

**College of Education and Human Services
Educator Certification and Academic Services**



**Education Preparation Program
Handbook**

2021-2022

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dear Teacher Education Candidate:

The wise decision you have made to pursue your teacher certification in the Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services at Texas A&M University-Commerce will open many doors for you. The Educator Preparation Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce has enjoyed a reputation of excellence in preparing educators since its inception, with the establishment of the East Texas Normal College in 1889. The College of Education continues to honor our heritage of distinction in being recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a Doctoral Research University, leader in field-based internship/residency district partnerships, and the recipient of many awards at the national, state, and local level. Your choice to join the Texas A&M University-Commerce EPP will serve you well.

Looking forward, you have a great future filled with many opportunities. One of the most important will be impacting the life of a student. Most likely a teacher made a difference in your life; a teacher that saw something special in you. One that encouraged you to develop your unique gift and planted a childhood memory that continues to bring a smile when reminiscing about your days in school. This teacher was someone whom you felt a connection. As a student, we remember our teachers!

Thank you for your commitment to becoming a teacher, dedicating yourself to course work, and a program designed to reach the goal of effective teaching for maximum classroom achievement. The majority of teacher certification applicants have previously made their mark in a successful career. The passion to become an effective teacher became the driving force for this career choice. We welcome you and look forward to serving you with your quest to become a professional educator.

Congratulations on your decision to become a teacher!

Best wishes,

Tracey Stedman

Tracey Stedman
Alternative Certification Program Coordinator

College of Education and Human Services Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services

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Graduate Alternative Certification & Post-Baccalaureate Alternative Certification Program Coordinator
Tracey Stedman

Contact Information

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Texas A&M University-Commerce College of Education and Human Services

Vision and Mission Statement

The Texas A&M University-Commerce Vision:

Texas A&M University-Commerce, as a part of the Texas A&M family of universities, has become the university of choice for those seeking a higher education in Northeast Texas and beyond. Our university will provide traditional learning opportunities through existing and emerging programs that set high expectations and goals for student, faculty, and staff. The University provides a sense of community through a nurturing environment for all individuals, maximizing learning, career, and personal development. Texas A&M University-Commerce, is an environment in which students, faculty, staff, and community are engaged in the pursuit of excellence.

The Texas A&M University-Commerce Mission:

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides a personal educational experience for a diverse community of life-long learners. Our purpose is to discover and disseminate knowledge for leadership and service in an interconnected and dynamic world. Our challenge is to nurture partnerships for the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic vitality of Texas and beyond.

The College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) Vision:

The College of Education & Human Services will be recognized nationally for our excellence in practice, programs, research, and services.

The College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) Mission:

The College of Education and Human Services promotes and enhances the development of researchers, professional practitioners, and leaders through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

Educator Certification and Academic Services Values

- Academic excellence through critical and reflective thinking
- Life-long learning
- Collaboration and shared decision making
- Innovation and openness to new ideas, diversity, and change
- Integrity, responsibility, morals, and ethical behavior
- Service that enriches the community and state of Texas

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

The preparation of teachers and other educational leaders is the goal of The Educator Preparation Program of Texas A&M University-Commerce. The Alternative Certification Advisory Committee consisting of university faculty, public school teachers and administrators, and business men and women serves as a directorial force for program guidelines which include such areas as admission and retention requirements, curriculum, and program design.

The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) is standards-based, learner-centered, and delivered through a collaborative classroom practicum experience. Technology skills and responsiveness to diversity, including ESL and students with special needs, are integral parts of the program. As with all teacher preparation in Texas, each program completer has an academic specialization, grade level, and a common core curriculum as a basis for the professional education sequence. Recommendation for certification is completed through the Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services. Once all requirements are completed (including all required tests, course work, and fees paid) you will apply to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for your Standard Texas Teaching Certificate.

Program Accreditations

Accountability System for Educator Preparation All educator preparation programs in the COEHS are accredited by the State of Texas. The Educator Preparation Program takes pride in the high over-all initial pass rate maintained by individuals completing the Texas A&M University-Commerce certification program

National Report Card – Title II

The Educator Preparation Program maintains a high pass rate on all state required assessments in basic skills, professional knowledge/pedagogy, academic content area, and/or teaching special populations.

Teacher Certification in Texas

In order to become a certified teacher in Texas through our Teacher Certification program, an individual must:

- Demonstrate competency in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics
- Have previously earned a bachelor's degree with a 2.75 GPA or higher
- Complete an approved educator certification program with or without earning a master's degree
- Complete a paid 1-year internship or an unpaid 16-week clinical/student teaching assignment
- Pass state certification examinations in both content and pedagogy
- Apply to Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Be recommended by the certification program or entity

Necessary Personal Skills of an Educator

Patience-Today's generation have been raised on technology and often lack social skills and the ability to focus for long periods of time. Having one, or more than one, distracted student can cause havoc in the classroom, no matter the age. It is important for the teacher to remain patient and develop ways to keep all students engaged.

Adaptability- Students learn in different ways, and some lessons need unique teaching tools. Good teachers know how to adapt their lesson plan to their students, so that all students learn optimally. This trait can take some experience and practice in a classroom setting, so give it time.

Imagination - Whether you teach kindergarten or high school, nothing is a more effective tool than using your imagination to create new and interesting ways for your students to learn. You may be inspired by the work of another teacher, mentor or a TV commercial - it doesn't matter. All that matters is that you take the initiative to find new ways for your students to learn the material.

Teamwork- Teachers could have a difficult time without establishing a solid networking system. Utilize your veteran teachers, department heads, principals and support staff as a sounding board for support. Your best connection at your school is always your custodial staff! By working as a team, you develop an environment conducive to learning.

Risk Taking - Sometimes to get the big reward, you may need to take a risk. Being a teacher is about finding a way to get students to learn, and sometimes these new learning methods can be risky. Stick to it and you'll soon find that others are following your teaching example.

Constant Learning - You can never know too much when you are a teacher, especially when it comes to the best way to teach your students. Great teachers are constantly looking for ways to expand their horizons with courses, workshops, journals and seminars. Make sure you don't become stagnant. Take courses or professional development to keep the content fresh in your mind.

Communication - All teachers need good oral and written communication skills. Clear, concise, and to the point - the better your communication skills are, the easier your lessons will be. There are many different types of classes available to teachers who desire to improve their skills.

Mentoring -It is important for new teachers to establish a mentor for their first couple of years. This mentor should be a seasoned teacher who is an encourager, a sounding board and will help you progress and suggest improvements.

Leadership - One of the most important skills each teacher must possess is leadership. Your students need someone to guide them, to be in charge, and set the tone of the class. Leadership is not always a natural skill and may take time to develop. Observe well-respected teachers, attend leadership workshops and talk to your mentor to hone this skill.

Fees**

Application to Graduate School		\$50.00
Application to Educator Preparation Program		\$50.00
TX PACT Test Registration Fee		\$106.00
TExES Content Test Registration Fee	Per test	\$118.00
Pedagogy & Responsibilities Test (PPR)		\$118.00
Standard of Teaching Reading Test*		\$136.00
Fingerprinting Fee		\$50.25
TEA Assessment Fee		\$35.00
Internship Teaching Fee OR	2 semesters	\$2,200.00
Clinical/Student Teaching Fee	1 semester	\$1,100.00
Additional Semesters if needed		\$1,100.00
Initial Texas Standard Teacher Certificate		\$78.00
Intern or Probationary Certificate	If applicable	\$78.00
Graduation Application Fee	If applicable	\$40.00
**Tuition/Fees--dependent on residency and how many classes taken in a semester, online classes have a \$50 per credit hour fee		Based on current 2021-2022 tuition rates/fees

***Required for students in the following content areas: EC-6 Core, 4-8 Core, 4-8 ELAR, 4-8 ELAR/Social Studies**

****May change without prior notice**

Pre-Admission Content Test (TX PACT)

Before applying to either program you must pass the TX PACT test. The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) allows degreed individuals who have not been enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) to take Pre-Admissions Content Tests (TX PACT) to demonstrate content proficiency for possible admission into an EPP. Taking TX PACT alone does not ensure admittance into a program. EPPs may have additional admission requirements.

You do not need EPP approval to register and take a TX PACT test.

TX PACT participants may not register to take Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) examinations without EPP approval.

You will be able to register for the TX PACT on the Pearson website at <http://www.tx.nesinc.com/>

Click on “Register” at the top of the page and review the step by step guide. You will need a TEA ID number to register.

Most TX PACT have the same name as what you are pursuing (4-8 Core, 7-12 Science, etc) but the TX PACT for EC-6 Core is called Essential Academic Skills and is test #700.

Before the day of the test, you should read and be familiar with all policies and procedures in the Registration Bulletin for the test you are planning to take. Details about acceptable identification documents are in the Registration Bulletins and on the website. Note: Without the required identification documents, you will not be admitted to the test center and no refund will be approved. **You must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to test time.**

Your scores will not be assigned to a program. Your scores will be uploaded into your TEA Educator Profile so programs can verify that you passed the TX PACT examination.

Please contact the alternative certification program when TX PACT scores are posted. You may contact Tracey.Stedman@tamuc.edu or 903-886-5671.

Background Checks

Pursuant to the Texas Education code (TEC) 22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and pursuant to the TEC, 22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching.

Per TAC Title 19, section 249.16 Pursuant to the Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Chapter 53, and the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21, Subchapter B, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may suspend or revoke an existing valid certificate, deny an applicant a certificate, bar a person from being assessed or examined for a certificate, or take other disciplinary action because of a person's conviction of a felony or misdemeanor or certain other criminal history.

If you feel that you have the potential to be ineligible because you have been convicted of an offense, it is in your best interest to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation.

1. What is a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation?

A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE) is an evaluation of eligibility for a Texas educator certificate based on your self-reported criminal history. As a service to prospective candidates, TEA staff may perform an evaluation for a non-refundable fee of \$50. The evaluation is voluntary and non-binding.

During the process, agency staff will obtain your name-based Texas criminal history information from the Texas Department of Public Safety. Once the evaluation is complete, TEA staff will send you an evaluation letter advising of your potential eligibility for educator certification. The determination of eligibility is based in part on the information you provide to the agency. Therefore, failure to provide complete and accurate information may result in an inaccurate criminal history evaluation. Agency staff performs the evaluations under the authority of the Texas Occupations Code §53.102 and Texas Administrative Code 19 Ch. 227.

You may request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation **only if**:

- You are enrolled or planning to enroll in an educator preparation program **or** you are planning to take a certification exam for initial educator certification, **and**
- You have reason to believe that you may be ineligible for educator certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

Certification Areas for TAMUC EPP

Early Childhood – 6th Grade

- Core Subject EC-6 with STR

4th Grade – 8th Grade

- Core subject 4-8 with STR
- 4-8 English Language Arts & Reading with STR
- 4-8 English Language Arts & Reading/Social Studies with STR
- 4-8 Mathematics
- 4-8 Mathematics/Science
- 4-8 Science
- 4-8 Social Studies

8th Grade – 12th Grade

- 8-12 Hospitality, Nutrition & Food Sciences (contact Keith Frost) *
- 8-12 Human Development & Family Studies (contact Keith Frost) *

7th Grade – 12th Grade

- 7-12 Chemistry
- 7-12 English Language Arts Reading
- 7-12 History
- 7-12 Journalism
- 7-12 Life Science
- 7-12 Mathematics
- 7-12 Physics/Mathematics
- 7-12 Science (Composite)
- 7-12 Social Studies (Composite)
- 7-12 Speech

6th Grade – 12th Grade

- 6-12 Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources (contact Keith Frost) *
- 6-12 Family & Consumer Science (contact Keith Frost) *
- 6-12 Health Science (contact Tracey Stedman) *
- 6-12 Marketing (contact Tracey Stedman) *
- 6-12 Math/Physical Science/Engineering
- 6-12 Physical Science
- 6-12 Technology Education (contact Tracey Stedman) *
- 6-12 Trades & Industry (contact Tracey Stedman) *

All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade)

- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) Art
- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) Health
- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) LOTE - French
- All Level (Early Childhood - 12th Grade) LOTE - Spanish
- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) Music
- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) Physical Education
- All Level (Early Childhood - 12th Grade) Special Education
- All Level (Early Childhood – 12th Grade) Theatre

Vocational Certificates

- * For more details contact Keith.Frost@tamuc.edu
- *For more details on Trade & Industrial (T&I) Education and Career and Technology, contact Tracey.Stedman@tamuc.edu.

Supplemental Certificates**

- Bilingual Education - Spanish
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Gifted & Talented
- Special Education

**** These certificates only cover the grade level and content areas of the areas you have standard certifications.**

Highlighted areas are part of Career and Technical Education which has additional requirements. Please see https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Career_and_Technical_Education/ for additional requirements.

Alternative Certification Program Admission's Process

Texas A&M University-Commerce

STEP 1: PASS THE PRE-ADMISSION CONTENT TEST (TX PACT)

This is the pre-admission content test for the certification area that the student chooses to become certified and must match your teaching assignment. Students must pass this test prior to admission.

[[PACT registration](#)] (<http://www.tx.nesinc.com>) Test fees are \$106.00.

STEP 2--APPLY AND GAIN ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Complete the online application to the Graduate School at www.applytexas.org and select Educator Certification. A \$50 application fee will be required. The graduate school will also need official copies of transcripts, sent directly from all regionally accredited colleges/universities attended. Transcripts in a sealed envelope directly from the institution are also acceptable.

GPA Requirement

Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) with a minimum of 2.75 overall GPA.

Foreign Transcripts

If you received a Bachelor's degree from outside of the United States then a Foreign Credential Evaluation with a Course-by-Course summary will be required. This is to remain in compliance with TEA to verify a Bachelor's degree and to compute a core GPA. The following is a list of acceptable Foreign Credential Evaluation Services to use:

Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. eval@ece.org
Foreign Credential Services of America <http://foreigncredentials.org>
Global Credential Evaluators, Inc. www.gceus.com
International Academic Credential Evaluator, Inc. www.iacei.net
International Education Research Foundation, Inc. www.ierf.org
Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. www.jsilny.com
World Education Services, Inc. www.wes.org

English Proficiency

- Educators who apply for certification are required to demonstrate English language proficiency by fulfilling one of the following requirements:
 - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, not including US Territories.
 - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree earned at an institution of higher education in a **country outside of the United States approved by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).**

If these requirements are not met, then a passing score on the TOEFL exam must be submitted. Minimum scores needed per TEA: Speaking 24, Listening 22, Reading 22, Writing 21.

Note: Acceptance into the Graduate School does not give automatic admission into the ACP program.

STEP 3--TO GAIN ADMISSION INTO THE ACP PROGRAM

ACP Application

Complete and submit the ACP program application along with your TX PACT test scores and a resume. The application is located here:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/post-baccalaureate-teacher-certification-program/default.aspx>

A \$50 ACP application fee is due when applying. Payments are made using the Educator Certification Marketplace Store:

https://secure.touchnet.com/C20206_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=48&STCATID=6

Applications are processed on a rolling basis. When you are accepted, your start date is the next available semester.

Interview and Essay

Complete an admission interview with an EPP coordinator. At the time of the interview the candidate should submit a 1-page essay titled "What Inspired Me to Become a Teacher". It should be no longer than 1-page and double-spaced. This essay will be used as part of your interview and writing requirement. It will be maintained in your file.

Decision Letter

The EPP coordinator will e-mail either a letter of invitation or a denial letter to the candidate. If it is a letter of invitation, the candidate will sign and return the letter within seven (7) days to complete the admission process. A \$35 TEA Assessment Fee will be required at time of acceptance.

Post-Bacc Alternative Certification Program Admission's Process

Texas A&M University-Commerce

STEP 1: PASS THE PRE-ADMISSION CONTENT TEST (TX PACT)

This is the pre-admission content test for the certification area that the student chooses to become certified and must match your teaching assignment. Students must pass this test prior to admission. ([PACT registration](#)) (<http://www.tx.nesinc.com>) Test fee is \$106.00.

STEP 2--APPLY AND GAIN ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Complete the [Apply Texas](#) (www.applytexas.org) Graduate School application for Texas A&M University-Commerce Graduate School and select one of the following**:

1. Curriculum and Instruction (CINS), MS
2. Secondary Education (SED), MS
3. Early Childhood Education (ECE), MS
4. Special Education (SPED), MS

There will be a question at the end of the application asking if you want to pursue a teaching certification—check yes. A \$50 admission fee is required at the time of application. The graduate school will also need official copies of transcripts, sent directly from all regionally accredited colleges/universities attended. Additional Graduate School admissions requirements and information is available on their [website](#).

(https://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateAdmissions/default.aspx?_ga=2.111929542.374559545.1569246880-1150166769.1556718063)

**Candidates may seek a masters in any content area; however, the 18 hours of required classes for teacher certification may not be available as electives in a non-education related field.

Note: Acceptance into the Graduate School does not give automatic admission into the PBTC program.

GPA Requirement

Applicants must have completed their Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) with a minimum of 2.75 overall GPA.

Foreign Transcripts

If you received a Bachelor's degree from outside of the United States then a Foreign Credential Evaluation with a Course-by-Course summary will be required. This is to remain in compliance with TEA to verify a Bachelor's degree and to compute a core GPA. The following is a list of acceptable Foreign Credential Evaluation Services to use:

Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. eval@ece.org

Foreign Credential Services of America <http://foreigncredentials.org>

Global Credential Evaluators, Inc. www.gceus.com

International Academic Credential Evaluator, Inc. www.iacei.net

International Education Research Foundation, Inc. www.ierf.org

Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. www.jsilny.com

World Education Services, Inc. www.wes.org

English Proficiency

- Educators who apply for certification are required to demonstrate English language proficiency by fulfilling one of the following requirements:
 - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, not including US Territories.
 - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree earned at an institution of higher education in a **country outside of the United States approved by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).**

If these requirements are not met, then a passing score on the TOEFL exam must be submitted. Minimum scores needed per TEA: Speaking 24, Listening 22, Reading 22, Writing 21.

STEP 3--TO GAIN ADMISSION INTO THE PBAC PROGRAM

PBAC Application

Complete and submit the PBAC program application along with your TX PACT test scores and a resume. The application is located at this link:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/alternativecertification/AMTRAC%20application/default.aspx>

A \$50 ACP application fee is due when applying. Payments are made using the Educator Certification Marketplace Store:

https://secure.touchnet.com/C20206_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=48&STCATID=6

Applications are processed on a rolling basis. When you are accepted, your start date is the next available semester.

Interview and Essay

Complete an admission interview with an EPP coordinator. At the time of the interview the candidate should submit a 1-page essay titled "What Inspired Me to Become a Teacher". It should be no longer than 1-page and double-spaced. This essay will be used as part of your interview and writing requirement. It will be maintained in your file.

Decision Letter

The EPP coordinator will e-mail either a letter of invitation or a denial letter to the candidate. If it is a letter of invitation, the candidate will sign and return the letter within seven (7) days to complete the admission process. A \$35 TEA Assessment Fee will be required at time of acceptance.

Military Personnel

Military service members or military veteran candidates that have verified military service, training, or education directly related to the certificate being sought, may have that military service, training or education reviewed by an EPP to see if it satisfies any of the educator certification requirements.

Non-Military

Candidates who are not military service members or military veterans may substitute prior or ongoing service, training, or education, provided that the experience, education, or training is not also counted as a part of the internship, clinical teaching, or practicum requirements, was provided by an approved EPP or an accredited institution of higher education within the past five (5) years, and is directly related to the certificate being sought.

Registering for Courses

After you have received acceptance into the ACP or the PBACP, you may register for classes. Course availability may be viewed on the university web site. To register for coursework the candidate will need to log into their myLeo account on the university home page. Every candidate is assigned a LEO email address that will need to be accessed on a regular basis. All correspondence from your eCollege instructors is through the LEO address.

Note: Please contact your advisor (see list below), if seeking a master's degree, if you have questions about what classes to take and to obtain a degree plan. If you are in the Alternative Certification Program, the first class you will register for is EDCI 514, if available. Please contact the office for a certification plan. If you have any questions you can call the Teacher Certification office at (903) 886-5671.

Alternative Certification: Tracey Stedman, tracey.stedman@tamuc.edu, 903-886-5671

Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Becky Sinclair, becky.sinclair@tamuc.edu, 903-886-5537

Early Childhood: Dr. Nicole Pearce, nicole.pearce@tamuc.edu, 214-886-5525

Secondary Education: Dr. Sherri Colby, sherri.colby@tamuc.edu, 903-886-5537

Special Education: Dr. Beth Jones, beth.jones@tamuc.edu, 903-886-5934

PAYMENT OF CLASSES - One half of the tuition is paid prior to the first day of class.

FINANCIAL AID—The candidate applies for financial aid through the financial aid office on campus. The office may be accessed at <http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/tuitionCosts/financialAidandScholarships/default.aspx> Contact the financial aid office to see if you are eligible.

Observation Hours/Course Work/Content & PPR Test

Observation - 30 hours of early field experience in the content area/grade level you are pursuing is required prior to a teaching assignment. This experience involves interactive and reflective observation of early childhood through 12th (EC-12) grade students, teachers, and faculty/staff members engaging in educational activities in a school setting and verified through a log sheet and reflection statement. Once admitted to the EPP you will be issued a letter of introduction you may use to secure a placement in the district of your choice. When completed, the candidate will then submit the log sheet and reflection statement to the Teacher Certification office.

Course Work – The State requires 150 hours of training be completed prior to a teaching assignment. For A&M-Commerce this requires you complete a minimum of 4 of our required teacher certification courses.

Note: Required classes include: EDCI 514, EDCI 517, EDCI 519, ECE 566 (EC-6) or ETEC 524 (4-8 & 7-12), RDG 516, EDCI 515 (taken in conjunction with student teaching)

TEXES CONTENT TEST--Once you begin taking your alternative certification classes you may seek approval for your TExES content exam. A passing score on the TExES content exam is required before you can begin your teaching assignment.

NOTE: Teacher candidates seeking certification in EC-6 Core, 4-8 Core, ELAR 4-8 and ELAR/SS 4-8 will be required to pass the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) exam in addition to their TExES content exam. A passing score on the STR exam is required before you can begin your teaching assignment.

Eligibility for Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Test (PPR) -- Approval from EPP staff after successful completion of EDCI 514 plus a minimum of 3 other certification courses (4 total) listed on your certification plan. You must have a minimum of 3.0 on all coursework with no grade below a B.

Teaching Experience Options

Paid One-Year Internship VS Unpaid 16-week Clinical/Student Teaching

The alternative certification program course work is offered completely online. This allows candidates to complete the teaching assignment in an accredited Texas Education Agency (TEA) public school district or accredited private school anywhere in Texas provided a credentialed University Field supervisor is available. If the requested school is outside a 2-hour driving radius of Commerce, then we must be able to secure a university field supervisor before the school can be approved. Per TAC Chapter 228 a candidate's teaching experience shall not take place in a setting where the candidate is related by blood or by marriage to the field supervisor or mentor. TAMUC takes that a step further that the candidate cannot be related to an administrator at the school or to a teacher on the same grade level team.

Once your teaching experience begins, a partnership is formed between the program and your school district. You will benefit from intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support from a university field supervisor and school district mentor teacher. There are two options for completing your teaching experience:

1. **A year-long paid internship** where you are employed on an intern or probationary certificate as the "teacher of record" in your certification area. You must teach no less than an average of four hours a day in the area in which you are pursuing certification. This type of internship is dependent upon the teacher candidate securing this kind of placement, and it is the sole responsibility of the candidate to find an acceptable position.

OR

2. **A one-semester (16-week) unpaid clinical/student teaching** placement where you are assigned to a mentor teacher's classroom. This is a full day, five days per week, 16-week commitment. The placement for student teaching will be determined by the alternative certification program staff. Completion of a separate student teaching application is required. Application deadline is April 15th for the Fall Semester and October 15th for the Spring Semester.

Support Staff

Once placed in a teaching experience assignment, the program appoints a university field supervisor who provides constructive feedback on a regular basis after conducting classroom observations. A mentor teacher, one who is recognized as a master teacher, is appointed by the district to work with you and provide support. Your mentor serves as a professional model for you to follow and is the one to whom you turn for advice and guidance on a daily basis. The principal also plays an active role in supervising your professional development and may conduct evaluations of your teaching performance. The university field supervisor, mentor and principal make up your Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) whose purpose is to provide support during your teaching experience and lead to your success in the classroom. You will also have an EPP coordinator who will be checking in with you and your mentor.

NOTE: During your teaching experience, concurrent enrollment in EDCI 515 at Texas A&M University-Commerce is required

Paid One-Year Internship

Career Development is a great resource for potential employment opportunities, resume review or interview process and may be contacted by telephone at 903-468-3223 or by website:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/CampusLife/CampusServices/careerDevelopment>

The Texas Education Agency provides a Statewide School District Job Search listing employment opportunities in Texas located here <https://tea.texas.gov/TexasEducators/> or <https://teacherjobnet.org/>.

Typically, a school district will not employ a non-certified teacher unless they are unable to secure a certified teacher and then the candidate has to have met content proficiency in their content area and formally admitted to a TEA recognized Educator Preparation Program. The alternative certification program considers a candidate content and pedagogy proficient when a candidate passes a content area TExES in the area he or she is seeking a teaching position and passes the PPR exam. The content proficiency is indicated on the candidate's certification plan.

Once a candidate has gained employment, the EPP advisor will supply a Statement of Eligibility (SOE) to the candidate to take to the ISD's HR department to fill out. The candidate will then return the SOE to the EPP advisor. Once the SOE has been returned, the candidate can then apply for an intern or probationary certificate.

Probationary Certificate Application Process

Please read all requirements and procedures listed below **prior** to accessing the TEA web page.

NOTE: This should be done once the EPP has contacted the candidate with information on the proper certificate to apply.

Application Procedures:

Log into your TEAL account via the TEA webpage <https://tea.texas.gov/>. You should have an account from your TExES exams.

Once you are logged in, click **APPLICATIONS** and then **INTERN** or **PROBATIONARY CERTIFICATE TEXAS PROGRAM** (Intern if you have not passed the PPR exam, Probationary if you have passed your PPR exam). Follow directions to apply for certificate. Choose Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Pay required fees to TEA. The cost of the certificate is \$78.

Finger printing is \$50.25 UNLESS:

1. You have an aide certificate with TEA.
2. You have been fingerprinted by a district as a substitute.

If you have already completed the fingerprinting process, your account will show that you need to pay for fingerprints but **DO NOT PAY**. A few days after applying, the fingerprints that you have completed will attach to your application and they will show as being paid. Go to your email account and find the email with an attachment from TEA. Open and print your Fastpass. Then complete all information in ink.

Continue to the instructions below to schedule an appointment.

- Go to www.L1enrollment.com
- Click "Texas"
- On the next screen choose ONLINE SCHEDULING
- Select BEGIN REGISTRATION
- Enter First and Last Name
- Select "Education" in application I II
- The next screen will ask for your ORI number from your FAST fingerprinting application. This number includes TX for Texas.
- The next screen will ask if you are being printed for a volunteer position; select "No"
- The next screen will ask you to enter your Agency Assigned Applicant Number (begins with SB). This number is also located on your FASTPASS form. Please enter it as it appears on your FASTPASS.
- Choose your location; ENTER A ZIP CODE. Locations near this zip code will appear for your selection. Choose a location and follow the instructions.

NOTE: Intern Certificate is only good for one year. Probationary certificates may be renewed for a second year. To renew your probationary certificate for another year you must submit a valid TEA accredited school teaching contract or school document outlining your teaching assignment and remain in good standing with your EPP. You may teach on a probationary certificate for a maximum of 2 years.

NOTE: Any student who does not complete ALL requirements for their Standard Texas Teaching Certificate and continues to teach on a probationary certificate, TEA requires continued supervision. Along with continued supervision, additional fees are required (\$1100.00 per semester).

Unpaid 16-Week Clinical/Student Teaching

Student Teaching Application Process

Should you choose not to seek an employed position, or you are not able to secure a paid position, you may opt to complete an unpaid clinical/student teaching assignment. You will be required to student teach for one full semester. This will be a full day commitment, five days per week for 16 weeks (80 days). The alternative certification program staff along with the ISD will determine placement, but every attempt will be made to place you in the district of your choice. Application deadline is April 15th for the Fall Semester and October 15th for the Spring Semester.

To apply for student teaching, please submit the following documents:

1. Completed application found at this link
<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/alternativecertification/documents/PBtCstudentTeachingApplication.pdf>
2. One copy of autobiography. Instructions found here
<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/documents/Autobiography.pdf>
3. Signed commitment contract. Print and complete at this link
<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/alternativecertification/documents/studentInternCommitmentContract2018.pdf>
4. Criminal history background found here
<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/FieldBasedUndergraduateProgram/traditional-student-teaching-program-home/documents/CriminalBackgroundCheckForm.pdf>
5. DPS Computerized Criminal History Verification form found here
<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/FieldBasedUndergraduateProgram/documents/criminalBackground/DPSgenericForm.pdf> **Some ISD's will have their own criminal background form or process. Please view the ISD website for information about their CHBC form or teaching placement requirements.
6. Program Fee Authorization Contract—will be provided at time of application.

Mail to:

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Tracey Stedman, Teacher Certification Program
P O Box 3011
Commerce, TX 75429-3011

OR fax to: 903-886-5156 OR scan and e-mail to Tracey.Stedman@tamuc.edu

Performance-based Academic Coaching Team (PACT)

NOTE: This is not the same as the TExES registration test site

The PACT system is designed to help you, the new teacher. Being on the front line can be intimidating and lonely which makes having immediate support and guidance valuable to you as you begin your teaching career. You will be able to access immediate teacher helps, teaching resources, teaching tools, chat rooms, discussion boards, and an electronic mentor. The e-Mentors are hand selected experienced teachers. They are trained and have signed a confidentiality form stating that no information about individual students will be released.

Explore the site. Post a question. Read our Quick Helps. Because the system needs to fit the needs of you, the new teacher, it will be continually upgraded with new materials based on reflections and feedback you give us. Please provide that feedback when prompted so modifications can be made.

You will be receiving an email inviting you to the site. Please follow those directions.

Performance-based Academic Coaching Team Website: <https://pact.tarleton.edu/pact/>

Completion of Paid 1-year Internship

In order to successfully complete your chosen internship, you must remain employed in an acceptable position during the duration of your internship. If at any time you are released from your position by your school district, or you resign from your position, you will be dismissed from the Teacher Education Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce. The only exception is if during a paid internship your resignation is amicable between you and your school district, and you immediately (within 7 days) assume an acceptable paid position and successfully complete internship. This exception also requires a statement of agreement by your mentor teacher and university field supervisor, stating that they believe that you have been making satisfactory progress in teaching and that you should be allowed to continue working in the profession.

Your successful completion of internship will be graded on a successful (S) /unsuccessful (U) basis. Members of your Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will make the determination based on your performance at the conclusion of your internship. Your ILT will be comprised of a university field supervisor, mentor and principal. Your internship handbook will serve as a guide for all members of the ILT. If the decision is made that you have failed to successfully complete internship, you will be dismissed from the program with the option to appeal. The only exception is if your ILT recommends that you continue with additional training. If this occurs, you will be required to obtain an extension of your probationary certificate for another year and pay all fees associated with an additional internship (\$1100 per semester). In addition, a growth plan will be initiated and you may be required to complete additional professional development or content related training/coursework.

Completion of Unpaid 16-week Clinical/Student Teaching

In order to successfully complete your clinical/student teaching, you must remain in your assigned classroom during the duration of your clinical/student teaching. If at any time you change classrooms without conversing with the Teacher Certification program, change classrooms to an area not in your content area or are dismissed from clinical/student teaching by your school, you will be dismissed from the Teacher Education Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Your successful completion of clinical/student teaching will be graded on a successful (S) /unsuccessful (U) basis. Members of your Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will make the determination based on your performance at the conclusion of your clinical/student teaching. Your ILT will be comprised of a university field supervisor, mentor and principal. Your clinical/student teaching handbook will serve as a guide for all members of the ILT. If the decision is made that you have failed to successfully complete clinical/student teaching, you will be dismissed from the program with the option to appeal. The only exception is if your ILT recommends that you must repeat all or part of the clinical/student teaching experience. If this occurs, you will be required to reapply for clinical/student teaching and pay all fees associated with an additional clinical/student teaching assignment (\$1100 per semester). In addition, a growth plan will be initiated and you may be required to complete additional professional development or content related training/coursework.

NOTE: see Retention and Due Process (page 33) for appealing a decision.

FITNESS TO TEACH (FTT) POLICY

Successful teaching requires a combination of both academic and interpersonal skills. Although interpersonal skills do not ensure the success of a teacher, the lack of them will ensure failure, regardless of how academically capable the teacher is.

The Texas Educator Agency (TEA) specifies that institutions preparing educators have the responsibility to certify the knowledge and skills of its teacher candidates. To that end, a committee composed of representatives from departments across the College of Education & Human Development developed the Fitness to Teach Policy.

Fitness to Teach Policy:

In addition to curriculum and testing requirements addressed in the Educator Preparation Handbook, all Alternative Certification teacher candidates will be screened throughout their program according to the criteria addressed in this policy, including dispositions for teaching. Dispositions for teaching are defined as those professional attitudes, values, and beliefs expected of a professional educator. As a professional program, the Alternative Certification Program reserves the right to recommend or not recommend teacher candidates for certification. If all criteria are not met satisfactorily, teacher candidates may be denied full acceptance into the Teacher Certification Program and/or denied the opportunity to student teach. Without full acceptance into the Alternative Certification Program and successful completion of all course work, field work, and student teaching or internship, the university will not recommend teacher candidates for Texas Teacher Certification. All teacher candidates referred for review are expected to participate in the process. Refusal to participate will not terminate or invalidate the process. Fitness to Teach reviews are internal institutional reviews and are not open to the public, including family members, friends, and other professionals unless specifically requested by the Assistant Dean for Teacher Education.

1. Completed Criminal History Review

In accordance with Texas Education Code 22.083, an examination of each teacher candidate's criminal history will be conducted by the independent school district (ISD) prior to participation in any on-campus activities, including observations or student teaching. Criminal history record information, which includes both conviction and arrest records is obtained. An ISD or other school entity may deny placement of students with a criminal background. The student's clearance for fieldwork is the prerogative of the ISD or participating entity and not Texas A&M University-Commerce. If a student cannot complete course-required field work because of their criminal history, the student will be required to withdraw from the course. The student may retake the course if and when the criminal history changes, allowing them to be cleared by the school district. If the offense is one that will preclude any further field work, the student will be dismissed from the Alternative Certification program.

2. Academic Requirements

a. Teacher candidates attend all classes as required. Preparedness for class and punctuality are expected at all times.

b. Teacher candidates complete course assignments in a professional manner according to the timelines designated by the course instructor.

c. Teacher candidates complete all field experiences in a professional and timely manner as required.

d. The teacher candidate demonstrates honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

3. Communication Skills

The teacher candidate demonstrates written and oral skills expected of an education professional that shows the ability to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

(1) *Written*: Writes clearly, using correct grammar and spelling. Demonstrates professional level skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to adequately complete all written assignments, as specified by faculty.

(2) *Oral*: Communicates effectively with other students, faculty, staff, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates the ability and willingness to listen to others. Demonstrates professional level skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences.

(3) *Electronic Communication*: the teacher candidate refrains from inappropriate communication with a student including electronic communications by cell phone, text message, email, instant message, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat and any other social network communication.

4. Personal and Professional Requirements

a. A teacher candidate does not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

b. Teacher candidates demonstrate interpersonal skills that are required for successful professional teaching. These skills include:

(1) An openness to accept and test the results of unfamiliar ways of teaching

(2) The ability to accept and act upon reasonable criticism

(3) The ability to understand others' perspectives about teaching

(4) The ability to separate personal and professional issues when in the classroom or completing course work

(5) The ability to work cooperatively with parents, teachers, staff, and administrators in school settings and elsewhere

(6) The ability to work productively with classmates in course assigned group projects

(7) The disposition to act always for the benefit of all students

c. The teacher candidate does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with their students, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways.

d. Teacher candidates demonstrate positive personal hygiene habits.

e. Teacher candidates dress appropriately for their professional contexts.

f. Teacher candidates adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

g. Teacher candidates demonstrate professional behavior both in and out of the classroom or school setting.

h. The candidate shall be of good moral character and demonstrate that he or she is worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

5. Cultural and Social Attitudes and Behavior

a. Teacher candidates exhibit respect for superiors, peers, and children and youth in all settings.

b. Teacher candidates understand and appreciate the value of diversity and look beyond self in interactions with others; respect differences of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class, national allegiance, and cultural heritage. Teacher candidates do not impose personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on others.

c. Teacher candidates exhibit acceptance of and provide accommodations for exceptional learners.

d. Teacher candidates are able to work productively with their peers.

e. Teacher candidates are able to speak in a manner appropriate to the context of the classroom.

f. Teacher candidates must display positive attitudes toward faculty, colleagues, and students.

g. Teacher candidates demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents, and students.

6. Physical Skills

The teacher candidate exhibits motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placements, with or without accommodations, as recommended by the Office of Disability Services.

Note:

No otherwise qualified teacher candidate shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the Alternative Certification Program. A teacher candidate with a disability may be protected by Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and be eligible for a reasonable accommodation that will provide an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance.

Any otherwise qualified teacher candidate with a qualified disability who requests a reasonable accommodation must notify the Office of Disability Services and provide documentation as needed. The Office of Disability Services makes recommendations for accommodations.

7. Emotional Dispositions

a. Stress Management

The teacher candidate demonstrates the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. He or she handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

b. Emotional and Mental Capabilities

The teacher candidate uses sound judgment. The teacher candidate demonstrates the emotional and mental health required to function effectively as a teacher.

c. Cognitive Dispositions

(1) Teacher candidates think analytically about educational issues.

(2) Teacher candidates are thoughtfully reflective about their practice.

(3) Teacher candidates are flexible, open to new ideas, and willing and able to modify their beliefs and practices.

(4) Teacher candidates question and test their assumptions about teaching and schooling.

Conditions for Completion of Clinical/Student Teaching or Internship

Successful completion of clinical/student teaching or internship is a condition for meeting teacher certification requirements. If a student fails to receive a recommendation they may appeal to the Alternative Certification Advisory Board. After the appeal, if the student fails to complete the assigned requirements, they will be dismissed from the Alternative Certification Program without the opportunity for a second appeal.

Review of Teacher Candidates

All teacher candidates referred for review are expected to participate in the process. Refusal to participate will not terminate the process. The level of review will depend on factors such as the nature, severity, frequency of the incident or concern. For example, repeated violations may result in immediate Formal Level 2 review. Violations of the TAMUC or host school district's student code of conduct will result in immediate Level 2 Formal Review.

1. Informal Review

An informal review involves a faculty member and a teacher candidate. When a faculty member has concerns about a teacher candidate meeting any of the fitness to teach criteria, the faculty member will:

A. discuss the concerns directly with the teacher candidate and seek to work with the candidate to resolve the difficulties

B. inform the appropriate department head and the dean or their designee of the concern(s) in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the teacher candidate

C. document dates and content of meetings with teacher candidates

If a problem arises in the field, the mentor teacher of the host school district may discuss concerns directly with the TAMUC University Field Supervisor or Alternative Certification Coordinator. The teacher candidate may also be included in this meeting.

2. Formal Review: Level 1

When a faculty member or university field supervisor is sufficiently concerned about a teacher candidate's fitness to teach, he or she will fill out the Fitness to Teach Formal Review Level 1 form. These forms are to be turned in to the Director of Teacher Certification or their designee.

A three-way conference will then be scheduled with the instructor or university field supervisor, the teacher candidate, and the Director or their designee. During this conference, a plan for remediation will be developed. The nature and content of the plan will depend on the specific situation. However, all remediation plans will be stated in measurable, objective terms, include a reasonable timeline, and be signed by all parties involved. If the candidate fails the remediation plan(s) he/she will be placed on Level 2 Formal Review. If the candidate successfully completes the remediation plan, probationary status will be removed. The remediation plan may continue for more than one semester, depending on the individual circumstances.

3. Formal Review: Level 2

If a second incident or concern is reported on the same teacher candidate, the candidate has failed a remediation plan during the Level 1 Review, or the seriousness of the incident or concern warrant it, the Advisory Board will meet to:

A. review the paperwork

B. interview the faculty members or university field supervisor who have instructed the teacher candidate

C. review the teacher candidate's documentation

D. makes a determination regarding the teacher candidate's suitability to continue in the program

The teacher candidate is afforded due process throughout these proceedings. Following a Level 2 review, a letter of appeal may be submitted to the Director of Teacher Certification for consideration. The Advisory Board's decision is final.

RETENTION AND DUE PROCESS

1. While in the Alternative Certification Program, maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 with no grade below a “B”. If your GPA falls below a 3.0 or you receive a grade below a “B”, you must retake that class in the next available semester and receive a “B” or above in order to maintain good standing in our program. If you fail to meet GPA or make a “B” or better in your second attempt, you will be removed from the program and be considered “not in good standing” with the program.
2. Successfully complete courses as outlined on the Alternative Certification plan and or Master’s Degree Plan.
3. Meet and adhere to all requirements listed in the Alternative Certification Handbook.
4. Successfully complete a 1-year paid internship or a 16-week unpaid clinical/student teaching assignment according to program guidelines.

a. Receive recommendation for certification from the mentor teacher, principal and university field supervisor at the end of your 1-year paid internship or 16-week unpaid clinical/student teaching assignment. This recommendation is required prior to the Alternative Certification Program recommending you for a Texas state standard teaching certificate. The University Field Supervisor is responsible for submitting or verifying that the completed form has been submitted to the Alternative Certification Program. Failure to receive a recommendation will result in dismissal from the program and you will be considered “not in good standing” with our program.

Exception: You may be retained in the program, if the mentor teacher, principal, university field supervisor and Educator Preparation Director agree that some or part of the internship or clinical/student teaching assignment must be repeated until standards for a successful internship or clinical/student teaching assignment are met. The teacher candidate will be responsible for additional costs related to added supervision.

b. Maintain employment at all times during a 1-year paid internship, from the beginning of the public school academic calendar year until the end. If at any time you resign, are dismissed, your contract is not renewed, you are discharged or released from the EPP, you withdraw from the EPP or your internship assignment is not in the grade/subject you are pursuing, you will be automatically dismissed from the program and you will be considered “not in good standing”. If you leave the internship due to any of the above reasons, the EPP, the campus or district personnel, and the candidate teacher must inform each other within one calendar week of the candidate teacher’s last day in the assignment and TEA must receive the certificate deactivation request with all related documentation from the EPP within two calendar weeks of the candidate teacher’s last day of the assignment in a format determined by TEA.

Exception: The only exception is if your resignation is amicable between you and your school district, and you immediately (within seven (7) days) assume an acceptable position and successfully complete the one-year internship. This exception also requires a statement of agreement by your mentor teacher

and university supervisor, stating they believe you have been making satisfactory progress in teaching and you should be allowed to continue working in the profession.

c. Maintain attendance at all times during the 16-week unpaid clinical/student teaching assignment. You are expected to complete 16-weeks (80 days) of clinical/student with no more than 3 excused absences. If you exceed 3 absences, you will be expected to make those days up before receiving a recommendation. If at any time you resign or are dismissed from student teaching, you will be automatically dismissed from the program and you will be considered “not in good standing” with our program.

Exception: If the school district assigned for the clinical/student teaching experience offers employment prior to the completion of clinical/student teaching, the Educator Preparation Director will determine requirements for the completion of the now internship.

5. Comply with the Texas Administrative Code, [Chapter 247](#) and exhibit professional behavior at all times. At any time, university or school district personnel may initiate Fitness to Teach (FTT) that will be considered by the Instructional Leadership Team and/or Educator Preparation Director at Texas A&M University-Commerce. These parties, or party, may decide whether the **behavior** violates acceptable professional behavior standards, and whether dismissal is warranted.

6. Enroll, fund and attend all prescribed coursework, training and internship or clinical/student teaching assignment in the designated semesters and at the designated times. This includes being punctual and remaining in attendance for the duration.

NOTE: All fees related to the Alternative Certification Program must be paid in full prior to being recommended for certification.

Exception with regard to attendance: Participation in a required/authorized university activity, verified illness, death in the student’s immediate family, or obligation of a student at a legal proceeding may be considered as excused. All absences must accompany authorization/verification of reason. The above exceptions may be considered when a policy is not apparent.

7. Continue to make yearly progress towards certification. (This may include continuing to successfully complete coursework on the certification plan, passing the required content area or PPR (Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities) TExES tests and completing an approved 1- year paid internship or a 16-week unpaid clinical/student teaching assignment. If you do not register for classes for two consecutive long semesters and do not respond to email requests, you will be removed from the program and an email will be sent to you. To be reinstated, an email should be sent to the EPP advisor requesting reinstatement and the reasons you should be allowed back into the program.

8. Comply with all practices, policies, and requirements written herein. Failure to comply with all practices, policies and requirements will result in dismissal from the Alternative Certification Program. In accordance with due process, students who are dismissed from the Alternative Certification Program will be issued a letter describing the reasons for dismissal from the program, including any supporting documentation (if applicable). Within a time-frame determined by the Director of Educator Preparation,

the student may challenge the reason(s) for dismissal from the Alternative Certification Program, if the student believes that practices, policies, and/or requirements written herein were adhered to by the student. The student may write a letter of appeal that will be reviewed by the Alternative Certification Advisory Committee.

The Certification Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet two (2) times during the year to review and consider appeals. Members of the Advisory Committee will have access to the letter of dismissal, the letter of appeal, evaluation materials, and all supporting documents related to the dismissal. The dismissed teacher candidate will have the opportunity to appeal to the Advisory Committee for re-entry into the Teacher Certification program. The Advisory Committee will determine if the policies, practices, or requirements written herein were adhered to by the student. If the ruling is in favor of the student and it is determined all practices, policies and requirements written herein were adhered to, the Advisory Committee and program staff will determine the conditions for re-admission to the Alternative Certification Program. Additionally, any remaining program requirements will be determined. Successful completion of conditions and program requirements may lead to an initial Texas state teaching certificate.

If the ruling is not in favor of the student, and it is determined that all practices, policies and requirements written herein were not adhered to by the student, re-admission to the Alternative Certification Program will be denied. If the student is unsuccessful in meeting the conditions and program requirements, they will not be eligible for another appeal. The student will then be considered “not in good standing” with the program.

Note: Direct violation of the Code of Ethics for Texas Educators as defined in the Texas Administrative Code, [Chapter 247.2](#), resulting in revocation of a certificate, or dismissal from the field experience, will not be considered for appeal and/or re-admission in to the Alternative Certification Program. The student will be considered “not in good standing” with the program.

TEA Candidate Transfer Form

A former Texas A&M University-Commerce candidate may request a transfer to another EPP program by filling out a TEA Candidate Transfer Form.

The TAMUC student fills out all of Part A.

Part B will be filled out by TAMUC's alternative certification program and TAMUC will send the form directly to the new EPP program, copying the student on the request.

TEA Candidate forms that Texas A&M University-Commerce's Alternative Certification Program receives from a student wanting to attend our program will be reviewed on a case to case basis. Candidates that are marked as "not in good standing" with the previous program will be reviewed by program staff and the former program may be contacted.

Candidates requesting transfer into TAMUC's program will still be required to complete a graduate application, an Alternative Certification Program application, an interview and meet all admission requirements, complete 30 hours of classroom observation, 6 required classes, an internship or clinical/student teaching and pay all fees.

Program Completion Requirements

Contact the Teacher Certification office to verify that all of the following requirements were met post your teaching assignment in order to apply for teacher certification.

1. Completion of 6 required courses on your certification plan for the alternative certification program. An overall GPA of 3.0 and no grade below a “B” in the alternative certification classes must also be met.
2. Submit any outstanding documentation required for completion of a successful internship or clinical/student teaching.
3. A passing score on the PPR exam.
4. Pay any remaining fees associated with the teacher certification program. All fees must be paid before we can recommend you for certification.
5. Apply and pay application fee to TEA for your Standard Teaching Certificate.

Filing for Standard Certification

Application Procedures:

Go to TEA website at <https://tea.texas.gov/> and log in to your TEAL account.

Choose the “Applications” link and then “Standard Certificate Texas Program”.

On the application make sure the entity that you select is Texas A&M University-Commerce (Alternative) and the subject matches the certification field on your certification plan.

Complete all requirements for the fingerprinting (if applicable).

Pay appropriate fees to TEA.

*You will receive an email confirmation from TEA after the university has completed its recommendation. Your status may be checked online. After the TEA receives the university’s recommendation, TEA will process the issuing of the certificate. Once the certificate has been issued, it may be viewed on the website under the “Official Record for Educator Certificate”. This virtual certificate is your official certificate and can be printed for your records. NOTE: Applications that are not fully processed within 60 days will be deleted. If deleted, you will be required to file again through the TEA online system.

Explanation of Forms

Statement of Eligibility (SOE)—the Statement of Eligibility form provides school districts with documentation supporting admission into the Texas A&M University-Commerce EPP necessary for employment in an internship position. The employing school district completes “Employing School District” section of the form and returns it to Tracey.Stedman@tamuc.edu. Note: A teacher candidate must gain employment in a Texas Education Agency (TEA) accredited school providing a credentialed supervisor is available. To determine accredited schools, you may view the TEA website at: <https://tea.texas.gov/accredstatus/>.

Payroll Deduction Authorization Form—a teaching assignment fee is assessed to all teacher candidates. Teacher candidates completing the 16-week clinical/student teaching option pay a \$1100 clinical teaching fee. Teacher candidates completing a one-year internship (employed in a school district) pay a \$2,200 internship fee. The fee funds the internship or clinical/student teaching support system including the mentor teacher and the university field supervisor. Each additional semester requiring supervision will be assessed an additional \$1100.00.

For the teacher candidate employed in an internship position, Payroll Deduction Authorization is highly suggested for monthly installments of the internship fee to be deducted from the payroll check. If a school district does not participate in the Payroll Deduction process, payments must be submitted on the payment schedule indicated by the candidate on the Payroll Deduction Authorization. Failure to submit payments by due dates may result in removal from the internship placement and/or removal from the educator preparation program.

Mentor or Master Teacher Observation—completed by teacher candidate during a formal observation of the mentor teacher or another master teacher. Two (2) formal observations are required.

Teacher Candidate Observation — completed by the mentor teacher during a formal observation of the teacher candidate. Two (2) formal observations are required.

Individual Lesson Observation — completed by the University Field Supervisor during the observation of the teacher candidate. Three (3) formal observations are conducted per semester.

Teacher Candidate Progress Report—Completed by the Mentor after eight (8) weeks of the teacher candidate being in the field. This is to help identify strengths, challenges and recommendations.

Summative Evaluation of Teacher Candidate—completed by the teacher candidate and the University Field Supervisor at the end of the teaching assignment. This form is an overall evaluation of the teaching experience.

Recommendation of Teacher Candidate—to be completed by the university field supervisor, mentor and principal to either recommend or not recommend the teacher candidate for certification. This form must be returned, signed by all 3, to the EPP office at Commerce prior to recommendation for st

FERPA

I understand that under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA” 20 USC 123g; 34 CFR §99; commonly known as the “Buckley Amendment”) no disclosure of my records can be made without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in legal statutes and judicial decisions. I also understand that I may revoke this consent at any time (via written request to the educator preparation program) except to the extent that action has already been taken upon this release. Further, without such a release, I am unable to participate in any field-based experiences including 30 clock hours of observation, clinical teaching, student teaching, or internship.

NOTE: Texas A&M University-Commerce expressly discloses the following:

1. As a provider of teacher education programs, Texas A&M University-Commerce must ensure its students demonstrate adherence to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices of Texas Educators, which requires the observance of federal and state law. An arrest, indictment, conviction and/or deferred adjudication may result in a student being dismissed from the program.
2. While Texas A&M University-Commerce does not perform criminal history background checks, Texas public schools are permitted by state law to conduct criminal history background checks on a person intended for hire or a person who has requested a volunteer position. As a participant in an internship in a Texas public school, you may be subject to a criminal history background check.
3. While Texas A&M University-Commerce does not perform criminal history background checks, The Texas State Board for Educator Certification requests information regarding any previous arrest, indictment, conviction, and/or deferred adjudication. When applying for state certification, you will be subject to a criminal history background check by the State Board for Educator Certification. An applicant with a criminal history may be denied certification.

Code of Ethics for Texas Educators

Texas Administrative Code

Rule §247.2 Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

In compliance with the Texas Education Code, §21.041(b)(8), the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) adopts an Educators' Code of Ethics as set forth in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators). The SBEC may amend the ethics code in the same manner as any other formal rule.

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification.

The SBEC is solely responsible for enforcing the Educators' Code of Ethics for purposes related to certification disciplinary proceedings. The Educators' Code of Ethics is enforced through the disciplinary procedure set forth in Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases) pursuant to the purposes stated therein.

As provided in §249.5 of this title (relating to Purpose), the primary goals the SBEC seeks to achieve in educator disciplinary matters are as follows:

Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.

- A. Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.
- B. Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
- C. Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
- D. Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
- E. Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
- F. Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

- G. Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.
- H. Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
- I. Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
- J. Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
- K. Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
- L. Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.
- M. Standard 1.13. The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

- A. Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- B. Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.
- C. Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.
- D. Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.
- E. Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.
- F. Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.
- G. Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

Ethical Conduct toward Students

- A. Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- B. Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
- C. Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
- D. Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

- E. Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
- F. Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- G. Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.
- H. Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.
- I. Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:
 - I. the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
 - II. the subject matter of the communication;
 - III. whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
 - IV. whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
 - V. whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
 - VI. whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Glossary of Terms

Acceptance Letter – a letter, received via email, notifying the student of an admittance decision.

Admission – meeting Graduate and Educator Preparation Program requirements as outlined in the program overview.

Advisor – staff or Faculty that can answer questions concerning coursework or testing related to teacher certification or a master’s degree.

Advisory Committee – representatives from local schools, school districts, higher education, Regional Education Service Center and Business & Community that meet in a collaborative effort with the EPP staff to help set guidelines and hear appeals for the certification program.

Certification Plan – outlines the certification requirements and serves as a guide to ensure that all requirements are met prior to completion of the Texas EPP.

Clinical Teaching – a supervised educator assignment through an educator preparation program at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by the TEA for this purpose that may lead to completion of a standard certificate; also referred to as student teaching.

Field-Based Experiences – introductory experiences for a classroom teacher certification candidate involving, at the minimum, 30-hours of reflective observation of Early Childhood-Grade 12 students, teachers, and faculty/staff members engaging in educational activities in a school setting.

EPP – Educator Preparation Program – an entity that must be approved by the State Board for Educator Certification to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification classes.

Fee – money owed to TEA, TAMUC or the EPP. Fees range from \$35 to \$2200.00.

Fingerprinting – a criminal history required by TEA consisting of fingerprinting for initial certificates.

Grade Point Average (GPA) – an indication of a student's academic achievement at a college or university, calculated as the total number of grade points received over a given period divided by the total number of credits awarded.

Graduate School Application- required for enrollment in any Graduate Level coursework.

Instructional Leadership Team- the support team during an internship or clinical teaching experience consisting of the university field supervisor, campus mentor, and principal.

Intern Certificate – a type of certificate as specified in §230.36 of Texas Administrative Code that is issued to a candidate who has passed their required content certification examination but not their PPR and is completing initial requirements for certification through an approved educator preparation program.

Mentor Teacher –an educator who is collaboratively assigned by the campus administrator and the educator preparation program; who has at least three (3) years of teaching experience; who is an accomplished educator as shown by student learning; and who is currently certified in the certification category in which the candidate is seeking certification.

myLEO – student account for transcripts, registering, accessing email account, etc.

myLEO online – used for online coursework and may be accessed from the university’s main webpage and your myLEO account.

Paid Internship – one academic year of employment as the “Teacher of Record” in a supervised educator assignment in a public school accredited by Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by the TEA leading to completion of a standard teaching certificate. The Intern will teach on an intern or probationary certificate in an acceptable content area in an academic instructional setting.

Note: It is the responsibility of the teacher candidate to secure a paid internship.

Program fee Authorization Contract – financial agreement between the teaching candidate and university. This agreement outlines payment requirements for the teaching assignment fee. This may also be an agreement between the intern, school district and the alternative certification program, if the school district participates in payroll deductions.

Performance-based Academic Coaching Team (PACT) – this is different from the Pre-Admission Content Test (TX PACT). This website is used to benefit teacher candidates through the first three years of teaching.

Pre Admission Content Test (TX PACT) – demonstration of TExES content proficiency prior to admission into the educator preparation program.

Probationary Certificate – a type of certificate as specified in §230.37 of the Texas Administrative Code that is issued to a candidate who has passed all required certification examinations and is completing requirements for certification through an approved educator preparation program.

Standard Teaching Certificate – upon completion of all program and state requirements and recommendation by the program officials, the Educator Preparation Program may make recommendation to Texas Education Agency (TEA) for issuance of a standard certificate.

Statement of Eligibility (SOE) – a form indicating the level and content area a candidate is eligible for on an intern/probationary certificate. The SOE is issued only when admission and content proficiency requirements are met.

TEA ID# - this is the identifying number received when completing the Texas Education Agency (TEA) profile.

University Field Supervisor – a qualified instructor assigned by the university to observe, support, and provide feedback to the intern or clinical/student teacher.