



Student Handbook

Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

2020-2021



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Program Overview

This alternative certification program is one of the first private web-based program in Texas to be approved by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). The concept was developed by experienced individuals associated with the teacher preparation who are aware of the inconvenience of traditional face-to-face training models. Traditional teacher preparation programs make it inconvenient, if not impossible, for students far from training sites to meet their internships requirements. In addition to the time spent at each session, some students are driving several hours to attend required training while maintaining a full-time job.

TeacherBuilder.com provides an easy to use and convenient alternative consisting of high-quality teacher preparation courses that interns complete on their own time schedule and from the comfort of their home, office or nearest internet access point. For more information, please feel free to call us at 1-877-822-1144 or you can visit www.teacherbuilder.com and complete an inquiry to have a representative reach out to you.

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1. Becoming a Certified teacher in Texas:

to become a certified teacher in Texas you must have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, pass a content exam in the subject or field you will be teaching, complete an educator preparation program (EPP), pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam (PPR) and complete fingerprinting as part of a national criminal background check. The only exception to these requirements are if you are seeking certification in a Trade and Industrial or Health Science subject area and those students are handled on a case by case basis to ensure TEA requirements are met for certification in those areas. There are two paths to standard certification in Texas:

 - a. Clinical/Student teaching:

clinical teaching consists of a student being paired with a teacher of record. It may be paid or unpaid (more often the latter) and is an apprenticeship assignment which is completed over the course of 14 weeks of full day apprenticeship, or 28 weeks of half day apprenticeship. During this time, the University or EPP will supervise the clinical student, and document progress. The clinical student begins by observing the teacher, assisting with lesson planning and progresses to a complete takeover of the classroom.
 - b. Internship:

offers candidates an immediate classroom experience as a full time, full salaried teacher of record. This route requires the candidate to have completed all bachelor's degree requirements, passed a subject area proficiency exam, completed 150 hours of training in teaching and classroom management strategies, and completed 30 hours of classroom observations. The internship must be a full school year, it must include a minimum of 5 classroom observations by a trained field supervisor provided by the EPP, and a minimum of 3 mentor observations by the district/principal-assigned teacher mentor. Upon completion of the aforementioned requirements, the school principal, and EPP field supervisor, must acknowledge in writing that the intern has completed the internship successfully.
2. Path to Standard Certification
 - a. Pass Content Exam
 - i. the minimum passing score for all TEXES exams is 240. A student must receive a passing score in the content exam prior to applying for formal admittance into an EPP
 - b. Apply to EPP for admission
 - i. requirements for admission
 1. Bachelor's degree, or last semester before receiving a bachelor's degree.
 2. minimum GPA of 2.5 overall, or in the last 60 hours.
 3. passing of a content exam, to indicate content knowledge.
 - c. Complete Coursework/Field observations
 - i. candidate must complete a 150-hour course that includes teaching theory and classroom management.
 - ii. for initial certification in the classroom teacher certification class, each EPP shall provide field-based experiences, as defined in §228.2 of this title (relating to Definitions), for a minimum of 30 clock-hours. The field-based experiences must be completed prior to assignment in an internship or clinical teaching.

Field-based experiences must include 15 clock-hours in which the candidate, under the direction of the EPP, is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities that include:

1. authentic school settings in a public school accredited by the TEA or other school approved by the TEA for this purpose;
 2. instruction by content certified teachers;
 3. actual students in classrooms/instructional settings with identity-proof provisions;
 4. content or grade-level specific classrooms/instructional settings; and
 5. written reflection of the observation.
- iii. Up to 15 clock-hours of field-based experience may be provided by use of electronic transmission or other video or technology-based method. Field-based experience provided by use of electronic transmission or other video or technology-based method must include:
1. direction of the EPP;
 2. authentic school settings in an accredited public or private school;
 3. instruction by content certified teachers;
 4. actual students in classrooms/instructional settings with identity-proof provisions;
 5. content or grade-level specific classrooms/instructional settings; and
 6. written reflection of the observation.
- d. Teach in the Classroom:
- i. Internship. An internship must be for a minimum of one full school year for the classroom teacher assignment or assignments that match the certification category or categories for which the candidate is prepared by the EPP.
 1. an EPP may permit an internship of up to 30 school days fewer than the minimum if due to maternity leave, military leave, illness, bereavement, or if the late hire date is after the first day of the school year.
 2. the beginning date for an internship for the purpose of field supervision is the first day of instruction with students in the school or district in which the internship takes place.
 3. an internship assignment shall not be less than an average of four hours each day in the subject area and grade level of certification sought. The average includes intermissions and recesses but does not include conference and duty-free lunch periods. An EPP may permit an additional internship assignment of less than an average of four hours each day if:
 4. the primary assignment is not less than an average of four hours each day in the subject area and grade level of certification sought;
 5. the EPP is approved to offer preparation in the certification category required for the additional assignment;
 6. the EPP provides ongoing support for each assignment as prescribed in subsection (g) of this section;

7. the EPP provides coursework and training for each assignment to adequately prepare the candidate to be effective in the classroom; and
8. the employing school or district notifies the candidate and the EPP in writing that an assignment of less than four hours will be required.
9. A candidate must hold an intern or probationary certificate while participating in an internship. A candidate must meet the requirements and conditions, including the subject matter knowledge requirement, prescribed in §230.36 of this title (relating to Intern Certificates) and §230.37 of this title (relating to Probationary Certificates) to be eligible for an intern or probationary certificate.
10. an EPP may recommend an additional internship if:
 11. the EPP certifies that the first internship was not successful, the EPP has developed a plan to address any deficiencies identified by the candidate and the candidate's field supervisor, and the EPP implements the plan during the additional internship; or
 12. the EPP certifies that the first internship was successful and that the candidate is making satisfactory progress toward completing the EPP before the end of the additional internship.
13. an EPP must provide ongoing support to a candidate as described in subsection (g) of this section for the full term of the initial and any additional internship, unless, prior to the expiration of that term:
 14. a standard certificate is issued to the candidate during any additional internship under a probationary certificate;
 15. the candidate resigns, is non-renewed, or is terminated by the school or district. A candidate must provide the EPP the official notice of resignation or termination within seven calendar days after receipt of the notice from the employing school or district. Within seven calendar days after receipt of the official notice of resignation or termination, an EPP must notify a candidate in writing that the EPP will provide TEA with notice about the resignation or termination and that the intern or probationary certificate will be inactivated by the TEA 30 calendar days from the effective date of the resignation or termination. Within one business day after providing the notice to a candidate, an EPP must email the TEA a copy of the notice to the candidate and a copy of the official notice of the resignation or termination;
16. the candidate is discharged or is released from the EPP. An EPP must notify a candidate in writing that the candidate is being discharged or released, that the EPP will provide the employing school or district with notice of the discharge or release, that the EPP will provide TEA with notice about the discharge or release, and that the intern or probationary certificate will be inactivated by the TEA 30 calendar days from the effective date of the discharge or release. Within one business day after providing a candidate with notice of discharge or release, an EPP must provide written notification to the employing school or district of the withdrawal, discharge, or release. Within one business day of providing

notice to the employing school or district, an EPP must email the TEA a copy of the notice of discharge or release and a copy of the notice to the employing school or district;

17. the candidate withdraws from the EPP. A candidate must notify the EPP in writing that the candidate is withdrawing from the EPP. Within seven calendar days after receipt of the withdrawal notice, an EPP must notify a candidate in writing that the EPP will provide the employing school or district with notice of the withdrawal, that the EPP will provide TEA with notice about the withdrawal, and that the intern or probationary certificate will be inactivated by the TEA 30 calendar days from the effective date of the withdrawal. Within one business day after providing a candidate with notice of discharge or release, an EPP must provide written notification to the employing school or district of the withdrawal, discharge, or release. Within one business day of providing notice to the employing school or district, an EPP must email the TEA a copy of the notice of withdrawal and a copy of the notice to the employing school or district;
18. the internship assignment does not meet the requirements described in this subparagraph. Within seven calendar days of knowing that an internship assignment does not meet requirements, an EPP must notify a candidate in writing: that the internship assignment does not meet the requirements; that the EPP will provide the employing school or district with notice; that the EPP will provide the TEA with notice; and that the intern or probationary certificate will be inactivated by the TEA 30 calendar days from the effective date the notice to the candidate was sent by the EPP. Within one business day after providing a candidate with notice, an EPP must provide written notification to the employing school or district that the internship assignment does not meet requirements and that the TEA will inactivate the certificate. Within one business day of providing notice to the employing school or district, an EPP must email the TEA a copy of the notice to the candidate and a copy of the notice to the employing school or district.
19. An internship is successful when the candidate demonstrates proficiency in each of the educator standards for the assignment and the field supervisor and campus supervisor recommend to the EPP that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate. If either the field supervisor or campus supervisor do not recommend that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate, the person who does not recommend the candidate must provide documentation supporting the lack of recommendation to the candidate and either the field supervisor or campus supervisor.
20. An internship for a Trade and Industrial Workforce Training certificate may be at an accredited institution of higher education if the candidate teaches not less than an average of four hours each day, including intermissions and recesses, in a dual credit career and technical instructional setting as defined by Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter D of this title (relating to Dual

Credit Partnerships Between Secondary Schools and Public Schools).

3. Program Timeline/Benchmark:
 - a. Program Checklist

Application Online TBC
Official Transcripts (mailed in)
SOQ/License/Diploma or Transcripts
TOEFL (for out of country transcripts only)
FERPA/Code of Ethics/TBC Admission Letter *TEA Technology fee (\$35.00)
Early Release/Program Deadline/Additional Test Approval
Preliminary Background acknowledgement form
Student Handbook acknowledgement form
Benchmark Checklist
TSI Interview
Pre-Internship Courses (150 hrs.)/PPR Courses(120hrs)
30 Hours of Observation
*Content Exam (TEXES exam fee approximately \$120.00)
Employment Verification Form
Authorization of Payments Form
Copy of Contract with the School
SOE
Supervisor Observations (3 per year) (5 if Intern Cert)
Mentor Observations (3 per year)
District Trainings (50 hours, copy from district)
Principal signature for standard (final ob. or Completion form)
*PPR Exam
Internship Payments Complete
*Apply Intern (\$78)/Prob. (\$78)/Standard Certificate (\$78)

***Note all fees with an asterisk are additional fees not included in the program but required by TEA to become eligible to teach.**

4. Supervision Requirements
 - a. Mentor Handbook
 - b. Field Supervisor Handbook
5. Cost of Program
 - a. Enrollment/Coursework fee for probationary and/or internship certificates
 - i. The enrollment and initial coursework fee is \$365.00
 1. This payment can be done in a lump sum of \$365 or another payment option can be divided into 3 payments of \$165.00, \$150.00, \$150.00, for a total of \$465.00. However, all monies paid will be credited to the total cost of the program.
 - b. Internship fee
 - i. The internship fee will be \$6,065.00 minus any monies paid for enrollment, or coursework. These payments will be divided up into 11 monthly installments, beginning with your first month of employment as a teacher.

***Note: The total cost of a one-year internship will never be more than \$6,065.00 for a one year certification.**

6. Complaint Policy:

Complaints:

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

Guiding Principles and Informal Process

TeacherBuilder.com encourages interns to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their program staff.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Formal Process

If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the candidate, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, a candidate is encouraged to seek informal resolution of his or her concerns. A candidate, whose concerns are resolved, may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

General Provisions Filing

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, email, fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Emails shall be timely filed if they are date and time marked on or before the deadline. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Response

At Levels One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the candidate from the appropriate EPP staff. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail or emailed to the candidate’s email or mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on the deadline and received by the candidate no more than three days after the response deadline.

Days

“Days” shall mean program business days. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following day as “day one.”

General Provisions

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Candidates shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the program may consolidate the complaints.

Untimely Filings

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the candidate, at any point during the complaint process. The candidate may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten business days, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint Form

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form *provided by the program*.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the candidate does not have copies of these documents, he/she may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted unless the candidate did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but it may be refiled with all the requested information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

Audio Recording

As provided by law, a candidate shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference under this policy at which the substance of the candidate's complaint is discussed. The candidate shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

- (a) Within 15 days of the date the candidate first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
- (b) With the direct supervisor.
- (c) The direct supervisor shall hold a conference with the candidate within ten days after receipt of the written complaint.
- (d) The direct supervisor shall have ten days following the conference to provide the candidate a written response.

Level Two

If the candidate did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the candidate may appeal the decision to the program's legal authority.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the program, within ten days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level One.

The program's legal authority or designee shall inform the candidate of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the complaint will be discussed.

The direct supervisor shall provide the program's legal authority with copies of the complaint form, the response at Level One, the appeal notice, and all written documentation previously submitted by candidate. The program's legal authority shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding level and identified in the appeal notice.

The program's legal authority must provide written notice of the decision to the candidate.

The EPP must retain information concerning the complaint for a minimum of three years.

After the candidate has exhausted all attempts at the program level to resolve a complaint that occurred within the past two years and has not received the relief sought, information on how to file a complaint with TEA can be secured from the EPP by information posted at their physical facility, on their website or, upon request, directions in writing.

Level Three

The official TEA complaint process can be found at [https://tea.texas.gov/Texas Educators/Preparation and Continuing Education/Complaints Against Educator Preparation Programs/](https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Preparation_and_Continuing_Education/Complaints_Against_Educator_Preparation_Programs/).

The complaint process allows for an applicant or a candidate in an educator preparation program to seek redress in areas where they feel that the program did not fulfill requirements for certification or for actions that the candidate feels are wrong. Educator preparation programs may also file a complaint about the actions of other programs when it involves a candidate transferring into a program.

Not all complaints fall under the authority of TEA. TEA has jurisdiction to investigate allegations of noncompliance regarding specific laws and rules, generally related to state and federal requirements. Complaints may address educator preparation program requirements listed in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) in Chapters 227, 228, 229, ethics (TAC 247), fingerprinting (TAC §§227,232) and certification (TAC §§230, 231, 232, 239, 241, 242)

All complaints filed with the TEA must be in writing. We do not accept complaints by phone or complaints that are submitted anonymously. A person or entity may file a written complaint with TEA by filling out the complaint form found in the link above or by mailing or faxing a hard copy to the address on the form. You may fax your submission to (512) 463-9008 or email it to generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov.

To adequately review and address a complaint, TEA needs specific details. We must be able to identify a clear violation of TAC and determine whether the agency has authority to act upon the allegation.

Complaints submissions should include the following:

- The reasons you believe the issues raised in your complaint are valid. You should also indicate how you believe that TEA can assist you with this matter. Remember that TEA cannot assist you in understanding your contractual arrangement with the educator preparation program, arranging for a refund, obtaining a higher grade or credit for training, or seeking reinstatement to an educator preparation program.
- Documentation to support your claim when possible. For example, if you refer in your complaint to an educator preparation program policy, include a copy of the policy with your complaint. Helpful documentation might include letters or e-mails exchanged between the parties.

Texas Education Agency staff will send confirmation of a complaint within 30 days of receiving the submission. Remember, information the public sends to TEA by email may not be secure. Do not email sensitive information to TEA. The agency will remove confidential or sensitive information when replying by email. TEA will maintain confidentiality of information to the extent the law allows.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE §228. 70

7. Frequently Asked Questions

List of questions with answers is maintained and updated at the following link

<http://www.teacherbuilder.com/>

8. Student Handbook Acknowledgement

The following form indicates that you have been made aware of the student handbook, and are able to access it online at www.teacherbuilder.com at your convenience.



Acknowledgment of The Educators' Code of Ethics

Visit: https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Investigations/Educators_Code_of_Ethics/

The Educators' Code of Ethics is set forth in the Texas Administrative Code to provide rules for standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community.

It includes the following:

- The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
• Good moral character--The virtues of a person as evidenced by patterns of personal, academic, and occupational behaviors that, in the judgment of the State Board for Educator Certification, indicate honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity.
• 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.
• Under the influence of alcohol--A blood alcohol content of .04% or greater and/or lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties by reason of the introduction of alcohol.

By being a part of the TeacherBuilder.com program, whether you are a candidate or an active participant in an internship, you must abide by the standards mentioned above and the rest of the standards mentioned in the Code of Ethics. If you are partaking in any actions that are not in line with the Code of Ethics as candidate, will be released from the Teacher Builder program. If you are partaking in any actions that are not in line with the Code of Ethics during your internship, you risk being terminated from your position with the district and you will be released from the Teacher Builder program.

As part of Teacher Builder, I am committed to abiding by all the Code of Ethics expectations and understand that I will be released from the TeacherBuilder.com program if I violate any of the Code of Ethics standards.

Disclaimer: this form will be signed by candidate at the time of admission.

Student Name (Print)

Student Name Signature

Date

Visit: https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Investigations/Educators_Code_of_Ethics/



Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

My signature below on this form is indicative of the following:

1. I have been made aware of the Teacherbuilder.com Student handbook and am familiar with the process by which to access it at my convenience online at [www. Teacherbuilder.com](http://www.Teacherbuilder.com)
2. I have been made aware of the complaint policy in section 6 of the student handbook.
3. I am in agreement with the Mediation and Arbitration clause below.
 - a. In the event of any controversy or concern arising between Teacherbuilder.com, and the Student/Candidate/Intern, that could not be resolved through the complaint process, the parties shall then attempt to settle the dispute by mediation.
 - b. If settlement is not reached within 60 days of a written demand for mediation any unresolved controversy or claim shall be settled by arbitration. Judgement on the award rendered by the arbitrator, maybe entered in any court that has jurisdiction.
 - c. Any and all fees associated with either mediation or arbitration shall be the responsibility of each party.
 - d. All mediation, or arbitration shall be heard in Brownsville, Texas.

Student/Candidate/Intern Signature

Date

Teacherbuilder.com representative

Date