

Region 10 Teacher Preparation and Certification (TPC) Program Guidelines

Program Expectations

Program Completion

The TPC Program is an 18 month educator preparation program composed of pre-service coursework, a field-based teaching practicum (internship or clinical teaching experience) in a public/charter/private school, and ongoing professional development. The teaching practicum component must be initiated within three years of attendance at candidate orientation. Program participants who do not meet the timeline requirement are withdrawn from the TPC Program.

Professionalism

Professional conduct is an expectation for all Region 10 TPC Program participants at all times. This includes actions during coursework sessions, communications with Region 10 and school professionals, and interactions with peers. Continued participation in the Region 10 TPC Program is contingent upon maintaining professional conduct.

Communication

There are several means of communication available as you have questions. If there is a concern, please ask for assistance. The TPC Program staff is here for support. Please schedule time to talk with the staff before or after coursework sessions, not during that time. The session's facilitator is available for questions during scheduled break times. Office hours are 8:00–4:30, Monday through Thursday and 8:00–3:00 on Friday. To foster effective communication, maintain up-to-date personal contact information (e-mail, phone, address, change of name) so that information reaches you. NOTE: Remember email addresses and phone greetings/messages should be viewed as "professional" by schools and administrators.

Dress

Dress during coursework sessions is casual, but respectful. If in doubt, check with Region 10 TPC Program staff concerning proper attire. While teaching, interns and clinical teaching experience candidates need to dress as professionals. Many schools/districts have established dress codes for professional staff, so be sure to inquire about expectations for appropriate attire.

Paperwork

Completing and returning all required forms by the due dates is mandatory. This is necessary for certification documentation and auditing purposes. Incomplete or late forms may result in a probationary program status and may delay the certification process. Establish a system of organization that reminds you of due dates for required forms. Status letters are emailed to program participants regularly listing current requirements to be met. Upon receipt of the status letter, review it for accuracy. For questions about the completion of required forms or status letters, contact the Region 10 TPC Program office.

Financial Commitments

Candidates are not eligible for coursework, test approval, internships, or clinical teaching experiences until fees are paid or a financial agreement is established. Failure to make payments by due dates is a violation of the Region 10 TPC Program Agreement and may result in program probation and/or dismissal. Probationary certificates may be recommended only after fees or financial agreements are established. Probationary certificates will not be extended on past due accounts.

Criminal History and Background Check

An Affidavit for Acquisition and/or Release of Criminal History, Personal or Professional Data is submitted with the program application. Region 10 TPC Program reserves the right to complete a criminal history background

check and access personal and professional data at any time during participation in the program. All information obtained becomes the property of Region 10 TPC Program and is kept confidential. A school district, charter school or private school may also conduct criminal history background checks prior to classroom observations and employment. The candidate must follow the procedures indicated by each educational entity.

Coursework Requirements

Field-Based Experience

All teacher candidates must complete 30 hours of field-based experience and are encouraged to complete these hours soon after TPC Program acceptance. This state mandated requirement must be met prior to internship/clinical teaching experience placement. **Exception:** A late hire, after June 15th, for a teaching position shall complete 30 clock-hours of field-based experience as well as 80 clock hours of initial training within 90 school days of assignment. Field-based experience is defined as observations and interaction in the performance of professional educator activities with early childhood through grade 12 students, teachers, and faculty/staff members in a school setting that is part of classroom instruction. Classroom observation, substitute teaching, instructional aide, student mentoring, campus or classroom volunteer and paraprofessional experiences may be used to meet this requirement. Failure to complete this requirement prohibits a teacher candidate from beginning an internship/clinical teaching experience placement.

Curriculum

The curriculum has been carefully planned to address the state teacher proficiencies, state tests and best practices. Candidates should successfully complete designated coursework requirements, including online courses, within 18 months of candidate orientation and initiate an internship/clinical teaching experience. Coursework is considered current for 18 months. Participants are expected to complete all coursework including online course assignments before beginning a 15 week clinical teaching experience or prior to the end of an internship year. If the participant does not complete all required coursework including any make-up activities within the designated timelines, program dismissal may be recommended. At any time, if deemed necessary, additional coursework requirements/activities may be added requiring additional fees. Participants are not eligible for certification until all coursework requirements are met and fees paid. If a candidate withdraws from the program at any time, coursework completed at that time may or may not be applicable at a later time and may or may not be transferrable to another program, college or university.

Attendance for Coursework

Attendance is a critical part of the participant's commitment to the TPC Program and to the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills. Participants are required to attend and be actively involved at all face-to-face sessions. Grading papers or conducting other business during this time is not permitted. Excessive tardiness and/or absences, during a course, may result in probation or dismissal. Tardiness includes the beginning of a session and returning late from breaks and/or lunch. The participant is required to make up the absence, at a determined cost to the participant, and to submit all assignments/products as scheduled. Failure to do so will result in lack of credit for the instructional module. Each participant is expected to register and then to sign in for each session. Failure to sign in results in no credit being received for that session. Once registered, attendance at that specific session is expected. If your plans for attendance change, you are expected to cancel your registration for the class. This allows someone else access to the session. In the event of an emergency, the participant is expected to contact a Region 10 TPC consultant as soon as possible.

Textbooks

Most required textbooks are provided by Region 10 TPC Program. Textbooks are college level or research-based study books published by nationally recognized research and staff development organizations. Some textbooks

become the property of the teacher candidate and others are checked out for study purposes only and must be returned or replaced before certification is recommended.

Equipment Needs

Region 10 TPC Program integrates technology into the preparation program both for communication and course delivery. Some instruction is presented via online delivery. Program participants must own or have daily access to a computer, printer, and internet.

Food/Beverages

Participants may bring food and drinks into the rooms during coursework provided they do not interfere with the learning process and/or participation. No food or drinks are permitted in computer labs.

Telephone Calls

Participants are expected to be present in all sessions during coursework. Avoid telephone calls except in an emergency. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers, or place them on silent/vibrator mode during sessions. Phone calls or messages should be handled during the scheduled breaks.

Children and Non-Program Participants

Due to safety concerns, children are not permitted at Region 10 TPC Program coursework sites. Participants need to make other arrangements for child care. Further, recognizing the need for an educationally sound learning environment for program participants, non-program participants/family members are not permitted at Region 10 TPC Program on-site or off-site premises during sessions. If children/family/non-program participants are brought to sessions, the participant will be asked to leave and the session will be counted as an absence.

Testing

State Testing Information

- **Test Registrations**
Registration for the state certification tests requires online registration and links the test taker to an educator preparation program. Region 10 TPC Program issues registration approval when it is time for you to register for the state test. When registering for a test, you **MUST** provide all requested information and provide the same information for each test registration. Non-compliance with these policies may result in being placed on probation with the Region 10 TPC Program.
- **Timelines for Testing**
Designated content tests must be passed before final program acceptance and/or before probationary certificates are issued. The TExES PPR test must be completed successfully before the mid-point of an internship/clinical teaching experience. Failure to register for and take state tests according to the certification area schedule results in program probation and possible program dismissal.
- **TExES PPR Reviews/Practice Tests**
In preparation for the state required Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test, participants are required to attend a review session and complete a practice test. If unsuccessful with the practice test, an individual study plan is developed and a follow-up review/practice test session may be required before taking the TExES PPR test.

Teaching Practicum Options

Option 1 - Internship

One of the two options for meeting the required teaching practicum component for obtaining certification is a salaried internship. An internship requires two consecutive semesters as the “teacher-of-record” in a school

district, approved charter, or accredited private school. An intern is hired as a first year teacher in a school setting and is expected to fulfill successfully the roles and responsibilities of a classroom teacher in the area for which the intern is being certified. Finding a full-time teaching position is the responsibility of the program candidate. Candidates are highly encouraged to consider the responsibilities of teaching while completing program requirements for certification and not to accept extracurricular assignments during the internship year. Once an internship is initiated, an intern is expected to complete all program requirements before the end of the initial internship year. NOTE: If an intern is offered a position outside the Region 10 boundaries, approval to accept the position must first be granted by the Region 10 TPC Program consultant. If approved, an out-of-region travel fee will be added to the internship fee.

- **Commitments to Districts/Schools:** When seeking a job for an internship, seek as much information as possible about the school setting, expectations, and responsibilities during the interview process. Apply to a variety of schools before making a decision to accept a job for an internship. Once a decision is made, a verbal commitment given, and/or a letter of intent to hire/contract is signed, that commitment is final. Program participants who later renege on commitments made to schools will be dismissed from the Region 10 TPC Program.
- **Contracts with Districts/Schools:** Interns enter into contractual agreements with schools when accepting teaching positions. Contract renewals are also executed according to local school district/charter /private school board policies. Enrollment in the Region 10 TPC Program provides no guarantee of contract extensions. All contract decisions are strictly between the intern and the employer. An intern must have two consecutive successful semesters of internship with the same employer in the same assignment to be recommended for a Texas Standard Certificate.
- **Texas Probationary Certificate:** A Probationary Certificate is issued to an individual at the time an internship is being initiated and is required in order to serve as the “teacher-of-record”. Once issued, the Probationary Certificate expires 12 months from the effective date and is contingent upon the provision of a support system for the individual with involvement from the school district and the educator preparation program. Once an individual completes the requirements to earn a Standard Certificate, a Probationary Certificate is no longer needed.
- **Supervising Campus Administrator:** The supervising campus administrator is the principal, assistant principal, or another administrator on the campus where the intern is assigned. The administrator provides campus level supervision and support. The supervising campus administrator completes fall and spring mid-semester assessments, a preliminary intern evaluation, a district recommendation regarding certification, and campus/district evaluations of teacher performance throughout the internship year.
- **Mentor Teacher:** School administrators assign a campus mentor to work with the Region 10 TPC Program intern as early in the school year as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of employment. The mentor is required to be a certified teacher and to participate in Region 10 TPC Program mentor coursework. This mentor provides ongoing support, completes classroom observations followed by feedback discussions, and is a general school/district resource person. The mentor receives a stipend, from Region 10, for fulfilling responsibilities. If a mentor has not been assigned by the end of the first two weeks of internship, please notify Region 10 TPC Program staff.
- **TPC Field Supervisor:** Region 10 TPC Program assigns each intern a visiting consultant who schedules time to meet the intern, mentor teacher, and school administrator throughout the teaching experience. This

field supervisor provides ongoing support, completes classroom observations followed by feedback discussions, completes mid-semester and final assessments and is a general Region 10 TPC Program resource person.

- **Professional Action Plan:** A Professional Action Plan, for remediation or intervention, is designed and implemented in order to provide effective support for participants who experience difficulties. The written plan addresses the area(s) in which there is evidence of deficiency indicating lack of consistent progress. The Professional Action Plan is stated in measurable, objective terms, includes a reasonable timeline and is signed by all parties involved. Once initiated, the Professional Action Plan remains in effect until the end of the school year unless otherwise specified. There may be added costs for the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, as well as additional Region 10 observations/conferences.
- **Internship Extensions:** Occasionally, an intern needs additional classroom experience and coursework to further develop the necessary skills to be consistently effective with the roles and responsibilities of a beginning teacher. When Region 10 TPC Program professional staff and the school administrator recommend a second year of internship, with approval from the TPC Program Advisory Board, an intern may continue the process of seeking teaching certification. An intern may receive an extension on the probationary certificate for two additional years (total of 3 years maximum). Additional fees apply. Reasons for an extension include, but are not limited to: additional time to gain the requisite knowledge and skills to be a proficient classroom teacher, additional time to pass a certification exam, and additional time to complete payment of outstanding fee(s).

Option 2 - Clinical Teaching Experience

The second option for meeting the required teaching practicum component for obtaining certification is a clinical teaching experience (CTE). A CTE requires 15-16 weeks of unpaid teaching practicum in the specific certification area and is an accelerated opportunity for qualified candidates to become certified. To be eligible for a CTE placement approximately 240 clock hours of coursework must be completed before the CTE begins.

- **Commitments to Districts/Schools:** When considering a clinical teaching experience, seek as much information as possible about the expectations and responsibilities during the TPC interview screening process. Participants approved for clinical teaching assignments who accept a placement may not change assignments. Once a decision is made and a verbal commitment given that commitment is final. Program participants who later renege on commitments made to schools will be dismissed from the Region 10 TPC Program.
- **Cooperating/Mentor Teacher:** A campus teacher is assigned to work as both a supervisor and a mentor to a Clinical Teaching Experience (CTE) candidate and provides ongoing support and guidance. The cooperating/mentor teacher is a general school/district resource person and completes classroom observation reports documenting teacher performance throughout the clinical teaching semester and submits a summative recommendation regarding certification.
- **TPC Field Supervisor:** Each CTE candidate is assigned a Region 10 TPC field supervisor who schedules time to meet with the CTE candidate and cooperating/mentor teacher throughout the teaching experience. This field supervisor provides ongoing support, completes classroom observations followed by feedback discussions, completes mid-semester and final assessments and is a general Region 10 TPC Program resource person.

- **Individual Certification Plan:** Upon acceptance for a clinical teaching experience (CTE), an Individual Certification Plan is developed to outline program requirements to be met before the TPC Program Advisory Board approves recommendation for a Texas Standard Certificate. The plan includes already completed coursework, coursework to be completed in order to meet the **300** clock hours required, and any other outstanding program requirements.
- **Professional Action Plan:** A Professional Action Plan, for remediation or intervention, is designed and implemented in order to provide effective support for participants who experience difficulties. The written plan addresses the area(s) in which there is evidence of deficiency indicating lack of consistent progress. The Professional Action Plan is stated in measurable, objective terms, includes a reasonable timeline and is signed by all parties involved. Once initiated, the Professional Action Plan remains in effect until the end of the clinical teaching experience. There may be added costs for the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, as well as additional Region 10 observations/conferences.
- **Clinical Teaching Experience Extensions:** Occasionally, a CTE candidate needs additional classroom experience and coursework to further develop the requisite knowledge and skills necessary to be consistently effective with the roles and responsibilities of a beginning teacher. When the Region 10 TPC Program professional staff and the cooperating/mentor teacher recommend an extended teaching experience, with approval from the TPC Program Advisory Board, a candidate may continue the process of seeking teaching certification. This process will require an entire year of internship. Additional fees apply.

Texas Standard Certificate

Participants who successfully complete all program requirements of an internship or clinical teaching experience, pay all fees, pass the requisite certification tests, and successfully complete the teaching assignment are eligible for a Texas Standard Certificate. Texas Standard Certificates are valid for five years and may be renewed every five years with completion of 150 clock hours of professional development and application to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Failure to complete the renewal process will result in the Standard Certificate becoming “inactive”. A teacher may not work as a teacher in a public school once a certificate becomes “inactive”.

TPC Program Probation and Dismissal

The Region 10 TPC Program is a rigorous path to teaching that requires adherence to all program requirements, policies, and guidelines in order for an individual to be considered for certification. Participants must agree to meet specific professional expectations and responsibilities described in the Region 10 TPC Program Agreement, the Intent to Initiate Internship form, Clinical Teaching Experience Placement form and these Program Guidelines. Infrequently, a candidate/intern/clinical experience teacher is placed on probation and, if corrective actions are insufficient, the participant is dismissed. A candidate/intern/clinical teacher receives written notification of probationary status or program dismissal that includes the reason(s) for this action. The following cites criteria for probation and possible dismissal:

- Failure to meet financial agreement/payments
- Failure to register or *unenroll* once registered/participate/complete coursework and/or make-up coursework sessions as directed by the Region 10 TPC Program staff
- Tardy arrival for coursework/returning late to sessions from breaks/leaving coursework early after signing in
- Inappropriate, unprofessional behavior during coursework sessions and/or at any time during the teaching practicum

- Failure to update communication sources or to respond to communications from Region 10 TPC Program staff
- Failure to submit assignments, documentation, observation appraisals by specific deadlines
- Failure to register for and complete required state tests according to the certification area schedule
- Failure to meet the requirements of individual certification plans as well as study plans for state tests
- Failure to implement recommendations for improvement from the Region 10 TPC Program staff/school personnel
- Failure to adhere to the required arrival and departure time as campus/district policies dictate
- Failure to consistently structure a productive learning environment that includes appropriate preparation, organization and management
- Failure to attend all face-to-face coursework sessions and/or make up excused absences.
- Unsatisfactory appraisal/evaluation results by school district appraiser/Region 10 TPC Program staff

After being placed on probation, the participant receives notice of required corrective actions and must address all areas of deficiency in order to regain *active* status in the Region 10 TPC Program. A participant placed on probation may be required to complete an additional year of internship or an extended clinical teaching experience. In some cases, approval of the TPC Program Advisory Board may be required. Although a participant may be placed on probation prior to dismissal, there is no requirement that any individual be placed on probation prior to dismissal. Unprofessional conduct may result in immediate dismissal or non-recommendation for certification. The following are reasons for dismissal:

- Violations of the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics
- Falsification of information/documentation and/or plagiarism
- Failure to follow school/district/TPC Program directives/rules/policies/ procedures
- Insubordination to TPC Program staff and/or school/district personnel
- Resignation/Termination/Non-renewal of teaching contract from the employing school during the internship
- Failure to address the requirements of a TPC Action Plan or a district Teacher In Need of Assistance (TINA) Plan and to show consistent progress
- Failure to maintain a positive classroom learning environment and/or act in the best interests of children

Any decision by the Region 10 TPC Program Director (or designee) to dismiss a participant from the program and terminate the person's participation in the Region 10 TPC Program is a final decision. There is no refund of fees paid.

NOTE: To appeal a dismissal or extension, a participant must contact the Region 10 TPC Program Director in writing with documentation about reasons and rationale for the appeal. The letter will be submitted to the TPC Advisory Board at the next scheduled meeting (May or November) for review and action. The TPC Advisory Board decisions are communicated in writing after the meeting and are final decisions.