

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) adopts amendments to 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §§234.1, 234.3, 234.5, and 234.7, concerning military service members, military spouses, and military veterans. The amendments are adopted without changes to the proposed text as published in the October 18, 2024 issue of the *Texas Register* (49 TexReg 8465) and will not be republished. The amendments add language specific to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), allowing the portability of licenses for active-duty military service members or the spouse of a military service member, and provide technical edits to clarify existing language, alphabetize definitions, and remove duplicative language where necessary. The amendments expand the number of individuals eligible to become certified educators in Texas.

REASONED JUSTIFICATION: The SBEC rules in 19 TAC Chapter 234 consolidate all military-related provisions into one chapter for all members of the military community (i.e., military service members, military spouses, and military veterans) and related individuals subject to these provisions through statute (military veterans, peace officers, fire protection personnel, emergency medical services personnel, and qualified instructors for the Community College of the Air Force).

At the July 2024 SBEC meeting, Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff provided SBEC with an overview of the provisions of the chapter as well as proposed technical edits to alphabetize, re-number, and strike duplicative information. TEA staff also discussed the addition of language added to the SCRA by the U.S. Congress to allow service members and the spouses of military service members to use their professional licenses and certificates when they relocate due to military orders.

The following is a description of the adopted amendments.

§234.1. Purpose.

The adopted amendment to 19 TAC §234.1 incorporates technical edits and adds new subsection (c) related to the SCRA to incorporate the federally mandated Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022 (H.R. 7939), which allows a military service member or the spouse of a military service member to use their license and certificates in certain circumstances when they relocate to another state due to military orders.

§234.3. Definitions.

The adopted amendment to 19 TAC §234.3 alphabetizes and re-numbers definitions relevant to effective implementation of this chapter.

§234.5. Certification of Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans.

The adopted amendment to 19 TAC §234.5 makes the following technical edits for clarification: in subsection (b), adds the phrase "Following completion of the review of credentials,"; strikes the phrase "As soon as practicable after the issuance of a one-year certificate"; strikes the phrase "in writing or by email" to more accurately reflect the current process of placing the results of an educator's credentials review in his or her online certification account for access and review; adds text to include the temporary certificate; and strikes subsection (c) because it is duplicative and re-letters the subsequent subsections.

§234.7. Renewal and Continuing Education Requirements for Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans.

The adopted amendment to 19 TAC §234.7 strikes subsection (d) since there is not a time limit imposed on any individual related to certificate renewal.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES: The public comment period on the proposal began October 18, 2024, and ended November 18, 2024. The SBEC also provided an opportunity for registered oral and written comments on the proposal at the December 6, 2024 meeting's public comment period in accordance with the SBEC board operating policies and procedures. No public comments were received on the proposal.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) took no action on the review of the amendments to §§234.1, 234.3, 234.5, and 234.7 at the January 31, 2025 SBOE meeting.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY. The amendments are adopted under Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.041(b)(2), which requires the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to adopt rules that specify the classes of educator certificates to be issued, including emergency certificates; TEC, §21.041(b)(4), which requires the SBEC to adopt rules that specify the requirements for the issuance and renewal of an educator certificate; TEC, §21.044(a),

which requires the SBEC to adopt rules establishing training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program; TEC, §21.0444, which requires the SBEC to adopt rules for issuing a temporary certification to teach career and technology education for certain military service members and first responders; TEC, §21.052(b-1), which requires the SBEC to adopt rules to establish procedures to establish residency and expedite processing of certification applications submitted by a military veteran or military spouse; TEC, §21.052(c), which states the SBEC can specify the term of a temporary certificate issued under this subsection; TEC, §21.052(d-1), which requires the SBEC to issue a three-year temporary certificate to eligible military spouses of active-duty service members; TEC, §21.052(f), which requires the SBEC to maintain an Internet website that outlines the procedures for military community members to obtain certification in Texas; TEC, §21.052(i), which defines active-duty service, lists the branches of the United States armed forces, and confirms the members of the military community eligible for processes established to certify educators from outside the state; TEC, §21.0525, which requires the SBEC to adopt rules for issuing a temporary teaching certificate for certain persons with experience as instructors for the Community College of the Air Force; TEC, §21.054, which requires the SBEC to adopt rules establishing a process for identifying continuing education courses and programs that fulfill educators' continuing education requirements; and TEC, §21.458(a-2), which specifies that a school district shall assign a mentor teacher to a classroom teacher who has been issued a temporary certificate to teach career and technology education under TEC, §21.0444, for at least two years; and Texas Occupations Code (TOC), §55.001, which defines key terms and identifies the individuals relevant to the processing and support of members of the military community; TOC, §55.002, which provides clarification and guidelines for implementing fee exemptions for members of the military community; TOC, §55.003, which states military service members are eligible to receive a two-year extension of time to complete requirements for license renewal; TOC, §55.004(a)-(c), which requires state agencies to adopt rules for issuance of licensure to members of the military community and provides alternatives to become eligible for licensure; TOC, §55.004(d), which requires state agencies to adopt rules to allow military service members to use the same options as military spouses to meet the residency and other state-specific requirements for licensure; TOC, §55.0041, which requires state agencies to establish a process to identify jurisdictions that have licensing requirements that are substantially equivalent to the requirements for the license in this state and to verify that the member or spouse is licensed in good standing in such a jurisdiction; TOC, §55.005(a), which requires a state agency that issues a license must do so no later than 30 days following the date that a military service member, military veteran, or military spouse applies for licensure; TOC, §55.006, which requires state agencies to determine renewal requirements for expedited licenses issued to members of the military community; TOC, §55.007, which provides state agencies authority to credit verified military service, training, or education toward licensing requirements; TOC, §55.008, which authorizes state agencies to credit verified relevant military service, training, or education relevant to the occupation toward the apprenticeship requirements for licensure; TOC, §55.009, which confirms state agencies that issue licensure shall waive license application and examination fees paid to the state for applicable members of the military community; and TOC, §55.010, which requires state agencies to prominently post notification of licensure provisions for military service members, military veterans, and military spouses on the home page of the agency's website.

CROSS REFERENCE TO STATUTE. The amendment implements Texas Education Code, §§21.041(b)(2) and (4); 21.044(a); 21.0444, 21.052(b-1), (c), (d-1), (f), and (i); 21.0525, 21.054; and 21.458(a-2), and Texas Occupations Code, §§55.001; 55.002; 55.003; 55.004(a)-(c); 55.004(d), 55.0041, 55.005(a), 55.006; 55.007; 55.008; 55.009; and 55.010.

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§234.1. Purpose.

- (a) The purpose of identifying military service members, military spouses, and military veterans is to establish a process to count applicable military service for timely admission into educator preparation programs, expedite the completion of certification credential reviews, support certification examination and licensure application fee exemptions as applicable, and support certification renewal of members of the military community.
- (b) Effective September 1, 2023, in support of House Bill 621 and Senate Bill 544 passed by the 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, this chapter has been updated to include military veterans, peace officers, fire protection personnel, emergency medical services personnel, who meet the qualifications outlined in this chapter to be issued a three-year temporary certificate to be placed in a career and technology education assignment, and to include qualified instructors for the Community College of the Air

Force to be issued a one-year temporary certificate upon enrollment in a Texas-approved educator preparation program.

- (c) Effective January 5, 2023, Title 50--War and National Defense, Chapter 50--Servicemembers Civil Relief, Subchapter VII-Further Relief, was amended to add Section 4025a, which states in any case in which a servicemember or the spouse of a servicemember has a covered license and such servicemember or spouse relocates his or her residency because of military orders for military service to a location that is not in the jurisdiction of the licensing authority that issued the covered license, such covered license shall be considered valid at a similar scope of practice and in the discipline applied for in the jurisdiction of such new residency for the duration of such military orders. The servicemember's or spouse's covered license or certificate must be in good standing with the licensing authority that issued such professional license or certificate and has been actively used during the two years immediately preceding the relocation. Requirements to have a specific number of years of experience in roles other than classroom teacher do not apply to applicants eligible for certification via provisions of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.
- (d) In the event of conflict with any other rule in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 7, this chapter shall supersede with regard to the certification of military service members, military spouses, and military veterans.

§234.3. Definitions.

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- (1) Active duty--Current full-time military service in the armed forces of the United States or active duty military service as a member of the Texas military forces, as defined by the Texas Government Code (TGC), §437.001, or similar military service of another state.
- (2) Armed forces of the United States--The army, navy, air force, space force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States or a reserve unit of one of those branches of the armed forces.
- (3) Emergency medical services personnel--As defined by Health and Safety Code, §773.003.
- (4) Fire protection personnel--As defined by TGC, §419.021.
- (5) License--A license, certificate, registration, permit, or other form of authorization required by law or a state agency rule that must be obtained by an individual to engage in a particular business, occupation, or profession.
- (6) Military service member--A person who is on active duty.
- (7) Military spouse--A person who is married to a military service member.
- (8) Military veteran--A person who has served on active duty and who was discharged or released from active duty.
- (9) Peace officer--As defined by Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 2.12.
- (10) Permanent change of station order--United States armed forces active duty member document ordering a permanent change of station.
- (11) Review of credentials--The licensure process completed by Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff for individuals certified to teach in other states or countries as specified in Chapter 230, Subchapter H, of this title (relating to Texas Educator Certificates Based on Certification and College Credentials from Other States or Territories of the United States) and Chapter 245 of this title (relating to Certification of Educators from Other Countries).
- (12) State agency--A department, board, bureau, commission, committee, division, office, council, or agency of the state.
- (13) Texas Education Agency staff--An employee of TEA who performs administrative functions on behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification.

§234.5. Certification of Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans.

- (a) The application for certification of a military service member, military veteran, or military spouse, including an application based upon certification by a jurisdiction other than Texas that has certification requirements substantially similar to the Texas certification requirements, shall be processed within 30 days of receipt of a complete application.
- (b) Following completion of the review of credentials, Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff shall notify a military service member, a military spouse, and/or a military veteran of the requirements for obtaining temporary and standard Texas certificates.
- (c) Effective September 1, 2017, a military spouse shall be issued a three-year temporary certificate upon completion of the review of credentials.
- (d) Effective December 1, 2019, prior to beginning employment, a military spouse must declare his or her intent to teach in Texas with a license issued by another state department of education, by submitting an application and required documents for a review of credentials to the TEA and completing the criminal background check. TEA staff must provide approval for the military spouse to teach in Texas a maximum of three years with credentials issued by another state.
- (e) Effective December 1, 2023, a military service member shall be issued a three-year temporary certificate upon completion of the review of credentials, or, prior to beginning employment, a military service member must declare his or her intent to teach in Texas with a license issued by another state department of education, by submitting an application and required documents for a review of credentials to the TEA and completing the criminal background check. TEA staff must provide approval for the military service member to teach in Texas a maximum of three years with credentials issued by another state.
- (f) A military service member, a military veteran, or a military spouse shall be entitled to credit verified military service, training, clinical and professional experience, or education toward the training, education, work experience, or related requirements (other than certification examinations) for educator certification. TEA staff and educator preparation programs (EPPs) shall use information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or other reliable sources to assist in crediting applicable military service, training, or education to certification requirements.
- (g) A military service member pursuing certification in career and technical education must meet requirements for the certificate, but for career and technical education certificate areas requiring experience and licensure, the military service member shall be entitled to substitute military experience in the trade for the required license or professional credential for the specific trade.
- (h) A military service member, military spouse, and military veteran shall complete educator examination requirements for certificate issuance as outlined in Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B, and rules in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 7, or qualify for an exemption from required Texas examinations through provisions in §152.1001 of Part 2 of this title (relating to Exceptions to Examination Requirements for Individuals Certified Outside the State).
- (i) A military service member and a military veteran are exempt from certification application fees that are paid to the state that lead to initial certification. These members of the military community are exempt from paying the portion of the examination registration fee that is paid to the TEA.
- (j) A military service member and a military veteran are exempt from certification application fees that are paid to the state that lead to initial certification resulting from a review of credentials, one-year certificate, or out-of-state standard certificate. These members of the military community are exempt from paying the portion of the examination registration fee that is paid to the TEA.
- (k) A military spouse is exempt from certification application fees that are paid to the state that lead to initial certification resulting from a review of credentials, three-year temporary certificate, or out-of-state standard certificate. This member of the military community is exempt from paying the portion of the examination registration fee that is paid to the TEA.
- (l) As applicable to meet residency requirements and establish acceptable identification for military-related fee exemption and other provisions, a military service member, military spouse, or military veteran can submit

a copy of the permanent change of station order for the military service member, military spouse, or military veteran.

§234.7. Renewal and Continuing Education Requirements for Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans.

- (a) Military service members, military spouses, and military veterans who hold a standard certificate(s) are responsible for certificate renewal and continuing professional education requirements pursuant to Chapter 232 of this title (relating to General Certification Provisions), except where specified in this chapter.
- (b) A military service member shall be exempted from any fee or penalty for failing to timely renew his or her Texas educator certificate if the delay occurred because the educator was serving as a military service member.
- (c) A military service member is entitled to two years of additional time to complete all continuing education requirements and any other requirements relating to the renewal of his or her Texas educator certificate.