

# Program and Policy Handbook 2024-2025



## Our Mission

Our greatest contribution is to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day, learns and grows and feels like a real human being.

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# Education Service Center Region 13

## Educator Certification Program Overview

### Program Background

Alternative certification programs in Texas were established in 1984 by the 68th Legislature in House Bill 72. In this Bill, the State Board of Education (SBEC) was directed to provide for the certification of individuals who met specific requirements and who completed an internship in a public school or a Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved charter or private school. The bill was originally implemented for non-certified teachers to fill shortages in critical need areas and to provide an alternative certification route for qualified individuals interested in making a career change. The Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP) was established in 1989 to provide an opportunity for professionals from various careers to become teachers through an approved alternative route to certification. ECP is a rigorous field-based program that integrates theory with practice. In this program, teacher-interns make valuable contributions to accredited public, charter, and private schools as they draw upon their diverse past experiences to enhance student learning.

Texas Administrative Code requires that all students have the benefit of a qualified teacher knowledgeable in the content they are responsible for teaching. As a result, prospective teachers in all content areas are required to demonstrate content competency prior to teaching. For teachers in Texas, this is accomplished by passing the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) content exam(s) that match(es) the area of certification the prospective teacher is seeking.

### Program Timeline

- Program participants will complete their state content examination(s) in the spring and summer preceding their internship experience. Participants are required to demonstrate content competency before seeking and accepting employment with a school district. Preparation for the TExES content exam is provided through online instruction for most certification areas. This requires a high level of personal discipline, as candidates are responsible for managing their time, completing all readings, assignments, and course tests in a timely manner.
- Upon successful completion of pre-service instruction and related program and state requirements and demonstration of a commitment to ongoing instruction during the school year, participants are eligible to be employed as a teacher for the internship year. Once a full-time teaching position is secured, participants are placed on an intern or probationary teaching certificate (*see types of certificates*). During the internship year, the teacher-intern is hired by a district as the teacher of record with full pay and benefits.
- Upon successful completion of the internship year and related program and state requirements, participants earn a standard teaching certificate specific to their teaching assignment/area of certification.

# Certification Areas Offered by Region 13 ECP

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program is accredited by the Texas Education Agency/ State Board for Educator Certification. The program has been approved to offer the following certificate areas.

## Elementary and Middle School Areas

- EC-6 Core Subjects + Science of Teaching Reading (STR)
- EC-6 Bilingual Core Subjects + STR
- EC-6 ESL Core Subjects + STR
- 4-8 Core Subjects + STR
- 4-8 Bilingual Core Subjects + STR
- 4-8 ESL Core Subjects + STR
- 4-8 Math
- 4-8 Science
- 4-8 Social Studies
- 4-8 English/Language Arts/Reading + STR
- 4-8 Math/Science
- 4-8 English/Language Arts/Reading/Social Studies + STR

## Secondary Certification Areas

- 6-12 Agricultural, Food and Natural Resources
- 6-12 Health Science
- 6-12 Marketing
- 6-12 Business and Finance
- 6-12 Trades and Industrial Education
- 6-12 Technology Education
- 6-12 Computer Science
- 6-12 Family and Consumer Sciences (composite)
- 8-12 Human Development & Family Studies
- 8-12 Hospitality, Nutrition and Food Science
- 6-12 JROTC
- 7-12 Math
- 7-12 Math/Physics
- 7-12 Science
- 6-12 Math/Physical Science/Engineering
- 7-12 Social Studies
- 7-12 English/Language Arts/Reading
- 6-12 Dance
- 6-12 Speech

## All Grade Levels

- EC-12 Reading Specialist
- EC-12 Languages Other Than English
- EC-12 Special Education + STR

- EC-12 Technology Applications
- EC-12 Music
- EC-12 Art
- EC-12 P.E.
- EC-12 Theatre Arts

## Types of Certificates Offered

### Intern Certificate

- To be placed on an Intern Certificate, a program participant must pass all TExES content exams required for their certification area, complete at least 150 hours of pedagogy-related training and at least 30 hours of field based experience requirements.
- An Intern Certificate is valid for a period of one year and will require five formal observations by the educator preparation program.
- Participants are allowed **ONE** Intern Certificate for their lifetime.

### Probationary Certificate

- To be placed on a Probationary Certificate, a program participant must pass all TExES content exams required for their certification area as well as the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam. They must also complete at least 150 hours of pedagogy related training and at least 30 hours of field based experience requirements.
- A Probationary Certificate is valid for one year with the option for one additional year. Three formal observations will be required by the educator preparation program for interns on this type of certificate.

# ECP Application Process

## Deadlines and Forms

Consult the website <http://teach.esc13.net> to determine application and payment deadlines for the certification areas offered. The application and application fee payment must be completed online, and official professional reference forms must be downloaded from the ECP website, if required by the specific program for which the application is submitted. Once the application and required documents are submitted and reviewed, qualified applicants will be notified that entrance requirements have been met and will be provided instructions for beginning their participation in the program.

## GPA

For every certification area, with the exception of CTE certifications requiring work experience, admission requires a baccalaureate degree earned from and conferred by an institute of higher education recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Region 13 requires that the candidate have an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 or a GPA of at least 2.75 in the last 60 semester credit hours. A candidate must have a minimum of 60 hours associated with a GPA on their transcript or obtain a passing score on the Pre-Admission Content Test for the certification area they are seeking.

For the Secondary and Elementary programs, candidates must also have a 2.5 in the coursework required for the designated certification area or demonstrate proficiency in their certification area. Region 13 computes the GPA based on all transcripts. Therefore, official transcripts from ALL institutions of higher education the applicant has attended must be submitted to the ECP office. Candidates seeking certification in the area of Trade and Industrial Education and Health Science will be expected to document work experience in lieu of the required GPA.

## GPA 10% Exception Rule

Consideration by the program coordinator may be granted to individuals with a GPA less than a 2.5. This exception to the minimum GPA requirement will be provided only in extraordinary circumstances, such as illness or deployment, and may not be used by a program to admit more than 10% of any cohort of candidates. All candidates in the 10% Exception Rule category must provide a passing score on a Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) in their content area to be considered for acceptance. For information about taking a PACT, please see <http://www.tx.nesinc.com/>.

A list of required coursework for each certificate offered can be found at this link: <https://teach.esc13.net/path-to-certification/requirements>

## Proficiency in Reading, Math and Writing

Candidates are required to demonstrate proficiency in reading, math and writing or meet at least one criteria for exemption or exception from this requirement. The following are common qualifications that allow a candidate to be exempt from this requirement. For a full list of exemptions and exceptions, see [Texas Administrative Code](#).

- Earned Associate's Degree or higher
- Previously attended any institute of higher education
- Active duty military
- Honorably discharged, retired, or released from the military on or after August 1, 1990

## Second Language Proficiency Screening

Applicants for Languages Other Than English (Spanish) and Bilingual Education (Spanish) will be required to demonstrate language proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking by participating in a language screening during their interview for program admission.

## Credentials from Outside the United States

Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be evaluated by a TEA approved credential evaluation service. Evaluation must include semester hour equivalent, grade point evaluation and a statement confirming that the degree is equivalent to at least a bachelor's degree conferred by a college or university in the United States. The evaluation must indicate that the applicant has an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 (See the [TEA website](#) for a list of credential evaluation services).

Applicants with a transcript from outside the United States must also provide TOEFL iBT test results with a minimum score of 24-Speaking, 22- Listening, 22-Reading, and 21-Writing. If you have a degree from a country where English is the official language, a TOEFL score is not required. [See approved list.](#)

## Military Service

Applicants who currently or previously served in the military will be asked to provide a Joint Services Transcript or equivalent as part of their application materials. Cohort specialists will review Joint Services Transcripts to determine if coursework aligns with certification preparation coursework for their specific content area. For CTE applicants, Joint Services Transcripts can be submitted along with the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) for consideration when calculating work experience within the required time range. For CTE applicants, a Joint Services Transcript may count in lieu of the required industry license or certification. *Health Science applicants must hold an active license/certification.*

For all content-tested teachers the Joint Services Transcript will be evaluated for content specific coursework for admission purposes.

## Interview

Applicants participate in a face-to-face or zoom interview developed by ECP to determine their aptitude for teaching, as applicable for the program for which the application was submitted.

## Reapplication

Applicants who were previously accepted and withdrew or were dismissed before program completion may reapply to the program. A new application must be completed. If an applicant reapplies within one cohort year of the previous acceptance, and did not previously attend orientation, no additional application fee is required. In all other circumstances, a new application fee must be paid. If readmission occurs within one cohort year from original acceptance, fees paid for registration and pre-service will be applied to the new cohort year, if applicable.

Credit for coursework completed prior to withdrawal or dismissal may be awarded upon readmission at the discretion of the cohort specialist.

The ECP reserves the right to deny program readmission based on prior program performance. No guarantees are made about reacceptance into the program.

## Contingent Admission

Applicants who have not earned an undergraduate degree may be eligible for contingent admission into the ECP if their degree is expected to be conferred within the same semester in which the application is submitted. In order to qualify for this admission status, the candidate must supply their current transcript showing courses in progress and a letter from the registrar's office stating the expected graduation date. An official transcript showing degree conferred must be submitted within one month of the graduation date or the candidate could be dismissed from the program. *Communication with ECP program support through the process is crucial to remain in good standing in the program.*

## Conditional Acceptance

Occasionally, an applicant is accepted into the program with conditions. These conditions are limited to official transcripts, recommendations, licenses for Trade and Industrial Education teachers or licenses/certifications for CTE that expire within the program year. Due dates will be set for conditions and provided in the notification letter. A candidate cannot be recommended for standard certification until all conditions are met.

## Selection

Candidates are selected for the program based on their qualifications as set out in the screening process. Not all applicants who meet minimum requirements are selected for the program. Each year program staff identifies a maximum number of applicants who will be accepted into the program, and those applicants whose qualifications rise to the top of the applicant pool are selected.

The selection criteria include:

- overall GPA
- coursework requirements per certification area
- GPA on coursework
- rubric score from face-to-face or zoom interview
- quality of references
- work experience
- experience working with students in an educational setting
- a writing sample
- a passing score on the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT Exam), if applicable
- other criteria, such as language proficiency for applicants for Languages Other Than English and bilingual applicants as well as applicants with transcripts from outside the United States, are also used.

Region 13 ECP seeks a diverse applicant pool and strongly encourages all to apply. Region 13 shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of any of the following characteristics: race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age (applies to individuals who are 40 years of age or older), disability, or genetic information.

## Criminal History Checks

Per Texas Administrative Code 227.1. (b), Educator Preparation Programs should inform all applicants that: (1) Pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), § 22.083, all candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator.

If you feel this is a concern and you have questions about eligibility for a Texas educator certificate, TEA staff may perform an evaluation for a non-refundable fee of \$50. Visit the [Texas Education Agency](#) for more information regarding these procedures.

If convicted of an offense, there is a potential for ineligibility for issuance of a certificate from the Texas Education Agency.

## Transfers

Individuals wishing to transfer from another alternative certification program must complete all steps of the application process. In addition, they must submit a TEA Candidate Transfer form with their online application. Transfer acceptance will be at the discretion of the ECP (see Selection criteria above). If the intern is indicated as a "finisher" in the previous program, please see the finisher admission program information section in the handbook.

Candidates transferring from other programs will be required to start ECP coursework from the beginning. Credit will not be given for pedagogy-specific coursework completed in another program. ECP will evaluate the following items from a transfer candidate's previous program to determine if the item(s) can be counted towards certification requirements with ECP:

- Field Based Experience including reflection forms
- Dyslexia Training through TEALearn
- Suicide Prevention Course through TEA Approved Provider
- Substance Abuse Course through TEA Approved Provider
- Mental Health Course through TEA Approved Provider
- Work Based Learning through TEALearn or Education Service Center
- TEALearn courses specific to the Scope and Sequence of the Cohort

## Revoked Certificate

Candidates who have had a certificate revoked by TEA will not be considered for admission into the ECP.

## Suspended Certificates

Region 13 will comply with TEA guidelines for admission or readmission of candidates with suspended certificates. Acceptance of candidates with suspended certificates will be at the discretion of the ECP (see Selection criteria above).

# ECP Standards of Conduct

## ECP Class Expectations

The ECP staff maintains high standards of conduct and expects candidates to demonstrate professional behavior during training classes and in their own classrooms. This includes punctuality for all ECP class sessions and activities. Attendance and other professional behavior are required at all class sessions (online and on-site) for successful completion of the program. The curriculum taught in class sessions is aligned to the Texas Educator Standards, and instruction has been designed to provide candidates with experiences and information needed for the first year of teaching.

### Punctuality

Attendance during each entire class session is required. When a candidate's cumulative tardy minutes reach 30 minutes, the candidate will receive an absence. A tardy is defined as late to class, late returning from a break, late returning from lunch, or leaving class early. Tardy minutes will accumulate throughout the program.

### Absences

**Attendance for all class sessions is required.** In case of an emergency, a candidate may find it necessary to miss a class. All absences must be made up with learning experiences similar to the instruction missed and must be approved by the ECP cohort specialist in advance of completing a make-up session. When a candidate misses a class session they must notify the cohort specialist in advance of the absence and return the approved/assigned make-up work within 30 days of the absence. **NOTE: Attendance at ECP class sessions takes precedence over campus or district instructions, meetings, or activities.**

After the third absence, a letter will be sent to the candidate and the candidate's principal. If necessary, a staff advisory committee will meet to discuss the absences and determine whether or not the candidate will continue in the program. Options for the staff advisory committee to consider include placing the candidate on program probation with an individual growth plan, denial of eligibility to take a TExES exam(s), or dismissal from the program. If a program extension is necessary due to absences, the candidate will be charged fees in accordance with the extension policy. If a candidate is dismissed from the program due to absences, no fees will be refunded. *See Growth Plans, Extensions, and Dismissals & ECP Exit Policy.*

### Coursework

Candidates are expected to complete all coursework within the time allotted. Failure to complete all course requirements (discussion assignments, readings, activities, tests, etc.) in the allotted time will result in an "Incomplete" status. Candidates must complete all coursework with at least 80% proficiency in order for the assignment to be considered complete.

### Children

Due to safety concerns, children of any age are not permitted at Region 13 or satellite locations during class sessions. Candidates need to make other arrangements for child care. If a child is brought to a class session, the candidate will be asked to leave the class session and make up the class session at a later date.

### Updating Contact Information

It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure the ECP has their current contact information. Please contact our ECP office at [ecp@esc13.txed.net](mailto:ecp@esc13.txed.net) to update all contact information.

## Changing Certification Areas

If a candidate wishes to change certification areas after admission into the program, a written request must be sent to the cohort specialist. Upon receiving the request, program staff will evaluate the following to determine if the candidate is eligible to change certification areas:

- current program status and progress
- admission qualifications for the requested certification area
- current employment status and courses being taught, if applicable

If a candidate does not meet entrance requirements for the requested certification area, a passing score on the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) is required prior to the approval of a change. Following approval of a change in certification area, the candidate will be required to complete test preparation for all content exams associated with the new certification area in order to gain approval to take the related TExES exam(s). The only exception to the test preparation requirement is a candidate who is changing from 7-12 to 4-8 in the same subject area and has already completed the test preparation for the original certification area. For example, a candidate who was admitted for 7-12 Social Studies and has completed the test preparation for 7-12 Social Studies may change to 4-8 Social Studies without completing additional test preparation, upon meeting all other change requirements.

Approval of a change in certification areas is not guaranteed. Changing certification areas may result in additional coursework, an extended timeline, and additional testing requirements, depending on the original certification area and the area being requested.

## Deadlines

All deadlines for the ECP application process are posted on the ECP website. Deadlines regarding coursework will be provided by the cohort specialist once accepted into the program. The deadline for finding a teaching position is 30 school days after the first day of school.

## Professionalism

Professionalism is a critical part of the teaching profession. As teachers work with their colleagues, campus administration, parents, and community members, exhibiting professional behavior is very important. When an applicant becomes a member of ECP, professionalism will be modeled and taught. Candidates are expected to comply with the ECP requirements and expectations, including the standards of professionalism as described in the ECP handbook and coursework. Candidates should maintain a professional demeanor and exercise sound judgment at all times while representing a school, a district, and the ECP.

Professionalism includes: being on time for all classes, participating in class discussions, treating fellow candidates, field supervisors and specialists with respect, academic integrity as well as other relevant practices and procedures. School districts hire and maintain faculty who are models for their students and their community. Professionalism is a vital part of the ECP instructional program and is a non-negotiable requirement for participation in the ECP. **Failure to adhere to these provisions is grounds for dismissal from the program.**

## Plagiarism

The Region 13 ECP expects all program participants to model ethical and professional behavior in all aspects of their teaching career. Modeling professional behavior begins with modeling academic integrity in completing assignments done during training. Plagiarism is defined as the representation of another person's work, words, thoughts, or ideas, as one's own. Plagiarism includes copying materials from a source such as a book or an internet site without including documentation of references. It is important that ECP program participants have a full understanding of material covered in program coursework in

order that they may internalize this knowledge and be able to apply it in their classroom. Therefore, plagiarized work will not be accepted in online courses, class assignments or any other coursework done as a part of the ECP curriculum.

### **Technology Requirements**

The ECP integrates technology into the program for communication and online course delivery along with in-class activities and assignments. All program participants must own or have daily access to a portable electronic device (laptop or tablet with keyboard) and a high-speed Internet connection. A mobile phone will not meet this requirement. A personal email address is also required. Minimum system requirements:

- High-speed Internet connection
- Personal computer with Windows 7 or higher, or MacOS X 10.9 Mavericks or higher
- Web browsers: Be sure you are on the most modern version of your favorite web browser; Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Edge. <https://updatemybrowser.org/>
- Most recent version of Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Access to Microsoft Word 2010 or higher

### **Release of Information**

In order to participate in the Region 13 Educator Certification Program, candidates will be asked to give consent to disclosure of records related to program performance and performance in the field to school administrators and program representatives for the purpose of reviewing performance, acquiring feedback or procuring required signatures.

# Testing

## Texas Examination of Educator Standards

The Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) tests knowledge and skills that a beginning educator should possess for an entry-level position in Texas public schools. Passing one or more TExES tests is required for the issuance of an Intern Certificate for all certification areas except Trade and Industrial Education (TIE). These tests are sometimes referred to as “content tests” or “content exams”.

### PACT Exam

If an applicant does not have the required minimum number of college course hours or the applicant's GPA is below 2.5, a passing score on a Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) will be required for admission into the Region 13 Educator Certification Program.

### Content Exam

To qualify for the issuance of an Intern Certificate, an applicant must pass all required content certification exams.

- Elementary Candidates must pass the EC-6 Core Subjects Content Exam and the Science of Teaching Reading Exam, along with any other exams necessary for the certification they are seeking.
- Special Education Candidates must pass the Special Education Exam and their Content Exam(s) for their certification area.
- EC-12 and Secondary candidates must pass the Content Exam for their certification area.

### Pedagogy Exam

In order to be recommended for a Standard Certificate, an applicant must complete all certification requirements and pass the applicable Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam (PPR EC-12 or PPR for TIE).

All participants have the opportunity to gain test approval for the PPR in the spring of their Internship year based on readiness.

### Additional Exams

Based on certification area, some candidates must pass additional exams in order to meet requirements for an Intern Certificate:

- Candidates for Bilingual Certification must also pass the Bilingual Supplemental (theory/law/practice) and BTLPT TExES exams prior to being placed on an intern certificate.
- Some candidates might be directed to take the English as a Second Language Supplemental Exam based on their certification area.

### Exam Registration Criteria

According to Texas Administrative Code an EPP is responsible for ensuring that each *candidate is adequately prepared to pass the appropriate content pedagogy examination(s)* required for certification. The Region 13 Educator Certification Program uses the following criteria for determining exam readiness for each required exam:

- Completing test preparation as directed by the Cohort Specialist (*indicated on the scope and sequence/calendar*)
- Passing a practice test

- Showing readiness to test by passing a combination of the test preparation and/or practice test depending on the certification area

## Exam Retesting

Registration approval is facilitated by the ECP and scores are provided by Pearson to the candidate and the ECP. Texas Administrative Code requires a candidate to pass the appropriate TExES content exam(s) before the issuance of an Intern Teaching Certificate.

If a candidate fails any of the required exams, they must complete a study plan and show readiness in order to receive test registration in order to retake the exam. If the PPR has not been passed by July 30 of the internship year, a program extension will be required (*see Testing-Based Extension After the Completion of a Successful Internship*). If the required content exam(s) are not passed by the program deadlines, an extension will be required (*see Testing-Based Extension Prior to Internship*).

# ECP Fees

All fees submitted to the Region 13 ECP are non-refundable.

## Elementary, Secondary, Special Education Cohorts

- Registration Fee - \$300
- Pre-Service Fee - \$1500
- In-Service Fee - \$4313 (*\$2313 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education*)

## ASEC<sup>1</sup> Cohort, CTE<sup>2</sup>, ACCEL<sup>3</sup> Cohort (Austin Area - hired within Region 13)

- Registration Fee - \$125
- Pre-Service Fee - \$450
- ACCEL Pre Service Fee - \$900.00 (*includes registration fee*)
- In-Service Fee - \$4970 (*\$2970 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education*)

## ASEC Cohort & CTE Cohort (Statewide Area - hired outside of Region 13)

- Registration Fee - \$125
- Pre-Service Fee - \$450
- In-Service Fee - \$5510 (*\$3510 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education*)

## District Referral Program Cohorts

- Registration Fee - \$125
- In-Service Fee Year 1 - \$2250
- In-Service Fee Year 2 - \$4313 (*\$2313 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education*)

## Other Fees - All Cohorts

- Application fee - \$100
- Intern certificate fee - \$78 (*see more info below*)
- Probationary certificate fee - \$78 (*see more info below*)
- TExES registration fee (per exam) - \$116 - \$138 (*see more info below*)
- Standard Texas certification fee - \$78 (*see more info below*)
- Criminal history check and Fingerprinting for SBEC \$37.75 - \$14
- Out of region fee - \$500

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<sup>1</sup> ASEC refers to the Accelerated Secondary program

<sup>2</sup> CTE refers to the Career and Technical Education program

<sup>3</sup> ACCEL refers to the Accelerated Elementary program

## Extension Fees (when necessary)

- For Coursework Extensions After a Successful Internship - \$125/month
- For Performance-Based Extensions - \$250/month
- For Testing-Based Extensions Prior to the Start of an Intern Certificate - \$250/month

## Additional Fee Information

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program charges a \$100 application fee. No application will be processed until the fee has been received. The application fee covers transcript evaluation and processing of other items necessary to complete the application process.

All program fees are non-refundable and are subject to change without notice.

If accepted into the program, the applicant must submit a non-refundable registration fee to the ECP in order to reserve a spot in the program. [See website for due dates.](#)

A candidate must be in good financial standing and/or have communicated with the Cohort Specialist and Budget Manager in any specific situations to be eligible for the recommendation of their intern/probationary certificate.

The In-Service fee is payroll deducted over nine months during the internship year. Currently, candidates teaching in critical need content areas, as determined by the U. S. Department of Education, receive a \$2000 scholarship. There is no application for this scholarship; it is automatic for participants in the ECP program and is deducted from the In-Service fee.

If a candidate withdraws, is dismissed, or is recommended before 9 months of in-service payments have been made, the candidate is responsible for payments for all months in which services were provided. Please note that the ECP bills candidates for services provided in the month prior to payment. *These payments are required, regardless of if payroll deductions have not begun or did not begin timely.*

If a candidate withdraws or is dismissed and would like to transfer to another Educator Preparation Program they must be in good financial standing in order for the Region 13 Educator Certification Program Certification Officer to complete the required TEA Transfer form.

If a candidate withdraws, is dismissed or chooses to go on hiatus after September 15th, one month of in-service fees will be owed for the month of September.

All ECP fees are non-refundable.

**NOTE:** *The Education Service Center Region 13 (Region 13) does not meet the IRS definition of an "eligible educational institution" in that we do not provide courses for which academic credit is offered. Therefore, we are unable to file or provide a 1098-T form to the candidates in our Certification Programs.*

## ECP Pre-Service Instruction

## Schedule

Classes are held no more than two evenings a week and Saturdays. Class time is from 6:00pm – 9:00pm CST for evening instruction and 9:00am – 4:00pm CST for Saturday instruction.

## Class Locations

Most instruction is provided at the Region 13 Education Service Center main campus located at 5701 Springdale Road in northeast Austin. No smoking is allowed inside this building. Alcohol and drugs are not allowed at Region 13 or any of the Region 13 campuses.

Statewide CTE and ASEC candidates will receive instruction via video-teleconference at designated locations across the state.

Some classes are hosted via Zoom based on the cohort and schedule provided.

## Field Experience

All candidates must complete a minimum of 30 hours of Field Based Experience prior to internship, unless the requirements for a late hire designation as defined by Texas Administrative Code (TAC) are met. Each cohort creates its own timeline and will provide a Field Experience Handbook outlining expectations set by TAC and the Region 13 ECP. According to TAC a late hire is: *An individual who has not been accepted into an educator preparation program before the 45th day before the first day of instruction and who is hired for a teaching assignment by a school after the 45th day before the first day of instruction or after the school's academic year has begun. Late hire teachers have the first 90 days of instruction to complete the Field Based Experience requirements.*

### Field Experience For 17 Month Program Cohorts

Candidates participate in a required Field Experience for a two-week period that is scheduled according to the cohort timeline. Times for field experience are the regular school hours of the campus where the candidate is placed. Field Experience is conducted on designated Region 13 campuses with cooperating teachers and field supervisors provided by ECP. Concepts learned during Pre-Service classes are expected to be implemented during this classroom experience. Successful completion of Field Experience is required before advancing into the internship phase of the program.

### Field-Based Experience for CTE and Accelerated Programs

Candidates enrolled in CTE, ASEC, or ACCEL cohorts must complete a minimum of 30 clock-hours of field-based experience. Up to 15 clock-hours of this field-based experience may be provided by use of electronic transmission, or other video or technology-based methods. A candidate who does not qualify as a late hire (*an individual who has not been accepted into an educator preparation program and is hired 45 days or less prior to the first day of instruction for a school year*) must complete the field-based experience requirement prior to internship.

Instructions regarding field-based experience will be provided to program participants by their cohort specialist at orientation sessions.

# ECP Curriculum

## Texas Standards for Educators

The ECP curriculum is aligned to the Texas Standards for Educators established by the Texas Education Agency/ State Board for Educator Certification and the state curriculum established for Texas public schools, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

There are four domains included in the Texas Standards for Educators:

### Domain 1

The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.

### Domain 2

The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.

### Domain 3

The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely, high quality feedback.

### Domain 4

The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.

## Assessment

Candidates are assessed throughout the program in many different ways. Proficiency on performance tasks is required in order to advance through the program.

# Securing Employment

## Obtaining a Position

It is the responsibility of the candidate to find a full-time teaching position before the beginning of the school year. The candidate is responsible for finding a teaching position aligned to their area of certification. It is important that the position accepted be a match between the campus and the candidate; therefore, the ECP does not “place” candidates.

The ECP notifies schools of candidates seeking employment along with providing them with candidate contact information. ECP also provides guidance to the candidate in developing resumes and participating in interviews. The deadline for obtaining a position is 30 school days after the first day of school. If a position is not found by that time, the candidate is offered an option agreement (see “Non-hired,” below). The specialist will meet with the candidate to offer options for which the candidate is qualified and develop an individual plan.

**NOTE:** *If a candidate is offered a position outside the districts served by Region 13, approval to accept the position must first be given by the ECP coordinator. If approved, an out-of-region fee will be added to the In-Service fee.*

## Acceptable Positions

Candidates must accept a position as a teacher of record in a public, accredited private, or charter school. The position must be a full-time position in the area for which the intern is being certified or a position in which the candidate is teaching at least four hours of their day in their certification area. At any point that the candidate has questions about the assignment being offered by a district, a conference with the cohort specialist is highly recommended prior to accepting the position.

## Out of Region Positions

Approval of a teaching position outside of the Region 13 service area is required by the ECP *before* accepting the position. If the position is approved, a minimum \$500 out-of-region fee for counties bordering Region 13 is added to the In-Service fee and payroll deducted. Prior approval is not required for candidates enrolled in the statewide CTE and ASEC programs; however, the out-of-region fee does apply.

Public Schools located in and serviced by Region 13 can be found [here](#). There are also numerous charter schools and accredited private schools within the Region 13 service area that are approved for the internship year.

## Non-Hired

If a candidate has not been hired by the deadline (see “Deadline” in the General Information section), they must meet with the ECP cohort specialist to review options and develop an individual plan. The specialist will determine which options are available to the candidate based on performance and develop an individual plan with the candidate. Options may include a hiatus, withdrawal or clinical teaching.

If a candidate chooses to withdraw from the program and reapply for the following cohort year, a new application must be completed and a new application fee must be paid. Applications will be evaluated based on current admission requirements, and readmission into the program is not guaranteed. Upon readmission, prior coursework will be evaluated and the cohort specialist will design a pre-service plan for the candidate. Successfully completed coursework is valid for one year, at the discretion of the cohort specialist.

## Clinical Teaching

Candidates who are not able to find an acceptable teaching position may be offered an option for clinical teaching. Clinical teaching is *not* an automatic option available to candidates. Procedures and required documentation for applying for clinical teaching will be discussed with eligible interns by their cohort specialist.

## Delays in Certification

If a candidate has not met the testing requirements for the issuance of an Intern Certificate by 30<sup>th</sup> day of school, a Testing-Based Extension will be required (*see Testing-Based Extension Prior to the Start of an Intern Certificate*). Candidates requiring a Testing Based Extension will complete the program on an extended timeline and will owe additional fees (*see Fees*). If the candidate does not obtain standard certification within two years, additional coursework may be required at the discretion of the cohort specialist.

If a candidate has not met the testing and/or coursework requirements for the issuance of a Standard Certificate by the expiration date of their Intern Certificate, a Coursework Based Extension will be required (*see Testing Based Extension After a Successful Internship*). Candidates requiring a Coursework Based Extension will complete the program on an extended timeline and will owe additional fees (*see Fees*). If the candidate does not obtain standard certification within two years, additional coursework may be required at the discretion of the cohort specialist.

Candidates requiring either type of extension must continue to communicate with their cohort specialist at least monthly and attempt any remaining tests at least once a semester.

## Statement of Eligibility

A Statement of Eligibility (SOE) for Internship will be provided to all candidates in good standing once the required content TExES exam(s) are passed and all requirements for Internship have been met.

## Fingerprinting and Applying for an Intern Certificate

Once eligible, candidates are responsible for the creation of a TEAL account, applying and paying for the Intern Certificate with Region 13 ECP listed as the entity, and scheduling and completing the fingerprinting process. More detailed instructions for completing these items is provided by the cohort specialist.

# Hiatus

## Taking a Program Hiatus

A program hiatus is an option for accepted candidates in specific circumstances who wish to pause their participation in the Educator Certification Program. A candidate's status will be changed to "Hiatus" only after the candidate has attended orientation and submitted a written request by submitting the Application for Program Continuation form and the request has been approved by the Coordinator after a review of the candidate's progress and standing in the program. The following conditions apply to taking a program hiatus:

1. The candidate must be in good financial standing prior to being approved for a hiatus.
2. Any coursework not completed prior to taking a hiatus must be completed upon return. Successfully completed coursework remains valid for up to one cohort year.
3. The candidate may be required to repeat coursework that was not completed satisfactorily or that was updated while the candidate was on hiatus, at the cohort specialist's discretion.
4. Test approval for any content exams not yet taken or passed will be granted at the cohort specialist's discretion based on established test approval criteria and candidate readiness.

A hiatus may be granted for one cohort year, with the option to extend by one additional cohort year, at the cohort specialist's discretion. Continued, regular communication with the cohort specialist is necessary in order to remain on hiatus and in good standing with the program.

# ECP Internship

## Curriculum

During the Internship phase of the program, the curriculum remains aligned to the state standards for educators. Instructional topics include instructional practices in the classroom, needs that have arisen as a result of these practices, the development of effective lessons, and classroom management. Instruction occurs evenings and weekends, but less frequently than during pre-service.

## Observations

During the internship year, candidates will conduct classroom observations and will observe master teachers other than their mentor teacher. An observation record form will be completed and submitted to the candidate's assigned cohort specialist by the designated deadline. The candidate is responsible for scheduling arrangements and obtaining approval from their campus administrator to arrange for a substitute or conduct the observations during the candidate's conference or planning periods.

## Field Supervisors

Region 13 ECP field supervisors and other experienced educators contracted by ECP provide intern support and monitor intern classroom progress.

A minimum of five observations are made during the year with feedback following each observation for program participants placed on an Intern Certificate. A minimum of three observations are made during the school year for program participants placed on a Probationary Certificate (see types of certificates).

Interns must complete a pre-conference set up by their field supervisor. Lesson plans must be prepared by the intern and made available to the field supervisor before each observation. These timelines are established by the Field Supervisor. Paperwork documenting the observation and the feedback are made available to the intern and shared with the campus administrator and mentor through the field support reports created by the Field Supervisors.

## Mentor

Research has shown that mentoring is an important component in the success of the first-year teacher. Texas Administrative Code supports this research by requiring the campus to appoint a mentor for each intern.

The mentor is required to participate in professional development training about mentoring a Region 13 ECP beginning teacher. This training is provided by the Region 13 Educator Certification Program.

Mentors and interns also participate in observations and structured conversations during the school year.

Texas Administrative Code requires that the assigned mentor is an educator who meets the following criteria:

1. has at least three years of teaching experience;
2. is an accomplished educator as shown by student learning;
3. has completed mentor training, including training in how to coach and mentor teacher candidates, by an EPP within three weeks of being assigned to the intern;
4. is currently certified in the certification category in which the internship candidate is seeking certification;
5. guides, assists, and supports the candidate during the internship in areas such as planning, classroom

- management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, district policies;
6. reports the candidate's progress to that candidate's field supervisor.

### **District/Campus Responsibilities**

Candidates will be provided a Campus Agreement to share with their campus principal that outlines the responsibilities of the campus during the Internship year. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure it is signed and returned to Region 13.

Region 13 ECP and the district will follow the Payroll Authorization Agreement policies and forms signed by the candidate and provided to the district by the Budget Manager.

### **Teaching Assignment Changes**

Once an Intern Certificate is active, candidates must complete their internship at the same district and campus for the entirety of the internship. If the Internship begins mid-year, it must continue at the same campus into the following school year. Interns must notify their cohort specialist in the case of district assignment change.

# Certification Requirements

## Steps to be recommended for Standard Certification

In addition to passing the required TExES exams, an intern must meet the following requirements to be recommended for Standard Certification:

1. Satisfactory completion of all ECP class and coursework requirements including attendance, performance tasks, field supervisor observations, and mentor dialogues;
2. Submission of all required forms and application materials;
3. Satisfactory/proficient campus evaluation, such as the T-TESS (or district equivalent), from the supervising administrator;
4. A recommendation for certification from the campus administrator;
5. A recommendation for certification from the field supervisor;
6. A recommendation for certification from the ECP program;
7. All fees must be paid in full.

If the Region 13 ECP Staff determines that the intern has not demonstrated professionalism in their roles and responsibilities and/or has not adhered to the legal and ethical requirements of the profession, recommendation for certification will be withheld.

## Applying for Standard Certification

Upon completion of all requirements for the issuance of a Texas Standard Teacher Certificate the ECP will provide instructions for applying for the certificate in TEAL/ECOS. The candidate is responsible for applying for the certificate and paying the applicable fee. The ECP will verify that the candidate has completed all necessary requirements and recommend the candidate for certification in TEAL/ECOS. The candidate will be notified by email once their application has been processed and their certificate has been posted. The verification and recommendation process may take several days to several weeks, depending on if the ECP has received all necessary documentation from the candidate, candidate's district and administrators, and field supervisor and if all payroll deductions have been received and/or verified.

# Growth Plans, Extensions, and Dismissals & ECP Exit Policy

## Growth Plans

In the event that a candidate is not meeting program expectations, they may be placed on a growth plan and ultimately may be dismissed from the program. If a candidate is experiencing difficulty in a specific area, including participation in ECP classes, attendance, performance in field experience, or performance during internship, the ECP Specialist and/or Coordinator will meet with the candidate to determine the course of action. This may include a growth plan. Timelines for meeting the expectations of the growth plan will be established. Failure to meet those deadlines may result in a dismissal from the ECP. Those involved in the development of the growth plan will meet regularly to evaluate progress. Copies of the growth plan will be provided to the candidate, principal (if during in-service), field supervisor, and ECP Specialist; a copy will also be placed in the candidate's ECP file.

## Performance-Based Extension

If the candidate does not perform in a proficient manner by the designated deadline, an extension of one year in the program is possible (but not guaranteed). Decisions about extensions are made by the ECP Coordinator, Cohort Specialist, and Field Supervisor.

Please note these three guidelines regarding extensions:

1. A program participant on an Intern Certificate may not be extended for a second year on a Probationary Certificate unless all exams have been passed.
2. If a candidate does not receive an unconditional recommendation from the campus administrator, field supervisor and the ECP, a performance extension is possible, but not guaranteed. The candidate must show progress toward meeting the certification performance requirements and must be employed for the extension year.
3. All program fees must have been paid prior to the beginning of the extension.

If the candidate has not received a contract renewal from the current district, they must notify any district considering the candidate for employment with information about the extension.

If granted an extension, the candidate will start the second internship year on a growth plan developed by the ECP staff and/or campus administrator. The growth plan must be successfully completed prior to recommendation for Standard Certificate. The candidate may also be required to attend additional ECP classes as deemed necessary for their professional growth and performance success.

## Testing-Based Extension After a Successful Internship

If a candidate does not pass the required TExES exams and/or complete all required coursework by the designated deadline, an extension of up to one year in the program is possible (but not guaranteed). Decisions about extensions are made by the ECP Coordinator and the Program Specialist.

Once a program participant's Intern Certificate has expired, no additional certificates will be issued during an extension for coursework or testing purposes.

Once a program participant has passed all state-required exams and successfully completed all ECP coursework, a recommendation for a Standard Certificate will be processed.

All extension fees must be paid in full prior to the recommendation.

## Testing-Based Extension Prior to the Start of an Intern Certificate

If a candidate does not pass all required content tests within the first thirty days of the start of the school year, a Testing-Based Extension will be required.

To be eligible for an Intern Certificate at any time during the program year, the following conditions must be met:

- Successful completion of all ECP content preparation
- Successful completion of at least 150 hours of pedagogy coursework and 30 hours of field based experience. *Late hire teachers have the first 90 days to complete this requirement.*
- Passing required content tests

Once the Intern Certificate begins, the intern must continue in the ECP throughout their internship year, extending their participation in the ECP program and remain on the same campus. For example, an Intern Certificate issued in January requires the intern to teach until January of the following year on the same campus.

During the extension, interns will continue to have field supervisor observations and complete program activities at the discretion of the program specialist.

*See Certificate Requirements for the requirements to obtain Standard Certification.*

## **Dismissals and ECP Exit Policy**

Under certain circumstances, a candidate may be dismissed from the Region 13 ECP. Although the candidate may be placed on a growth plan prior to dismissal, there is no requirement to do so.

The following are reasons for automatic dismissal *with no growth plan*:

- Termination from a teaching position under policy governing the hiring entity
- Unacceptable behavior identified in the Texas Educator Code of Ethics
- Falsification of information or documents
- Resignation by the intern from their contracted position

The following are reasons for dismissal or a growth plan:

- Insubordination to ECP and/or district personnel
- Failure to comply with a hiring entity's rules or policies which leads to concerns by the school administrator (this applies to actions outside the classroom as well as in the classroom).
- Unsatisfactory classroom performance on appraisal results, evaluations or Standard Recommendation Form by the building principal and/or ECP staff
- Failure to pay fees or submit required paperwork in a timely manner
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Failure to meet ECP requirements/standards during Pre-Service
- Failure to meet ECP requirements/standards during Internship
- Failure to return the withdrawal form within 15 days as indicated on the withdrawal form

ECP must notify the Texas Education Agency if a dismissal happens for any of the following reasons:

- Resignation, non-renewal or termination by the school or district
- Discharge or release from ECP
- Withdrawal from ECP
- The internship assignment does not meet the requirements described in Texas Administrative Code

The following is an outline of the notification process:

- ECP, the campus or district personnel, and the candidate must inform each other within one calendar week of the candidate's last day in the assignment; and

- TEA must receive the certificate deactivation request with all related documentation from ECP within two calendar weeks of the candidate's last day of the assignment in a format determined by TEA.

If a candidate who has been dismissed or withdrawn requests that ECP sign a TEA Transfer Form to move to another Educator Preparation Program, they must have paid all required program fees for this form to be provided.

# ECP Appeals and Complaint Policy

## Dismissals

To appeal a dismissal, a candidate must contact the ECP Coordinator with a written explanation of the reasons for the appeal within 10 business days of the decision. Documentation supporting the written explanation may be submitted for consideration but is not required. The Coordinator will review the information, and if necessary, a face-to-face conference may be requested with the candidate.

If the candidate is not satisfied with the decision of the Coordinator, the intern can appeal the decision to the Deputy Executive Director for Academic Services. The final appeal would be to the Executive Director of the Region 13 Education Service Center.

## Timeline

The candidate must appeal the dismissal in writing within 10 business days of receiving the dismissal notification. The ECP must respond to the appeal within 30 business days of the filing of the appeal.

## Complaint Policy

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program encourages all stakeholders to discuss their concerns with the candidate's cohort specialist. If concerns are not addressed, ECP encourages stakeholders to contact the Coordinator. Anyone can make a complaint without fear of retaliation.

A copy of the ECP Complaint Policy and process can be found here: <https://teach.esc13.net/complaints>

# Finisher Admission Program Information and Fees

## Admission:

A finisher (TEA term regarding a candidate who has finished all program pieces except state-mandated testing requirements) may be admitted into the Educator Certification Program at Region 13, although they will not be responsible for completing the same program requirements or timeline as a current cohort.

## Admission Requirements:

- A finisher may be admitted if ECP admission requirements are met, including:
  - Online application; <https://teach.esc13.net/>
    - Follow-up email should be sent to [amy.walsh@esc13.txed.net](mailto:amy.walsh@esc13.txed.net) and [sarah.jones@esc13.txed.net](mailto:sarah.jones@esc13.txed.net) once the application is complete
  - College transcripts
  - Transfer form from original program
  - TOEFL scores, if applicable
- Documentation of completing all teacher preparation requirements, except testing requirements
- Status of good standing upon exit as a finisher from the previous program

## Finisher Program Requirements:

- Monthly 30-minute check-ins with assigned cohort specialist
- Structured test preparation plan prepared by cohort specialist plan including but not limited to:
  - Reading of key textbooks aligned with the exam content
  - Online content course preparation
  - Attendance at pre-service training classes during the summer
  - Attendance at in-service training classes during the school year
  - Performance task completion
  - Practice Tests provided by the ECP
  - Pearson Online Practice Exam

Note: Finisher candidates may be required to pay for the cost of a monthly subscription to 240 Tutoring, or other test prep service, if mastery levels are not met by the second practice exam provided by the ECP.

## Program Fees by Status:

- \$100 Application fee
- Testing Only: \$125 Monthly Testing Extension Fees until the certification process is complete
- Field Support Necessary: \$250 Monthly Extension Fees until the certification process is completed

## Additional Notes:

- It is recommended that the transfer candidate complete required testing necessary for recommendation for standard certification within one year of the upload admission transfer date to the ECP.
- Fees are subjects to change