. - approximately 5 p.m. Some EPI courses physically meet fewer times; however, additional hours are completed via Internet assignments or other independent study.
- The ending time each class day may vary and is based upon the instructor's method of dealing with lunch and break times and other considerations.
- Students are advised to bring their lunch each week. A working lunch will be the routine, and allows classes to end by 4 - 4:30 p.m. on most days.
- At times special activities will be scheduled at other locations on campus or in the community.
- Fieldwork hours (EPI courses 0940 and 0945) will be arranged at local public and/or private schools with the assistance, and preapproval, of the EPI director.
- Announcements regarding any EPI class cancellations or changes will be posted on the Panther Den site EPI 1045 course listing. It is the student's responsibility to check their Panther Den e-mail, and the news items for EPI 1045, daily!

The official schedule of EPI classes for the current academic year is available from the EPI director.

"Communication Central"- EPI 1045

- In Panther Den, the course listed as number **Educator Preparation Institute - EPI 1045-** is the site where the EPI director will routinely share information, announcements, notices of upcoming events, and topics of interest to *all* students and faculty associated with the program. Students are advised to check this site often for news, generic assignments, and fieldwork and general EPI discussion topics. Students will be held responsible for all EPI announcements and information disseminated via D2L email and postings.
- Panther Den Online is a preferred method for raising discussion issues of general interest to all EPI students. Be sure to check the News area of EPI course 1045 frequently for announcements pertaining to the EPI Program. The director will also host discussions and fieldwork debriefing in this forum. EPI 1045 is the ideal site for students to pose general EPI related issues or questions for which they would like feedback from the director, the EPI faculty, and other EPI students.

Communication with the EPI Director

- Use any of the following contact methods to reach the EPI Director- Colleen Rafatti:

<i>Office:</i>	<i>863- 784- 7403</i>
<i>Cell/text messages:</i>	<i>863- 443- 1152</i>
<i>SFCC e-mail:</i>	<u>rafattic@southflorida.edu</u>
<i>Panther Den e-mail:</i>	<u>crafatti@online.southflorida.edu</u>

- The SFCC e-mail address is a preferred method for reaching the EPI director, along with phone contact. Feel free to call the director's voice-mail equipped cell phone anytime for emergencies and pressing concerns.

Communication with EPI Faculty and Students

- It is preferred that students use Panther Den Online (D2L, Desire to Learn) e-mail to reach the EPI faculty and other EPI students.
- To use this system students are to log onto Panther Den and, from their personal home page, click on the title of a specific EPI course (for example, 11642-EPI0001-ClassRoomMgt-Doty or 11643-EPI0020-ProfessionalFound-Lewis) to e-mail the course instructor and fellow students, to view course-specific content, to participate in course discussions and chats, and to submit assignments.

To receive a Panther Den user name and password, the student must first fully complete the SFCC application process and the two required Panther Den online tutorials (available on the SFCC Web site):

- Go to: <http://www.southflorida.edu>
- Click on the tab labeled *Panther Den Online*.
- On the new page that opens, click on the New User link (just above the Username box).
- On the Tutorials page complete the tutorials for: Introduction/Login, Classlist, Content, Discussions, Dropbox, E-mail, Locker, and Quiz.

To locate the e-mail address of a faculty member or student via Panther Den:

- Go to the SFCC Web site at: <http://www.southflorida.edu>
- Click on the tab labeled Panther Den Online.
- Type in the Username and Password, and then click Login to be taken to your personal "home" page.

- On the right side of your home page, you will see a list of all of the courses (including EPI courses) for which you are currently registered. Click on the underlined name of the course in which you want to contact a faculty member or student. On the new screen that opens you will see the name of that course in the upper left corner.
- Click on *Classlist*. In the next window that opens you will see two tabs- one labeled *Students*, the other labeled *Staff*. Click on the appropriate tab. The names and e-mail addresses of all individuals in this class will be shown.
- Click on the underlined e-mail address for the person you wish to e-mail and a "compose e-mail" window will open.

Also note these special links on the Student and Staff classlist pages that allow you to contact multiple individuals concurrently with a single e-mail:

- E-mail everyone on this page.
- E-mail everyone in the classlist.

Course Grades, Withdrawal, and Grades of Incomplete

- Specific policies are outlined in the syllabus for each EPI course. Syllabi are posted on Panther Den under Content for each specific EPI course.
- Students are responsible to obtain a copy of the current SFCC College Catalog and course registration schedule, and to read and review all policies and procedures contained within those documents.
- Course withdrawal must be completed formally *by the student*, following the SFCC guidelines. Students will not be withdrawn from a course by the EPI director or EPI faculty. Failure to officially withdraw from a course that is not completed will lead to a student receiving an automatic grade of F for the course, and the need to re-register for the course and to repeat it to receive a passing grade. (Under these circumstances the student will also have to pay again for the course.)
- No automatic grades of Incomplete will be issued for students who miss class or assignments without proper notification of the EPI director and course instructor. Failure to communicate with the EPI director and instructor regarding missed class time and assignments will likely lead to issuance of a failing grade, and the need to retake the course. The EPI director must authorize all grades of Incomplete, which will be removed only when the make-up procedure has been completed to the satisfaction of the instructor and the EPI director.

Education Related Extra-Curricular Opportunities

EPI students are encouraged to consider additional opportunities for networking with current and future teachers and for acquiring practical teaching experience beyond the regularly scheduled EPI classes and EPI fieldwork. Several of those options include:

SFCC's Take Stock in Children Mentoring Program

- This non-profit program provides deserving low-income children in our community with full tuition scholarships to college or vocational school and guidance from caring volunteer mentors.
- Mentors meet for one hour weekly over a period of several years with their assigned student and encourage the student to pursue his or her education and career goals.
- Young people who complete the Take Stock in Children program earn a college scholarship.
- The SFCC Foundation sponsors take Stock in Children. More information about the program can be obtained from:

Irene Castanon, Take Stock in Children Program Director
Office phone: 863-784-7343
Office location: Hotel Jacaranda
Email: Irene.Castanon@southflorida.edu

Substitute Teaching

- Local school districts are often in need of qualified individuals who have a strong interest in education to serve as substitute teachers.
- These paid on-call positions provide EPI students with valuable teaching experience and educational networking opportunities.
- For more information contact these local school district offices:

Highlands County Public Schools: 863-471-5555
Hardee County Public Schools: 863-773-9058
DeSoto County Public Schools: 863-494-4222

Fieldwork

EPI 0940- Professional Foundations Field Experience (Offered in fall and spring terms)

- During the fall or spring terms, each student registered for EPI 0940 (Professional Foundations Field Experience) must complete a minimum of 15 hours of field experience in an approved public or private school classroom. The

FLDOE requires that fieldwork be completed in a grade level and subject area setting similar to that in which the EPI student will seek certification.

- Students will collaborate with the EPI director to select and arrange the site for this field experience, with approval of the proposed site.
- Local school districts have different policies regarding fieldwork placement. Check with the EPI director for details once you have identified a proposed site. Each school district retains the authority to accept, or refuse, any student placement in their facilities as well as the right to request immediate removal of an EPI interning student from their site upon request.
- EPI students must have documentation of law enforcement and drug screening clearance prior to beginning fieldwork, and are responsible for paying the cost of this process. Screening will be arranged through the school district in which the student will complete the fieldwork.
- EPI 0940 fieldwork can be completed either in full days or in smaller blocks of time. All time must be documented on forms provided by the EPI program, and signed by a mentoring classroom teacher or school administrator. Students will be provided a varied list of observational and hands-on experiences to complete during the fieldwork.
- Fieldwork discussion and "debriefing" exercises will be conducted by the EPI Director and faculty using face-to-face class meetings, Panther Den discussion boards, live chat, and/or reflective journaling assignments. Emphasis will be placed on peers sharing ideas and issues with each other and on analysis of the experiences encountered during fieldwork.

EPI 0945- Diversity Field Experience (Offered fall and spring terms)

- During the fall or spring term, each student registered for EPI 0945 (Diversity Field Experience) must complete a minimum of 15 hours of field experience in an approved public or private school classroom. The FLDOE requires that this fieldwork be completed in a grade level and subject area setting similar to that for which the EPI student will seek certification.
- Students must complete their fieldwork in a school in the tri-county service area of the SFCC EPI Program (DeSoto, Hardee, or Highlands Counties) unless otherwise approved in advance by the EPI director. The EPI director will work with each student to try to accommodate their individual requests for grade level, subject area, and teacher.

- EPI students must have documentation of law enforcement and drug screening clearance prior to beginning fieldwork, and are responsible for paying the cost of this process. Screening will be arranged through the school district in which the student will complete the fieldwork.
- Local school districts have different policies regarding fieldwork placement. Check with the EPI director for details. Most districts require that EPI 0945 fieldwork be completed in a classroom supervised by a clinically educated or nationally board certified teacher. Each school district retains the authority to accept, or refuse, any student placement in their facilities as well as the right to request immediate removal of an EPI interning student from their site upon request.
- EPI 0945 fieldwork must be completed in larger blocks of time than those allowed for EPI 0940 fieldwork because students will be doing actual teaching. Students should expect to complete at least part of their fieldwork hours in blocks of no less than four to six hours/day. All time must be documented on forms provided by the EPI program, and signed by the mentoring classroom teacher. Students will be provided a list of observational and "hands on" experiences to be completed.
- EPI 0945 requires a mandatory teaching proficiency demonstration, which must be satisfactorily completed to pass EPI 0945 and to graduate from the EPI Program.
- Fieldwork discussion and "debriefing" exercises will be conducted by the EPI Director throughout the term using Panther Den discussion boards, live chat, reflective journaling assignments and/or face-to-face meetings. Emphasis will be placed on peer sharing of ideas and issues and analysis of the experiences encountered during fieldwork.

Completion of Fieldwork for Students Currently Employed as Teachers

EPI students who are currently employed full-time as regular classroom teachers (not as sporadic substitute teachers) in the same grade level and subject area in which they are seeking eligibility for Professional certification through EPI will have more flexibility in their options for completion of fieldwork. Fieldwork completion, in these cases, is arranged on an individual basis with the agreement of the EPI director, the student's school principal, and the employing school district's Human Resources Department. In some cases, the fieldwork may be completed in the teacher's own classroom- following a set of individually developed criteria and procedures determined by the EPI director.

EPI students interested in pursuing this option must:

- Receive advance approval from the EPI director.
- Supply the EPI director with written verification of their employment as a full time teacher, and of the support of their employing school district for completion of their fieldwork in their own classroom.
- Meet with the EPI director in advance of beginning any fieldwork hours to develop an individualized instructional plan to meet the EPI 0940 and EPI 0945 guidelines.

Financial Aid

- EPI students may wish to explore several types of financial aid including Federal Student Loans, grants, Workforce Investment Act funding, and scholarships. (Several student loan "forgiveness" programs are available to graduates who are later hired as teachers in high need schools.)
- Qualified EPI students are now eligible for Pell grants. Contact the SFCC Financial Aid Department for more details.
- Military veterans may be eligible for special Troops to Teachers scholarships and their spouses may want to explore the Spouses to Teachers program. More information about these programs can be obtained at troopstoteachers.fl DOE.org or by calling 850-245-5023.
- SFCC also offers students the FACTS tuition installment plan (TIP).

To explore opportunities for a federal student loan a student must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application. To expedite this process, it is recommended that the FAFSA application be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

EPI students interested in any of these financial aid options are strongly encouraged to meet with an SFCC financial aid advisor as soon as possible. Contact the SFCC Financial Aid Department at 863-784-7108 for an appointment and additional information.

FLDOE Contacts and Communication

- Students must be proactive in communicating with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Bureau of Educator Certification regarding their eligibility for teacher certification, Official Statement of Status of Eligibility letters, and applications for Temporary and/or Professional Certification.

- Students in need of assistance with certification issues should contact the FLDOE at the Bureau's Customer Access Number (toll free): **800-445-6739**. Extensive information can also be obtained at the FLDOE Web site: www.fl DOE.org
- The EPI director also serves in the role of Ombudsman to assist EPI students with the teacher certification process and will assist students with acquisition of information and documentation issues. Certification specialists at each local school district may also be willing to assist in seeking information regarding individual certification questions.

FTCE Examinations and Preparation Workshops

- Each EPI student is required to pass, *and submit to the EPI director*, a copy of their written score report for each Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) that FLDOE requires them to complete in order to apply for Professional certification. (This list will vary, depending upon the student's educational background and the contents of their Official Statement of Status of Eligibility provided by FLDOE.) A CT-133 form and SFCC EPI transcript documenting completion of the EPI Program cannot be issued without this documentation.
- Students are responsible for all costs associated with FTCE examinations and testing.
- Students should sign a release of information when taking each FTCE exam authorizing release of a copy of their exam scores directly to the EPI Program to expedite completion of their records.
- Students are strongly encouraged to begin to take their required FTCE examinations *early* in their program of study. The Professional Education Exam should be taken when the EPI student is nearing program completion, as the EPI coursework is designed to prepare students to be successful on that examination. Contact the EPI director for registration bulletins and information about availability of study guides and review/preparation workshops for these examinations.
- For information about testing dates or registration for FTCE examinations, or obtain an application or registration bulletin call 413-256-2893 or go to www.fl.nesinc.com
- ***Important Note:*** The FLDOE recognizes *only* the date on which an official FTCE exam score report *is issued by the testing agency* as valid for meeting these criteria- *not the date on which the examination was taken!* SFCC must also follow this FLDOE policy when it determines the date for completion of the EPI Program and for issuance of the CT-133 form and EPI transcript to FLDOE.

Students who hold Temporary teaching certificates with rapidly-approaching expiration dates are strongly encouraged to plan accordingly and to allow adequate lead time to obtain this documentation prior to the end date of their Temporary certificate!

Individual Education Plan (EPI IEP)

- Within the first month of beginning EPI studies each student is required to meet with the EPI program director to jointly develop an EPI Individual Education Plan.
- The plan will outline future teaching goals and the steps to achieving Florida teacher certification in the desired content area and grade level.
- The EPI program director will also meet with each student following completion of each subsequent EPI course to update the Plan and track the student's progress toward successful EPI program completion.

Institutional Credit, Transfer Credit, and Certificate of Completion

EPI courses earn "institutional credit." This credit is recognized by the FLDOE *only* for the purpose of determining that all EPI Program requirements have been met for the purpose of helping a prospective teacher earn eligibility for teacher certification in Florida.

While EPI course credit may be transferable to other EPI Programs in Florida, it *cannot be transferred* to an associate, baccalaureate, or higher degree program.

EPI's are approved by Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) as alternative routes to teacher certification and, as such, are considered to be self-contained programs. Teacher candidates who pursue alternative certification through EPI must complete *all* outlined EPI requirements *only through an EPI Program* to obtain this eligibility. Because the EPI program is competency-based and highly-specific it is *not* possible to substitute undergraduate education courses or credits for EPI requirements, and students *may not* blend elements from different alternative certification models together to try to meet the eligibility requirements outlined by FLDOE. EPI applicants who have substantial graduate level coursework in education may request evaluation of their records for consideration of course substitution credit on a case-by-case basis.

A certificate of completion from the SFCC EPI Program (CT 133 form) and SFCC EPI transcript is issued to FLDOE only after all of the following requirements are satisfied:

- The student holds a valid Statement of Status of Eligibility from FLDOE Bureau of Educator Certification showing their eligibility for certification in the subject area and grade level they have declared as their certification goal,
- The student has participated in and successfully completed, with a grade of "C" or higher, each EPI course,
- The student has participated in and successfully completed and documented field experience(s) appropriate to their individual educational plan (i.e. in the same subject area and grade level for which they held a valid Official Statement of Status of Eligibility letter at the time they entered the EPI Program),
- The student has successfully completed a Proficiency Teaching Demonstration with a grade of 80% or better to the satisfaction of the EPI Director,
- The student has successfully documented mastery of all required teaching competencies in their declared age-level and subject area for certification as outlined in s. 1004.85 through their FACTS.ORG portfolio and other methods,
- The student has achieved a passing score on the Florida Professional Education Examination and all other FTCE examinations required by FLDOE (General Knowledge Exam and subject area examinations) and provided copies of all passing score reports to the EPI director, and
- The student has met all financial and programmatic obligations to SFCC.

Once all EPI and FLDOE requirements are met, as noted above, SFCC will send directly to FLDOE a copy of the student's completed CT-133 form and a copy of the student's SFCC EPI transcript. The student's EPI FACTS.ORG portfolio will be recorded and made available for review by FLDOE. Students may request a copy of their EPI transcript through the SFCC Registrar's office.

The EPI Program Student Handbook in effect at the time the EPI student completes their EPI studies and requests issuance of the CT-133 form is the one that will apply for the determination of program completion status.

To achieve the Professional Certificate for teacher certification in the state of Florida, the EPI graduate must also meet all other requirements outlined on the Statement of Status of Eligibility issued by FLDOE.

EPI institutional credits and records will not be transferred to another EPI program until:

- The student has completed an exit interview with the EPI director,
- The student has provided the EPI director a signed and dated written request to withdraw from the SFCC EPI Program and to transfer EPI records to the new institution, and
- The student has successfully met and satisfied all financial and programmatic obligations to SFCC.

Official Statement of Status of Eligibility Letter

- Every student must provide the EPI Director a copy of their Official Statement of Status of Eligibility for teacher certification from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) showing eligibility for temporary certification in at least one subject area (a "valid" Statement) *before* they will be unconditionally admitted to the EPI Program.
- The Official Statement indicates the acceptance of the student's bachelor's degree for potential teacher certification by FLDOE, and outlines all the requirements the student must meet to become a highly qualified teacher holding Professional Certification.
- The Official Statement is a core element in the development of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). **The student must complete all EPI portfolio-related projects, and field experiences, in the subject area and grade level for which they hold a valid Official Statement.** (Students who ultimately desire to teach in a different subject area or grade level than that outlined by their Official Statement will be advised regarding how to pursue that goal once they have first obtained their initial Professional Educator's Certificate in their field of study for EPI.)
- Students are responsible for the costs associated with application for their Official Statement.

Professional Portfolio (FACTS.ORG)

- All EPI students are required to establish their professional competency portfolio on FACTS.ORG as a condition of participation in the EPI Program. The portfolio will be established on FACTS.ORG using a template specifically developed for EPI students. (FACTS.ORG is available at www.facts.org)
- **The student must complete all EPI portfolio-related projects, and field experiences, in the subject area and grade level for which they hold a valid Official Statement.**
- As EPI courses are completed students add samples of artifacts and documents that illustrate their attainment of competency in each of the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPS) at the pre-professional level. A copy of the completed EPI Portfolio becomes a permanent part of each student's records when their EPI studies have ended, and the electronic portfolio is made available to the Florida Department of Education as evidence that the student has achieved competency in the FEAPS.

- Official acceptance as an SFCC student, and as an SFCC EPI student, is required prior to establishing an online EPI FACTS.ORG portfolio. You must have an active SFCC student ID (GID) number in order to establish a FACTS.ORG portfolio.
- Satisfactory completion of the FACTS.ORG portfolio is determined by the EPI Program Director, who will evaluate and must approve each entry into the portfolio.
- Assignments in all EPI courses are of a practical nature and result in creation of products for the portfolio. As their knowledge and skills increase, students are encouraged to update and refine their portfolio artifacts.
- At the conclusion of EPI studies students will develop a hard copy of their portfolio for use during employment interviews.

More information about how to create a FACTS.ORG EPI portfolio, and an outline of required and optional documents and information for inclusion in that portfolio, is available in the document *How to Create Your FACTS.ORG EPI Portfolio* on the EPI website (www.southflorida.edu/educatorprep) under **Resources for Current Students**.

Purpose of the EPI Program

The purposes of the EPI Program are to:

- Provide another route to teacher certification- quickly and efficiently.
- Prepare candidates to meet some of the Florida professional educator requirements for teacher certification.*
- Provide training in the "basic skills" new teachers need for success in the classroom.

****Completion of EPI does not guarantee certification; completers must still apply through FLDOE and meet all FLDOE requirements.***

Registering for EPI Courses

- All incoming students must be accepted as students at SFCC, complete SFCC orientations (including the two required Panther Den Online tutorials), and pay their SFCC student registration fee (currently \$20) prior to being allowed to register for EPI classes.
- Once these SFCC application steps have been completed, the student will receive the appropriate EPI course registration form from the EPI director. The student must present this registration form, signed by the EPI director, to the Registrar to enroll and pay for their EPI classes.

- A different registration form is required for each term. Students enrolling for single EPI classes, rather than an entire term's worth of classes, will need to obtain a signed registration form from the EPI director at least one week prior to the starting date of each class to complete their registration process.
- After being established as an SFCC student, it may be possible to register and pay for EPI courses online. Course registration can also be completed at any of SFCC's four campuses.

Submitting Assignments

- Throughout the EPI program students will use the SFCC electronic learning community (Panther Den/D2L) system to complete course work and assignments and to interact with faculty and peers.
- EPI syllabi, assignments, and projects will be posted online in Panther Den. Most assignments must be submitted online, and assignments typically have defined "starting" and "ending" dates for submission. Once a submission ending deadline has passed the student will be unable to post the assignment electronically via Panther Den. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of upcoming deadline dates for assignments, and to communicate with their course instructor in advance if difficulty in meeting the announced deadlines is anticipated.
- Numerous online Panther Den self-paced tutorials are available to assist students in building a strong set of skills for the various aspects of system use such as discussion boards, chat room, drop box, and the like. All EPI students are strongly encouraged to explore, and complete, these tutorials as soon as possible.
- EPI students will find it highly beneficial to have access to a computer and Internet access from their home. Students who do not have access at home can use computers at any SFCC campus to complete their assignments and portfolio items. Contact the EPI director for further information.

Teaching Proficiency Demonstration

The guidelines under which the SFCC EPI Program is structured require that each EPI student successfully pass a formal Teaching Proficiency Demonstration prior (usually during their EPI 0945 fieldwork) as a mandatory element of their program requirements.

The Teaching Proficiency Demonstration consists of the student completing the following:

- Creation of an original lesson plan suitable for the age level and subject area in which the student is seeking certification.
- Creation of supportive documents to accompany the lesson plan (assessment tools, handout materials, student instruction sheets, rubrics, and the like).
- Teaching the lesson plan in an actual K-12 classroom, under the observation of a clinical educator or National Board Certified Teacher and the EPI program director- each of whom will complete the scoring rubric for the Demonstration.
- Implementing their assessment tools for the lesson taught, and analyzing and reporting the results of that assessment to the EPI program director.
- Completion of a Teaching Proficiency Demonstration self-assessment rubric.
- Meeting with the EPI program director to review the outcome of the raters' scoring rubrics.

Important Note: If the initial Teaching Proficiency Demonstration is not completed to the satisfaction of the program observer and EPI director, the student may be offered either the opportunity to repeat the Teaching Proficiency Demonstration at another date or to retake EPI 0945 at a later date.

Textbooks

- Textbooks will be provided at no charge via the EPI "lending library", and will be distributed during the first class meeting of each new EPI course.
- Texts will be released to students in numbered "sets"; they must be returned to the EPI director at the end of each course in acceptable condition in order for the student's course grade to be posted. Book sets will then be re-issued to students enrolled in the next EPI course.
- It is expected that "loaner" textbooks will be handled with care and consideration. If textbooks are damaged, lost, or returned in unacceptable condition the student will be billed for their replacement cost. If textbooks are not returned, a "financial hold" will be placed on the student's SFCC account until books are returned in acceptable condition, and SFCC EPI CT-133 forms and/or transcripts will not be issued until this obligation had been satisfied.
- Students who would like to order copies of the texts for their own personal libraries may do so. It is suggested that these orders be placed with the assistance of the EPI director to ensure timely delivery and best pricing.

Weather Emergencies

- If a local weather emergency exists please check for emergency information through the SFCC College Web site (www.southflorida.edu). After the storm has passed, even if the network is shut down, you should be able to check this site to find out when the college will reopen and when staff and students can resume normal class and work schedules.
- The college telephone message will also be updated periodically and SFCC will do its best to notify the news media of closing and opening information.
 - DeSoto Campus: 863-993-1757
 - Hardee Campus: 863-773-3081
 - Highlands Campus: 863-453-6661
- Each of the three counties in the SFCC service area has an EOC Hotline and a radio station that should have current information about the storm as well as other information.

DeSoto County	EOC Hotline (863) 993-4831 WZZS-FM 106.9
Hardee County	EOC Hotline (863) 773-6373 WZZS-FM 106.9
Highlands County	EOC Hotline (863) 385-1112 WVOJ-FM 99.1
- If the college is officially closed on a regularly scheduled EPI class day, there will be no EPI class conducted. A make-up date will be arranged at a later date and time to ensure that all EPI course content is appropriately covered.

The First EPI Assignments!

Prior to the start of a student's first EPI course the student must complete *each of the following* assignments within the first 30 days after the date of their letter of acceptance (unconditional or conditional) into the EPI Program:

- **Self-Introduction:** this is a discussion activity that involves generating a posting to the discussion board within the EPI 1045 "course."
- **Dispositions for Teaching Survey:** this EPI 1045 content area activity is to be submitted electronically into the EPI 1045 Dropbox.
- **Quiz on EPI Student Handbook:** this quiz is posted on the EPI 1045 Web site, and is completed and submitted online. A minimum score of 90% must be achieved to have successfully passed the quiz.

- **Kuder Career Inventories:** All incoming students must complete the following Kuder instruments through the Kuder Web site:

- **Kuder Career Search Interest Inventory**
- **Kuder Skills Assessment**
- **Super's Work Values Inventory**

The EPI director will provide log-in instructions and access codes for these instruments. There is no cost to the student for these assessments.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of SFCC and EPI Student Materials

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of each of the following documents:

- EPI Student Handbook and Policies for Academic Year 2010, dated 11-3-09
- 2009-10 SFCC College Catalog (electronic version provided)

I understand that it is my responsibility to read, review, and abide by the policies and procedures contained within these documents, and to review them and seek additional clarification regarding any policies or procedures that are unclear to me.

I also understand that I am responsible to periodically check my Panther Den Online SFCC e-mail and the Panther Den Online EPI 1045 Web site to check for updates and announcements and that failure to check for communications at these sites in a timely fashion does not exempt me from meeting requirements noted in them.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____