

Undergraduate

**Teacher Candidate Handbook**

Field-Based Programs, Admissions & Certifications

### Fall 2023

*This handbook is subject to changes per SBEC and TEA rulings*

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Welcome to Student Teaching at Texas A&M University- Commerce!

Dear Teacher Candidate:

In Fall 2020, the College of Education and Human Services (CoEHS) entered an exciting new chapter of teacher preparation at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Our educator preparation program is a clinically intensive, competency-based program aimed at improving EC-12 student achievement, increasing teacher candidates’ qualifications upon entry into their careers, and fostering within them the dispositions important for helping them remain and thrive in the teaching profession.

This revolutionary reform has been prompted by a new vision for teacher preparation in our college that is responsive to your needs as a teacher candidate, the students you will serve over the course of your career, our district partners, and accountability demands of governmental agencies. In the most extreme, I feel that this reform is a matter of highest priority for the future of our nation.

This reform marks a radical departure from traditional programs that prepare teachers. The A&M-Commerce educator preparation program will engage you in activities that are aimed at developing professionalism and superior instructional competency. Reformed *coursework* will focus on helping you learn and apply the skills necessary for fostering student achievement.

*Clinical experiences*, including extended placements throughout the program and a full year of student teaching, will focus on supporting your growth and transition into your career. Through video-capture technology, you will receive unprecedented feedback about your instructional competency; and through a co-teaching model, gain experience that will find you, upon graduation, with the qualifications and skills equal or above that of a second-year teacher.

Combined, the elements of this reform will ensure that you are among the most effective new teachers in the State of Texas.

I heartily welcome you to the A&M-Commerce educator preparation program and thank you for your decision to serve our nation as an EC-12 teacher.

In service with you,



Sherri Harwell

Director – Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services Texas A&M University-Commerce

Teacher Candidates:

We are pleased and honored that you have chosen to be a part of our teacher education program!

Texas A&M University-Commerce has a long-standing commitment to excellence, and the College of Education and Human Services believes that our well-developed program will continue our tradition of excellence in preparation of tomorrow’s teachers.

Student teaching is the capstone experience for a novice teacher. It is critical, challenging, and rewarding to all involved and a time of great professional growth. The student teaching experience typically has a lasting effect upon a teacher's outlook toward teaching and, therefore, greatly affects future generations of teachers and students.

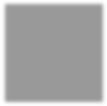
As a teacher candidate, you will be putting into practice all that you have learned through your coursework and field experiences, while at the same time learning from two other sets of expertise—those of your cooperating teacher and field supervisor.

It is essential that teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and field supervisors function effectively as a team during this student teaching experience. Good communication is vital to ensuring a positive experience for all involved. Ask good questions about your teaching, try new things, and study your environment … good teachers never stop being good learners!

We offer our best wishes for a powerful semester of learning as you join the next generation of professional educators!

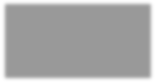
**~The Department of Curriculum and Instruction team**

**A&M University-Commerce**



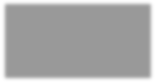
Advisory

Board

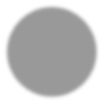
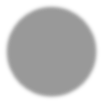
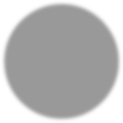


C&I

Department Head



Educator Preparation Program



Center

Coordinators

Field

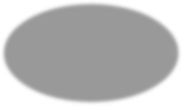
Supervisors

ISD

Administration

Campus

Principals



Center Council



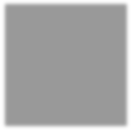
**Shared Governance**

**University Governance**

**Program Governance**

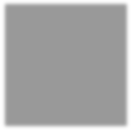
**State Governance**





SBEC

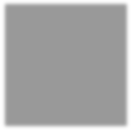
State Board of Educator Certification



TEA

Texas Education

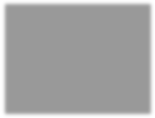
Agency



SBOE

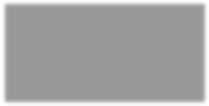
State board of

Education



C&I Department of Curriculum & Instruction

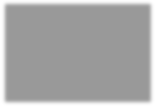
Program Coursework



A&M University-Commerce

EPP

Educator Preparation Program



Office of Educator Certification

Initial Certification

## A&M University-Commerce Key Contacts

#### Quick link: [Undergraduate Field-Based and Teacher Certification Programs](https://www.tamuc.edu/programs/undergraduate-field-based-teacher-certification-programs/#tamuc-section-249549)

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Mesquite Center: Susan Williams, Ed.D.

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Paraprofessional Center: Amy Corp, Ed.D.

Center Coordinator: [Amy.Corp@tamuc.edu](mailto:Amy.Corp@tamuc.edu)

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Assistant Department Head: Nicole Pearce, Ph.D. [Nicole.Pearce@tamuc.edu](mailto:Nicole.Pearce@tamuc.edu)

## Definitions

**Applicant**-An individual seeking admission to an educator preparation program for any class of certificate.

**Benchmarks** – Requirements that must be met to successfully complete the preparation program. Failure to meet the requirements in any area will prevent a candidate from moving forward in or removal from the program.

**Candidate**-An individual who has been formally admitted into an Educator Preparation Program

**Clinical Teacher**-Pre-service teacher who is assigned to a certified teacher in an accredited public school.

**Clinical Teaching** -The culminating experience in a teacher certification preparation program. In the practicum, the clinical teacher gradually assumes the teacher role. The assignment must be at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that is in the particular category for which a certificate area is being sought.

**Code of Ethics**-Standards of practice and ethical conduct toward students, colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community to which Texas educators adhere.

**Completer** – A candidate who has met all the requirements of an approved educator preparation program. This does not automatically guarantee recommendation for certification.

**Cooperating Teacher (CT)** - The EC-12 classroom teachers in the partner school district who have agreed to have a teacher candidate in their classroom; who has at least three years of teaching experience; who is an accomplished educator as shown by student learning; who has completed cooperating teacher training by the EPP within three weeks of being assigned to a clinical teacher; who is currently certified in the certification category for clinical teaching assignment for which the clinical teacher candidate is seeking certification; who guides, assists, and supports the candidate during the candidate's clinical teaching in areas such as planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, district policies; and who reports the candidate's progress to that candidate's field supervisor.

**Classroom Walkthrough (CW)** - Short (5-15 minute) observation that allows the field supervisor to collect a “snapshot” of information on co-teaching, professionalism, and overall development of the teacher candidate.

**D2L / Brightspace** - A&M-Commerce’s online platform for sharing content and information. This platform is accessible through myLEO on the A&M-Commerce website.

**Dispositions for Teaching** – Initial assessment prior to being admitted into the educator preparation program.

**Educator Preparation Program (EPP)** – An entity approved by the State Board for Educator Certification to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification classes or categories. (*This includes coursework, early field experience and student teaching experiences that lead to graduation, program requirements, and initial teacher certification*)

**Field-Based Experiences**-Introductory experiences for a classroom teacher certification candidate involving, at the minimum, 30 hours; (15) of active engagement, and reflection over the experience of Early Childhood-Grade 12 students, teachers, and faculty/staff members engaging in educational activities in a school setting.

**Field-Based Program** - A collaborative process between A&M-Commerce and partner independent school districts to provide a rich, authentic experience during student teaching.

**Field Performance Rubric/Progress Report** – A performance-based assessment used to holistically assess the teacher candidate’s performance in the field and in seminars. This document is a part of the midterm and final ILTs.

**Field Supervisor**- A currently certified educator, hired by the Educator Preparation Program, who preferably has advanced credentials, to observe candidates, monitor their performance, and provide constructive feedback to improve their effectiveness as educators. A field supervisor shall have at least three years of experience and current certification in the class in which supervision is provided.

**Fitness to Teach** – This is an assessment tool that may be utilized throughout the program to help candidates be aware of the expectations of the teaching profession.

**Google Drive** - Online cloud storage service from Google that allows users to simultaneously create and edit documents in browsers, and create and share folders.

**Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)** - The ILT consists of the cooperating teacher, teacher candidate, and university field supervisor. The ILT is a major decision-making body for the teacher candidate that adjusts expectations based on the individual circumstances of the placement, and the teacher candidate’s strengths and weaknesses.

**Intern Semester** (Pre-Clinical) - The first of two final semesters in the program, consisting of a field placement and seminar coursework*. During the first half* of the intern semester, students report to their field placement with a single cooperating teacher for two full days each week and attend weekly seminars. *During the second half* of the semester, students report to their field placement for three full days each week and attend a weekly 90-minute seminar, per center design.

**Paid Teacher Residency** (selected districts) - The teacher resident (TR) is a teacher candidate who participates in a year-long clinical experience under the guidance of a highly effective cooperating teacher (CT). A resident observes and learns to teach on the job in preparation for a teaching career while earning a degree. For full school year, full-time, the resident works alongside the CT. TRs are actively engaged in as many elements of the classroom as possible from the very beginning of the residency year. The TR will gradually assume greater responsibilities throughout the residency year as they develop as a teacher. Compensated roles must not compromise learning goals for future teachers. The teacher resident begins and ends on the public school calendar. They may be considered an employee of the district.

**POP Cycle** - The evaluation process used at Texas A&M University-Commerce. A POP “cycle” consists of (a) a pre-conference to review the teacher candidate’s lesson; (b) observation and scripting of the lesson by field supervisor to gather evidence; (c) post-conference meeting with the teacher

candidate to review evidence, coach and assign ratings; and (d) uploading portions of lessons as directed by the center coordinator or field supervisor.

**Performance Assessments** - Performance assessments of a teacher candidate are a collaborative process engaged in by the cooperating teacher, field supervisor, seminar instructors and the teacher candidate as a team, based on a series of formative and summative assessments.

**Professional Growth Plan (PGP)** - Support tool created by teacher candidate, field supervisors and cooperating teachers when issues arise with teacher candidates or when they are at risk of not meeting performance assessments.

**Residency Semester** (Clinical Teaching) – The final semester of student teaching. During clinical teaching, teacher candidates report to their field placement five full days each week with the exception of eight seminar days scheduled throughout the semester. *Those seeking SPED certification will have two placements during clinical teaching.*

**Seminars** – For first semester intern seminars, students will have weekly seminars at the designated campus location and vary by center. For final semester resident seminars, students will have eight seminars scheduled at the designated campus location. The seminar courses include application and performance, learning opportunities, growth and development by applying theory and best practices to the classroom.

**Standard Certificate –** When applying for certification during the residency semester, our candidates submit an application with the Texas Education Agency, (TEA). Choose the standard certificate option; apply for fingerprinting if not already done so at this time.

**Student Achievement Chart (SAC**) - The Student Achievement Chart is a tool used during the performance assessment that scaffolds teacher candidates as they analyze data based on their student population and then use those data to inform their instruction.

**Teacher Candidate (TC)** – In this handbook, teacher candidate refers to undergraduate students that are seeking initial teacher certification. A teacher candidate is a student admitted into the teacher preparation program at A&M University-Commerce. Teacher candidates may be in an “early phase” consisting of pre-teaching and developing teaching semesters that take place prior to the student teaching year; or in a “later phase” consisting of the final two semesters when they are completing the student teaching year.

**Tk20 by Watermark** - College of Education and Human Services online data management system used for candidate and program assessment. This system is utilized throughout the program.

**Traditional Program** – An unpaid student teaching experience that typically consists of 16 week semester(s) where candidates begin in the fall semesters at least two weeks prior to the universities start date to experience the beginning of school in their public school district. The candidates begin in the spring semesters on the university calendar start date.



**Senior Year Information – All Candidates**

###### Purpose of Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive reference guide to students seeking Texas teacher certification. The handbook outlines policies, procedures, and guidelines used by the Undergraduate Teacher Education Preparation Programs (EPP) in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at Texas A&M University- Commerce (A&M-Commerce). It answers most of the questions asked by students regarding course requirements, program admission, field experiences, certification testing, clinical teaching and teacher certification.

**Goals of the Program**

The goal of the student teaching experience at A&M-Commerce is the preparation of an effective, skilled, and independent educator.

#### Learning Outcomes/Objectives of the entire Student Teaching Experience:

This includes Intern semester (Pre-clinical) and Resident semester (Clinical)

* To be immersed in the profession of teaching at their target grade range that allow for a smooth transition from the role of a student at A&M-Commerce to the role of a classroom teacher
* To be placed in a classroom with a cooperating teacher, who also has the same credentials, for two full semesters; one semester per program area
* To observe the behavior and learning styles of students in a world of diverse cultures and expectations
* To develop high levels of teaching competence through guided teaching experience
* To learn how to create and use effective lesson plans for instruction
* To become competent in creating and using instructional materials and strategies
* To effectively use technology for instruction and communication
* To establish open communication to support and be an asset to the cooperating school and teacher education program
* To become familiar with the organization and programs of the public-school
* To establish professional relationships with fellow teachers, students, administrators and parent
* To engage in self-evaluation and professional goal setting
* To apply research-based practices and teaching strategies in a classroom setting with the support of a cooperating teacher and a field supervisor

We recognize that student teaching is a disruption to family life, work schedules, and leisurely habits; other professions admittedly require less time and fewer requirements outside coursework. However, we make no apologies for the rigor and the time commitment—we are preparing teacher candidates for one of the most demanding professions, as well as some of the most meaningful work that can be done.

Texas Administrative Code defines required minimums for coursework and activities required for teacher certification in the state of Texas. A&M-Commerce exercises its right to have program standards above the minimum to ensure the quality of our program and positive outcomes for our candidates. Policies and procedures within this handbook that go beyond state minimums while maintaining compliance will supersede the minimums outline in state code for A&M-Commerce students.

## Candidate Expectations

Transportation

**Candidates are responsible to provide their own transportation during the student teaching semesters**

Dedication

* **Make student teaching a top priority**
* Prompt, consistent and reliable attendance in the field placement and seminars; including but not limited to beginning and ending of teacher contract hours, including professional development days
  + *Interns starting in the fall semester may have an ‘official’ start date due to summer 2 course end date*
* Participating in all cooperating teacher in-service training throughout the school year
* Be teachable and coachable
* **Attendance is required in all areas – field & seminars**

Organization

* Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance log
* Notify the school, cooperating teacher and university supervisor as soon as possible if absent, be prepared to discuss making up the absence
* Provide the field supervisor your schedule(s)
* Communicate with all parties involved throughout the experience
* Regular use of the Tk20 data management system for assignments and performance gate assessments; keeping current and up-to-date and submitting by the due date given by the center coordinator
* Manages the progress and appropriate times to prepare, set up and take the certification exams required for initial certification to be complete, by graduation

Preparation

* Participation at weekly meetings, co-planning sessions, and initiate discussions regarding progression of teaching responsibilities
* Prepared to engage in all seminar discussions, activities, and take leadership/ownership of own learning
* Provide the cooperating teacher and field supervisor with lesson plans well in advance of teaching
* Prepared to alleviate misuse of time and misbehavior of students, have ready all teaching materials/technologies
* Show initiative to use all available resources to enrich the lessons; ensuring alignment of all standards
* Plan for efficient routines, procedures, transitions, etc..
* Allow for flexibility in teaching by planning for interruptions and time constraints
* Earnest effort in passing all required certification exams in a timely manner

Instruction

* Know and understand the major principles and concepts of the material to ensure high levels of teaching competence.
* Sequence instructional events to enhance student understanding
* Observe the behavior and learning styles of students in a world of diverse cultures in order to create a classroom atmosphere that enhances multicultural understanding
* Incorporate a variety of teaching strategies to provide for individual learning styles and to better develop inquiry and problem-solving skills
* Become competent in creating and using instructional materials and techniques that are consistent with the instructional level of the students
* Present directions in a clear, sequential manner
* Develop critical thinking through the use of thought-provoking questions
* Choose a variety of assessment tools and teach students to use self-evaluation
* Provide lesson activities that require cooperation and teamwork
* Encourage creativity by accepting students’ ideas to enrich class experiences
* Earnest efforts in the improvement of instructional competency

Rapport with Students

* Create and maintain a positive learning environment by demonstrating respect for each student
* Develop with the cooperating teacher a specific classroom management plan that complements both the existing plan and your strengths as a new teacher
* Maintain a firm, but friendly relationship with each student
* Be aware of the students’ social and emotional needs
* Be a respectful listener

Professionalism

* Wear appropriate professional attire.
* Protects confidential information concerning K-12 students, public school partners, and colleagues
* Develop an individual plan for self-evaluation/reflection
* Set short-term goals
* Welcome constructive suggestions and incorporate them in subsequent planning and teaching
* Be discreet with any confidential information
* Become familiar with public school organizations and programs by attending any school and/or parent meetings when appropriate
* Attend all supervisor seminars
* Collaborate with other faculty members/clinical teachers in your building in sharing instructional ideas, materials and technology
* Establish professional relationships by interacting with school personnel (administrators, faculty, and support staff), students and parents
* Be familiar with school policies and procedures
* Contact your supervisor with questions/concerns

### Performance Assessments of Teacher Candidates

Performance Assessment of a teacher candidate is a collaborative process engaged in by the cooperating teacher, field supervisor, seminar instructors and the teacher candidate as a team, based on a series of formative and summative assessments.

These include but are not limited to:

* + On-going teacher disposition assessment throughout the program / Fitness to teach
  + Review of attendance log (keep current)
  + Walk-throughs of lessons by cooperating teachers and field supervisors
  + Mid-Term and Final ILT Progress assessments
  + POP CYCLE – Lesson Evaluations by field supervisor Included in each POP CYCLE:
    1. Pre-conference
    2. Observation – minimum of 45 min. each time, per TEA
    3. Post-conference
  + Professional Growth Plan, as needed
* Examples include but are not limited to: poor communication, attendance issues, lack of growth towards goals decided at the ILT

*INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS*

**Teacher**

**Candidate**

**Cooperating**

**Teacher**

**Field**

**Supervisor**

The primary force during student teaching is the *instructional leadership team* that is coordinated by the university field supervisors and cooperating teachers with input from the interns, residents, and principals. Most decisions about the activities and experiences each intern or resident will have are determined by the ILT through discussion and consensus. The ILTs are usually composed of at least one cooperating teacher, an intern, and/or a resident, and university field supervisor.

A *cooperating teacher* is a public school classroom teacher who has volunteered to work with an intern and/or resident for one/two semesters. The primary role of the cooperating teacher is classroom instruction, student learning and achievement. The role of the cooperating teacher in this program is to provide an environment where an intern and/or resident can observe, understand, and assimilate the experiences involved in the learning process as they learn to teach for student learning. As a means of professional development, the cooperating teacher shares his/her experience and expertise with the intern and resident and the intern and resident share their time and effort to enhance learning in the classroom.

A *university field supervisor* is a member of the instructional university personnel who works with an intern and/or resident and the cooperating teachers at an assigned public school site. The primary role of the university field supervisor is to facilitate reflection and assessment activities for interns and/or residents on an ILT, to assist cooperating teachers in planning and coordinating assignments and activities with interns and/or residents, to foster communication between the university and public school, and to assist the ILT in ways which enhances the learning of the K-12 students.

An *intern* is a university-based student who is learning about teaching and who is in the first semester of his/her final year of work toward certification. The primary role of the intern is to assist the teacher in achieving his/her professional instructional goals. The intern should listen, observe, question, reflect, learn, and contribute to the learning experiences of the classroom. Most of the intern semester is spent becoming acclimated to the school setting and culture so that increased awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity can be assimilated.

A *resident* is a university-based student who has successfully completed the intern semester or a part of a one semester secondary program and is in his/her final clinical semester toward teacher certification. The primary role of the resident is to assist the teacher in achieving his/her professional instructional goals. The resident should also provide increasing instructional and management leadership in the classroom as the semester progresses.

The primary duties of each ILT are:

1. to facilitate communication among the members of the ILT so that the students in the classroom benefit from the activities in the program;
2. to meet formally for ILTs throughout the semester to plan lessons, strategies to be used in lessons, the use of technology within the lessons, and assessment procedures related to the lessons, as well as gauge and support the growth of the intern or resident;
3. to coordinate teaching schedules, duties, and experiences for interns and residents;
4. to provide collaborative feedback and reflection for evaluation of interns and residents.



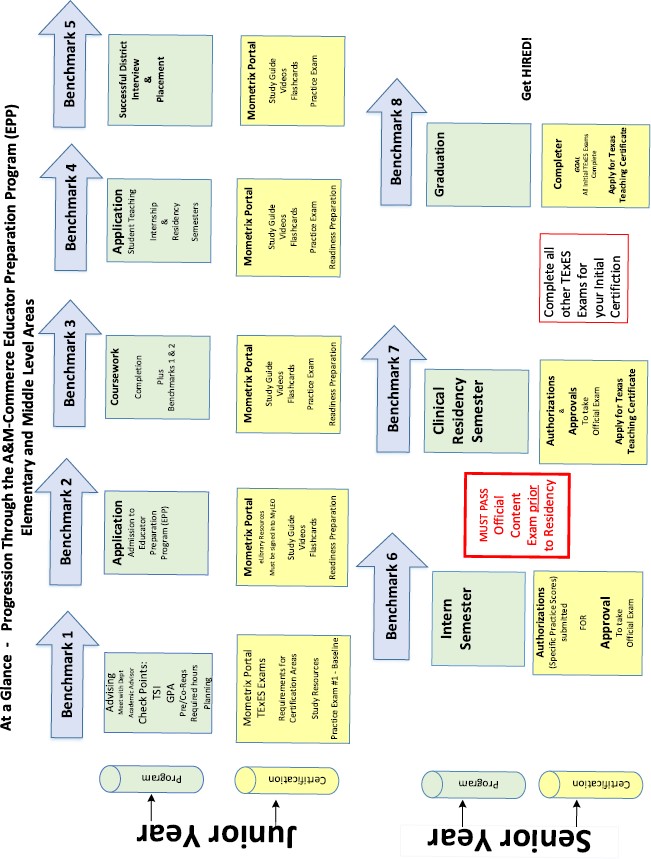
**Elementary and Middle Level Program Benchmarks & Certification**

Below is a ‘quick look’ of the program benchmark and certification requirements a candidate must successfully progress in order to be a completer. Detailed information regarding each benchmark and certification specifics will follow.

The Field-Based undergraduate program has two components that run parallel from start to finish culminating in graduation from A&M-Commerce’s Educator Preparation Program as well as successfully completing the necessary certification exams per the initial target certification(s).

Please read through these areas carefully.

|  |
| --- |
| **Elementary and Middle Level**  **Program** |
| Benchmark 1  Academic Advising and readiness  (Checks for: TSI/Course Completion/ GPA**)**  Benchmark 2  Admission to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP)  Benchmark 3  Completion of coursework and prior benchmarks  Benchmark 4  Admission to Student Teaching semesters  Benchmark 5  Successful district interviews & placement  Benchmark 6  Student Teaching Requirements – Intern semester  Benchmark 7  Student Teaching Requirements – Resident semester  Benchmark 8  Recommendation for certification |



# Benchmarks

###### Requirements for Admission to the Undergraduate Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

**Benchmark One** – Junior Year (First and Second semesters)

###### Academic Advising (Check: TSI/Course Completion/GPA)

Student will meet with an academic advisor to assure successful progression. The following list is a few of the things an advisor checks. **It is advisable to check-in with advisor at the beginning and end of semesters**.

* Completion of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of college coursework; CoEHS Mentor Center provides course completion check
* Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements met
* Minimum overall GPA of 2.50 as a prerequisite to ELED 300 and RDG 350 *[EC-6/4-8 Only]*
* Minimum overall GPA of 2.75 as a prerequisite to SED 300 and RDG 380 [All level/Secondary]
* Documented Early Field Experience (EFE) observation hours (ELED 300 and SED 300/330:30 hours and RDG 350:15 hours)
* Degree evaluation in myLEO (DegreeWorks) to verify courses and requirements still to be met throughout the student’s program
* Review of core coursework for appropriate grades and completion (usually after earning 54 hours of core and interdisciplinary courses)
* Co- and prerequisites met (See Table 1) Table 1 – Course Co/Prerequisites

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Co/Prerequisites** | **Overall GPA Prerequisites** | **EFE Hours**  **Early Field Experience** |
| ELED 300 | Pre or Co:  ELED 200 | 2.50 ELED | 30 |
| RDG 350 |  | 2.50 | 15 |
| RDG 360 | Pre: ELED 300  Pre: RDG 350 | 2.75 |  |
| RDG 370 | Pre/ELED 300  Pre/RDG 350 | 2.75 |  |
| RDG 380  (4-8 Only) |  | 2.75 |  |

**Benchmark Two - Junior Year Admission to Educator Preparation Program** Requirements for admission to the EPP

\*Note: Benchmarks 2 and 4 may overlap, depending on coursework completion.

* Minimum overall GPA of 2.65 is required for admission into the EPP
* Minimum 12 semester hours completed content area-target certification, ie., EC-6 Core Subjects;
* Minimum 15 semester hours completed content area-target certification, ie., All Math and Science
* Must be TSI complete

###### Process for Admission

* Completed online application through Tk20 for admission to the educator preparation program. A Texas Education Agency (TEA) assessment fee of $35, applied at time of application.
  + Separate applications for below programs:
    - EC-6/4-8 programs
    - Paraprofessional-Aide program
    - Secondary/All-Level program
* Complete a teacher disposition survey within the application. This will be scored for readiness.
* Results of admission are recorded within Tk20.
* Upon receiving the acceptance survey, applicants MUST COMPLETE the survey to finalize formal admission into the program by the deadline provided by the certification office.
* Failure to complete and submit the Tk20 acceptance survey will result in an incomplete application.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the appropriate contact person in the event of a status change that prevents a candidate from moving forward with the program. They must formally withdraw from the program. Important contacts are:

* Certification office - [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)
* C&I Department - [Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu](mailto:Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu)
* Center Coordinator – depends on your program

In the event an applicant does not gain admission by not yet meeting criteria and/or requires remediation see below for next steps:

* Applicants who do not meet the disposition rubric score requirements will meet one-on-one with the EPP coordinator to determine appropriate intervention/remediation. For a pre- mediation/remediation action plan, students will be notified by department personnel.
* Applicants who do not meet admission TEA requirements will be notified by the certification office to determine next steps.
* Applicants who do not meet admission requirements, must reapply to the program and complete/meet all admissions requirements (disposition survey, minimum GPA, application fee, etc.) to be considered for admission into the program.

# Benchmark Three

###### Complete the coursework and benchmarks required in the junior year prior to beginning student teaching placement:

*Approval to enroll in professional development/teacher certification coursework must be obtained and an official degree plan declared.*

* Overall GPA of 2.75 is required for all candidates;
* Completion of a minimum of 80 semester credit hours of college coursework/degree plan
* Overall GPA of 2.75 is a prerequisite to RDG 360, RDG 370 and RDG 380.
* Completion of all professional development/teacher certification, education core, and specialization / major courses required before internship/clinical teaching, as reflected on student’s DegreeWorks, with a minimum grade of “C” and a minimum GPA of 2.75 in all identified areas.

It is very important for this section to make sure you are communicating with the appropriate advisor to receive approval/authorizations prior to registering.

Moving forward also requires the successful completion of the 30 early field hours connected to ELED 300 & successful rating from the observing mentor teacher/district. \*This could impact an applicant from moving forward and/or initiate a ‘fit to teach’ growth plan.

# Benchmark Four

###### Complete the Application for Student Teaching

\*Note: *This application may coincide with and prior to Benchmark 2 completion; (Application to EPP)* Students must apply for their student teaching placement in the field-based educator preparation program ***in the first three weeks of the spring/fall semester prior to*** beginning the intern or clinical residency semester.

* **Applicants should apply the semester prior to starting their internship**; *once they have met with the departmental advisor regarding readiness.*
* Application is an online process within Tk20. (*components listed below*)
* Application opens on the first class day; check website for closure date
* Applications may not be processed past this date.
* Applicants must decide which route (Traditional route or Paid Teacher Residency route) and 1st and 2nd district choices – *see explanations of these in the Definition section – NOT all districts offer a paid teacher residency.*
* EC-6/4-8 complete two semesters of student teaching

The online application within Tk20 consists of the following:

 Application processing fee of $40

 Choose path – traditional or paid teacher residency, if applicable; educational aide application opens later

 An autobiographical sketch

 A signed commitment contract

 A schedule of courses currently enrolled in and courses still lacking

 Orientation PowerPoint Acknowledgement

 Students must meet all requirements under benchmark three

 Departmental review and approval to interview and begin the intern/resident semester (If two or more separate faculty members file a Departmental ‘Fit to Teach’ Concern form, a student may be prevented from interviewing or beginning the pre-intern/resident semester if a pattern of professional issues is documented.)

 Before participating in the field-based interview sessions with ISDs, teacher candidate applicants will receive communication by email by their center coordinator for their particular center. Questions and/or concerns can be addressed at this time.

 Questions related to the Orientation PowerPoint email [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)

\*\* **Read the orientation PowerPoint carefully!**

###### Approval to Student Teach

*An applicant who does not meet the established criteria for approval to begin student teaching may appeal to the Departmental Appeals Committee or to TEARAC for permission to begin intern semester or clinical residency semester, with the following* ***exceptions****:*

A student **may not** appeal:

* to begin an intern/clinical teaching placement if they have not completed a successful interview that resulted in a confirmed placement
* a “Departmental review and non-approval to interview and begin internship” This occurs when faculty have professional concerns and completes two or more Department “Fitness to Teach” for Prospective Teacher Education Students Professional Behavioral Standards Evaluation forms, which are filed in the C&I department.
* a low GPA
* a low Basic Skills Requirement score (Reading, Writing, or Math)
  + However, a student may appeal a grade below a “C” only if (a) the student’s overall GPA is 2.75 or above and (b) the student’s department gives written approval for the student to appeal to TEARAC.

# Benchmark Five

###### Successful Interview and Field-Based Placement within our partner districts

The purpose of this interview session is to provide prospective teacher candidates with information about the various ISDs and to provide an opportunity for ISD personnel (often a team of the principal and mentor/cooperating teachers) to identify prospective teacher candidates with whom they would like to work. Prospective teacher candidates are:

* + - Required to attend an interview session with partner school districts organized by a field-based center.
    - District interviews are held in the fall semester for spring placement and the spring semester for fall placement.
    - An interview schedule will be posted on the Educator Certification website (tamuc.edu/teacher).
    - Once each prospective teacher candidate has interviewed with the team from their first-choice district, respective districts identify the applicants to invite to be teacher candidates in their districts.
    - The candidate will be notified by phone or email of their acceptance and assignments by the center coordinator.
    - If a student does not have a satisfactory interview, they will be notified by departmental personnel or Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services staff about next steps.

###### Placement with Our Partner School Districts

The purpose of field experiences in the educator preparation program is to provide authentic observational experiences and structured teaching practice in school settings. The goal, first and foremost, is for teacher candidates to gain experience in performing the professional dispositions required of teachers in Texas.

Our ability to place teacher candidates with an effective cooperating teacher so that they can learn the profession depends on our strong relationships with dozens of local school districts. These districts also place teacher candidates from other institutions, so it is vital that we communicate with the district representatives in a timely and organized manner.

Process:

* Prospective teacher candidates are required to attend an interview session with partner school districts organized by a field-based center. This process will vary by district and the particular path.
* District interviews are held in fall for spring placement and the spring semester for fall placement for centers. An [interview schedule](https://www.tamuc.edu/programs/undergraduate-field-based-teacher-certification-programs/#tamuc-section-249549) will be posted on the Educator Certification website. The purpose of this interview session is to provide prospective teacher candidates with information about the various ISDs and to provide an opportunity for ISD personnel (often a team of the principal and Cooperating teachers), to identify prospective teacher candidates with whom they would like to work.
* Once each prospective teacher candidate has interviewed with the team from their first-choice district, respective districts identify the applicants to invite to be teacher candidates in their districts. The students will be notified by phone or email of their assignments by the center coordinator or Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services staff.
* If a student does not have a satisfactory interview, they will be notified by departmental personnel about next steps.
* Once again, if an applicant has formally accepted the invitation to the EPP and the ISD, then something occurs to change their status of continuing with the program, it is the responsibility of the now candidate to inform the appropriate contact person and formally withdraw from the program. Important contacts are:
  + Certification office - [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)
  + C&I Department - [Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu](mailto:Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu)
  + Center Coordinator – this depends on your program (pg. 6 [key contacts](#_bookmark2))

###### Important awareness:

Our schools and cooperating teachers accommodate teacher candidates on a voluntary basis, so various grade levels or specializations may or may not be available on a particular campus during any given semester. *TEA also requires candidates to be placed with a cooperating teacher that has the same credential(s) the teacher candidate is seeking for their initial certificate; even supplemental certificates.* Also, district partnerships occasionally change, even at the last minute; if this happens, teacher candidates will be notified as soon as possible so that they can make the necessary arrangements. Note that for a variety of reasons, teacher candidates cannot be placed at a school where any relative is employed or is attending.

It is our policy that teacher candidates do not contact school districts or individual schools directly to request a placement. Even if they happen to know a principal, and she/he has said they want them to come teach for them; we must work through the district protocols. We are guests in our partner schools, and their normal and effective operation will be impaired if our candidates swamp them with individual requests.

The ability of our teacher candidates to complete the program—and their degree—in a timely manner is important to us. Please check with your departmental advisor in the first week of each semester to review your eligibility to apply for field-based experience.

# Benchmark Six

###### First Semester of Senior Year- (intern semester)

\*This begins a candidate’s yearlong field-based student teaching with a public school partner district. This is the culminating experience leading to initial certification.

The goal of the student teaching experience at A&M-Commerce is the preparation of an effective, skilled, and caring independent educator.

Teacher candidates:

* + - Must meet all previous benchmarks
    - Enroll in intern coursework
    - Meet all necessary requirements for approval to take their required TExES exam
      * See information in Certification section; communicate with center coordinator
    - Must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching
      * See statement below from the various entities

*\*\*\*\* Candidates are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from their school district.*

*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 8, 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 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.*

It is important to note that the cooperating teacher—the teaching professional—maintains the authority in pacing. When beginning a field experience, some co-teaching strategies are more appropriate than others. The cooperating teacher decides when to use each strategy.

# Benchmark Seven

###### Official Clinical Teaching

Teacher candidates:

* + - Must be enrolled in appropriate concentration coursework
    - Must have passed the EC-6 Core Subjects exam or Content Areas exam to begin clinical teaching semester **[EC-6/4-8 ONLY]**
    - Must maintain a 2.75 GPA in clinical teaching, successfully complete clinical teaching seminar courses with no grade below a 'C' and have all other requirements and benchmarks met
    - Should take any remaining TExES exams needed for their level or subject area(s) of certification
    - Must apply for graduation at the beginning of their clinical residency semester regardless, whether they choose to walk or not
    - Application for certification should be initiated toward the end of clinical semester

# Benchmark 8

###### Recommendation for Certification

Teacher candidates:

* + - Must have approval from the instructional leadership team (ILT) and center faculty for recommendation for certification
    - Must have their Tk20 binders completed fully and submitted by deadline

### Key Contacts after graduation

**Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alleigh Bryan,  Exam Administration Coordinator | 903.468.3082 | [Alleigh.Bryan@tamuc.edu](mailto:Alleigh.Bryan@tamuc.edu) |
| Bob Nottingham, Certification Coordinator I | 903.886.5643 | [Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu](mailto:Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu) |
| Sherri Harwell, Director | 903.468.8186 | [Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu](mailto:Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu) |

**Office of Registrar**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Theresa Glover, Graduation/DegreeWorks Coordinator | 903.886.5429 | [Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu](mailto:Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu) |
| Amy Barrow, Transcript Analyst | 903.886.5448 | [Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu](mailto:Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu) |



**TExES: Texas Examination of Educator Standards**

Examination Requirements for Initial Teacher Certification

To become a Texas teacher, candidates must pass the examinations required by the Legislature in Texas Education Code (TEC) [§21.048](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.21.htm#21.048) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§233.1(e)](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/chapter233/index.html).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers these tests through a testing vendor.

These tests are generally referred to as the Texas Examination of Educator Standards or “TExES” exams.

**Teacher Certification in Texas**

In order to become a certified teacher in Texas, an individual must:

* be Texas Success Initiative (TSI) complete,
* complete 30 hours of observation,
* earn a bachelor's degree,
* complete an approved educator certification program,
* complete a field experience (student teaching),
* pass state certification examinations in both content and pedagogy, and
* apply to the Texas Education agency (TEA) Certification and be recommended by the certification program or entity

Prior to taking the ‘official’ TExES exams, teacher candidates must first demonstrate their readiness by submitting a practice exam score which qualifies them for approval.

For Initial certification, see below chart for required certification TExES examinations.

Table 2: Current *Initial Certifications and requirements*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Certification | Requirements |
| **EC-6 Areas**  EC-6 Core Subjects ESL embedded  English as second language (ESL) | TExES 391 Core Subjects EC-6 Exam  TExES 293 STR Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  Supplemental TExES 154 ESL (optional) |
| EC-6 Core Subjects/SpEd | TExES 391 Core Subjects EC-6 Exam  TExES 293 STR Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  Supplemental TExES 161 Special Education |
| EC-6 Bilingual | TExES 391 Core Subjects EC-6 Exam  TExES 293 STR Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  TExES Spanish 190 – (BTLPT) Bilingual target Language Proficiency Test  Supplemental TExES 164 Bilingual |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **4-8 Areas**  ELAR  Math  Science  Math/Science  Social Studies | \*Supplemental Exams - Supplemental exams are only required if they are a part of your degree plan  TExES 117 ELAR Content Exam TExES 293 STR Exam  TExES 160 PPR Exam  TExES 115 Math Content Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  TExES 116 Science Content Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  TExES 114 Content Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam  TExES 118 Content Exam TExES 160 PPR Exam |

**TExES Test Preparation & Testing**

###### Authorizations for Approvals

**ALL exams require approvals** -- Prior to taking the ‘official’ TExES exams, teacher candidates must first demonstrate their readiness by submitting a practice exam score which qualifies them for approval.

Approval Process (includes practice tests, receiving a required score, submission of full practice score report) etc… Then, candidates will receive instructions through email from Alleigh Bryan, exam coordinator.

Candidates **during ELED 300,** will submit in Tk20, a baseline score report from Mometrix for their content exam. For EC-6, this will be Exam #1 *interactive* – Core Subjects (391);

For 4-8, this will be Exam #1 *interactive* – Content specific (elar, math, sci., etc)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Testing Attempt*** | ***Expectations for Testing Approval for EC-6 &***  ***4-8*** |
| *1st attempt* | A score report from Mometrix showing an overall score of 80% can be submitted for the first attempt.   * Your practice exam score report must be submitted as a PDF file, include the name   of the exam, and include your name for verification purposes. Incomplete score reports lacking information **will not** be accepted. |
| *2nd attempt*  **Options:** Certify Teacher or 240 Tutoring | If approval for a **second attempt** is needed, the student will be required to submit  *additional evidence of readiness*:   * An overall passing score report of 80% or higher in each subject area assessed * Plus a score of 75% or higher in each of the domain areas from a practice exam to obtain test approval.   The following two options are for authorization purposes to receive approval to take the formal TExES exams on second attempt: Certify Teacher or 240 Tutoring   * Your practice exam score report must be submitted as a PDF file, include the name of the exam, and include your name for verification purposes. Incomplete score reports lacking information **will not** be accepted. * \*Note: pay attention to the domain and individual competency areas  1. Certify Teacher - $35 for 3 years access (with TAMUC promo code – TEXES4728)    1. Take the full exam mode exam in one sitting; download your score report as a PDF to turn in when asked for….Save and name it in this format: **date.testname.CWID;** Example 7.12.23.CoreSubjects.5011111    2. Candidate must score an 80%       1. 4-8 – specific content exam       2. EC-6 – all 5 areas on the Core Subjects exam 2. 240 Tutoring - $20 month (when provided with the student discount through email invite); Monthly subscription    1. To take the practice exam, the candidate will need to have worked through 90% of the study practice material for the exam to open. \*This takes more time than you think!    2. Candidate must score an 80%       1. 4-8 – specific content exam       2. EC-6 – all 5 areas on the Core Subjects exam |



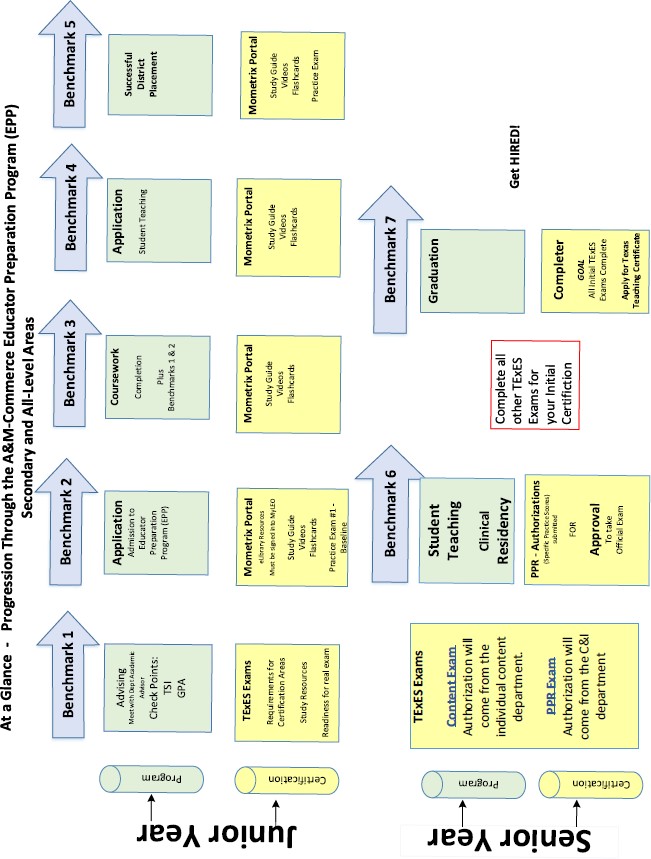
**Secondary & All-Level Program Benchmarks & Certification**

Below is a ‘quick look’ of the program benchmark and certification requirements a candidate must successfully progress in order to be a completer. Detailed information regarding each benchmark and certification specifics will follow.

The Field-Based undergraduate program has two components that run parallel from start to finish culminating in graduation from A&M-Commerce’s Educator Preparation Program as well as successfully completing the necessary certification exams per the initial target certification(s).

Please read through these areas carefully.

|  |
| --- |
| Secondary/All-Level Program |
| Benchmark 1  Academic Advising  (Check: TSI/Course Completion/ GPA**)**  Benchmark 2  Admission to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP)  Benchmark 3  Coursework completion  Benchmark 4  Complete Application for Student Teaching  Benchmark 5  Field-Based Placement within our partnership districts  Benchmark 6  Student Teaching Requirements  Benchmark 7  Recommendation for certification |



# Benchmarks & Certification

Requirements for Admission to the Undergraduate Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

**Benchmark One** Junior Year

###### Academic Advising (Check: TSI/Course Completion/GPA)

Students will meet with an academic advisor to assure successful progression. The following list is a few of the things an advisor checks. It is advisable to check-in with advisor at the beginning and end of semesters.

* Completion of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of college coursework
* Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements met
* Minimum overall GPA of 2.75 as a prerequisite to SED 300 and RDG 380 [All level/Secondary]
* Documented early field experience observation hours (SED 300/30 hours and RDG 380/15 hours)
* Degree evaluation in myLEO (DegreeWorks) to verify courses and requirements still to be met throughout the student’s program
* Review of core coursework for appropriate grades and completion (usually after earning 54 hours of core and interdisciplinary courses)
* Prerequisites met (See Table 1)

Table 1 – Course Co/Prerequisites

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **GPA Prerequisites** | **EFE Hours** |
| SED 300 | 2.75 | 30 |
| SED 330  *STEM Only* | 2.65 | 30 |
| RDG 380 | 2.75 |  |

# Benchmark Two

**Admission to Educator Preparation Program**

##### Requirements for admission to the EPP:

* Minimum overall GPA of 2.65 is required for admission into the EPP
* Minimum 12 semester hours completed in major coursework (15 hours for Math and Science majors)
* Minimum 15 semester hours completed content area-target certification, ie., Math and Science
* Must be TSI complete

##### Process for Admission

* Purchase Tk20 (if not previously purchased)
* Complete online application through Tk20 for admission to the educator preparation program for Secondary/All-level program. A Texas Education Agency (TEA) assessment fee of $35, applied at time of application.
* Complete a teacher disposition survey within the application. This will be scored by a faculty member for readiness.
* Results of admission are recorded within Tk20.
* Upon receiving the acceptance survey, applicants MUST COMPLETE the survey to finalize formal admission into the program by the deadline provided by the certification office. Failure to complete and submit the Tk20 acceptance survey will result in an incomplete application.
* It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the appropriate contact person in the event of a status change that prevents a candidate from moving forward with the program. They must formally withdraw from the program. Important contacts are:
  + Certification office - Ms. Mitzi Hughes [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)
  + C&I Department: Ms. Nicole Jones [Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu](mailto:Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu)
  + Center Coordinator: Dr. Julie Mills [Julie.MIlls@tamuc.edu](mailto:Julie.MIlls@tamuc.edu)

In the event an applicant does not gain admission by not yet meeting criteria and/or requires remediation see below for next steps:

* Applicants who do not meet the disposition rubric score requirements will meet one-on-one with the EPP coordinator to determine appropriate intervention/remediation. For a pre- mediation/remediation action plan, students will be notified by department personnel.
* Applicants who do not meet admission TEA requirements will be notified by the certification office to determine next steps.
* Applicants who do not meet admission requirements, must reapply to the program and complete/meet all admissions requirements (disposition survey, minimum GPA, application fee, etc.) to be considered for admission into the program.

# Benchmark Three

###### Coursework Completion

**Prior to student teaching, applicants must have:**

* Approval to enroll in professional development/teacher certification coursework must be obtained and an official degree plan declared
* Overall GPA of 2.75
* Completion of a minimum of 80 semester credit hours of college coursework/degree plan
* Completion of all professional development/teacher certification, education core, and specialization / major courses required before internship/clinical teaching, as reflected on student’s DegreeWorks, with a minimum grade of “C” and a minimum GPA of 2.75 in each identified areas.

Meet with your advisor to review these requirements.

# Benchmark Four

###### Complete the Application for Student Teaching

\*Note: *This application may coincide with or prior to Benchmark 2 completion; (Application to EPP)*

Students must apply for their student teaching placement in the field-based educator preparation program during the ***spring/fall semesters prior to*** beginning the intern or clinical residency semester (this application is open the first three weeks of the spring/fall semesters).

##### Process for Completing Application

* Purchase Tk20 (if you have not previously purchased)
* Complete online application in Tk20 (*components listed below*), which includes a $40 processing fee
* Application opens on the first class day
* Applications may not be processed past this date
* Applicants will choose:
  + between traditional unpaid route or paid teaching residency
  + 1st and 2nd district choices – *see explanations of these in the Definition section – NOT all districts offer a paid teacher residency*
* SED/All-level candidates complete one semester of student teaching (residency), except STEM candidates may have the option for a year-long residency. (STEM majors, meet with Mr. Clay Stanfield if you are unsure)
* Residents refer to candidates completing one semester of student teaching or STEM candidates in the second semester of student teaching. Interns refer to candidates in the first semester of a year-long residency.

The online application within Tk20 consists of the following:

* Application processing fee of $40
* District Request (includes a list of districts that offer pay for residents)
* Autobiographical sketch
* Signed commitment contract
* Schedule of courses currently enrolled in and courses still lacking
* Orientation PowerPoint Acknowledgement
* Students must meet all requirements under benchmark three

Applications are reviewed by the department and certification office. Completion of Benchmarks 1,2, 3, and 4 are required to enroll in student teaching/residency. If two or more separate faculty members file a Departmental ‘Fit to Teach’ Concern form, a student may be prevented from interviewing or beginning the pre-intern/resident semester if a pattern of professional issues is documented.

Teacher candidate applicants will receive communication by email by their center coordinator (Dr. Mills, [Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu](mailto:Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu)) regarding next steps (orientation meeting, interviews (if required), etc.) Questions related to the Orientation PowerPoint, should be sent to Ms. Hughes, [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)

###### Approval to Student Teach

*An applicant who does not meet the established criteria for approval to begin student teaching may appeal to the Departmental Appeals Committee or to TEARAC for permission to begin intern semester or clinical residency semester, with the following* ***exceptions****:*

A student **may not** appeal:

* to begin an intern/clinical teaching placement if they have not completed a successful interview that resulted in a confirmed placement.
* a “Departmental review and non-approval to interview and begin internship” This occurs when faculty have professional concerns and completes two or more Department “Fitness to Teach” for Prospective Teacher Education Students Professional Behavioral Standards Evaluation forms, which are filed in the C&I department.
* a low GPA
* a low Basic Skills Requirement score (Reading, Writing, or Math)
  + However, a student may appeal a grade below a “C” only if (a) the student’s overall GPA is 2.75 or above and (b) the student’s department gives written approval for the student to appeal to TEARAC.

# Benchmark Five

###### Field-Based Placement within our partner districts

The purpose of field experiences in the educator preparation program is to provide authentic observational experiences and structured teaching practice in school settings. The goal, first and foremost, is for teacher candidates to gain experience in performing the professional dispositions required of teachers in Texas.

Our ability to place teacher candidates with an effective cooperating teacher so that they can learn the profession depends on our strong relationships with dozens of local school districts. These districts also place teacher candidates from other institutions, so it is vital that we communicate with the district representatives in a timely and organized manner.

Our schools and cooperating teachers accommodate teacher candidates on a voluntary basis, so various grade levels or specializations may or may not be available on a particular campus during any given semester. TEA also requires candidates to be placed with a cooperating teacher who has three years teaching experience and has the same credentials the teacher candidate is seeking for their initial certificate. Also, district partnerships occasionally change, even at the last minute; if this happens, teacher candidates will be notified as soon as possible so that they can make the necessary arrangements. Note that for a variety of reasons, teacher candidates cannot be placed at a school where any relative is employed or is attending.

It is our policy that teacher candidates do not contact school districts or individual schools directly to request a placement. Even if they happen to know a principal, and she/he has said they want them to come teach for them; we must work through the district protocols. We are guests in our partner schools, and their normal and effective operation will be impaired if our candidates swamp them with individual requests.

The ability of our teacher candidates to complete the program—and their degree—in a timely manner is important to us. *Please check with your departmental advisor in the first week of each semester to review your eligibility to apply for field-based experience.*

Process for field-based student teaching placement:

* The center coordinator communicates with partner school districts to begin placements and considers applicants first and second choices (but these choices are not guaranteed).
* Ms. Darla Meek handles all student teaching placements for music *(Music majors, contact Ms. Meek for questions about placements)*
* Applicants may request to be placed outside of a partner school district by emailing the center coordinator. The request should outline any extenuating circumstances. Requests are considered based on the need of the applicant and availability of personnel to supervise.
* Districts may require an interview or additional information from applicants
* Districts may communicate with the applicants directly or choose to email the center coordinator. Check your school email frequently, including your SPAM folder for communication from your center coordinator or requested districts.
* Applicants will be notified by phone or email of their placement by the center coordinator.
* Applicants should contact the center coordinator if they have an issue with their placement.
* If an applicant has formally accepted the invitation to the EPP and the ISD, then something occurs to change their status of continuing with the program. It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the appropriate contact person and formally withdraw from the program. Important contacts are:
  + Certification office - [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)
  + C&I Department - [Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu](mailto:Nicole.Jones@tamuc.edu)
  + Center Coordinator – [Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu](mailto:Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu)

# Benchmark Six

Secondary/All-level candidates typically complete one semester of clinical teaching (student teaching). However, some STEM majors may complete a one year residency. STEM majors completing one year residencies should read the pre-clinical and clinical teaching semester sections. All other secondary/all- level majors should just read the clinical teaching section.

Two Semesters (STEM Majors Only)

This section is only relevant to STEM majors completing a one-year residency. All other candidates should proceed to the Clinical Teaching Section.

Contact for STEM majors – [Melanie.Fields@tamuc.edu](mailto:Melanie.Fields@tamuc.edu)

## Clinical Teaching Semester (All Candidates)

* 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 8, 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 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.*

* Teacher Candidates must be enrolled in appropriate concentration coursework. The center coordinator will send an email with which sections to register for. You should also review your degree plan and meet with an advisor, because different majors have different requirements.
* Teacher Candidates must maintain a 2.75 GPA in clinical teaching, successfully complete clinical teaching seminar courses with no grade below a 'C' and have all other requirements and benchmarks met.
* Teacher Candidates should take any remaining TExES exams needed for their level or subject areas of certification. See certification section for more information.
* Teacher Candidates must apply for graduation at the beginning of their residency semester regardless if they choose to walk or not.

# Benchmark 7

###### RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Teacher candidates:

* + Must have approval from the instructional leadership team (ILT) and center faculty for recommendation for certification
  + Must have their Tk20 binders completed fully and submitted by deadline

### Key Contacts after graduation

**Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alleigh Bryan,  Exam Administration Coordinator | 903.468.3082 | [Alleigh.Bryan@tamuc.edu](mailto:Alleigh.Bryan@tamuc.edu) |
| Bob Nottingham, Certification Coordinator I | 903.886.5643 | [Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu](mailto:Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu) |
| Sherri Harwell,  Director | 903.468.8186 | [Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu](mailto:Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu) |

**Office of Registrar**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Theresa Glover, Graduation/DegreeWorks Coordinator | 903.886.5429 | [Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu](mailto:Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu) |
| Amy Barrow,  Transcript Analyst | 903.886.5448 | [Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu](mailto:Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu) |



**TExES: Texas Examination of Educator Standards**

###### Examination Requirements for Initial Teacher Certification

To become a Texas teacher, candidates must pass the examinations required by the Legislature in Texas Education Code (TEC) [§21.048](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.21.htm#21.048) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§233.1(e)](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/chapter233/index.html).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers these tests through a testing vendor. These tests are generally referred to as the Texas Examination of Educator Standards or “TExES” exams.

Prior to taking the ‘official’ TExES exams, teacher candidates must first demonstrate their readiness by submitting a practice exam score which qualifies them for approval.

Approval Process (includes practice tests, receiving a required score, submission of full practice score report) etc… Then, candidates will receive instructions through email from Alleigh Bryan, exam coordinator.

For Initial certification, see below chart for required certification TExES examinations.

Table 2: Current *Initial Certifications and requirements for Secondary/ALL-Level exams*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Certification | Requirements |
| **Secondary &**  **All-Level** | All certifications require a TExES content exam. *Authorizations for content exams come from the individual content areas.*  All areas take the TExES (160)  Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Authorizations come from C&I Dept.  \*Supplemental - ONLY if they are a part of your degree plan |



Educational Aide (Paraprofessional)

###### Educational Aide Program

**Candidates currently employed by an approved TEA district as a Certified Educational Aide:**

* For program benchmarks and certification details, see the requirements in your program area in the above sections.
* In addition to the above benchmarks, the following additional requirements must be met for the educational aide candidates. These are found in the responsibility framework.

**Required at the time of application:**

**Responsibility Framework** – A copy of the Educational Aide Framework is to be presented to, initialed and signed, by the building principal and human resource department. All copies of the framework must be uploaded with the completed Educational Aide application. If there are any questions, please contact Mitzi Hughes at 903-468-3061 or email [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu).

**NOTE:** Approval of the school district is required for any educational aide to complete student teaching while maintaining employment status as an educational aide. This is at the discretion of the school district.

The student teaching job placement must be approved by the Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services (CECAS) and must meet the requirements as outlined by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) for clinical student teachers.

1. Match the grade level and specialization/teaching field in which the candidate is seeking certification.
2. Be assigned a mentor teacher in an authentic classroom setting.
3. Perform instructional duties for a full day (7 hours per day of instruction and planning) where the educational aide is “doing the work of a teacher of record” under the guidance and supervision of their cooperating teacher. For example, lesson planning, delivering instruction, implementing classroom management plan, grading, communicating with parents, etc.
4. Clinical teaching shall not be less than four (4) hours each day in the subject area and grade level of certification sought.
5. Complete clinical student teaching for 16 weeks.
6. Must hold an Educational Aid certificate.

Note: It is at the discretion of the school district to allow an educational aide to complete student teaching and meet requirements as mandated by TEA, while maintaining employment status as an educational aide.

Educational Aide candidates completing their senior year clinical student teaching experience as a certified educational aide must be aware of some key information:

* + Seminar coursework is delivered in a synchronous online format during both semesters. Candidates are required to attend the zoom sessions and complete the coursework expectations.
  + TEA’s requirements span multiple areas.
  + There are program requirements beyond TEA requirements that must be met.
  + Check the [certification website](https://www.tamuc.edu/programs/undergraduate-field-based-teacher-certification-programs/#tamuc-section-249549) for application open and closed dates as well as other details pertaining to the educational aide requirements.

EXAMPLE:

* If a candidate is seeking EC-6 Core Subjects certification, the candidate must be placed in an instructional setting that aligns with their target certification.
  + If the candidate plans to take the Supplemental English as a Second Language (ESL) exam prior to applying for the initial certificate, please know that the cooperating teacher must also need to be certified in ESL as well as having students in the candidate’s placement with whom are being served.
* If a candidate is seeking EC-6 Special Education (SPED) certificate,
* The candidate must be placed in instructional settings that match both certificates.
  + These candidates typically have two placements;
    - one placement in a general education classroom (primary);
    - one placement in a special education setting.
* The special education exam the candidate takes is the SPED supplemental.
* The bilingual education exam the candidate takes is the Bilingual supplemental.

Also, placement with a cooperating teacher must comply with specific TEA requirements such as:

* placement is collaboratively assigned by district and EPP
* must have a minimum of 3 years teaching experience
* holds the current certifications the candidate is seeking
* an accomplished educator as shown by student learning



**Retention – Dismissal – Due Process**

The Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee (TEARAC) is composed of Texas A&M University-Commerce faculty directly involved with educator preparation and are appointed by the Chair of the Committee. The Committee Chair is appointed by the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

TEARAC is charged with setting educator preparation admission and retention requirements, as well as hearing student appeals for individual exceptions to the approved admission and retention requirements as they relate to the student’s admission and retention status.

The Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services (CECAS) is responsible for facilitating the admission, retention, and certification process within the framework of TEARAC requirements.

###### Retention in the Field-Based Program

To be retained in the educator preparation program, a student must do as follows:

* Continue to meet admission standards.
* Remain in good standing with their Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and school placement principal.
* Make satisfactory progress toward teacher certification.
* Students who change their degree to a non-teaching degree will not be retained in the field-based program and will be administratively removed.
* Students who fail to continue with coursework working toward teacher certification will not be retained in the field-based program and will be administratively removed.

A requirement of the undergraduate teacher certification program is continuous enrollment and progress toward certification. Teacher candidates may be approved by the program to take a leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances. Acceptable extenuating circumstances include:

* + Significant financial hardship
  + Personal injury/illness
  + Caring for a family member with personal injury/illness
  + Birth/adoption of a dependent child
  + Death of immediate family member

###### Status of Retained:

During a leave of absence, the teacher candidate’s status in the program will be changed from “admitted” to “retained.” When the teacher candidate enrolls in courses again, they must contact the certification office to update their status back to “admitted.”

###### Duration and Terms of Retention:

A leave of absence is not to exceed two consecutive long semesters. Fall and spring are considered long semesters. Teacher candidates will be administratively removed from the program, including records of active enrollment with TEA, in the event of:

* Failure to enroll in courses at the beginning of the designated return semester, and/or
* Failure to notify the certification office that they have returned and enrolled in courses.

**Removal Repercussions:**

If teacher candidates are administratively removed from the program, they will be required to do the following to return:

* Go before the Teacher Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee for consideration to re-enter the program.
* Reapply to the certification program and complete all admission steps satisfactorily.

*\*This process may cause a significant delay in a candidate being able to continue certification coursework.*

###### Dismissal of Teacher Candidates from A&M-Commerce

Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee (TEARAC): If a teacher candidate does not meet the established admission criteria, or is not satisfactorily pursuing certification, the student will be dismissed from educator preparation program. In addition, a TEARAC review of a student in reference to an academic or professional behavioral concern may be requested by Texas A&M University-Commerce or public-school personnel at any stage in the educator preparation program.

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT): A teacher candidate may be dismissed from intern semester or clinical teaching semester by a recommendation to the principal from the student’s field-based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), consisting of the field supervisor, cooperating teacher, center coordinator, and teacher candidate. This recommendation will result in the teacher candidate no longer being retained in the educator preparation program.

Principal (school placement): A teacher candidate may be dismissed from the intern semester or clinical teaching by a recommendation and letter from the principal of the school where the teacher candidate is placed. This may occur if the principal determines that it is in the best interest of K-12 learners or the teacher candidate that the field experience be terminated. This recommendation will result in the teacher candidate no longer being retained in the educator preparation program.

**Reasons for dismissal** from internship or residency and the educator preparation program may include, but are not limited to the following:

* Failure to meet course requirements
* Lack of progress in meeting the performance gates outlined in the teacher candidate handbook
* Lack of progress or success on a growth plan
* Violation of the Code of Ethics and Standards for Texas Teachers
* Non-adherence to the Intern Commitment Contract
* Violation of school district and/or campus rules and regulations
* Excessive tardiness, absences, or failure to complete or make-up days missed in the field
* Failure to respond to feedback from the ILT

###### Procedures for Removing a Student from Pre-Clinical or Residency:

If dismissal is due to a violation of established admission or retention criteria, the Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services (CECAS) will notify the student in writing of the grounds for dismissal and due process.

If dismissal is resulting from an ILT or school placement principal recommendation, a request to terminate the placement will be generated by the principal. The principal will send a letter to the Director of the (CECAS). This letter will convey with clearly documented reasons that it is in the best interest of K-12 learners or the intern/resident that the teacher candidate’s field experience be terminated. After this occurs, the university field-supervisor or site/center coordinator will schedule a meeting with the teacher candidate, the university field-supervisor, and the (CECAS) Director to inform the student of the decision to terminate the placement and dismiss the student.

###### Due Process Rights in the Field-Based Program

Teacher candidates who wish to appeal admission or retention criteria may schedule a meeting with the Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee to ask that an individual exception be made. In some cases, an appeal to TEARAC will not be granted. If an appeal is granted, TEARAC will review all documentation and any oral deliberation to determine if an exception should be made. If TEARAC determines that an exception should not be made, the student will not have the opportunity to re-enter the educator preparation program. If the student believes that the correct procedures were not followed, as written here-in, the student may appeal to the dean of the College of Education and Human Services. The dean's charge will be to determine if procedures were correctly followed. The dean’s decision is final.

\*If appeal is granted, the candidate must re-apply to the Teacher Education Program.

Candidates who wish to appeal dismissal resulting from an ILT or principal recommendation may also schedule a meeting with the Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee (TEARAC). The committee’s charge is to review the evidence to determine if professional judgment was exercised and if there was a rational basis for the decision. If the committee determines that professional judgment was not exercised, or that there was no rational basis for the decision, the committee will recommend that the ILT and/or principal reevaluate the decision. The reevaluated decision by the ILT and/or principal is final.