REGION 13
Educator Certification Program

Program and Policy Handbook



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.

The Educator Certification Program (ECP) Handbook is subject to revision as state requirements and regulations change. All program fees, policies, and guidelines are subject to modification without notice. To ensure you are referencing the most current version of the handbook, participants should download the document directly from teach.esc13.net.

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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 internship. 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, completing pedagogy-aligned coursework and field-based experience hours.

Region 13 ECP Contacts

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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 and Reading + STR
- 4-8 Math/Science
- 4-8 English Language Arts and 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 Trade and Industrial Education (TIE)
- 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 and Reading
- 6-12 Dance
- 6-12 Speech

All Grade Levels

- EC-12 Languages Other Than English
- EC-12 Special Education Specialist
- EC-12 Technology Applications
- EC-12 Music
- EC-12 Art
- EC-12 Physical Education

- EC-12 Theatre Arts

Beginning August 2nd, 2026:

- An EPP may not admit an applicant who: is seeking certification in a certificate category or class where the certificate and/or related certification examination is scheduled to expire within one calendar year of the admission date if the EPP is not approved to offer the next generation of that certificate.

- Candidates who are admitted into certificate areas where the certification examination and/or certificate will expire must be notified by the EPP of the expiration timeline at admission and, thereafter, must be notified prior to expiration within a reasonable amount of time, based on the structure and requirements of the program, for the candidate to be able to complete requirements for standard certification before the certification examination and/or certificate expires.
    - Region 13 ECP will notify candidates in their official Offer Letter if their certification area is expected to expire within the program timeline.

Region 13 Educator Certification Program Cohorts

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program offers three distinct Cohort Models to ensure each candidate has an option that aligns with their learning style and location in Texas. While each cohort has a designated Cohort Specialist and follows the same timeline of the Region 13 ECP Program—including similar coursework and performance-based assessments—the mode of delivery and associated costs vary by cohort.

Structured In-Person Cohort

This cohort provides a highly structured and interactive learning experience with consistent face-to-face engagement. It allows candidates to form strong connections with instructors and peers, receive immediate feedback, and establish a clear routine throughout the program.

- **Best for:** Candidates who can attend classes at the Region 13 ESC and prefer traditional classroom learning, benefit from live interaction, and thrive with structure, accountability, and in-person collaboration.
- **Format:** Coursework is delivered primarily through in-person classes at the Region 13 ESC, with additional learning completed through self-paced online modules and occasional live Zoom sessions. Most coursework is completed before the internship, with supplemental "just-in-time" sessions offered during the internship to address immediate classroom needs.
- **Schedule:** When there are live classes, they are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (6:00–9:00 PM) and Saturdays (9:00 AM–4:00 PM).

Balanced Hybrid Cohort

This cohort blends in-person learning with the flexibility of online coursework, creating a balance between structured interaction and independent study. Candidates still benefit from face-to-face learning and the cohort model during the in-service classes.

- **Best for:** Candidates in or near the Region 13 area who are self-motivated but still value occasional in-person sessions for community building and hands-on activities.
- **Format:** Coursework is completed through a combination of self-paced online coursework and live classes at the Region 13 ESC. This format is best for candidates who are comfortable completing the majority of their coursework online, with occasional live classes during In-Service. Coursework is evenly split before and during internship, with “just-in-time” content provided to address challenges as they arise in the classroom.
- **Schedule:** Live classes held once a month on Saturdays during In-Service (9:00 AM–1:00 PM).

Live Online Cohort

This fully remote cohort combines the flexibility of online coursework with the benefit of live, virtual instruction and community interaction. It allows for statewide access while still fostering connection through scheduled virtual sessions.

- **Best for:** Candidates across Texas who are self-driven, prefer the convenience of learning from home, and still want periodic live interaction with instructors and peers.
- **Format:** Coursework is completed through a combination of self-paced online coursework and live classes via Zoom. This format is best for candidates who are comfortable completing the majority of their coursework online, with occasional live, virtual classes during In-Service. Coursework is evenly split before and during internship, with “just-in-time” content provided to address challenges as they arise in the classroom.
- **Schedule:** Live classes held once a month on Saturdays during In-Service (9:00 AM–1:00 PM) via Zoom.

Routes to Standard Certification

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 50 hours of field-based experience requirements.
- An Intern Certificate is valid for a period of two years and will require formal observations and informal observations completed by the educator preparation program. The number of formal and informal observations is dependent on whether a participant is designated as a late hire. According to TAC, a late hire is: *An individual who is both accepted into an EPP after the 45th day before the first day of instruction and hired for a teaching assignment by a school after the 45th day before the first day of instruction or within the first semester of the academic year; or who is both admitted into the EPP and hired by the district or after the school's academic year has begun, and requires additional time to complete the pre-internship requirements*.
- Participants are allowed only **ONE** Intern Certificate for their lifetime.
- The duration of the internship must be a minimum of one full school year and must be completed in the classroom teacher assignment or assignments that match the certification category or categories for which the candidate is prepared by the EPP.
- An EPP may permit an internship of up to 30 school days less than the required minimum for parental leave, military leave, illness, bereavement leave, or if the late hire date is after the first day of the school year.

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 50 hours of field-based experience requirements.
- A Probationary Certificate is valid for one year with the option for one additional year if the internship was declared unsuccessful by the field supervisor or campus administrator and will require formal observations and informal observations completed by the educator preparation program. The number of formal and informal observations is dependent on whether a participant is designated as a late hire.
- The duration of the internship must be a minimum of one full school year and must be completed in the classroom teacher assignment or assignments that match the certification category or categories for which the candidate is prepared by the EPP.
- An EPP may permit an internship of up to 30 school days less than the required minimum for parental leave, military leave, illness, bereavement leave, or if the late hire date is after the first day of the school year.

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.
- To be considered for Clinical Teaching, 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 50 hours of field-based experience requirements.
- The Clinical Teaching component consists of 490 minutes of teaching in a placement aligned to the clinical teacher's area of certification. These 490 minutes promote understanding of students, classroom procedures, and campus expectations while the ECP Clinical Teacher gradually assumes the daily responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher.
- The ECP Clinical Teacher will complete the assigned performance tasks each week and maintain a Clinical Teaching Portfolio. An ECP Field Supervisor will document the Clinical Teacher's progress through regular classroom observations and assigned performance tasks.

- An ECP Clinical Teacher who successfully applies the knowledge and skills of the ECP curriculum will be recommended for standard certification upon completion of all program requirements. This success will be evident in classroom observations, recommendations from the Cooperating Teacher and ECP Field Supervisor, and in all performance, tasks completed throughout the Clinical Teaching experience.

Residency

- A Residency is where a teacher candidate is paired with an experienced, highly effective Host Teacher for a full year of clinical training/co-teaching in a K-12 classroom.
- Candidates may be offered an option to complete Residency. Residency is *not* an automatic option available to candidates. Procedures and required documentation for applying for Residency will be discussed with eligible interns by their cohort specialist.
- To be considered for a Residency, 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 50 hours of field-based experience requirements.
- The ECP Resident Teacher will complete the assigned performance tasks/gates each week and maintain a Teaching Portfolio. An ECP Field Supervisor will document the Resident Teacher's progress through regular classroom observations, campus meetings, and assigned performance tasks.
- An ECP Resident Teacher who successfully applies the knowledge and skills of the ECP curriculum will be recommended for an enhanced standard certification upon completion of all program requirements. This success will be evident in classroom observations, recommendations from the Host Teacher, Campus Administrator, and ECP Field Supervisor, and in all performance gates/tasks completed.

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 will be sent out by the candidate, when applicable. 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, except for 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. Degrees must be from an institution of higher education that, at the time the degree was conferred, was accredited or otherwise approved by an accredited organization recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The Region 13 ECP requires that the candidate has 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 (PACT) 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.

TEA requires Educator Preparation Programs to compute 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 Trade and Industrial Education (TIE) and Health Science will be expected to document work experience in lieu of the required GPA.

Beginning August 2nd, 2026, TAC updates allow for the following adjustment: applicant shall have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.50 on a four-point scale or the equivalent before admission. Equivalency is determined by the scale printed on the Official transcript from the University or College.

GPA 10% Exception Rule

Consideration by the program coordinator may be granted to individuals with a GPA less than 2.5. This exception to the minimum GPA requirement will be provided only in extraordinary circumstances, with approval by the Program Coordinator 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 TAC 227, Subchapter A:

- 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 High Intermediate in Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening. For applicants with a degree from a country where English is the official language, a TOEFL score is not required. See approved list. TOEFL scores are valid for two years.

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, applicable military experience may be used in lieu of work experience and current licensure at program discretion.

For applicants in areas other than CTE, the Joint Services Transcript will be evaluated for content-specific coursework for admission purposes.

Interview

Applicants for the Structured In-Person cohort participate in a face-to-face or Zoom interview developed by the ECP to determine their aptitude for teaching, as applicable for the certification area for which the application was submitted.

Reapplication

Applications are valid for six months. If an applicant does not complete the admissions process and gain acceptance into ECP within that time frame, they will be required to reapply to the program.

If an applicant reapplies within one cohort year of a previous offer of acceptance, and did not accept their offer of admission, no additional application fee is required.

Applicants who were previously accepted and withdrew or were dismissed before program completion may reapply to the program. A new application and payment must be completed.

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.

In all other circumstances, a candidate considering reapplication would be starting from the beginning of the certification process and responsible for all program fees and coursework requirements.

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 the degree is expected to be conferred within the same semester in which the application is submitted. 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.

Beginning August 2nd, 2026 TAC will be updated to allow contingent admission into an EPP if the degree is expected to be conferred within sixteen weeks from when the application is submitted.

An official transcript showing the degree conferred must be submitted within one month of the graduation date or the candidate could be dismissed from the program. TAC requires that if the required degree is not conferred at the end of the semester identified in the Notification Letter, the candidate must be removed from the EPP. *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/certifications for Trade and Industrial Education applicants, or licenses/certifications for CTE applicants 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 and scored on an admission rubric. 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, if applicable
- quality of references
- work experience
- experience working with students in an educational setting
- a writing sample
- previous testing history
- 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

The Region 13 ECP seeks a diverse applicant pool and strongly encourages all to apply. The Region 13 ECP 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 an applicant has concerns or questions about eligibility for a Texas educator certificate, TEA staff will 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 and/or completion of the EPP.

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 completed in a Texas approved school setting, including signed reflection forms
- Dyslexia Training through TEA Learn
- 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 TEA Learn or Education Service Center
- TEA Learn 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).

TExES Testing History

If a candidate has five or more failures of an individual TExES test matching the certification area for which the candidate has applied or a combined ten TExES failures overall, then a candidate does not meet admission standards for the ECP. *If a candidate is a Finisher confirmed by TEA from a closed program, testing history does not impact the completion of certification requirements with the ECP.*

Candidates with Disabilities

Candidates with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability that affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic and/or testing accommodations must notify their cohort specialist upon admittance into the program.

To request testing accommodations with Pearson, candidates must work with their Cohort Specialist to have early access to test approval, then request accommodations with Pearson (https://www.tx.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/GENRB_AlternativeArrangements.html). These requests typically take 30 days to process. Once the request is processed, candidates can schedule their test once they have demonstrated readiness according to the ECP's testing criteria.

ECP Standards of Conduct

The ECP staff maintains high standards of conduct and expects candidates admitted into the Region 13 Educator Certification Program to demonstrate professional behavior during training classes, throughout coursework, and in their own classrooms. This includes punctuality for all ECP class sessions and coursework. 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 courses 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.

Candidate Expectations

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 instruction, meetings, or activities.**

After the third absence, a letter may 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, 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, performance-based assessments, tests, etc.) in the allotted time will result in an "Incomplete" status. Candidates must complete all coursework with at least 80% proficiency for the assignment to be considered complete.

Children

Due to safety concerns, children of any age are not permitted at the Region 13 ESC or satellite locations during class sessions. Candidates need to make other arrangements for childcare. 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 that the ECP has their current contact information. The ECP office may be contacted at 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
- Texas Administrative Code requirements for qualifications for the requested certification area
- current employment status and courses being taught, if applicable

If a candidate does not meet state-required 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).

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.

Changing Cohorts

If a candidate wishes to change cohorts 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 cohorts:

- current program status and progress
- Texas Administrative Code requirements for qualifications for the requested change
- current employment status and courses being taught, if applicable

The Cohort Specialist will work with the Budget Manager to provide an updated fee schedule and steps for changing cohorts. Approval of a change in cohorts is not guaranteed. Changing cohorts may result in additional coursework, additional fees, an extended timeline, and additional testing requirements, depending on the original certification area and the cohort being requested. Orientation for the new cohort will be provided and is required to successfully move cohorts.

Deadlines

Deadlines for all program requirements will be communicated by the cohort specialist. Failure to meet program deadlines may result in a program extension, additional fees, delay in certification, or program dismissal.

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 participant in the 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 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.

AI Policy

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP) recognizes the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and professional settings. However, to ensure the integrity of candidate work and adherence to program standards, the submission of work created by AI tools is prohibited when completing Performance-Based Assessments (PBAs) or any other assigned coursework.

If a Cohort Specialist identifies or suspects that AI was used in the completion of an assignment, the following steps will be taken:

- The Cohort Specialist will reach out to discuss the assignment with the candidate.
- At their discretion, the Cohort Specialist will ask the candidate to revise and resubmit the assignment without the use of AI assistance.
- The candidate may be provided with additional guidance or resources to complete the work independently if necessary.

This policy is in place to uphold the authenticity of candidates' work, promote skill development, and maintain the credibility of the certification program.

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: the most current version of Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Edge. https://updatemybrowser.org/
- Most recent version of Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Access to Microsoft Word 2010 or higher or a personal Google Account

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, school human resources, and program representatives for the purpose of reviewing performance, acquiring feedback or procuring required signatures.

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).

Texas Administrative Code Chapter 235, Subchapter C includes the revised Classroom Teacher Pedagogy Standards implemented in May 2025.

- Instructional Preparation: Teachers understand how students learn and prepare for instructional delivery by designing lessons, evaluating instructional materials, leveraging their knowledge of students, and engaging in a thorough process for lesson internalization.
- Instructional Delivery and Assessment: Teachers intentionally apply their knowledge of students and the learning process to implement high-quality instruction and assessment practices that are research and evidence-based and informed by student work.
- Content Pedagogy Knowledge and Skills: Teachers show a full understanding of their content and related pedagogy, and the appropriate grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- Learning Environment: Teachers maintain a safe and supportive learning environment that is characterized by respectful interactions with students, consistent routines, high expectations, and the development of students' self-regulation skills.
- Professional Practices and Responsibilities: Teachers are self-aware and consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development. They collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with federal, state, and local laws, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity.

There are four domains included in the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Exam:

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.

Performance Based Assessments

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

Parts of the Region 13 Educator Certification Program

Part 1: Orientation

After an applicant receives notification that they meet admission requirements, they will be provided with instructions for setting up an E-Campus account and paying the registration fee. Once the fee has been paid, they will be enrolled in an Orientation course. This course introduces candidates to the ECP program and includes a copy of the ECP Handbook, a review of program schedules, an introduction to the ECP team, and an opportunity to accept ECP's offer by signing the Orientation Agreement.

Part 2: Pre-Service

After completing Orientation, candidates begin the Pre-Service portion of the program. Candidates receive support for content test preparation and are expected to complete all required content exams. Candidates also participate in Field-Based Experiences (FBEs), which involve interactive and reflective observations of certified teachers. Additionally, candidates' complete pedagogy coursework aligned to the Educator Standards in preparation for their first year of teaching. During Part 2, candidates are also required to secure a teaching position in preparation for the Internship. *Residency and Clinical Teaching are alternative pathways available with specific deadlines and Cohort Specialist approval.*

Part 3: In-Service

During In-Service, candidates continue pedagogy coursework aligned to the Educator Standards, with a focus on practical application during their first year of teaching. They also receive preparation and support for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam.

Once candidates begin their internship, they are supported by an assigned Field Supervisor and Campus Mentor. The duration of the internship must be a minimum of one full school year and must be completed in the classroom teacher assignment or assignments that match the certification category or categories for which the candidate is prepared by the EPP. An EPP may permit an internship of up to 30 school days less than the required minimum for parental leave, military leave, illness, bereavement leave, or if the late hire date is after the first day of the school year.

Standard Recommendation

At the end of the internship year, candidates are eligible for a standard teaching certificate recommendation if all program and state requirements have been met.

Extension

In some cases, a candidate may need additional time beyond the In-Service portion of the program. Extensions may be granted due to incomplete testing, pending coursework, or delayed internship start date.

ECP Fees

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

Structured In-Person Cohorts

- Registration Fee - $150
- Pre-Service Fee - $1500
    - *Pre Service fee due dates are calculated from the date a candidate begins pre service (January or March) all fees are non-refundable.*
- In-Service Fee - $4628 *($2628 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education)*
    - Out of region fee - $540

Balanced Hybrid and Live Online Cohorts – hired within Region 13

- Registration Fee - $150
- Pre-Service Fee *(certification areas requiring one content exam)* - $450
- Pre Service Fee *(certification areas requiring two or more content exams)* - $900.00
    - *Pre Service fee due dates are calculated from the date the orientation agreement is signed, based on the certification at admission, all fees are non-refundable.*
- In-Service Fee - $5051 *($3051 for critical needs content areas as determined by the U. S. Department of Education)*

Balanced Hybrid and Live Online - hired outside of Region 13

- Registration Fee - $150
- Pre-Service Fee *(certification areas requiring one content exam)* - $450
- Pre Service Fee *(certification areas requiring two or more content exams)* - $900.00
    - *Pre Service fee due dates are calculated from the date the orientation agreement is signed, based on the certification at admission, all fees are non-refundable.*
- In-Service Fee - $5591 *($3591 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 Additional Fee Information below)*
- Probationary certificate fee - $78 (*see Additional Fee Information below)*
- TExES registration fee (per exam) - $116 - $138 (*see Additional Fee Information below)*
- Standard Texas certificate fee - $78 (*see Additional Fee Information below)*
- Criminal history check and Fingerprinting for SBEC - $37.75 and $14

Extension Fees (when necessary)

- For Extended Pre-Service – Two additional Pre-Service Fee Payments totaling $600.00
- For Coursework Extensions After a Successful Internship - $150/month
- For Continuation Extensions - $250/month
- For Growth plan Extensions (Candidates who had an unsuccessful Internship Year) - $300/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, applicants must submit a non-refundable registration/orientation fee to the ECP to begin orientation and officially confirm their admission. 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.

If a candidate withdraws or is dismissed before all pre-service payments have been made, the candidate is responsible for all payments due upon withdrawal, dismissal, or recommendation.

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 in a timely manner.* 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.

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 second-year hiatus is granted, additional pre-service fees may apply. Factors determining the need for a second pre-service payment include: unsuccessful completion of pre-service coursework, unsuccessful completion of test preparation, and/or failure to pass all required tests. The Coordinator and Specialist will determine pre-service fees upon returning from hiatus.

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

Class schedules vary by Cohort and will be provided to candidates through the website, information sessions, and emails.

Class Locations

Live In-Person 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 Hybrid candidates will receive instruction via video-teleconference at designated locations across the state or offered via Zoom.

Live Online and Hybrid classes are hosted via Zoom based on the cohort and schedule provided.

Field Experience

All candidates must complete a minimum of 50 hours of Field Based Experience prior to internship, unless 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 is both accepted into an EPP after the 45th day before the first day of instruction and hired for a teaching assignment by a school after the 45th day before the first day of instruction or within the first semester of the academic year; or who is both admitted into the EPP and hired by the district or after the school's academic year has begun, and requires additional time to complete the pre-internship requirements. Late hire teachers have the first semester of instruction to complete the Field Based Experience requirements.*

Beginning August 2nd 2026 TAC updates will allow: An EPP may allow a candidate who is employed as an uncertified classroom teacher, and who was employed as an uncertified teacher for at least the full school year preceding issuance of the intern certificate, to substitute service as a teacher of record for the field-based experiences required in §228.43 of this title (relating to Preservice Field-Based Experiences for Classroom Teacher Candidates). Candidates who meet these criteria and were admitted into the EPP on or after September 1, 2024, are eligible.

Field Experience for Structured In-Person Program Cohort

Candidates in the Structured In-Person Cohort can choose to participate in a Facilitated Field Experience for a two-week period, 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.

Candidates who don't choose a Facilitated Field Experience must complete the Independent Field Experience where they independently arrange to observe 50 clock hours of instruction. Instructions regarding field-based experience will be provided to program participants by their cohort specialist during orientation and pre-service.

Field-Based Experience for Balanced Hybrid and Live Online Programs

Candidates enrolled in Balanced Hybrid and Live Online Programs cohorts must complete a minimum of 50 clock hours of field-based experience. A minimum of 25 hours of field-based experience must be completed through in-person classroom experiences with a certified teacher. Additional allowable hours are described in the field-based experience handbook. A candidate who does not qualify as a late hire *(see definition above)* 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 during orientation and pre-service.

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.
- Core Subjects 4-8, ELAR 4-8 and ELAR/SS 4-8 Candidates must pass their Core 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 if required by their teaching assignment.
- EC-12 and Secondary candidates must pass the Content Exam for their certification area.

Pedagogy Exam

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 In-Service year based on readiness.

Additional Exams

Based on certification area, some candidates must pass additional exams 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, when available

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 to receive test registration approval to retake the exam. If the PPR has not been passed by August 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 Continuation Extension*).

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 in which the candidate plans to complete the internship. 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. If a position is not found by the end of August, the candidate is offered an ECP Options Form (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 in a local cohort and 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 a 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 $540 out-of-region fee for campuses outside of the Region 13 area is added to the In-Service fee and payroll deducted. Prior approval is not required for candidates enrolled in the statewide 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 “Deadlines” in the General Information section), they must meet with the ECP cohort specialist to review options and develop an individual plan using the ECP Options Form. 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 Extended Pre-Service, hiatus, withdrawal, or clinical teaching *(prior approval before finding a position is required)*.

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

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. Candidates must discuss Clinical Teaching with their Cohort Specialist during the spring before the Clinical Teaching experience begins in August in order to be approved for the Clinical Teaching pathway.

Delays In Certification

If a candidate has not met the testing requirements for the issuance of an Intern Certificate by the first day of the school year set by the district, a Continuation Extension will be required (*see Continuation Extension*). Candidates requiring a Continuation 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. Per TAC if the candidate does not obtain standard certification within five years, all coursework will expire and new coursework must be completed in order to earn standard certification

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 Testing/Coursework Based Extension will be required (*see Testing Based Extension After a Successful Internship*). Candidates requiring a Testing/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. TEA requires candidates to have all required content exams passed, 150 hours of pedagogy coursework completed, and 50 hours of field-based experience complete before an EPP can issue a SOE.

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 are provided by the cohort specialist.

Hiatus

Taking a Program Hiatus

A program hiatus is an option in specific circumstances for accepted candidates who wish to pause their participation in the Educator Certification Program. A hiatus is allowable for candidates who have successfully completed Orientation, Pre-Service and passed all required content tests but were unable to find a teaching position for the cohort-aligned school year.

A candidate's status will be changed to "Hiatus" only after the candidate has completed the Hiatus 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.

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. Lack of communication with the Cohort Specialist during hiatus could result in program dismissal.

Administrative Hold

Being Placed on Administrative Hold

Administrative Hold is a temporary status assigned to candidates who remain enrolled in the program but are unable to continue progressing toward certification requirements due to an outstanding administrative, financial, compliance, or eligibility matter requiring resolution. Moving a candidate to Administrative Hold requires Coordinator approval.

While on Administrative Hold, candidates may remain enrolled in the program; however, they may be restricted from one or more program activities, including coursework, certification testing approvals, recommendation for certification, or extension processing.

Administrative Hold may be assigned for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Outstanding program fees or payment obligations
- Pending TEA investigations or certification reviews
- Missing documentation or compliance requirements
- Required industry licenses or credentials for Trade and Industrial Education (TIE) or Health Science certification candidates
- Other administrative matters that temporarily prevent progression through the certification program

Candidates placed on Administrative Hold are responsible for resolving the identified issue(s) within the timeframe established by the Educator Preparation Program. Failure to resolve the issue(s) may result in withdrawal or dismissal as outlined in program policies.

ECP In-Service

Curriculum

During the In-Service part 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 because of these practices, the development of effective lessons, and classroom management. Instruction occurs on the evenings and weekends along with self-paced coursework to allow candidates time to further explore and apply pedagogical best practices.

Observations

During the internship year, candidates may conduct classroom observations and 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 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.

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP) is held to strict deadlines by TEA for completing field support observations and uploading reports based on candidates' assignment start dates.

For the 2026-2027 school year, candidates not classified as a Late Hire teaching on Intern or Probationary certificates will be required to have:

- 1 Initial Contact and Verification
    - Completed via Zoom, phone, and/or email
- 4 In Person Formal Observations (2 in the first half of their internship)
- 4 Informal Observations (2 in the first half of their internship)
    - First informal must be in person
    - Three remaining informal observations will be completed virtually

For the 2026-2027 school year candidates classified as a **Late Hire** teaching on Intern or Probationary certificates will be required to have:

- 1 Initial Contact and Verification
    - Completed via Zoom, phone, and/or email
- 5 Formal Observations (3 in the first half of their internship)
- 6 Informal Observations (3 in the first half of their internship)
    - First & Second informal must be in person
    - Four remaining informal observations will be completed virtually

For the 2026-2027 school year candidates in Clinical Experience will be required to have:

- 1 Initial Contact and Verification
    - Completed via Zoom, phone, and/or email
- 4 Formal Observations (2 in the first half of their internship)
- 6 Informal Observations (3 in the first half of their internship)
    - First informal must be in person
    - Five remaining informal observations will be completed virtually

Interns are required to follow the Field Support Timeline communicated by the Region 13 ECP for their

internship to remain in compliance with TEA requirements. Time out of the classroom and/or failure to meet these deadlines must be communicated with the ECP Cohort Specialist in advance. Failure to communicate in advance to the Cohort Specialist or failure to follow these established timelines may result in a dismissal from ECP.

- Interns must complete a pre-conference set up by their field supervisor.
- Lesson plans must be made available to the field supervisor before each observation within the established timeline.
- Interns must teach at least 45 minutes during formal observations and participate in an interactive post conference.
- Interns must teach at least 15 minutes during informal observations and participate in an interactive post conference.
- Interns are expected to show growth across Educator Standards throughout the internship year by implementing strategies from ECP coursework and field supervisor reports.
- Field Reports created by the Field Supervisors documenting the observation and the feedback are made available to the intern and shared with the campus administrator and mentor through the ECP Field App.

Mentor

Research has shown that mentoring is an important component in the success of a first-year teacher. Texas Administrative Code supports this research by requiring the campus to appoint an Intern Mentor Teacher for each intern. Intern Mentor Teachers are commonly referred to throughout the program as “Mentors”.

When a candidate begins their internship, they will be assigned an Intern Mentor Teacher by their campus or district. 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 through the ECP Mentor Handbook.

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:

- Holds a valid certification in the same certification category as the intern candidate.
- Has at least three complete years of successful classroom teaching experience, with a demonstrated record of improving student performance using student growth and/or achievement data.
- Demonstrates instructional effectiveness, including use of research-based practices aligned to the grade level and subject of the intern.
- Demonstrates strong interpersonal, collaboration, and leadership skills, including the ability to communicate effectively, build trust, and support beginning teachers.
- Has been selected using district criteria aligned to TEC §21.458 and is preferably a current classroom teacher, with recent teaching experience.
- Has completed required mentor training within the timeframe established by TAC (§228.91).
- Is not serving simultaneously as the intern’s cooperating teacher, field supervisor, or site supervisor.
- Guides, assists, and supports the candidate throughout the entirety of the internship in areas such as lesson preparation, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, and district policies;
- Reports the candidate's progress to the candidate's field supervisor.

District/Campus Responsibilities

When a candidate begins their internship, Region 13 ECP will send a Campus Agreement to the candidate’s

administration. This agreement outlines the campus's responsibilities during the internship year, including assigning a qualified mentor who meets state standards and has demonstrated a positive impact on student achievement. ECP will ask for support from candidates whose administrators have not completed the agreement.

The 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 in an allowable teaching assignment according to the certification area at the same district for the entirety of the internship certificate. If the Internship begins mid-year, it must continue at the same district into the following school year until the completion of the internship. Interns must notify their cohort specialist in the case of any changes to teaching assignment during the internship. If a change in teaching assignment during the internship results in the candidate teaching in a position that is not allowable for their certification area, the Intern Certificate will be deactivated and the candidate will be required to begin a new internship in an allowable assignment.

Certification Requirements

Steps to be recommended for Standard Certification

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

1. Satisfactory completion of all ECP class and coursework requirements including attendance, completing required modules, performance-based assessments, 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. Completion of one full school year teaching on the intern or probationary certificate;
5. A recommendation for certification from the campus administrator;
6. A recommendation for certification from the field supervisor;
7. A recommendation for certification from the ECP program;
8. All fees must be paid in full.

If the Region 13 ECP Staff determines that the candidate 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 will 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.

Educator certificates are not issued automatically and will only be released after completion of a required background screening through the Statewide Educator Misconduct and Accountability Clearinghouse (SEMAC). SEMAC is now connected to the Do Not Hire Registry (DNHR) to strengthen background review processes and help prevent individuals with reportable misconduct from moving between school systems.

Because of this additional screening, candidates should expect a delay of several days between recommendation and certificate issuance. Once a certificate has been issued, candidates will receive an email notification. Candidates may also verify their certificate status using the Certificate Lookup tool.

The ECP encourages candidates to plan accordingly for this processing time, especially if certification is needed for employment purposes. If several days have passed and the certificate has not been issued, the candidate may contact Educator Fingerprinting at 512-936-8400 (Option 3) or submit a request through the Fingerprinting Help Desk for assistance.

Please note recommendations cannot be made by an EPP until the entire internship is complete, meaning the candidate has taught for at least one full school year.

JROTC Candidates Holding a Valid Texas Standard Teaching Certificate

To be admitted into the JROTC certification program, candidates must:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- Submit a Joint Services Transcript (JST) or other official military transcript;
- Hold a valid Military Instructor Certificate; and
- Be formally admitted to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP).

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.79 and TEC §21.0487(c)(2)(B), candidates employed by a school district as a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructor prior to or during enrollment in the EPP are exempt from clinical teaching, internship, residency, and field-based experience requirements.

Candidates who hold a valid Texas Standard Teaching Certificate in the applicable grade band are exempt from educator preparation coursework requirements associated with the JROTC certificate area. Documentation verifying the standard certificate must be maintained in the candidate's certification file.

Prior to recommendation for certification, candidates must successfully complete all program requirements, including passing the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) examination.

JROTC Candidates Without a Valid Texas Standard Teaching Certificate

To be admitted into the JROTC certification program, candidates must:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- Submit a Joint Services Transcript (JST) or other official military transcript;
- Hold a valid Military Instructor Certificate; and
- Be formally admitted to the Educator Preparation Program (EPP).

In accordance with 19 TAC §228.79 and TEC §21.0487(c)(2)(B), candidates employed by a school district as a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructor prior to or during enrollment in the EPP are exempt from clinical teaching, internship, residency, and field-based experience requirements.

Candidates who do not hold a valid Texas Standard Teaching Certificate in the applicable grade band (6-12) must successfully complete all EPP-assigned coursework required for the grade band associated with the JROTC certificate area.

Prior to recommendation for certification, candidates must successfully complete all program requirements, including passing the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) examination.

Growth Plans, Extensions, and Dismissals & ECP Exit Policy

Growth Plans

If 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 not meeting expectations 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 internship), field supervisor (if during internship), 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 an additional year on a Probationary Certificate unless the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility (PPR) exam has 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.
3. The candidate must complete a petition for extension and submit it to their cohort specialist by the deadline provided.
4. ECP will meet to determine if the petition for extension will be approved and notify the candidate of the decision.
5. The candidate must show progress toward meeting the certification performance requirements and must be employed for the extension year and teach on the Probationary Certificate for one full school year.
6. All current program fees must be paid prior to the beginning of the extension.
7. Performance-based extension fees are $300 a month.

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 the Standard Certificate. The candidate may also be required to attend additional ECP classes as deemed necessary for their professional growth and performance success.

Testing/Coursework 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 Cohort 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 requirements, a recommendation for a Standard Certificate will be processed.

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

Continuation Extension

If a candidate does not pass all required content tests by the first day of instruction at the start of the school year, a Continuation Extension will be required for the following cohort year to complete the internship.

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

- Successful completion of at least 150 hours of pedagogy coursework and 50 hours of field-based experience. *Late hire teachers have the first semester 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 in the same district. For example, an Intern Certificate issued in January requires the intern to teach until January of the following year in the same district.

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

If a candidate was admitted as a Late Hire and becomes a Continuation Extension starting their internship the following school year or cohort year theire status as a late hire will be removed as they had one year in the program to complete pre service requirements.

See Certificate Requirements for the requirements to obtain Standard Certification.

Program Withdrawal

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from the Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP), they must submit a withdrawal request via email to their Cohort Specialist. The Cohort Specialist will review the impact of the withdrawal on coursework, program standing, and financial obligations with the candidate. Following this review, the candidate will receive an official withdrawal form to sign.

Once the form is signed, the candidate's status will be changed to Withdrawn/Inactive. If the withdrawal form is not signed within 15 days of the initial request, the candidate will be dismissed from the program.

Candidates are responsible for paying all outstanding balances at the time of withdrawal. Please note that ECP bills candidates for services provided in the month prior to payment, and In-Service Fee billing occurs on the 15th of each month. These payments are required regardless of whether payroll deductions have begun or have not been processed in a timely manner. Pre-Service payments are due on the schedule set in the Cohort's Pre-Service course.

If a candidate does not participate in In-Service and withdraws after September 15th, one month of inservice fees will be owed for September.

If a candidate successfully completes their internship but has not finished all required EPP coursework, they are not considered a program completer (finisher). By withdrawing, the candidate acknowledges that if they choose to pursue certification in the future, they will be required to re-enroll in the program and complete a new internship to meet certification requirements.

If a candidate is readmitted within one cohort year of their original acceptance, fees paid for registration and pre-service will be applied to the new cohort year (if applicable). Credit for previously completed coursework may be granted at the discretion of the Cohort Specialist.

In all other cases, candidates who reapply to the program will be required to start from the beginning of the certification process and will be responsible for all program fees and coursework requirements.

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 from a teaching position by the intern on an Intern or Probationary Certificate prior to completion of internship

The following are reasons for dismissal or a growth plan:

- Insubordination to ECP, Field Supervisors, 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 campus 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 or In-Service
- Failure to meet ECP requirements/standards during Internship
- Failure to return the withdrawal form within 15 days as indicated on the withdrawal form
- Contract abandonment

Per TAC 228, the exit policy must identify a point of dismissal for inactive candidates after no more than two years of inactivity. An inactive candidate is one who is no longer completing coursework, training, and testing requirements with an EPP and is not a completer of the EPP.

The Region 13 Educator Certification Program will ask a candidate to withdraw from the program if they have been inactive for one full Cohort Year. The ECP defines inactivity as a candidate who is not completing coursework, testing requirements, or attending training classes as determined by the Cohort Specialist. If the candidate does not complete the Withdrawal Form within 15 days of receiving the form, they will be dismissed from the ECP.

ECP must notify the Texas Education Agency if a dismissal happens for any of the following reasons while a candidate is on an intern or probationary certificate:

- 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 ten business days of the candidate's last day of the assignment in a format determined by TEA.

If a candidate is dismissed from the Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP) before completing a successful internship and all required EPP coursework, they are not considered a program completer (finisher). Candidates dismissed from the program who wish to pursue certification in the future will be required to re-enroll in the program and complete a new internship as part of the certification requirements.

Readmission to the Region 13 ECP is not guaranteed. If a dismissed candidate reapplies, the Program Coordinator will review the individual’s prior program performance, documentation, and overall standing before determining eligibility for readmission.

Finishers/Completers

If a candidate is reported to TEA by Region 13 ECP as a Finisher (Completer), this designation indicates that they have successfully completed their internship and all required coursework but still need to pass the PPR and/or a content exam to earn their Standard Certificate.

A Finisher is eligible to return only to the Region 13 ECP to complete remaining testing requirements. Candidates who wish to pursue their Standard Certification should refer to the Finisher Process section of this handbook for additional guidance.

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 from the date of dismissal. Documentation supporting the written explanation may be submitted for consideration but is not required. The ECP 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 ECP Coordinator, the intern can appeal the decision to the Director of Leadership Initiatives following the same process above.

If the candidate is not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Leadership Initiatives, the intern can appeal the decision to the Deputy Director of Academic Services following the same process above.

The final appeal would be to the Executive Director of the Region 13 Education Service Center.

Timeline

The candidate must appeal against the dismissal in writing within 10 business days from the date of dismissal. The ECP must respond to the appeal within 30 business days of the filing of the appeal.

Complaint Policy

The Region 13 Educator Preparation Programs encourage stakeholders to discuss their concerns with appropriate program personnel who have the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible level. Informal resolutions shall be encouraged.

As defined by TAC 228.121: An applicant for candidacy in an educator preparation program (EPP), an employee or former employee of an EPP, a cooperating teacher, a host teacher, a mentor, a site supervisor, or an administrator in a public or private school that serves as a site for clinical teaching, residency, internship, or practicum experiences may submit a complaint about an EPP for investigation and resolution.

Any of the above-mentioned, hereinafter referred to as the complainant, who has a complaint, may seek resolution without fear of retaliation.

For filing a formal complaint, please follow the guidelines in the Complaint Process linked below.

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

Finisher Program Information and Fees

Admission
A finisher, as defined by TEA, is a candidate who has finished all program components except state-mandated testing requirements. Finishers may be admitted into the Region 13 Educator Certification Program to fulfill testing requirements. Finishers will not be responsible for completing the same program requirements or timeline as candidates admitted into 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 and 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: $150 monthly testing extension fees until the certification process is complete

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