

Educator Certification Examination Retake FAQs

Beginning September 1, 2015 candidates will be limited to four attempts to retake any educator certification examination. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is implementing this change to Texas Education Code §21.048 in response to HB 2205, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015. The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may prescribe rules in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) to administer these changes. More information will be shared as rules are adopted. The following paragraphs provide answers to frequently asked questions regarding this change to statute.

[I have never taken a certification test. How does this change affect me?](#)

[How do I apply for a waiver to the four retake limitation?](#)

[I failed a certification test before September 1, 2015. How does this change affect me?](#)

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[How does the five attempt limit apply to the Core Subjects examinations?](#)

[I have never taken a certification test before. How does this change affect me?](#)

An individual will have five attempts to take a certification examination. The five attempts include the first attempt to pass the examination and four retakes. The five attempts include any of the test approval methods (PACT, EPP, out of state/country, charter, and CBE). If the individual is unable to successfully pass the examination after five attempts, the individual will not be allowed to take the examination again unless he or she is granted a waiver for one more attempt. If an individual is not able to pass an examination that is a requirement for a given certification, the individual will not be able to be issued a probationary or standard certificate in that certification field.

[How do I apply for a waiver to the four retake limitation?](#)

The SBEC has defined the waiver application process in [Chapter 230, Subchapter C of the TAC](#). With this change in statute, it is even more important for educator preparation programs to establish benchmarks and structured assessments of an educator candidate's progress towards certification. Educator candidates and preparation programs need to work together to determine readiness for attempting any certification exam. Educators who are not seeking test approval through an educator preparation program need to determine their own readiness when seeking test approval through one of the other methods (PACT, out of state, charter, and CBE). Candidates should consult with their educator preparation program about applying for a testing waiver. To request a waiver application, please call or [email Rebecca McCoy](mailto:Rebecca.McCoy@tea.texas.gov) at (512) 936-0761, or Rebecca.McCoy@tea.texas.gov.

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I failed a certification test before September 1, 2015? How does this change affect me?

All attempts to pass a certification examination before September 1, 2015 count as one attempt for purposes of the statute. After September 1, 2015 an individual will have four opportunities to retake the examination regardless of the number of times the individual attempted the examination in the past.

How long do I have to wait before I can retake an examination?

If an individual fails an examination, the individual must wait 45 calendar days before retaking the same examination. For example, if an individual fails the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (160) examination, the individual cannot retake that examination for 45 days.

For the Core Subjects examinations, an individual must wait 45 calendar days between the initial examination (291 or 211) and an attempt to retake the whole examination or any subject area subtest (801–809). After the 45-day waiting period from the initial examination, if an individual chooses to take a single subject area subtest (e.g. Science 804), the individual does not have to wait 45 days before retaking a different subtest (e.g. Social Studies 803). If an individual fails a subject area subtest (e.g. Science 804), the individual does have to wait 45 days before the individual can retake the same subject area subtest (e.g. Science 804). After the first attempt, each testing session counts as another attempt, whether the session included the entire examination or one of the subject area subtests; therefore, a candidate is discouraged from taking individual subtests, unless the candidate is down to the last subtest needed to pass.

Since both the Generalist and Core Subjects test qualify me to teach the same subjects and grades, do they count together toward the five attempt limit?

Because the Generalist and Core Subjects examinations are different examinations, they do not count together toward the five-attempt limit. An individual could have taken the Generalist examination five times and still be allowed to take the Core Subjects examination five times.

I passed a subject area subtest of the Core Subjects examination. Can I be certified in that subject?

An individual must pass all parts of the Core Subjects examination in order to meet the examination requirement for the Core Subjects certificate. If an individual only wants to be certified in an individual subject, the person should attempt a single subject examination in the appropriate grade range. For example, educator candidates who want to teach in grades 4-8 have a variety of options. In addition to the Core Subject 4-8 exam, there are individual subject certification tests such as the English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 (117), Mathematics 4-8 (115), Science 4-8 (116) or Social Studies 4-8 (118) exams, or combination tests such as the English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies 4-8 (113) or Mathematics/Science 4-8 (114).

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If I fail a test five times, can I still be a teacher?

With this change in statute, it is even more important for educator preparation programs to establish benchmarks and structured assessments of an educator candidate's progress towards certification. Educator candidates and preparation programs need to work together to determine readiness for attempting any certification exam, especially the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam. Whether an individual can still be a teacher if an individual fails an examination five times depends on a number of factors that could include a waiver or pursuit of a different certification field. For example, educator candidates who want to teach in grades 4-8 have a variety of options. In addition to the Core Subject 4-8 exam, there are individual subject certification tests such as the English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 (117), Mathematics 4-8 (115), Science 4-8 (116) or Social Studies 4-8 (118) exams, or combination tests such as the English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies 4-8 (113) or Mathematics/Science 4-8 (114).

I did not want my test to be scored so I chose to cancel the test at the end of the test session. Does this count as a first attempt or retake?

If an individual chooses to cancel an examination score at the end of a testing session, the examination does not count as one of the five attempts. If an individual chooses to cancel an examination score at the end of a testing session, the scores will not be reported and the scores cannot be reinstated. The individual will not receive a refund if the scores are canceled. If the individual wants to retake the examination after canceling the scores, the individual must wait at least 45 days before retaking the examination.

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How does this change relate to the Core Subjects examinations, since I have to pass all of the subtests in order to pass the overall test?

An individual has five attempts to pass all portions of the Core Subjects examinations. For the Core Subjects EC–6 (291) exam, an individual has five attempts to pass all five subject area subtests (801–805). For the Core Subjects 4–8 (211) exam, an individual has five attempts to pass all four subject area subtests (806–809). An individual is required to attempt the entire Core Subjects exam (291 or 211) on the first attempt. After the first attempt, each testing session counts as another attempt, whether the session included the entire examination or one of the subject area subtests. Individuals retaking the overall Core Subjects exams (291 or 211) are required to view all of the test questions in each subject area, even if they have previously passed one or more of the subject area subtests. In order to quickly progress through a subject area subtest that was previously passed, the individual should view, but not answer, each test question in the section. Individuals should also be careful not to skip through subject area subtests that they *do* intend to take. When an individual completes a subject area subtest, they cannot go back to that subtest again. The table below provides three examples of how Core Subjects attempts are calculated:

Attempt	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
One	Initial 291: passed 801; failed 802, 803, 804 & 805	Initial 291: failed 801, 802, 803, 804 & 805	Initial 291: passed 801, 802, 803 & 804; failed 805
Two	Retake 291: passed 802; failed 803, 804 & 805	Retake 291: passed 801; failed 802, 803, 804 & 805	Take 805: failed 805
Three	Retake 291: passed 803; failed 804 & 805	Retake 291: passed 802; failed 803, 804 & 805	Retake 805: failed 805
Four	Retake 291: passed 804; failed 805	Retake 291: passed 803; failed 804 & 805	Retake 805: failed 805
Five	Take 805: passed 805	Retake 291: passed 804; failed 805	Retake 805: failed 805
Result	Passed 291	Failed 291; seek waiver for additional 805 attempt OR seek other certification field	Failed 291; seek waiver for additional 805 attempt OR seek other certification field