The mission of the UTPA is to recruit, welcome, encourage and sustain a network of comprehensively trained teacher advocates who believe in equity for all learners and who serve the diverse communities of OKCPS.

1. What is the Urban Teacher Preparation Academy (UTPA)?

The Urban Teacher Preparation Academy consists of current students who have completed a considerable portion of their study and are interested in teaching in high need schools in Oklahoma City Public Schools. UTPA offers the following advantages for student teachers:

- A unique track for teacher preparation that prepares candidates for work in urban environments
- 16 Week student teaching experience in a specially selected OKCPS classroom
- Professional development and mentoring
- Ongoing support during first three years of teaching
- Tuition waivers and scholarship opportunities
- Financial stipends from the OKCPS Foundation for each active semester in the program through Year 3 of teaching.

2. What are the guiding concepts for UTPA?

UTPA has three central guiding principles

I. Embrace diversity and become practitioners of culturally responsive pedagogy.
II. Understand issues of equity relevant to public schooling in the OKC area and advocate for change.
III. Develop strong teacher leaders who become agents of change in their OKCPS school community.

3. What does urban mean?

UTPA only places candidates into Oklahoma City Public Schools classrooms and prepares them for full time employment in the district. Demographically, we seek to place our teacher candidates in education settings that comprise a 25% or greater minority population, a free/reduced lunch of 40% or greater, and at least a 10% English Language Learners population. All of the OKCPS public schools meet this criteria.

4. What do you look for in a strong UTPA candidate?

Below are some of the areas that are considered when looking for UTPA candidates:

- Passion and commitment to urban education
- Consistent quality scholarship
- An interest in issues surrounding educational justice
- Professionalism
- High expectations
What are the deadlines for entering the UTPA program?

The deadline for fall application is October 1 and late, spring application is March 1st. The application and application instructions can be found on the UCO UTPA website. Applicants must be admitted to Teacher Education and on track to student teach in the fall following their application semester. The best time to apply is the semester that you apply to student teach.

What prerequisites do I need before I enter the program?

Applicants must be admitted to Teacher Education and on track to student teach in the Fall following their application semester.

How long does it take to go through the program?

UTPA is a 16-week (traditional) student teaching experience. Program members will participate in UTPA activities in the spring prior to student teaching, during their student teaching semester and for their first three years of their employment in OKCPS.

Is financial aid available?

Individuals that are accepted to the UTPA are eligible to receive tuition waivers, scholarships and stipends through the UTPA program. The amount is dependent on current funding of the program.

Do you help with job placement?

Yes!! Upon successful completion of the UTPA, UCO will recommend candidates to the district for employment. OKCPS is committed to the UTPA and gives recruitment preference to UTPA candidates.

For more information at UCO contact

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