

For guidance and FAQs for current educators and staff please see the **Guidance for Current Educators and Staff - Educator Evaluations and Non-renewal** document located under the [Staff and Educator Issues](#).

## Educator Certification Guidance and FAQ: Section Topics

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### Currently Enrolled Educator Candidates

Although many candidates have completed the requirements necessary to receive their standard certificates at the end of the spring semester, some candidates have been unable to fulfill testing requirements due to the closure of schools and testing sites. Building upon [prior guidance related to educator preparation requirements](#), this guidance provides updates related to candidates currently enrolled in educator preparation programs (EPPs) and the requirements for certification given the impacts of COVID-19.

To manage the impact of the public health crisis on educator certification candidates, Governor Abbott has issued waivers to allow certain candidates who have completed EPP requirements to qualify for a one-year probationary certificate so that they may be certified for the 2020-21 school year without meeting testing requirements, paid internship requirements, and other pre-employment requirements. The waiver applies to individuals who meet one of the following conditions:

- Teacher candidates who completed clinical teaching during Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 and are designated as having completed all preparation requirements by their educator preparation program;
- Teacher candidates who completed an internship during Spring 2020 and are designated as having completed all preparation requirements by their educator preparation program;  
or
- Non-teacher candidates who completed a practicum during Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 and are designated as completing all requirements of their educator preparation program.

While State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules allow for a probationary certificate for certain candidates enrolled in alternative certification programs, the flexibility provided by Governor Abbott’s waiver creates the possibility for additional candidates to receive the one-year probationary certificate and seek (or maintain) employment as a certified educator. This flexibility also provides some clarity for hiring districts about who is eligible for hire as a certified educator.

Eligible candidates should begin the application process immediately following the instructions below, and educator preparation programs will be able to recommend eligible candidates for a defined window tentatively scheduled for **May 15th through June 15th**. For a certificate to issue, candidates must submit a complete application, including the background check. **After June 15th, candidates must meet all requirements for standard certification, including testing requirements.** The probationary certificate will be valid for one year only and candidates must complete all testing requirements in order to receive the standard certificate before the probationary certificate expires.

**Certification Flexibility Due to COVID-19:**

| <b>Background of Applicant</b>  | <b>Flexibility Provided</b>   |
|---|---|
| Teacher candidates without an existing certification who completed clinical teaching in Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020, who have not passed their required certification exams. | <p>Teacher candidates who completed clinical teaching during Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 and are designated as having completed all preparation requirements by their educator preparation program are eligible for a <b>Probationary certificate</b>.</p> <p>The certificate will be issued upon submission of a complete candidate application and preparation program recommendation indicating that all other requirements have been met. Complete candidate applications and program recommendations must be completed in the Educator Certification Online System (ECOS) by June 15, 2020.</p> |
| Non-teacher candidates without an existing certification who completed a practicum in Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020, who have not passed their required certification exams.   | <p>Non-teacher candidates who completed a practicum during Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 and are designated as completing all requirements of their educator preparation program are eligible for a <b>Probationary certificate</b>.</p> <p>The certificate will be issued upon submission of a complete candidate application and preparation program recommendation indicating that all other requirements have been met. Complete candidate applications and program recommendations must be completed in ECOS by June 15, 2020.</p>  |
| Teacher candidates on intern certificates that are expiring in Spring 2020, who have not passed their required certification exams.   | Teacher candidates who completed an internship during Spring 2020 and are designated as having completed all preparation requirements by their educator preparation program are eligible for a <b>Probationary certificate</b> .  |

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|  | <p>The certificate will be issued upon submission of a complete candidate application and preparation program recommendation indicating that all other requirements have been met. Complete candidate applications and program recommendations must be completed in ECOS by June 15, 2020.</p>   |
| <p>Non-teacher candidates on intern certificates that are expiring in Spring 2020, who have not passed their required certification exams.</p> | <p>Non-teacher candidates who completed a practicum during Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 and are designated as completing all requirements of their educator preparation program are eligible for a <b>Probationary certificate</b>.</p> <p>The certificate will be issued upon submission of a complete candidate application and preparation program recommendation indicating that all other requirements have been met. Complete candidate applications and program recommendations must be completed in ECOS by June 15, 2020.</p> |

## FAQs from Teacher Candidates

### 1. What constitutes a complete candidate application?

A complete candidate application is the correct online application (in this case, Probationary Certificate Texas Program) submitted by the candidate with the required \$78 fee; verification of fingerprint complete status; and an EPP online recommendation for issuance of the certificate.

### 2. What steps do I take to apply for this probationary certificate?

Follow the step-by-step instructions located on TEA’s Coronavirus webpage under [Staff and Educator Issues](#) titled **Applying for Probationary Certification** to submit your online application and payment to TEA.

### 3. What is a probationary certificate good for?

A probationary certificate issued in the appropriate teacher or non-teacher certification area allows a candidate to be appropriately certified to serve in that role during the one-year validity period of the credential.

### 4. How long is a probationary certificate valid for?

A probationary certificate issued under provisions of the Governor waivers is valid for one year.

**5. What happens once I take and pass my certification exams after being issued the probationary certificate?**

If you have successfully completed all other preparation program requirements and your EPP confirms you are ready to apply for the standard certificate, you should submit a complete candidate application (in this case, Standard Certificate Texas Program) and payment to TEA. If you have additional preparation program requirements to complete, your EPP will confirm when you should submit your online application and payment to TEA so that they can recommend you for the standard certificate.

**6. I have already met all preparation program requirements and passed my certification exams, what are my next steps?**

Submit a complete candidate application (in this case, Standard Certificate Texas Program) with the required \$78 fee and an EPP online recommendation for issuance of the standard certificate.

**7. What if I'm a non-teacher candidate (e.g. principal candidate, school counselor candidate) on an intern certificate who completed a practicum, but did not meet all preparation program requirements? What certificate am I eligible for?**

Under current SBEC rules, you are eligible for the probationary certificate if you submit a complete candidate application (Probationary Certificate Texas Program) and payment and an EPP online recommendation for issuance of the certificate.

**8. Will there can be any leeway for fingerprinting of teacher candidates who will not be able to go in for digital fingerprinting at this time?**

IdentoGO, the fingerprinting vendor for the Tx. Dept. of Public Safety (DPS), has closed or reduced operating hours in nearly half of its locations in Texas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The closures have resulted in a decrease in fingerprinting appointment availability within certain regions. However, in the interest of student safety, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is not planning to modify fingerprinting requirements for certificate applicants, non-certified employees, or any other individuals required to fingerprint for TEA or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The agency will continue to monitor the situation and notify school districts and educator preparation programs if there is a change in policy. As a reminder to applicants for SBEC certification, fingerprinting is required for issuance of the initial certificate. As long as a person holds an SBEC certificate, TEA will receive real-time notifications of subsequent criminal history through the DPS Clearinghouse. Therefore, an individual does not need to fingerprint again to receive additional certificates. Furthermore, if an individual previously fingerprinted as a non-certified school district or charter school employee, TEA will be already subscribed to that person's criminal history and the person does not need to fingerprint again to obtain an SBEC certificate.

For more information about fingerprinting requirements or to submit a fingerprinting Help Desk ticket, please visit the TEA fingerprinting website at

<https://tea.texas.gov/texaseducators/investigations/fingerprinting/fingerprinting-and-registry>.

Additionally, please visit the DPS Clearinghouse website for information about the fingerprinting vendor's operations and guidelines for reducing exposure to COVID-19 during the fingerprinting process. <https://secure.txdps.state.tx.us/Clearinghouse/index.aspx>.

**9. How can candidates complete the 15 clock-hours of field-based experiences on a school campus if the schools are closed? Posted March 26, 2020**

Governor Abbott has waived the requirement that 15 clock-hours of field-based experiences must be completed on a school campus for those completing field-based experience requirements in spring or summer 2020. All field-based experiences may be completed by use of electronic transmission or other video or technology-based method.

## FAQs from Districts

**1. I have an employee who is currently on an intern certificate. What does this guidance mean for them?**

The provisions of the Governor waiver allow your employee to qualify for issuance of a probationary certificate if he or she meets specified requirements, submits a completed online application to TEA, and is recommended for certification by his or her EPP.

**2. How long will the certificate be effective for?**

A probationary certificate issued under provisions of the Governor waiver is valid for one year.

**3. Does a district need to complete any additional paperwork to hire someone on a probationary certificate?**

No. For TEA purposes, a district does not need to complete any additional paperwork to hire someone on a probationary certificate. If an employing district has paperwork that is completed as part of its hiring process, the district should continue to comply with its own standard operating procedures.

**4. Can a teacher with a probationary certificate serve as a teacher of record?**

Yes. Candidates issued a probationary certificate under provisions of the Governor waiver are considered appropriately certified to serve as a teacher of record.

**5. How can I validate that an individual holds a probationary certificate?**

As a standard best practice, districts should utilize their secure entity access through ECOS to verify an individual's certificate status.

## FAQs From Educator Preparation Programs

To manage the impact of the public health crisis on educator certification and preparation programs, Governor Abbott has issued the following waivers for those completing clinical teaching during spring 2020, engaging in an internship or a practicum during spring 2020, or completing field-based experience requirements in spring or summer 2020: [Posted March 26, 2020](#)

- For those candidates who have met at least half of the required days of clinical teaching, demonstrated proficiency in each of the educator standards for the assignments and for whom their field supervisors and cooperating teachers recommend to the candidates' educator preparation program (EPP) that the candidates should be recommended for a standard certificate, the requirements of 19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(A)(i)(I) imposing clinical teaching requirements are waived as necessary.
- For those candidates who have met at least half of the required hours of practicum, demonstrated proficiency in each of the educator standards for the assignments, and for whom the field supervisor and site supervisor recommend to the EPP that the candidates should be recommended for a standard certificate, the requirements of 19 TAC §228.35(e)(8) imposing minimum practicum requirements are waived as necessary.
- The requirements for candidates' experiences to be performed in actual school settings under 19 TAC §228.35(e)(6) and 19 TAC §228.35(e)(8)(A) are waived as necessary.
- The requirements for a minimum number of hours of field-based experience under TEC, §21.051(b), and 19 TAC §228.35(e)(1)(A) and §228.35(e)(1)(B) are waived as necessary.
- The requirements for face-to-face observations under 19 TAC §228.35(g) and 19 TAC §228.35(h) are waived as necessary.
- The requirements for educator and administrator surveys for educator preparation program accountability under 19 TAC §229.3 are waived as necessary.

### 1. **How do programs recommend candidates for the probationary certificate?**

EPPs will use the same process to recommend these candidates as for any probationary certificate. Step by step guidance is available in this document. EPPs will need to provide information about the candidate, verify the certificate, and select district 000005 (TEA Cohort 2020) to recommend.

### 2. **Do programs have to provide formal observations for these candidates on a probationary certificate?**

No. Candidates who have successfully completed an internship or clinical teaching have fulfilled this requirement. These candidates are not completing an internship under the probationary certificate, so formal observations are not required. The exception would be candidates who did not successfully complete an internship under their intern certificate, who are addressed below.

### 3. **Do programs need to mark these candidates as finishers on the finisher records list?**

Yes. If the candidate has completed the EPP requirements, the EPP needs to update the finisher records list in ECOS to note that the candidate is a finisher. Candidates do not need to pass certification exams to be marked as a finisher.

**4. What should programs do with candidates who have not yet had their bachelor's degree conferred?**

When completing a recommendation, EPPs can put a date of degree conferral that is in the future.

**5. Is there any documentation necessary for recommending these certificates?**

Yes. EPPs will need to complete the **Probationary Certificates Recommended** located under [Staff and Educator Issues](#) on TEA's Coronavirus webpage. This form will need to include information for all candidates recommended for a probationary certificate under these conditions. This form will allow TEA to make necessary adjustments in our databases. TEA will provide this form to EPPs.

### Clinical Teaching

**7. With schools and districts closed or moving online, how can our candidates who are completing clinical teaching meet the required number of days? [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**

In accordance with Governor Abbott's waiver, candidates completing clinical teaching during spring 2020 who meet the following criteria will be considered to have successfully met requirements for clinical teaching: 1) Completed at least half of the required days of clinical teaching, a. 35 days for full-day assignments or b. 70 days for half-day assignments 2) Demonstrated proficiency in each of the educator standards for their assignments (to be determined by the preparation program), and 3) Received a recommendation from their field supervisor and cooperating teacher that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate.

**8. How can my candidates who were in clinical teaching this semester but were not able to meet the above criteria still qualify? [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**

In accordance with Governor Abbott's waiver, the requirements for candidates' clinical teaching experiences to be completed in an actual school setting are also waived. This means that these candidates may complete any additional requirement by supporting their cooperating teacher through non-traditional means and may demonstrate proficiency based on alternative arrangements established by the preparation program, such as but not limited to simulated, remote, virtual, or video classroom experiences and reflection.

**9. How can EPPs provide the required number of formal observations for candidates? [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**



In accordance with Governor Abbott’s waiver, all requirements related to field supervision of candidates have been waived, including the number, duration, timing, and format of the observation.

### Internships

**10. With schools and districts closed or moving online, how can our candidates who are completing internships on an Intern or Probationary certification complete their internship? [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**

Per 19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B), an internship is, at minimum, one full school year for the classroom teacher. As defined in 19 TAC §228.2(30), a school year may be defined by a particular public or private school. This means that as districts adapt the definition of a school year based on the situation, the school year associated with active internships will also adapt. Because interns are district employees and subject to the requirements of that district, what qualifies as a full year will be dependent on what the district establishes as its modified calendar. Interns who complete the year in the district, even if shortened, will have completed the year according to the rule. Further, for 3 candidates who began their internship in January, the completion of this semester according to the district’s schedule will count as half of the year.

**11. How can EPPs provide the required number of formal observations for interns? [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**

In accordance with Governor Abbott’s waiver, all requirements related to field supervision of candidates have been waived, including the number, duration, timing, and format of the observation.

### Practicums for Certificates other than Classroom Teachers

**12. How can candidates complete the required hours for their practicums?**

In accordance with Governor Abbott’s waiver, candidates engaging in a practicum during spring 2020 who meet the following criteria will be considered to have successfully met requirements for the practicum:

- Completed at least half of the required hours of the practicum (80 hours)
- Demonstrated proficiency in each of the educator standards for their assignments (to be determined by the preparation program), and
- Received a recommendation from their field supervisor and site supervisor that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate.

**13. How can EPPs provide the required number of formal observations for candidates completing practicums?**



In accordance with Governor Abbott’s waiver, all requirements related to field supervision of candidates have been waived, including the number, duration, timing, and format of the observation

### **Educator Preparation Program Accountability**

**14. With disruptions in educator preparation program operations, will the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) remain in effect for the 2019-2020 accountability year?**

During these times, we know that EPPs have numerous concerns and priorities related to ASEP. Given the interruption of testing, changes and increases in workload for principals and teachers, and disruptions in field experiences, the indicators in the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) have been impacted. TEA will monitor the situation related to accountability and plans to make appropriate recommendations to the State Board for Educator Certification to allow flexibility for EPPs to meet the unique needs of their candidates, institutions, and partner LEAs during this crisis. Given that any ratings would not be calculated until much later in the year, there is time for SBEC to follow the rulemaking schedule and make changes before programs have any impact related to accountability.

**15. Are the principal surveys for April to June still on schedule or will they be canceled due to the COVID-19 illness?**

Governor Abbott has waived the requirements for principals to complete the surveys.

**16. Is the teacher survey related to educator preparation still happening this spring given COVID-19?**

Governor Abbott has waived the requirements for teachers to complete the surveys.

## **Educator Certification Testing Updates [Posted March 26, 2020](#)**

### **Pearson**

#### **Test center closings due to COVID-19 (coronavirus)**

As COVID-19 continues to spread globally, Pearson has extended **the suspension of test delivery at U.S.- and Canada-based Pearson VUE-owned test centers (PPCs) through April 30.** As a result, test appointments at PPCs in this timeframe have been temporarily rescheduled to an appointment in the future to allow candidates to choose how they would like to manage their appointments.

Candidates should check their email often as circumstances continue to change. If candidates have not received email notification of their test appointment being changed, they should plan to attend

as many of the partner sites (some of which may be located at colleges and universities), are making the determination to close or remain open based on their own state and local guidance.

Pearson is [regularly updating COVID-19 information on a dedicated webpage, and that remains the best source for updated information regarding test site closures.](#)

**To schedule or reschedule a test appointment:**

Please note that only test centers that are open will appear in the seat availability tool and during the scheduling process.

**If you are ill on the day of your test appointment:**

Do not report to the test center. If you miss your appointment due to illness, please review the absentee policy for emergency circumstances, which includes information about requesting a refund.

**If your appointment was rescheduled by Pearson, you may withdraw your registration for a full refund.**

Please check the withdrawal and refund [policy](#) for more information.

**If you have any questions or need help:**

Please contact [Customer Support](#) at 1-800-877-4599 Mon–Fri: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Central time, excluding holidays; Sat: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Central time, excluding holidays (*Automated Information System available 24 hours daily*)

**ETS – Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL)**

**Modifications to the Spring 2020 PASL assessment [submission schedule.](#)**

Due to the nationwide impact the Coronavirus is having, ETS has extended the deadline for the PASL assessment. Based on the changes to the submission dates, score reporting deadlines will also be impacted. This decision was made taking into consideration candidates who are unable to complete their work by the original deadline due to sudden school closures.

We will continue to provide updates periodically. This information is also available at <https://www.ets.org/ppa>.

**Task 3 video created in a virtual school environment**

During this time of self-isolation, ETS® understands that your ability to complete the PASL assessment requirements may be impacted by school closures and restrictions on travel. In response, ETS is accepting Task 3 videos created in virtual school environments. While for many candidates it may be

preferable to delay Task 3 submission until you are able to prepare a face-to-face video for the May 20, 2020 extended deadline, ETS will also accept and score Task 3 videos created in a virtual school environment. Candidates will still be responsible for providing all evidence necessary to meet the current task requirements and will be scored against those requirements.

Importantly, candidates have the option for a free registration voucher for the Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 submission window if they are not able to submit all three tasks by the May 20, 2020 extended deadline. See the final paragraph for more information about submitting in the fall or next spring.

The submission system has specific requirements as to the type and size of video files that are acceptable for uploading. The video file must meet these requirements to upload successfully. The requirement for two video segments combined into one file still applies. Please refer to the PASL assessment website for [file requirements](#). Candidates are still required to obtain and upload signed permission forms from individuals who appear in the online video.

When considering an online platform as an option, candidates should review all of the guiding prompts and activities and think about how their particular version of online facilitation will enable them to respond completely to the guiding prompts for each step and provide the required evidence to support those responses. For instance, does the submission show interaction between the candidate and colleagues while planning or implementing a plan? Can the candidate be seen meeting with the members of a collaborative team and show how they are impacting the school culture? Can the candidate be seen facilitating reflection among the collaborative team members? The evidence that the candidate provides to address all of the task requirements such as those listed above and all of the guiding prompts as well as the rubric are what raters will be looking for in both a face-to-face and an online platform video submission.

Candidates who are unable to complete the assessment this spring will be eligible to receive a registration voucher to take the PASL assessment over the next academic year. Candidates should contact ETS at [ppa@ets.org](mailto:ppa@ets.org) or 1-855-628-5088 (Monday-Friday 8 am-6 pm ET) once they have confirmed they will not be able to complete the assessment, or if they have additional questions.

## edTPA

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Governor Abbott's waiver, the requirement that an internship or clinical teaching experience take place in an "actual school setting" rather than a virtual school setting has been waived for candidates completing clinical teaching during spring 2020 and interns engaging in internships during spring 2020. As a result, many teacher candidates may have opportunities to teach students in non-traditional settings, including virtual learning environments, as part of their internship or clinical teaching experience. To this end, SCALE and Pearson have developed guidance for candidates that may be teaching in a virtual learning environment (VLE) when completing edTPA.

### Guidance for Candidates Completing edTPA in a Virtual Learning Environment

A teacher candidate teaching in a VLE must first work with their educator preparation program (EPP), in partnership with the school district, to determine if the online learning platform will permit video recording of instruction and collection of other artifacts, such as student work samples. Alternative evidence submitted in lieu of standard artifacts and evidence must still demonstrate all the required elements measured within each task and meet all of the technical specifications as indicated in each subject-specific edTPA handbook. The VLE must be certified as a viable option by the EPP in which the teacher candidate is currently enrolled.

Guidance on the requirements for participating in a VLE, including evidence considerations for materials collected as evidence, are available in the **Guidance for edTPA in An Alternative Arrangement: Virtual Learning Environment** resource. If the edTPA Coordinator believes that the VLE is viable enough to allow for the collection of evidence that meets the requirements of the assessment, they and the teacher candidate must complete the **Request for edTPA Alternative Arrangements: Virtual Learning Environment** form and email it to [edTPAEPPSupport@pearson.com](mailto:edTPAEPPSupport@pearson.com) for review and approval. *Note: Please download the form to complete all fields.* Confirmation of receipt will be emailed to the candidate and edTPA Coordinator within one business day of submission.

Once the Request for edTPA Alternative Arrangements: Virtual Learning Environment has been approved by Pearson, the teacher candidate and program will receive an acknowledgment of this approval, along with detailed submission procedures in order to complete edTPA. Please note that these procedures are applicable only to candidates whose program has submitted a completed request form to Pearson in advance of the submission and received confirmation of the approved request.

For access to the **Guidance for edTPA in An Alternative Arrangement: Virtual Learning Environment** and **Request for edTPA Alternative Arrangements: Virtual Learning Environment** forms, please visit [Impact of COVID-19 on the edTPA Pilot](#).

### **Additional Information**

For more information related to the impact of COVID-19 on candidates completing edTPA (e.g., extensions to registration, additional submission windows), please visit [Impact of COVID-19 on the edTPA Pilot](#). Please contact [Customer Support](#) at 1-866-565-4872 Mon–Fri: 8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Central time, excluding holidays.