

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Test-Limit Waiver Process

1. I haven't hit the 5-time limit, but I'm getting close. Can I apply for a waiver now?

A waiver application cannot be requested until after you have reached the 5-time limit. It is recommended that you review your [score reports](#) to identify your deficit competencies and address those with a comprehensive study plan before you reach the testing limit. Educator candidates and preparation programs must work together to determine readiness for attempting any certification exam. Those 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 (i.e., pre-admission content test (PACT), out of state, charter, and certification by examination).

2. I just hit the 5-time limit. What do I do now?

You must submit a test-limit waiver application. EPP candidates should consult with your educator preparation program (EPP) about applying for a test-limit waiver. If you are not able to or do not want to switch to a different certification area that requires a different test and will most likely require you to complete further course work or other requirements, then you will need to download the waiver application and complete all waiver requirements before mailing your waiver application to the Texas Education Agency.

3. I'm no longer enrolled in an educator preparation program (EPP). Do I really need to get approval from a representative of the EPP?

If you are pursuing certification through an EPP, even if you have completed all requirements other than testing, then you must get a representative of the EPP to approve your waiver application before submitting it to the Texas Education Agency. Your EPP is responsible for recommending you for certification, so an EPP representative must approve your waiver application to indicate that you are otherwise eligible to take an examination.

4. For Section D: Highest Score Examination Information, does this apply to only Core Subjects or to all tests?

Section D applies to all tests and determines the number of clock-hours of educational activity you must complete. You must enter the highest scaled score(test score) and other test information requested in this section. You will determine which letter to circle in this section of the application by using the Texas Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement (CSEM) Report found in Page 7/Attachment I of the waiver application. If you are applying for Core Subjects and your waiver request is for more than one 800-series examination, then include the subject name for each exam in the boxes found in options A-D.

5. How do I determine how many clock-hours of educational activity I need to complete?

Your highest test score determines the number of clock-hours you must complete. You will use the Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement (CSEM) chart found in Page 7/Attachment I of the waiver application to determine if your highest score was equal to or greater than the passing score minus 1 CSEM, 2 CSEM, or 3 CSEM, or if your highest score was lower than 3 CSEM. Cut scores are listed for each test to help you determine the number of required clock-hours. More information about determining the number of required clock-hours may be found in Section D: Highest Score Examination Information of the waiver application.

6. How do I complete Section E: Deficit Competency Analysis?

You will need to use the [score reports](#) from the five most recent attempts found in your [testing vendor](#) account to complete Section E. Detailed instructions are provided at the top of the chart on page 3 of the application. This chart helps you to determine the deficit competencies that should be the focus of your comprehensive study plan. Note that the score reports list the information requested in the opposite order as specified in the chart. Care should be taken to complete this section accurately since it will drive your choice of educational activities.

7. How do I decide what educational activity I need for Section F: Evidence of Educational Activity?

Your Deficit Competency Analysis will help you decide which competencies need to be a priority in your study plan. Competencies for which you are performing below 70% across all attempts, as identified in the last column of the Deficit Competency Analysis chart, should be addressed with appropriate educational activities. It is your responsibility to identify appropriate educational activities that address your deficit competencies. TEA will not provide guidance in identifying activities or providers.

8. How do I determine if an educational activity is related to my deficit competencies?

You will need to read the course description of the educational activity and then determine if it is correlated to your deficit competencies. By reading through the competencies and detailed descriptive statements outlined in the test preparation manuals posted on the [testing vendor's website](#), you must determine if an educational activity is correlated to deficit competencies. It is your responsibility to determine the competencies that are addressed by an educational activity. TEA will not provide guidance in identifying related competencies.

9. How do I find educational activities that will help me to pass my test?

If you are with an educator preparation program (EPP), ask a representative from your EPP for assistance finding appropriate course work. Network with other successful candidates to find out what resources helped them to pass their certification exam. You must cross reference all resources with the [list of CPE providers approved by TEA](#) **or** be sure that they are offered by one of the [pre-approved providers](#), such as a [regional education service center](#), college, or university. Be sure that you understand what type of learner you are and take course work that supports your learning style. You may want to consider taking a college or university class. One semester credit hour earned at an [accredited institution of higher education](#) is equivalent to 15 clock-hours. You are going to have to make some calls and do some research to determine if a provider offers educational activities that address the competencies of your test. Reach out to your regional education service center to find out what educational activities they may offer. Rather than looking for a workshop on how to pass a certain test, look for workshops related to the competency areas of that test. For example, there may not be a workshop entitled “How to Pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Test,” but you will probably find workshops on monitoring student performance, actively engaging students, and improving classroom management, which are topics directly related to the PPR test. Look for educational activities that will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need, based on your Deficit Competency Analysis, to be successful on your waiver attempt.

10. I just took a 40-hour seminar from my regional education service center related to my test right before my last attempt. May I use those clock-hours?

No, all educational activities must be completed after the last unsuccessful attempt. All your efforts up to this point have not helped you to pass your test, so you need to do something different.

11. What do I have to attach to Section F: Evidence of Educational Activity section of the waiver application?

You must attach a description of the educational activity, such as a syllabus or course outline, and written verification of completion, such as a certificate of completion, which contains the following components:

- 1) name of the provider, sponsor, or program;
- 2) name of applicant;
- 3) name of the educational activity;
- 4) date(s) of the educational activity; and
- 5) the number of clock-hours completed for the educational activity.

All documentation is subject to verification by TEA staff. This means that providers may be contacted to confirm your attendance, and educational activities will be checked for relevance to the test for which the waiver was submitted. Educational activities must be directly related to the competencies of the test for which the waiver was submitted.

12. Who does TEA consider an approved provider or sponsor of continuing professional education clock-hours?

A current list of [CPE providers approved by TEA](#) may be found on the [TEA website](#). In addition to this list, other providers have been pre-approved by TEA and include the following: State Board for Educator Certification; Texas Education Agency; accredited institutions of higher education recognized by the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#); [regional education service centers](#); [Texas public school districts](#); private schools as defined in [TAC §230.1](#); and professional associations, non-profits, or state associations as described in [TAC §232.17\(7\)](#).

13. Does teaching count in clock-hours? May I use a private tutor, such as another teacher, to complete my clock-hours?

No, teaching does not count as an approved educational activity. In most cases, private tutoring will not count as an approved educational activity. Tutoring provided by a TEA-approved provider or pre-approved provider can count if the applicant is given written documentation by the provider that includes the following components: 1) name of the provider, sponsor, or program; 2) name of applicant; 3) name of the educational activity; 4) date(s) of the educational activity; and 5) the number of clock-hours completed for the educational activity. A detailed description of the educational activity, such as a syllabus or course outline, must also be provided.

14. May I do self-study for the educational activities?

Self-study educational activities are not permitted to be counted in the clock-hours for your waiver application. Only educational activities from an approved provider or sponsor may be used in determining whether clock-hour requirements have been met. However, applicants are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, including self-study, which go above and beyond waiver application requirements.

15. Is online course work acceptable for the educational activities?

Online course work is acceptable if it is from a pre-approved or approved provider, and it is directly related to the test for which you are applying for a waiver.

16. I finished all clock-hours and waiver requirements. When may I submit my waiver application? May I submit it early?

You must wait 45 calendar days after the last unsuccessful attempt before you may submit your waiver application. Applications are not accepted by fax or email. The waiver application must be delivered (in person, by mail, or by delivery service) to:

Texas Education Agency
Educator Testing, WBT 5-100
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

17. Is there a fee to apply for a test waiver?

Yes, you must pay \$160 plus an ecommerce charge of \$4 before the application will be processed. Information will be sent through the [TEA Help Desk](#) to you after your waiver is received with instructions on how to make this online payment. Checks and money orders are **not** accepted.

18. Once my waiver is approved, how many more chances do I get to pass my test?

An approved waiver application will give you one more attempt at the examination you applied for, as long as it is still a current exam.

19. What happens if my waiver request is denied?

The State Board for Educator Certification has authorized TEA staff to administratively process waiver requests. TEA staff will work with you to ensure that all waiver requirements are met so that you may be granted another opportunity to test. If a waiver is denied by TEA staff, then you may appeal the decision to the State Board for Educator Certification.

20. How long will it take to process my waiver application? Are expedited reviews available?

Waivers are processed in the order received. Normal processing time will take several weeks after the waiver application fee has been paid. Processing times will take longer during peak season (April – August) or if corrections are needed. You will be contacted through the [TEA Help Desk](#) if corrections are needed.

In fairness to other applicants, applications needing corrections will be pulled and placed at the end of the queue; therefore, it is crucial that applications are reviewed thoroughly for accuracy and completeness before submitting to TEA. Expedited waiver reviews are not available.

21. If my waiver is approved and I am not able to pass my test, may I apply for another waiver?

Yes, you may start working on waiver requirements immediately, such as analyzing test results and completing additional educational activities, but the waiver application must not be postmarked any earlier than 180 days after the last unsuccessful test attempt. There are no current limits to how many waiver applications you can submit for the same exam.

22. If my waiver is approved, is there a time limit on when I must take the test again?

You must attempt the test again before the test is discontinued. For a list of dates of when tests are scheduled to be discontinued, see the [Required and Replacement Test Chart for Texas Certification](#) posted on the [TEA website](#). If a test is replaced with a new version with a different test number (e.g., 141 is updated to the 241), then you must seek test approval from the entity that granted test approval for the discontinued test. Additional course work or conditions that must be met may be required before test approval for the new test may be granted.

23. How can I get help in completing the waiver application?

If you are pursuing your certification through an educator preparation program (EPP), then you will want to ask your EPP advisor for assistance with your application. You may also reach out to the TEA Educator Testing staff through the [TEA Help Desk](#) for assistance.

24. I want my waiver to get approved as quickly as possible. What are some common errors in waiver applications that I should avoid?

You will find helpful tips and common errors to avoid in each section on the [Test-Limit Waiver Information](#) page. More detailed directions are provided on each page of the waiver application. Do not mail an incomplete application, and make a copy for your records before mailing.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Test Waiver Process for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

1. What can we do to support our candidates so that they do not have to apply for a waiver?

EPPs need to monitor their candidates closely to determine readiness for attempting any certification exam. EPPs should implement a system of progressive conditions that the candidate must complete before giving test approval after an unsuccessful attempt. The conditions required should be based on a thorough analysis of a candidate's prior performance to determine appropriate next steps. The conditions required should be differentiated and take into account how close a candidate is to passing and how many attempts the candidate has left, since the needs of a candidate who scored a 200 on the first attempt are very different from the candidate who scored 236 on the first attempt.

2. How can we support candidates that have hit the 5-attempt limit?

EPPs may assist candidates by helping them complete the waiver application. Assign a specific staff member as a point of contact and ask the candidate to forward the email that they received from TEA regarding their waiver. Help the candidate complete the Deficit Competency Analysis section of the waiver application. Accurate identification of a candidate's deficit competencies is a crucial first step to helping the candidate identify appropriate educational activities. Then assist the candidate with identifying appropriate educational activities that will help the candidate learn the knowledge and skills associated with those deficit competencies. Finally, help the candidate review the waiver application to ensure that the application is complete, accurate, and presents the applicant in a professional manner.

3. What if we do not support a candidate's waiver application?

If a candidate is still in good standing with your program, then the EPP should approve the candidate's waiver application. If the candidate has been dismissed from the EPP according to the EPP's established procedures, then the EPP is not obligated to approve a candidate's waiver application. If the EPP would give test approval to a candidate if there were no testing limit, then the EPP should approve the candidate's waiver application by completing Section C.