



# **Undergraduate**

## **Teacher Candidate Handbook**

Field-Based Programs, Admissions & Certifications

**Fall 2024**

*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!

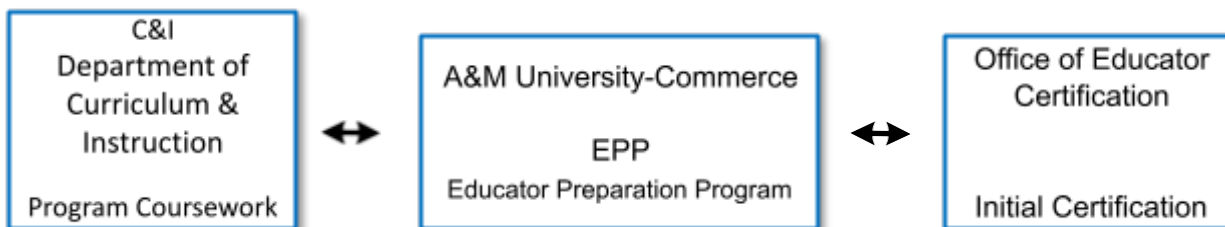
**~The Department of Curriculum and Instruction team**

# A&M University-Commerce Program Governance

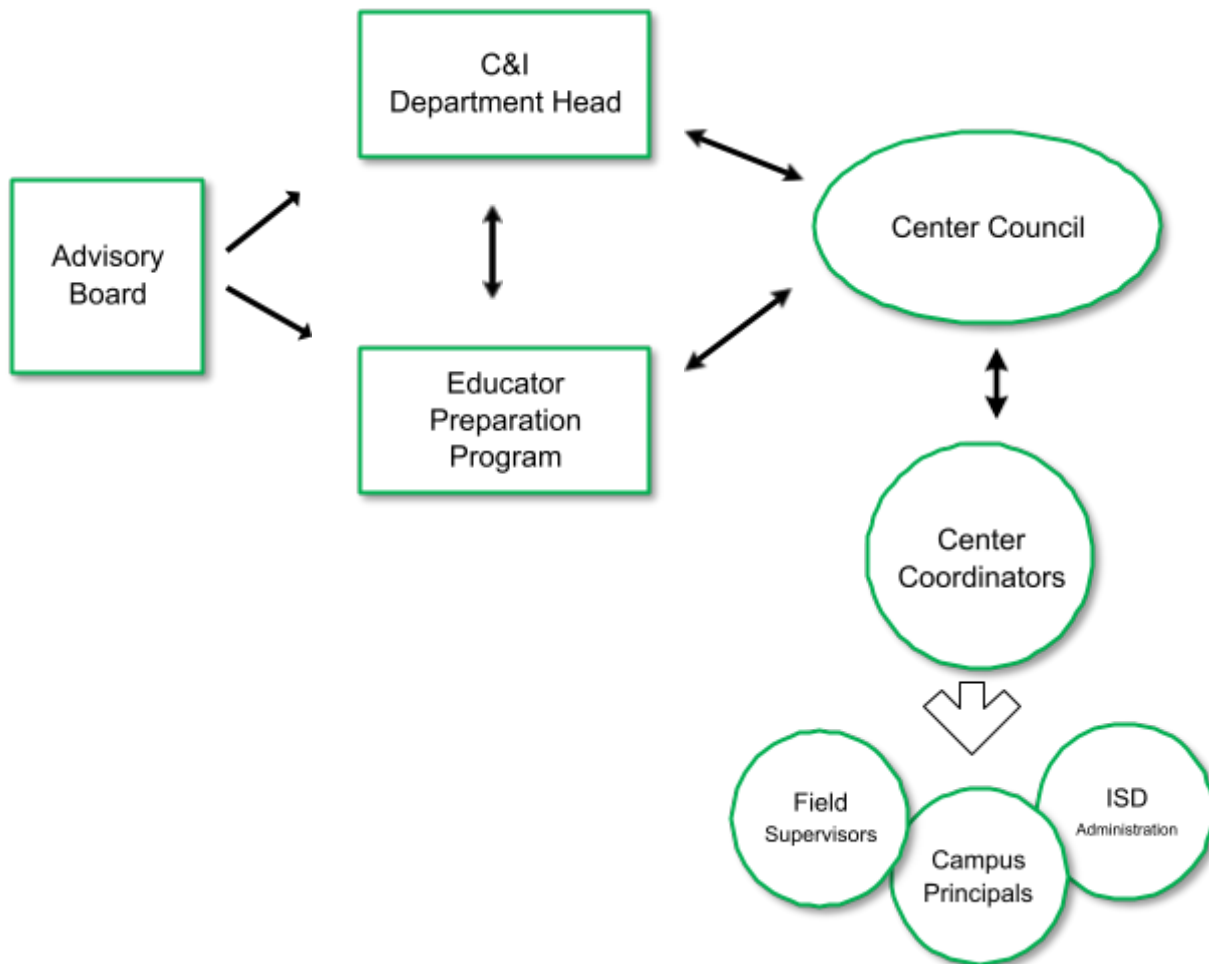
**State  
Governance**



**University  
Governance**



**Shared  
Governance**



## A&M University-Commerce Key Contacts

Quick link: [Undergraduate Field-Based and Teacher Certification Programs](#)

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Secondary - All-Level Center:  
Center Coordinator:

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## 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 experience the teacher candidate 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. Successful completion of an educator preparation program is one of the requirements for being recommended 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 (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.

**Clinical Teaching Semester I** - The first of two final semesters in the program, consisting of a field placement and seminar coursework. *During the first half* of semester I, 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.

**Clinical Teaching Semester II** – 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.*

**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. Assessment of appropriate dispositions for teaching and professionalism are assessed through the admissions essay.

**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, 50 hours; (5) 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. Field supervisors receive annual EPP training and TEA-approved field supervisor training at least once every three years.

**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.

**Paid Clinical Teaching (selected districts)** - The teacher candidate (TC) is a teacher candidate who participates in a year-long clinical experience under the guidance of a highly effective cooperating teacher (CT). A clinical teacher observes and learns to teach on the job in preparation for a teaching career while earning a degree. For a full school year, full-time, the clinical teacher works alongside the CT. TCs are actively engaged in as many elements of the classroom as possible from the very beginning of the residency year. The TC will gradually assume greater responsibilities throughout the year as they develop as a teacher. Compensated roles must not compromise learning goals for future teachers. The teacher candidate 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.

**Seminars** – For Clinical Teaching Semester I seminars, students will have weekly seminars at the designated campus location and vary by center. For final semester Clinical Teaching Semester II 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 Clinical Teaching II 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 Clinical Teaching Semester I and Clinical Teaching Semester II

- o 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
- o To be placed in a classroom with a cooperating teacher, who also has the same credentials, for two full semesters
- o To observe the behavior and learning styles of students in a world of diverse cultures and expectations
- o To develop high levels of teaching competence through guided teaching experience
- o To learn how to create and use effective lesson plans for instruction
- o To become competent in creating and using instructional materials and strategies
- o To effectively use technology for instruction and communication
- o To establish open communication to support and be an asset to the cooperating school and teacher education program
- o To become familiar with the organization and programs of the public-school
- o To establish professional relationships with fellow teachers, students, administrators and parents
- o To engage in self-evaluation and professional goal setting
- o 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 outlined 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
  - *Teacher Candidates 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)
- 15 minute walk-throughs of lessons by cooperating teachers and field supervisors
- The walk-throughs will be followed by a post assessment.
- 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

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 teacher candidates and principals. Most decisions about the activities and experiences each teacher candidate will have are determined by the ILT through discussion and consensus. The ILTs are usually composed of at least one cooperating teacher, a teacher candidate, and university field supervisor.

A *cooperating teacher* is a public school classroom teacher who has volunteered to work with a teacher candidate 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 a teacher candidate 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 teacher candidate and the teacher candidate can 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 a teacher candidate 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 the teacher candidate on an ILT, to assist cooperating teachers in planning and coordinating assignments and activities with the teacher candidate, 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.

A *Clinical Teacher in Semester I* 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 teacher candidate is to assist the teacher in achieving his/her professional instructional goals. The teacher candidate should listen, observe, question, reflect, learn, and contribute to the learning experiences of the classroom. Most of semester I is spent becoming acclimated to the school setting and culture so that increased awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity can be assimilated.

A *Clinical Teacher in Semester II* is a university-based student who has successfully completed semester I 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 teacher candidate is to assist the teacher in achieving his/her professional instructional goals. The teacher candidate should also provide increasing instructional and management leadership in the classroom as the semester progresses.

The primary duties of each ILT are:

- (a) to facilitate communication among the members of the ILT so that the students in the classroom benefit from the activities in the program;
- (b) 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 clinical teacher;
- (c) to coordinate teaching schedules, duties, and experiences for teacher candidates;
- (d) to provide collaborative feedback and reflection for evaluation of teacher candidates.

## 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.

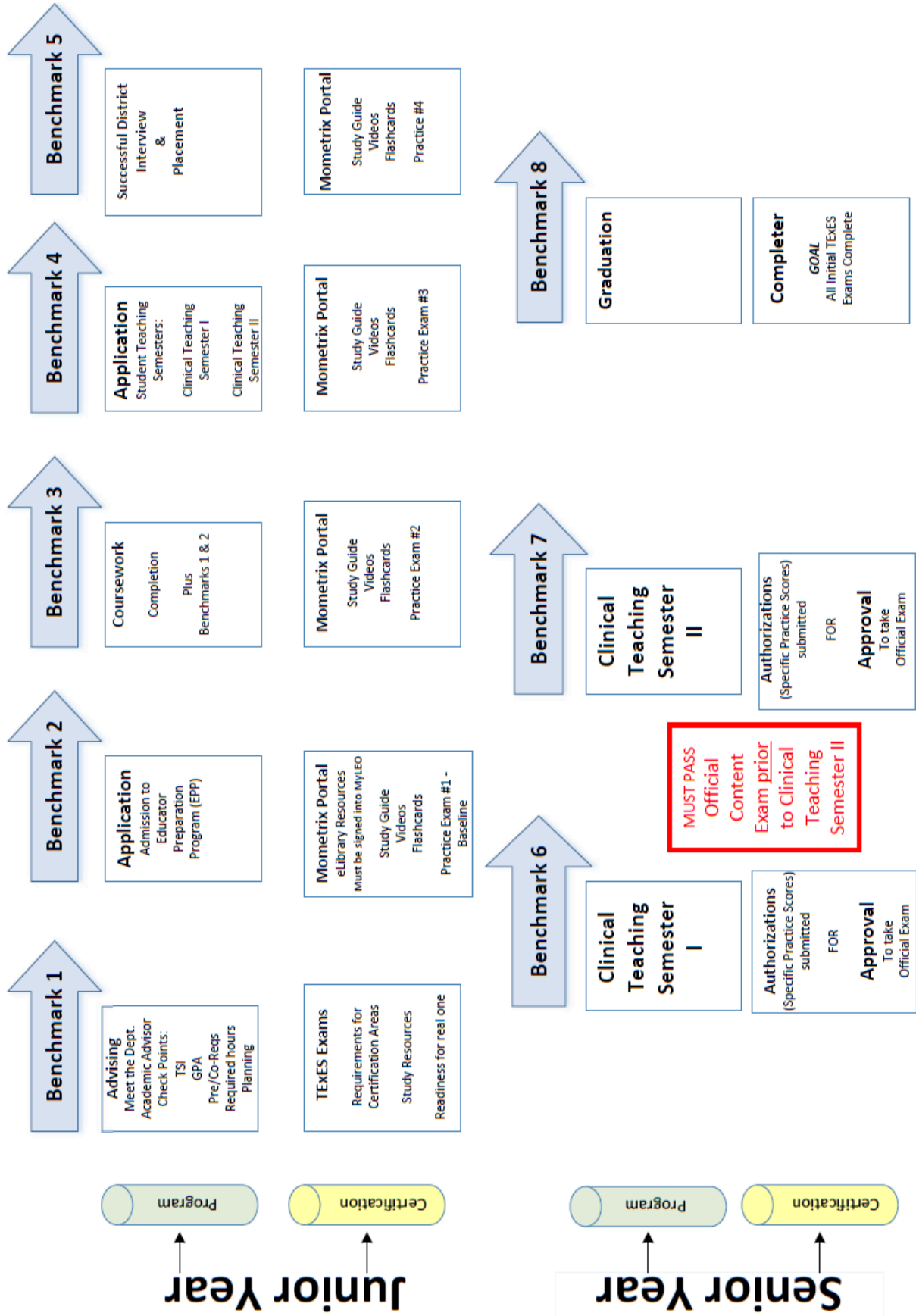
The Field-Based undergraduate program has two components that run parallel from start to finish culminating in graduation from A&M-Commerce's Educator Preparation Program as well as successfully completing the necessary certification exams per the initial target certification(s).

Please read through these areas carefully.

<b>Elementary and Middle Level Program</b>
<b>Benchmark 1</b> Academic Advising and readiness (Checks for: TSI/Course Completion/ GPA)
<b>Benchmark 2</b> Admission to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP)
<b>Benchmark 3</b> Completion of coursework and prior benchmarks
<b>Benchmark 4</b> Admission to Student Teaching semesters
<b>Benchmark 5</b> Successful district interviews & placement
<b>Benchmark 6</b> Student Teaching Requirements – Clinical Teaching Semester I
<b>Benchmark 7</b> Student Teaching Requirements – Clinical Teaching Semester II
<b>Benchmark 8</b> Recommendation for certification

# At a Glance Graphic

## At a Glance - Progression Through the A&M-Commerce Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Elementary and Middle Level Areas





# Benchmarks

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

### Benchmark One –

#### 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.**

- o **Most school districts require fingerprinting, which requires a social security number (SSN) for placements. Please talk to your advisor if you do not have a SSN to ensure we can make proper arrangements for your placement.**
- o Completion of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of college coursework; CoEHS Mentor Center provides course completion check
- o Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements met
- o Minimum overall GPA of 2.50 as a prerequisite to ELED 300 and RDG 350 [EC-6/4-8 Only]
- o Minimum overall GPA of 2.75 as a prerequisite to SED 300 and RDG 380 [All level/Secondary]
- o Degree evaluation in myLEO (DegreeWorks) to verify courses and requirements still to be met throughout the student's program
- o Review of core coursework for appropriate grades and completion (usually after earning 54 hours of core and interdisciplinary courses)
- o Co- and prerequisites met (See Table 1)

**Table 1 – Course Co/Prerequisites**

Course	Co/Prerequisites	Overall GPA Prerequisites
ELED 300	Pre/Co: ELED 200	2.50
RDG 350		2.50
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 - Admission to Educator Preparation Program

### Requirements for admission to the EPP

- o Minimum overall GPA of 2.65 is required for admission into the EPP
- o Minimum 12 semester hours completed content area-target certification, ie., EC-6 Core Subjects;
- o Minimum 15 semester hours completed content area-target certification, ie., All Math and Science
- o 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 and EPP admission application processing fee of \$50, applied at time of application. Students will identify their chosen program on the application:
  - EC-6/4-8 programs
  - Paraprofessional-Aide program
  - Secondary/All-Level program
- Complete a writing prompt within the application. This will be scored for readiness.
- Results of admission are recorded within TK20. If a candidate meets admission requirements, an Acceptance Survey is sent to the candidate's Leomail and through 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 the candidate not being admitted to the EPP.

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 writing prompt 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 prior to beginning student teaching placement:**

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

- o Overall GPA of 2.75 is required for all candidates;
- o Completion of a minimum of 80 semester credit hours of college coursework/degree plan
- o Overall GPA of 2.75 is a prerequisite to RDG 360, RDG 370 and RDG 380.
- o Completion of all professional development/teacher certification, education core, and specialization / major courses required before 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.
- o Completion of 50 Field Based Experience Hours. These hours include a combination of observation and actively engaged (interactive) hours and are connected to ELED 300, SED 300/330, RDG 350, RDG 360, and RDG 380 (4-8). A successful rating from the observing mentor teacher/district is required.  
\*If the hours are not completed and/or the teacher candidate receives an unsuccessful evaluation from the teacher/district this could impact an applicant from moving forward and/or initiate a 'fit to teach' growth plan. (See Table 2)

**Table 2 - Field Based Experience Hours**

Teacher Candidates must complete 50 Field Based Experience Hours after admission to EPP and prior to Clinical Teaching. At least 25 hours must be actively engaged (interactive) and up to 25 should be observation.	
<b>Certification Area</b>	<b>Course Requirements</b>
EC-6	ELED 300: 10 observation/ 10 interactive RDG 350: 10 observation RDG 360: 5 observation/ 15 interactive
4-8 ELAR	ELED 300: 10 observation/ 10 interactive RDG 360: 5 observation/ 15 interactive RDG 380: 5 observation/ 5 interactive
4-8 Math, Science, Math/Science	ELED 300: 15 observation/ 15 interactive RDG 380: 10 observation/10 interactive

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

# Benchmark Four

## Complete the Application for Student Teaching

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 Clinical Teaching Semester I.

- o **Applicants should apply the semester prior to starting Clinical Teaching Semester I**; *once they have met with the departmental advisor regarding readiness.*
- o Application is an online process within TK20. (*components listed below*)
- o Application opens on the first class day; check website for closure date
- o Applications may not be processed past this date.
- o Applicants must decide which route (Traditional route or Paid Clinical Teaching route) and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> district choices – *see explanations of these in the Definition section – NOT all districts offer a paid clinical teaching.*
- o EC-6/4-8 complete two semesters of student teaching

The online application within TK20 consists of the following:

- Choose path - traditional or paid clinical teaching, 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 - **read the orientation PowerPoint carefully!**
- Questions related to the Orientation PowerPoint - email [Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu](mailto:Mitzi.Hughes@tamuc.edu)
- Students must meet all requirements under benchmark three
- Departmental review and approval to interview and begin Clinical Teaching Semester I (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 Clinical Teaching Semester I 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.

## 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 (Teacher Education Admission, Retention and Appeals Committee) for permission to begin the Clinical Teaching Semester, with the following **exceptions**:*

A student **may not** appeal:

- to begin the 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 clinical teaching" 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

# 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: <https://www.tamuc.edu/programs/undergraduate-field-based-teacher-certification-programs/>
- 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.
- If an applicant has formally accepted the invitation to the Undergraduate Field-Based and Teacher Certification Programs and the ISD, then something occurs to change their status of continuing with the program, **it is the responsibility of the teacher 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](#))

## 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.

## 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- (Clinical Teaching Semester I)

\*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 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

### Clinical Teaching Semester II

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 teaching semester II regardless, whether they choose to walk or not
- Application for certification should be initiated toward the end of clinical semester II

## Benchmark Eight

### 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
- Must have passed content exam, PPR, and if applicable STR.
- The degree is conferred by the Registrar’s Office, prior to recommendation.

### Key Contacts after graduation

#### Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services

Alleigh Phillips, Exam Administration Coordinator	903.468.3082	<a href="mailto:Alleigh.Phillips@tamuc.edu">Alleigh.Phillips@tamuc.edu</a>
Bob Nottingham, Certification Coordinator I	903.886.5643	<a href="mailto:Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu">Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu</a>
Sherri Harwell, Director	903.468.8186	<a href="mailto:Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu">Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu</a>

#### Office of Registrar

Theresa Glover, Graduation/DegreeWorks Coordinator	903.886.5429	<a href="mailto:Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu">Theresa.Glover@tamuc.edu</a>
Amy Barrow, Transcript Analyst	903.886.5448	<a href="mailto:Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu">Amy.Barrow@tamuc.edu</a>

# TEExES: 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](#) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§233.1\(e\)](#). 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 “TEExES” exams.

### Teacher Certification in Texas

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

- be Texas Success Initiative (TSI) complete,
- complete 50 hours of field based experience,
- earn a bachelor's degree,
- complete an approved educator certification program,
- complete a clinical experience
- 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’ TEExES 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 TEExES examinations.

Table 3: Current *Initial Certifications and requirements*

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



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

<b>Testing Attempt</b>	<b>Expectations for Testing Approval for EC-6 &amp; 4-8</b>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> attempt</i>	Purchase Certify Teacher and select the online interactive practice option. The study tracker should be enabled. \$35 for 3 years access (with TAMUC promo code – TEXES4728) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete 100% of the study tracker</li> <li>• Score at least 80%                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-8 – specific content exam</li> <li>EC-6 – <u>all 5 areas</u> on the Core Subjects exam</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Submit a request to take the TExES exam by completing this <a href="#">form</a> .
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> attempt</i>	If approval for a <b>second attempt</b> is needed, the student will be required to submit <i>additional evidence of readiness</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An <u>overall</u> passing score report of <b>80% or higher in each subject area assessed on the Representative Exam</b> in the testing center on campus.</li> </ul> <p><b>There is a 30 day waiting period between Representative Exam attempts.</b></p> Upon completion of the Representative Exam your center coordinator will receive your scores, share them with you and talk with you about your next steps.

## 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.

- **Most school districts require fingerprinting, which requires a social security number (SSN) for placements. Please talk to your advisor if you do not have a SSN to ensure we can make proper arrangements for your placement.**
- 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 or 330/50 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	50
SED 330 <i>STEM Only</i>	2.65	50
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 Undergraduate Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Admission Application. A Texas Education Agency (TEA) assessment fee of \$35 and EPP admission application processing fee of \$50, applied at time of application.
- Complete a written prompt within the application. This will be scored by a faculty member for readiness.
- Results of admission are recorded within Tk20. If a candidate meets admission requirements, an Acceptance Survey is sent to the candidate's Leomail and through 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 Acceptance Survey will result in failure to be admitted to the EPP.
- 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 writing prompt 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.
- Complete 50 hours of field experience (associated with SED 300 or 330)

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 clinical teaching 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, check website for closure date
- Applications may not be processed past this date
- Applicants will choose:
  - between traditional unpaid route or paid clinical teaching
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> district choices – *see explanations of these in the Definition section – NOT all districts offer a paid teacher clinical teaching*
- SED/All-level candidates complete one semester of student teaching, except STEM candidates may have the option for a year-long clinical teaching (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. Clinical Teaching I refers to candidates in the first semester of a year-long residency.

The online application within TK20 consists of the following:

- District Request (includes a list of districts that offer pay for clinical teachers)
- 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. 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 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 clinical teaching" 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.

# Benchmark Five

## Field-Based Placement within our partner districts

The purpose of clinical teaching 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 clinical 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)

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

Secondary/All-level candidates typically complete one semester of clinical teaching (student teaching). However, some STEM majors may complete a oneyear clinical teaching. STEM majors completing one year clinical teaching should read all of the clinical teaching 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 two semester clinical teaching. All other candidates should proceed to the Clinical Teaching Section.

Contact for STEM majors – [Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu](mailto:Julie.Mills@tamuc.edu) or [Clay.Stanfield@tamuc.edu](mailto:Clay.Stanfield@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 clinical teaching semester regardless if they choose to walk or not.

# Benchmark 7

## RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Teacher candidates:

- Must be enrolled in appropriate concentration coursework
- 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
- 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 content and PPR TExES exams needed for their level or subject area(s) of certification
- Must apply for graduation at the beginning of their clinical teaching I or clinical teaching semester II respective of their clinical experience, regardless, whether they choose to walk or not
- Application for certification should be initiated toward the end of clinical semester II

## Key Contacts after graduation

### Office of Educator Certification and Academic Services

Alleigh Phillips, Exam Administration Coordinator	903.468.3082	<a href="mailto:Alleigh.Phillips@tamuc.edu">Alleigh.Phillips@tamuc.edu</a>
Bob Nottingham, Certification Coordinator I	903.886.5643	<a href="mailto:Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu">Bob.Nottingham@tamuc.edu</a>
Sherri Harwell, Director	903.468.8186	<a href="mailto:Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu">Sherri.Harwell@tamuc.edu</a>

### Office of Registrar

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# 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](#) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§233.1\(e\)](#). 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 Phillips, 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
<b>Secondary &amp; All-Level</b>	<p>All certifications require a TExES content exam. <i>Authorizations for <u>content exams</u> come from the individual content area/major departments.</i></p> <p>All areas take the TExES (160) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Authorizations come from C&amp;I Dept.</p> <p>*Supplemental - <u>ONLY</u> if they are a part of your degree plan</p> <p>Approval processes for taking certification exams will be provided by the center coordinator.</p>

# 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.

### Requirements 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.

### Educational Aide Job Placement

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 cooperating teacher in an authentic classroom setting.
3. Engage in instructional activities through which 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 five (5) hours per day / three (3) days per week in the subject area and grade level of certification sought.
5. Complete clinical student teaching for two full semesters.
6. Must hold educational aide certification from TEA.

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.

## Coursework & Certification Requirements

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](#) 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. In order to get this certification, the cooperating teacher must have ESL certification and students in the classroom must be identified as ELL.
  - If a candidate is seeking an EC-6 Special Education (SPED) supplemental certification, they must have a placement in both a general education and special education setting.

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 after two long semesters of inactivity.

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): 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 Clinical I semester or Clinical Teaching II 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 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 clinical experience be terminated. This recommendation will result in the teacher candidate no longer being retained in the educator preparation program.

**Reasons for dismissal** from clinical teaching 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
- 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 Clinical Teaching:**

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 clinical teacher that the teacher candidate's clinical experience be terminated. After this occurs, the university field-supervisor or 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.