



2018 – 2019 Continuing Approval Review Report

Introduction

A Five-Year Continuing Approval Desk Review was conducted by Lorrie Ayers of the Texas A&M University (021501) educator preparation program (EPP) on March 26, 2019. Per 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(b), an entity approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to certify educators shall be reviewed at least once every five (5) years. The EPP at Texas A&M University (TAMU) was originally approved on January 4, 1971.

Dr. Beverly Irby is the program Legal Authority. Misti Corn, Certification Officer, is the primary EPP contact for the 2018-2019 review. The TAMU EPP is approved to certify candidates in the undergraduate (U), post-baccalaureate (PB) and alternative (ACP) routes. The following certificate classes are approved for TAMU: Teacher, Principal, Superintendent, Educational Diagnostician, School Counselor, Reading Specialist, and Master Teacher. The EPP reported 645 program finishers for the 2016-2017 reporting year and 669 finishers for 2017-2018.

Candidate records were requested for five (5) candidates from each of the approved certificate classes and routes. A total of 25 records were submitted for review. The results were discussed with EPP staff on April 24, 2019. Attending from the EPP were: Dr. Beverly Irby, Misti Corn, and Dr. Valerie Hill-Jackson.

Results for Teacher Programs

1. Records for 15 teacher candidates were reviewed for evidence that admission requirements as identified in 19 TAC Chapters 227 were met.

All candidates were admitted with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. An application or candidate portal screenshot was present in all candidates' records.

There was inconsistent use, and/or documentation, of a screening instrument used for admission decisions. Candidates admitted to the ACP had completed an interview, a writing sample, and a perceptual scale evaluating a Human Relations Incident, and candidates admitted to the PB program had completed a writing sample. For some, a rubric was included but there was no evidence it was used for admission decisions. The U program requires applicants to submit a writing sample and recommendations. It was not clear if the writing sample was used as an admission screen. Aggie Teach is a grade of B or better in a required prerequisite course called SCEN201 but it is not clear if there is an additional screen.

Ten of the 15 candidates reviewed were admitted after February 28, 2016. A screen shot from each candidate's portal was evidence that these 10 candidates accepted admission electronically, which meets requirements in 19 TAC §227.17(c) effective February 28, 2016. While the date of the offer of admission and the date the offer of admission was accepted were visible in the candidate portal, it is not clear if the formal admission date was clear to the candidate as required in 19 TAC §227.17(d) for candidates admitted after October 18, 2016.



Admission dates identified in documentation for five (5) out of 15 candidates did not agree with the admission date uploaded into the Test Approval screen in the Educator Certification Online System (ECOS).

The audit trail in ECOS reflected that admitted candidates were uploaded into Test Approval within the 7 days of the identified date of admission as required in 19 TAC §227.17(e).

The GPA spreadsheet is a document EPPs use to report required data that cannot be uploaded into the ECOS or into the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP). For candidate data reported on older GPA spreadsheets, there was disagreement between GPA, admission dates and number of subject-specific credit-hours found in candidates' records vs. what was recorded on the GPA spreadsheet. In the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 spreadsheets, candidate admission data was reported accurately when compared with documents in candidates records except for three (3) candidates admitted in the 2016-2017 reporting year where the admission dates in candidates' records were consistently one (1) month earlier than those reported on the GPA spreadsheet.

It was noted that the portal screen shots for 10 candidates contained information related to background checks and Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE). If this information is not displayed elsewhere in a place apparent to applicants and candidates, the EPP must update documents to meet requirements in 19 TAC §227.1(d) that requires EPPs to a) inform applicants and candidates of their potential ineligibility for a certificate if they've been convicted of an offense; and b) inform applicants and candidates of the right to request a PCHE from TEA.

Faculty and staff electronically sign an agreement of understanding and adherence to the Educators' Code of Ethics (ECO). Candidates sign that they have received and read the candidate handbook which contains the ECO. Additionally, the portal screen shots for some of the candidates revealed candidates verify a commitment to the ECO when electronically accepting the offer of admission.

2. A review of candidate records revealed that candidate status, including the correct certificate areas in which candidates were admitted and processed, was reported accurately in the ASEP system for each year of candidate enrollment.
3. The TAMU EPP is approved to offer clinical teaching and internships to candidates. Seven out of 15 candidates completed clinical teaching. Seven out of 15 candidates completed internships. One (1) candidate was either in process or had been removed from EPP at the time of the review.

All candidates completing clinical teaching or internships were assigned campus mentors and field supervisors as required in 19 TAC §228.35(f) and (g).

Clinical teaching records inconsistently reflected the start and end dates of the assignments. Two (2) of the clinical teachers appeared to have completed less than the 70 days required in 19 TAC §228.35(e)(2).

Candidate internship records revealed that each candidate completing an internship held a valid probationary certificate for the duration of the internship.



Observation documents revealed that FS capture instructional strategies observed as required by 19 TAC §228.35(g); however, documentation inconsistently captured a pre- and post-observation conference and whether copies of the observation documents were provided to the appropriate campus staff.

All candidates received the required observations conducted by the field supervisor (FS) as identified in 19 TAC §228.35(g). Observation data reported in ASEP was accurate when compared with related documentation in candidate records.

4. Fourteen of the 15 candidates achieved a standard certificate. All candidates met requirements for the certificate(s) recommended except two (2) candidates were recommended for an ESL supplemental when that coursework and training was not reflected in the documentation or on the Finisher Records list in ASEP.

Results for Non-Teacher Programs

Records were requested for five (5) candidates each from the School Counselor, Principal, Superintendent, and Reading Specialist classes. Documentation was provided for the School Counselor and Reading Specialist classes but not for the Principal and Superintendent classes. Because there was no documentation submitted for the Principal and Superintendent candidates, it is assumed there is no documentation retained by these programs. TAMU staff should review 19 TAC §228.10(b)(2) and §228.40(f) that require EPPs to retain documentation that candidates are appropriately admitted to, and complete requirements for, each program and implement a process to retain candidate records as required.

1. Admission documents for three (3) of the five (5) Reading Specialist candidates revealed that admission dates on candidate paperwork agreed with dates reported in Test Approval and on the GPA spreadsheet.

A screen shot from each candidate's portal was evidence that the five (5) School Counselor candidates accepted admission electronically which meets requirements in 19 TAC §227.17(c) effective February 28, 2016. While the date of the offer of admission and the date the offer of admission was accepted were visible in the candidate portal, it is not clear if the formal admission was clear to the candidate as required in 19 TAC §227.17(d) for candidates admitted after October 18, 2016. Four (4) of the five (5) candidates were reported on the GPA spreadsheet in the appropriate admission year.

Two (2) of the five (5) principal candidates were represented in Test Approval and on the GPA spreadsheet with the same admission dates however there were no candidate records to support if those admission dates were accurate.

Prior to the 2017-2018 reporting year, Superintendent candidates were not reported on GPA spreadsheets.

An admission screen as required in 19 TAC §227.10(a)(8) could not be identified in the records for the School Counselor candidates. There was a screen and rubric in the records for the Reading Specialist candidates; however, the rubric scored the mechanics of the writing sample and did not focus on the applicant's "appropriateness for the certificate sought".



School Counselor candidates sign an acknowledgement that they receive and agree to abide by the candidate handbook; however, the handbook is not specific with regards to the ECOE. It is not apparent that candidates sign an agreement of understanding and adherence specifically regarding the ECOE. A signed ECOE agreement was not identified in the records for the Reading Specialist candidates. TEA strongly encourages the EPP to strengthen candidate focus on the ECOE in all programs by requiring a signature of understanding and adherence on a document that reflects each of the requirements in the ECOE found in 19 TAC §247.2.

It was noted that, in the Reading Specialist admission checklist, the TOEFL score requirement for applicants from out-of-country was not in alignment with requirements in 19 TAC §230.11(b)(5). TEA strongly encourages EPP program staff to regularly review and update manuals, checklists, websites and other relevant documents to accurately reflect requirements in TAC.

2. Two (2) of the five (5) Reading Specialist candidates were pursuing concurrent certification as a Reading Specialist and Master Reading Teacher. Both were recommended for a standard certificate in both areas however they were listed in the Finisher Records list as pursuing only Reading Specialist.

Principal and Superintendent candidates were inconsistently reported in ASEP on the Finisher Records list prior to 2017-2018. They appeared to be consistently reported in the 2017-2018 reporting year; however, candidate records were not available to verify dates of enrollment. Principal candidate admission dates in Test Approval were compared with certification dates to estimate candidate enrollment. One (1) Principal candidate was certified in 2016 but was not identified as a Finisher and is still represented as Other Enrolled on the Finisher Records list. Four (4) of the five (5) Superintendent candidates had not been uploaded with an admission date in Test Approval so dates could not be used to cross-reference enrollment.

Two (2) of the Superintendent candidates have been identified as Other Enrolled on the Finisher Records list from 2015-2016 through 2018-2019; however, one individual was certified as a Superintendent by Region 4 in 2014 and the other was certified by Region 4 in 2015.

3. There were no Intern or Probationary certificates issued to the non-teacher candidates.
4. Per the syllabi and benchmark documents provided, the School Counselor practicum is completed across two (2) semesters. Practicum logs provided evidence that candidates complete more than the required 160 hours. Two (2) of the three (3) candidates that completed a practicum were observed by the site supervisor and FS however observation documentation does not indicate the practicum start or end dates or the dates or durations of the observations conducted by the FS so it could not be determined if candidates received the minimum 135 minutes as required in 19 TAC §228.35(h). Instructional strategies observed were captured by the FS but it is not clear if the campus site supervisor received a copy of the observation and it is not clear if a pre- or post-observation conference occurred with the candidate. One (1) of the three (3) completed 148 hours and did not receive observations.



Three (3) of the five (5) Reading Specialist candidates should have completed a practicum. Observation documents were submitted for the three (3) candidates; however, the documentation revealed each candidate received two (2) observations which occurred in the summer and not in the actual school year. For one (1) candidate, an observation was dated after the identified end date of the practicum.

5. Two (2) of the five (5) School Counselor candidates achieved a standard certificate. Service records were available for one (1) candidate and revealed two (2) years of service. Service records for the other candidate were not submitted to TEA with documentation.

Two (2) of the five (5) Reading Specialist candidates achieved a standard certificate. Service records were available for one (1) candidate and revealed two (2) years of service. Service records for the other candidate were not submitted to TEA with documentation.

Candidates were recommended for certificates with effective dates after the date the degree was conferred.

Next Steps

The EPP will submit evidence to TEA that deficiencies in these areas have been corrected on or before 9/1/2019:

- For all programs within the TAMU entity, update the formal admission process so that the formal admission date is embedded in the formal written offer and require applicants to respond to the offer in writing as required in 19 TAC §227.17. Retain documentation of formal admission in candidates' records as required in 19 TAC §228.40(f).
- For all programs within the TAMU entity, update the admission screening process to implement a screening instrument to "determine if the EPP applicant's knowledge, experience, skills, and aptitude are appropriate for the certification sought" as required in 19 TAC §227.10(a)(8). Principal and Superintendent preparation programs must implement, at minimum, two (2) screening activities to "determine the candidate's appropriateness for" the certificate sought as required in 19 TAC §241.5(c) and §242.5(c) respectively. A rubric and a cut score must be applied to the screen.
- For all programs within the TAMU entity, review requirements in 19 TAC §227.1(b) - (e) and update materials provided to applicants and candidates to ensure they reflect the required information.
- Programs awarding certificates to candidates in non-teacher classes should review requirements in 19 TAC §228.10(b)(2) and §228.40(f) and must implement processes to retain appropriate documentation.
- Staff in non-teacher preparation programs should review practicum requirements and requirements for field supervision in 19 TAC §228.35(e) and (h). EPP staff must ensure:
 - All candidates complete a practicum of 160 clock-hours or more;
 - FS make first contact with candidates within the first three (3) weeks of the assignment start date;



- FS conduct the observations per the schedule identified in 19 TAC §228.35(h);
 - FS conduct pre- and post-conferences with candidates for each observation;
 - FS have completed TEA-approved observation training;
 - Copies of observations are provided to the appropriate campus staff; and
 - Appropriate documentation is retained in candidates' records per 19 TAC §228.40(f).
- EPP staff must implement a process to efficiently track the status of all candidates in every certification class as “admitted”, “other enrolled”, “finisher”, or “removed” and convey that status to the person responsible for making ASEP updates and preparing and submitting required reports to TEA.
 - EPP staff must implement a process for non-teacher classes to provide the documentation that candidates have met the requirements for certification to whomever in the EPP recommends certificates. The documentation must be retained in candidates' records.
 - TEA strongly encourages the staff for each program within the TAMU entity to review handbooks, websites, and other applicable documents that provide information to applicants and candidates and update them to align information with requirements in TAC.
 - TEA strongly encourages the EPP to strengthen candidate focus on the ECOE by requiring a signature of understanding and adherence on a document that reflects each of the requirements in the ECOE found in 19 TAC §247.2.

General Recommendations

- To ensure continuity in record keeping and other related processes, consider creating a procedure manual documenting EPP processes.

“I have reviewed the EPP Report and agree that all required corrections will be made on or before September 1, 2019”.

Signature of Legal Authority **Date**

Printed Name of Legal Authority **Date**