

Education/Teaching Career Employment Guide

SELF-MANAGED CREDENTIALS

WHAT IS A SELF-MANAGED CREDENTIAL FILE?

A self-managed credential file consists of signed letters of recommendation that are collected, maintained, administered and sent by you directly to prospective employers.

WHAT DOCUMENTS MAKE UP A SELF-MANAGED CREDENTIAL FILE?

www.stthomas.edu/careerdevelopment/files/pdf/education/Education-Self-ManagedCredentialFiles.pdf

Documents to be included in a self-managed credential file

o Credential File Cover Page - This document serves as the first page of your credentials packet.

o Cover Letter

o Resume

o Letter of Recommendation- Include at least 3

- o Official Transcript from Registrar's Office—or you may obtain unofficial copy of your UST transcript, if desired. It is suggested that candidates purchase one official transcript from the Office of the Registrar, to keep as your personal copy and include copies of it with your credentials materials.
- o A copy of your teaching license or certifications
- o A contact list of references (optional)

WHOM SHOULD I ASK TO WRITE A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION?

- Cooperating / partnership teacher
- UST supervisor
- UST faculty
- Other teachers that observed you teaching
- Field experience teacher
- Mentor teacher
- Principal / Assistant Principal
- Current or former employer
- Coaches
- Supervisor
- Student organization advisor
- Volunteer / community affiliation

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO ASK SOMEONE TO WRITE A RECOMMENDATION?

Always ask permission to use someone's name as a reference and before you give them the reference form. Provide the reference with a current resume. This will give them a broader view of your qualifications. Keep them informed about your job search and bring them into your network. Be sure to send a thank you note to each of your references after you have obtained employment. Yes, these are the same people you list on your application or send with your resume.

HOW & WHEN DO SCHOOL SYSTEMS RECEIVE MY CREDENTIALS?

You, as the applicant, are responsible for supplying your credentials when requested by the employer or when completing your teaching application. In some instances, employers do not request credentials until they have completed their initial screening process; in other instances, you need to send your completed file as soon as possible to the HR department in the school system.

CAN THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER ASSIST ME?

Absolutely! We want you to be successful in your job search. We are pleased to meet with you individually to answer any questions you may have about self-managed credentials, resumes, cover letters, and job search strategies.

YOUR JOB SEARCH

TIPS:

- Complete online teaching applications
- Busiest hiring season for school systems: April – August
- Attend job fairs
- Mail, email, or **drop off resumes to principals**
- Don't just complete the online application and expect to get an interview...work your job search!!
- Network – make connections
- Be aware that many new teachers are hired after classes start in August

STRAIGHT FROM THE PRINCIPALS:

1. Dress professionally, both for the interview and the job.
2. Clearly indicate your certification area and desired position on the resume
3. Always provide a list of your references with their contact information. Do NOT list "references available upon request" on the resume. It slows things down.

4. Complete all your paperwork with the school districts' office. Follow the guidelines for applying for jobs as posted on the schools' web sites. Fill out the online application before sending your resume.
5. Preferred method of contact is email or U.S. mail. Many principals do NOT like to be called by candidates asking for interviews or when they can stop by for a visit
6. Most new teachers won't have much professional experience and that's okay. Principals look for related experience such as volunteering at schools, camp counseling, church youth group leader, tutoring, etc.

GENERAL JOB SEARCH TIMETABLE

4 - 5 Months Prior to Graduation:

- Work on your resume and get it finalized. Have it reviewed by a career counselor (e-mail, resume appointment) and print it on high quality paper.
- Network by contacting friends, faculty members, to inform them of your career plans. Give each contact a copy of your resume.
- Identify references (cooperating teacher, UST supervisor, professors, past / current employers) and ask them if they will be willing to write reference letters. You will need to wait to ask your cooperating teacher and UST supervisor until you have completed a portion of your clinical practice.
- If you have job search questions, please see a career counselor or visit the Career Center web site at www.stthomas.edu/careerdevelopment/education
- Contact schools advertising for teachers in your field. Complete their teaching applications.
- Begin keeping a log of key events in your final student teaching experience so that you can talk about those events in an interview.

1 - 3 Months Prior to Graduation:

- Continue completing teaching applications for MN or out of state.
- Attend the Minnesota Education Job Fair and other teaching job fairs
- Work on your interview style and questions. Sign up for a mock interview.
- Make sure your resume is complete
- If possible, invite your principal, or assistant principal, to observe you in your classroom so he/she can write a letter of recommendation for you.
- Continue to monitor vacancies online.
- Mail out your resume, cover letter and list of references to principals at individual schools. Be sure to follow-up at a later date.
- Research school systems that interest you.

Graduation and Post-Graduation:

- Make sure you complete your self-managed credential file. Get your recommendation letters in there.
- Keep up the job search process if necessary. Many teaching jobs are filled just as the school year starts in August and are continued to be open throughout the year.
- Consider job offers and celebrate your new job!!

Developing a Teaching Resume

- **Make it look professional.**
Use a neutral paper color and a professional looking font such as Times Roman, Arial, or Calibri. The font should not be too large. Generally, keep the font size within 10-12 points. (Your resume is your first impression, and it must reflect that you are a professional. Remember who your audience is.)
- **Focus on your teaching experience.**
You haven't ever taught before? Yes, you have! Document all of the hours you spent in practicum's, volunteering, Field experiences, aiding, camp, tutoring & bible school, etc.! It doesn't have to be paid experience.
- **Choose areas that most reflect your abilities & interests in the teaching field.**
Indicate your membership in teaching organizations for students; add a section including your professional goals, etc.
- **Gain some experience or extra qualifications related to your career.**
If you are in your last year of college, or haven't been able to obtain a job yet, consider taking on a job working with children or attending a educational workshop. This will show your commitment to the field, plus you'll be more knowledgeable in the profession.
- **Don't forget those basic resume writing skills!**
Use good grammar, have at least 2 people proofread it for you, and keep the phrases short and simple. The person reading your resume will look at it quickly. You don't have to use complete sentences, except where it seems appropriate.

Buzzwords and Phrases - EDUCATION

Action Verbs	Optional Ideas
Accepted	Adhering to objectives set by state
Achieved	Audiovisual learning techniques
Adapted	Classroom management (specific)
Applied	Compassion for students
Assessed	Computer skills/technology
Assigned	Conferences, open houses, meetings
Committed	Confidence in the classroom
Communicated	Cooperative learning methods
Coordinated	Creative abilities/experience
Counseled	Critical thinking skills
Demonstrated	Diverse population (global perspective)
Developed	Education team (team teaching)
Diversified	Effectiveness of teaching methods
Encouraged	Enthusiasm/energy in the classroom
Engaged	Fairness in the classroom
Evaluated	Future plans related to teaching
Excelled	Hands on learning activities
Facilitated	High-expectations (teacher, student, parent)
Identified	Improving academic potential (how)
Improved	Inclusion classroom (setting)
Increased	Individual differences between students
Involved	Initiative (examples)
Judged	Innovative ideas
Managed	Involving Parents (classroom projects)
Organized	Languages
Planned	Learning at home/ tutoring opportunities
Prepared	Learning centers/activities
Promoted	Multi-cultural (settings/global perspective)
Questioned	Passion for teaching (give examples)
Recommended	Personal growth (describe)
Varied	Real world experience (paid or volunteer)
	Self-Assessment tools
	Social responsibility examples
	Special needs populations
	Student's abilities/class levels taught
	Teaching methods (descriptions)
	Teaching styles
	Team player examples
	Team-teaching experience
	Time-management strategies
	Understanding concepts
	Unit plans (subjects and titles)
	Variety of learning experiences

Tommie Teacher

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Objective

- Seeking a full time teaching position at the elementary level.

Education

- **University of St. Thomas** St. Paul, MN
Bachelor of Arts- May 2010
Double Major: Elementary Education (K-6) & Science and Math for Elementary Education/Science (5-8)
GPA: 3.51 -

Certifications & Awards:

Certification (following graduation): Early Childhood (PreK-3) and Elementary Education (1-6).

Clinical Field Experiences

- **Student Teacher: Turtle Lake Elementary School: Shoreview, MN (Dates)**
-Student teaching experience in which I worked collaboratively with a variety of staff members.
-Assisted in parent teacher conferences and worked as a partnership with parents.
-Planned, prepared and implemented curriculum related instruction.
-Participated in staff meetings, curriculum development teacher work days, and several IEP development meetings to meet individual student needs.
-Practiced effective classroom management techniques to promote student learning and create an overall positive learning environment for all students.
- **Field Experience: Farnsworth Aerospace Elementary School: St. Paul, MN (Dates)**
-Observed and taught individual children, small group, and whole group instruction in a kindergarten classroom; worked on planning and teaching instruction.
- **Field Experience: Andersen Elementary School: Minneapolis, MN (Dates)**
-Observed and taught individual children and small group instruction in a fifth grade classroom, --assisted in record keeping and grading.
- **Field Experience: Randolph Heights Elementary School: St. Paul, MN (Dates)**
-Observed and taught individual children and small group instruction in a first grade classroom, assisted in record keeping and grading.

Employment

- **Nanny -Bart and Mamie Harvey** June 2009-Present Lakeville, MN
-Responsible for care, discipline and instructed activity: children ages 1, 3 & 6
- **Bookkeeper- First Impression Group** January 2009-June 2009 Eagan, MN
-Manage Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable units
-Prepare financial reports for the Controller, Production Manager, and company owners
-Direct front desk operations and all incoming phone calls
-Utilize modern accounting system and Excel
- **Referee- Lakeville Basketball Association** September 2008-June 2009 Lakeville, MN
-Refereed youth basketball games and instructed youth on the techniques and rules of basketball
- **Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguard-Lakeville Aquatics Program** January 2007- August 2008 Lakeville, MN
- -Certification in First Aid Training and CPR

Volunteer Work

- Early Childhood Family Education and Family Literacy Program
- University of St. Thomas Tutor Mentor Program

Cover Letter Guidelines

*Follow the standard business letter format with your name and address in the letterhead or upper right-hand corner, the date, and the complete name and address of the principal or district official in charge of hiring for this position.

*Always address your letter to a specific person. If necessary, call the district or school to get the name and title of the person to whom you should address your letter.

*Type the letter in easily readable font style on a good quality, bond paper in a neutral color to match the color of your resume.

*Keep your letter short and to the point to a maximum of one page with about three paragraphs.

*Use present tense and active voice to stress your skills and past accomplishments.

*Your letter should use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Proof read it !

Format

Date of Letter
Contact's Name
Title
School District
Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

(Opening Paragraph:)

Identify the position in which you are interested and how you discovered the opening. If you are writing to express an interest in a specific area or grade level, say something like, "I am interested in applying for an elementary level special education teaching position in your school district." You could also include a sentence identifying your degree and date of graduation. For example, "I recently graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a BS.Ed. in Special Education and am very eager to begin my professional career in your district."

(Body Paragraph(s):)

Discuss why the position interests you, your specific qualifications, and a description of your experience related to this position. After learning a little about the district, mention something specific that makes you want to teach in that district. Refer to the enclosed resume and cite relevant highlights without reiterating your entire resume.

(Closing Paragraph:)

Suggest an action plan. Request an interview or state that you are available for an interview at their convenience. To facilitate contact, list your telephone number again and mention that messages may be left on your answering machine or voice mail. Thank them for considering your application for the position.

Sincerely,

Signature
Full Name
(Your Address and contact information)

Interview Tips

- *Practice interviewing. Get a list of possible questions and ask a friend or colleague to interview you. Consider doing a mock interview at the Career Center.
- *Be ready to respond to "Tell me a little about yourself." This statement is an inevitable request from most employers who would like to know about what you will bring to the district/school. Memorize a synopsis of your experience and personal characteristics, emphasizing those that make you a "good fit" for the open position.
- *Take time to get organized even before you leave for the interview. Make sure you have all materials organized in your briefcase. In addition to your résumé and portfolio, make sure you have a notebook or tablet, a pen, business cards, and anything else you might need.
- * Your attire should be conservative and something in which you feel comfortable.
- * Arrive on time. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early. Allow enough time to find a parking space, locate the room, and find the bathroom (check your appearance and take a deep breath).
- * When you arrive, greet the secretary/receptionist and any other personnel in a professional manner with a smile and a handshake. When you enter the interview room, introduce yourself and shake everyone's hand, making sure to maintain eye contact.
- * Know your résumé and portfolio. Review both before your interview, so that you will be thoroughly prepared to answer questions, discuss your experiences, and integrate your philosophy into your statements.
- * Be confident and poised. (Take pride in your experiences, but don't make it sound like you have nothing else to learn, or that your way of doing things is better than someone else's). Be sincere and listen to others involved in the interview.
- * Assess yourself before the interview: Know your strengths and weaknesses, and be prepared to explain both to the interviewer. Practice explaining out loud in simple terms why you are the right person for this position. Consider your education, work experience, career goals, and personal qualities.
- *When discussing your weaknesses, try to phrase them as positives. For example, "I have a difficult time delegating tasks because I like to make sure things are done correctly." Or, "I may be too flexible, as I can change a lesson plan or class schedule at the drop of a hat." When you discuss your weaknesses ALWAYS indicate how you have improved and your plans to further improve in this area. You can also discuss a weakness that you "used to have," but have worked hard to grow in this area.
- *Build and organize your portfolio to show the depth and breadth of your teaching abilities and goals. Include a table of contents to enable you to quickly locate information during the interview.
- * Make note of those with whom you are interviewing and send each a thank you letter (often makes or breaks the chance on landing the job).
- * Get informed about the school/system with which you are interviewing (check the school's web site, talk to others you know who have children in the school, get a hold of resources -- newsletters, policies, philosophies, etc.)
- *Know the district's mission and philosophy, current issues, programs, and student population. If possible integrate this information into your answers and statements.
- * Bring extra copies of you resume and references to hand out as you begin your interview (it is quite possible all the people on the interview committee haven't seen your resume).
- * Come to the interview prepared with some questions to ask!!!!!! (You may even have a short typed list to read from – so you don't forget anything). You may want to ask about opportunities for leadership/committees to join; professional development opportunities. Don't talk salary yet!!! Do end by asking when/how you will be informed of a hiring decision.
- * Give specific examples, whenever possible, to support your statements.
- * Be firm in your answers, don't try and answer questions the way you think they want you to. Be honest!
- *At the end of the interview be sure to restate your interest in the position and ask the interviewer if he/she needs you to submit additional documentation.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell us/me a little about yourself, including professional experiences.
2. Describe your student teaching experience. What did you find most rewarding/challenging when you student taught? Describe the best lesson you taught and one that didn't work.
3. What are your short- and long-term professional goals and plans? How do you plan to achieve them?
4. Tell us/me about your planning habits. If there a particular format that you use? Do you plan on a weekly basis?
5. A special education teacher must be both organized and flexible. Give examples of ways that you have demonstrated both of these characteristics.
6. Discipline is an integral part of teaching. What are the characteristics of a well-managed classroom? What approaches and models do you plan to integrate into your classroom management plan?
7. Describe the ideal learning/classroom climate that you strive to attain.
8. Describe your teaching style. What techniques would you use to better reach all of the students in your classroom?
9. Describe any multicultural, gender fair classroom practices you have used in the past and how you would ensure equality among your students.
10. What do the terms "team teaching" and "co-teaching" mean to you?
11. How would you communicate with the parents of your students? What issues would prompt you to contact them?
12. What will you do to engage parents? How will you get them actively involved in their child's education?
13. How would you delegate responsibilities to a paraprofessional and monitor his/her performance?
14. State your educational philosophy. How do you incorporate it into your daily instruction?
15. How do you evaluate your own teaching skills to insure continual growth and refinement?
16. Paperwork/documentation is a strong concern in the area of special education. How will you manage those demands, in addition to your teaching responsibilities?
17. Describe the main components of an IEP and what should go into each section.
18. Describe how you would determine and deliver appropriate individualized instruction to the students.
19. What types of assessment have you used? What assessments would you use to document student learning and plan for future instruction? How would you use assessment to develop and modify IEP goals?
20. What are the three most important characteristics of an effective educator/teacher?
21. How do you motivate students and keep them actively engaged in the learning process?
22. Unfortunately, there are some negative elements that you will encounter within the profession. How will you interact with those individuals so they will not alter focus?
23. What extra-curricular activities do you feel comfortable directing?
24. Why do you feel you are qualified for the position for which you are applying?
25. What do you believe is your major strength?
26. What area do you need to improve the most?
27. How do you integrate technology into your teaching? Have you had any experience with specific technology to support the needs of special education students?
28. Have you had any experience supporting students with IEPs in the regular classroom? How have you or would you do this?
29. Aside from coursework, what additional reading/literacy and math programs are you able to discuss?
30. Why do you want to work in this district/IU? Why should we hire you? What distinguishes you from the other candidates who applied for this position?

Questions to Ask Interviewer It's appropriate to ask general questions at the conclusion of the initial interview session. In fact, you may be asked if you have any questions. It's best to refrain from asking questions about salary and fringe benefits until you are actually offered a position. Consider asking questions centered on the following topics:

- Programs, textbooks, and supplementary materials currently used in the building/classroom
- Availability of technology in the classroom
- Number of other professionals in your grade level/department
- Paraprofessional support for your students
- Assistive technology currently used in the classroom/program
- Counseling, guidance, social work personnel and services
- Opportunities for staff development
- Reason the position is available (resignation, newly created position, retirement, etc.)
- Associated responsibilities with open position (after-school programs, clubs, coaching, tutoring, committees, etc.)
- Teacher mentoring program for beginning teachers
- Parent and community support for school programs

MN Education Job Fair

Tips to Prepare for the Fair

The MN Education Job Fair is an excellent networking opportunity which allows you to meet with many school district recruiters/employers in one day while gathering information to inform your job search. To ensure your success, you must be prepared.

Preparing for the Fair:

- Review the list of participating districts (link to www.mcucsa.org/mnedfair). Districts will continue to register up to a day before the job fair.
- Register for the fair with the UST career office. You must be pre-registered to attend!
<http://www.stthomas.edu/careerdevelopment/edfair/>
- Create a strong resume with an emphasis on all teaching related experiences. Have it reviewed by your career center.
- Research your priority districts online and take notes to help you be prepared the day of the fair. Know their mission, students they serve, curriculum, and prepare educated questions for recruiters.
- When possible, complete applications for districts of interest *prior* to the fair. Plan ahead, each application can take several hours to complete and may require essays.
- Prepare an elevator speech - a 30 second introduction of who you are and what you are looking for professionally. Practice your elevator speech with others.
- Plan for logistics: Map out how to get to the Minneapolis Convention Center, when to arrive and where to check-in. Make sure you have money for parking and lunch. Visit www.mcucsa.org/mnedfair for directions, parking information, and nearby restaurants.
- Check the MN Education Job Fair website (link) for districts that may be offering information sessions or interviews the day of the fair. Contact the district representatives listed if interested in scheduling an interview. Some recruiters will schedule interviews in advance, while others prefer to schedule them at the job fair.
- Review commonly asked teacher interview questions and formulate responses.
- Dress professionally. Be sure you have appropriate attire such as a suit, dress pants/skirt and blazer, or button down collared shirt. Wear comfortable, polished shoes. Have a neat and appropriate hair cut. You want to look great!
- Gather all necessary materials:
 - Multiple copies of your resume
 - Writing pad/folio to carry resumes, extra paper, and a pen
 - List of your priority districts with research notes gathered on each

At the Fair: General Tips:

- Arrive early and plan to spend the day at the fair. Some employers will conduct interviews until 5pm.
- Check in at career service table. There, you will receive a name tag and district list/map.
- Create a strategy to visit your priority districts. Do not visit one of your top three districts first. This will allow you to practice before meeting with your most important districts.
- Use the student lounge. Plan breaks into your schedule to allow you to rest, keep your materials organized, and check your appearance.
- Expect long lines. Be strategic. If the line of one of your priority districts is long, move onto the next one and come back.
- Consider attending district presentations to break up your day and learn about job search tips.

Contact With the Recruiters:

- Review your district notes before approaching the table.
- Respect others privacy as they complete their contact.
- Use a firm handshake, good eye contact, and be friendly.
- Greet employers with your 30 second elevator speech: share your educational/professional background and what interests you in the district, then inquire about open positions.
- Offer your resume.
- Be flexible with districts that do not have openings in your area of specialty at the time of the job fair. A position may open in a few weeks or over the summer.
- Always thank the recruiter for his/her time and ask for a business card or contact information.
- Jot down notes about the specifics of your conversation. This will help you write a thank you note later.

Interviewing at the Fair:

- Any interviews taking place at the fair will be short - 20-30 minutes. Be sure to present your most important information, focus on your strengths and accomplishments.
- Respond truthfully, while remaining positive. For example, "I have not had the opportunity to...but in a similar situation I would..."
- Be prepared with questions to ask the recruiter. Remember, this is your chance to interview them as well as show that you have done your research on the district. Asking about the hiring process and timeline is particularly useful.
- Schedule your interviews to allow for time to reflect on the interview: What went well? What do you wish you had said? What questions do you still have? Jot down a few notes.
- Don't be discouraged if you are not offered a position - most recruiters use the fair as an initial screening. You will likely attend a second interview before hearing of an offer.
- If you ARE presented with an offer, don't feel pressured to respond that day. Thank them for the offer and tell them you would like to have some time to consider.
- Always ask for the interviewer's business card and contact information.

After the Fair:

- Organize all the materials collected at the fair.
- Follow-up with thank you notes within 24-48 hours.
- Keep accurate records of all contacts to ease follow-up communication.

Education Job Fair Floor Strategy Worksheet

- **School Name** (Sort the School districts you researched into priority rank order with an A-B-C preference)
- "A" List
-
-
- "B" LIST
-
-
- "C" LIST
-
-
- **Strategy for floor time:** (Think about when you will arrive and which school district you want to visit early or later in the day.)
- 10:00 -- 10:30
-
- 10:00 - 10:30
-
- 10:30 - 11:00
-
- 11:00 - 11:30
-
- 11:30 - NOON
-
- Noon - 12:30
-
- 12:30 - 1:00
-
- 1:00 - 1:30
-
- 1:30 - 2:00
-
- 2:00 - 2:30
-
- 2:30 - 3:00
-