



One Year Post-Approval Compliance Audit Report 2012-2013 Texas A&M University at Central Texas Traditional Initial Certification Program

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), "An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff." Per TAC §228.1(c), "All educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title." The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

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Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialist, Mixon Henry and Program Manager, Sandra Jo Nix, conducted a one year post-approval compliance audit on April 1, 2013. The purpose of the visit was to verify that all components of Texas Administrative Code (TAC) that govern educator preparation programs are being implemented for a new educator preparation program. Texas A&M University at Central Texas (TAMU-CT) is implementing traditional initial educator certification preparation under a legislative mandate by the 82nd Legislature and was operating in conjunction with Tarleton State University until SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation was received in June 2013.

SCOPE OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT:

The scope of this audit was restricted solely to verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227, §228, §229, and §230.

Data Analysis:

Qualitative methods of gathering and analyzing data were used. Prior to the visit, TAMU-CT submitted a self-report to TEA on March 6, 2013, which was used as baseline data concerning the program. The university also prepared documents, including course syllabi, which were reviewed during the audit. Dr. Kellie Cude, Director of Teacher Education, and Dr. Dorleen Hooten, Certification Officer, were present during the visit in order to clarify documentation. Content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence for compliance. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric aligned to Texas Administrative Code.

Ten people attended the Opening Session of the post-approval visit, including the President of the University, Dr. Marc A. Nigliazzo, the Provost Dr. Peg Gray-Vickery, and the Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Tracy Teaff. Dr. Jeff Kirk, Head of the Division of Education, Dr. Kellie Cude, Director of Teacher Education, and Dr. Dorleen Hooten, Certification

Officer, were also present. Members of the Texas A&M University at Central Texas faculty and advisory committee rounded out the attendees.

Dr. Kellie Cude presented an overview of the educator preparation program. At this point TAMUCT only offers upper division courses, so all students transfer from other universities or community colleges.

The School of Education is currently housed in a building leased from Killeen Independent School District, but anticipates moving to a new campus in about one year. The current building houses an education library with a complete collection of state-approved K-12 textbooks, several computer labs, and classrooms with interactive white boards and other technology.

COMPONENT I: - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Findings:

Support for the program was voiced by President Nigliazzo and Provost Gray-Vickery during the Opening Session. The University has planned for this transition to an independent status for several years, and has the fiscal resources necessary to implement traditional initial teacher certification. The facilities are adequate for the purpose, and include specific library materials and appropriate technology.

The Strategic Partners Education Advisory Council (SPEAC) consists of forty-two (42) members: sixteen (16) from public and private schools; seventeen (17) members from institutions of higher education; eight (8) members from business and community, and one (1) member from an education service center. The program meets the TAC 228.20 requirements for committee composition.

According to the self-report, and evidence gathered, the advisory committee met on August 9, 2011, May 1, 2012, and November 30, 2012. The second meeting for the 2012-2013 academic year will be held on May 3, 2013. Minutes, agendas and sign-in sheets were available for the meetings that have been held. TAMU-CT meets the requirements for holding two advisory committee members per year.

SPEAC members are provided a handbook which covers mission, charge to the council, membership, SPEAC goals and responsibilities, components of compliance audits, admission criteria, curriculum, field based experiences, and field supervision.

In the TEA questionnaires sent to the advisory committee members, they responded as follows to their level of participation:

in reviewing admission requirements	Yes-89.5%	No-10.5%
in designing or revising the curriculum	Yes -76.2%	No-23.8%
in major policy decisions	Yes – 90.5%	No-9.5%
in overall program evaluation	Yes-100%	

in evaluating data and preparing an improvement plan	Yes – 88.9%	No-11.1%
in review of types of field-based experiences	Yes 86.4%	No-13.6%

As a complement to SPEAC, the University also holds Certificate Area Practitioners (CAPS) Meetings. The members are practitioners from various areas which provide input into the operation of the Texas A&M University – Central Texas programs. CAPS met on October 13, 2012, November 17, 2012 (Principal), November 29 (Superintendent), and February 2, 2013. CAPS leadership overlaps with SPEAC in order to provide continuity between the two groups.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University - Central Texas, is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC)

Findings:

Texas A&M University at Central Texas meets or exceeds all requirements regarding admission required in Texas Administrative Code. All candidates accepted for admission must have:

- A 2.6 GPA in Professional Development, Reading, Emphasis/supplemental coursework, and overall. If any applicant has a lower GPA, they will be put on a growth plan to bring the GPA up before they can be admitted [TAC 227.10(a)(3)(A)].
- No grade lower than “C” in professional education coursework, reading, emphasis/supplemental coursework, 12 hours of university required English, coursework in PSY 303 or 220 or HS 300. [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Current enrollment in or completion of EDU 320, PSY 303, 220 or HS 300, MATH 107 or above, 60 (60) semester hours of coursework (excluding developmental courses), and one full semester at Texas A&M University – Central Texas.
- Met minimum requirements of one of the following: TASP/THEA, Accuplacer, Asset, or Compass [TAC 227.10(a)(4)].
- Evidence of good moral character and the mental, emotional, and physical ability to function effectively in a classroom. [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Completion of Speech Communication (COMS 101 or its equivalent) with a grade of “B” or better by the end of the application semester. [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Completion of a minimum of 12 semester hours in the major certificate area with a grade of “C” or better and a 2.6 GPA by the end of the application semester [TAC 227.10(a)(3)(C)].

- A grade of “C” or better on all coursework in the major certificate area. [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- A successful, structured oral English interview with a faculty member that will be scored with a rubric. Students will be asked questions similar to those that might be asked in a job interview and the responses will be evaluated according to the established interview criteria (oral communication, thought processes, leadership potential, and human interaction). Interviews will last approximately 15-20 minutes. [TAC 227.10(a)(6)]
- Completed an application [227.10(a)(6)]
- Completed a detailed degree evaluation [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Produced a Reference Acknowledgment form [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Produced two (2) writing samples in response to the prompts provided. The writing sample will be assessed according to established criteria (sentence structure, mechanics, coherent professional response, and appropriateness of content). Each writing sample will be scored by a minimum of two faculty members. [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
- Three (3) signed letters of recommendation [TAC §227.10(a)(7)]

The program produced an application flow chart which reflected the various steps for admissions, the interview questions and rubric, the writing prompts and rubrics for review.

In review of the admission requirements for out-of-country students, Texas A&M University – Central Texas accepts English 1301 and 1302 with a grade of “C” or better or submit TOEFL scores. Candidates from out-of-country who enter the university with the intent to become a Texas certified teacher, must complete all portions of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with an oral speaking score of 26 as well as submit a transcript evaluation from an approved evaluator [TAC §227.10(a)(5) and TAC§ 230.11].

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University - Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 – Admission Criteria.

COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Findings:

There are currently eleven (11) faculty members. Ten of the eleven have either Texas or out of state teacher certification and years of public or private school experience. TAMU-CT provided a vita for each the faculty member in the School of Education documenting their knowledge and experience.

The University submitted curriculum correlation charts and syllabi to TEA that show alignment of coursework with standards, competencies, TEKS, and the 17 topics mandated by TAC §228.30. Since Texas A&M University – Central Texas at the time of the audit had not completed Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation, the University was mandated to mirror the curriculum offered by Tarleton State University. A review of the current syllabi and curriculum alignment charts reflects a need to address the Generalist EC-6 educator standards in art, music, and theater. In discussions with the program, as soon as their SACS accreditation is complete, the university is prepared to modify the curriculum to meet the required educator standards as well as the local needs of the community.

The TAMUCT program requires each candidate to take the following courses: EDUK 320 Understanding Learners; EDUK 330 Introduction to Teaching; EDUK 430/404 Application of Effective Teaching Practices/Early Childhood Environments; EDOK 435 Issues in Professional Development, EDUK Practicum in Teaching. Dyslexia, as required by the 82nd Legislature, is covered in RDG 301 Introduction to Children’s Literature, RDG 311: Reading I: Acquisition and Development, and RDG 351: Content Area Reading. All certification candidates participate in at least one of these courses.

Texas A&M University at Central Texas offers a unique “warranty” on the teachers it produces. As stated in the online catalog for the School of Education:

TAMU-CT WARRANTY FOR FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Because TAMU-CT believes that teacher education is a collaborative process between the University and public schools, and because this University is dedicated to achieving excellence in teacher education, the teaching performance of all TAMU-CT graduates is warranted by the University. Should a graduate of TAMU-CT’s Teacher Education Program receive a Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) domain (I-IV) rating that is less than "satisfactory" on his/her annual appraisal, the University will provide additional professional development aimed at remediating deficiencies at no additional cost to the individual or district.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University at Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT – Texas

Findings:

All coursework is delivered face-to-face at TAMU-CT with total clock hours of coursework and training for initial teacher certification of six hundred forth-five (645) hours. One hundred five clock hours of field-based observations are done in conjunction with specific classes. The last 60 clock hours of field-based observations are completed in the classroom where the student teacher will be placed. Signed observation logs were available verifying the field-based observations.

The six hours of test preparation is completed using the T-CERT program. Students are allowed to test in the first semester of their senior year during Professional Development III. In addition to the completion of T-CERT, readiness to test is evaluated based on completion of all core and certification area coursework with a "C" or better, and the candidate must have taken the representative examination. For candidates seeking a secondary certificate, the candidate is evaluated based on coursework with a "C" or better, presentation of a request to test from signed by an advisor, and taking the representative examination. A score of 70% or less on any of the representative exams may require remediation prior to test approval. Remediation is also provided for TExES exam failures.

Student teaching is a 14-week, full day experience in public and private schools in surrounding school districts. Campus placement records and observation forms verifying three required observations and interactive conference were located in the candidates' records.

Each student teacher had a cooperating teacher assigned in collaboration with the local school district. A letter was presented for review that was sent to the mentors where they were provided general information and policies guiding student teachers. The TXBess framework was used as the basis of training. Mentor training was scheduled for September 11, 2012, but no mentors attended. As a result a CD was prepared with the necessary training and provided to the mentors. As an incentive to be a mentor, the University provides the mentors with a voucher for \$250 to be applied to courses at the TAMUCT.

Field supervisors were trained by Dr. Dorleen Hooten each semester. Training was provided on August 14, 2012, to three field supervisors. The January 4, 2012, training included two field supervisors.

The field supervisors and student teachers met for the first time on the TAMU-CT campus at a student teaching orientation. Field supervisors are then required to meet on the K-12 campus within the first three weeks of the student teaching assignment. Each field supervisor will make four formal observations with evaluations of the student teacher each semester. Observation forms indicating date and time in/time were present in the candidates' records. All observations contained comments on observed teaching practices and interactive conferences followed.

Additional support for struggling candidates was noted in a remediation log which listed the student name, subject, date, time in, time out, and the instructor. In addition, students are emailed additional material to use at home for remediation.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University at Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

COMPONENT V: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40

Findings:

TAMU-CT monitors candidates' progress each semester through coursework grades, GPAs, and professional dispositions. Candidates must meet with faculty advisors and apply for various Block classes and student teaching.

TAMU-CT evaluates its overall program effectiveness once every 12 months with the participation of the advisory committee. Qualitative evaluations of coursework and from candidates are utilized as well as evaluations from field supervisors, cooperating teachers and campus principals. Data from the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) concerning pass rates on certification exams, specifically number of attempts, is also used in the evaluation process. Curriculum is evaluated annually, with revisions made as faculty sees appropriate and to respond to any changes in Texas Administrative Code.

All student records will be maintained for a minimum of five years in locked cabinets and in a locked room.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University at Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

COMPONENT VI: Professional Conduct. - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.50

Texas A&M University – Central Texas provides training on the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics to its faculty and staff as well as to the candidates. Verification was through coursework review and meeting sign-in sheets.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University at Central Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.50 – Professional Conduct.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Actions are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency compliance audit visit. If the program is out of compliance with any component, consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. Failure to comply with TAC rules governing educator preparation programs may result in action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) per TAC §229 beginning in 2010.

Other recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only.

COMPLIANCE ACTIONS:

None at this time.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Component I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs:

- Add school district human resource staff, current and former candidates to the advisory committee;
- Consider term limits for advisory committee members.

Component II: Admission Criteria:

- Publish TOEFL requirements for candidates;
- Consider limiting the number of students admitted with a growth plan.

Component III: Educator Preparation Curriculum:

- Revise curriculum syllabi to include the educator standards and the pedagogy and professional responsibility standards (PPR);
- Model methods of instruction to the candidates;
- Utilize the TEA STAR chart for the candidate and the campus in the technology course at <http://starchart.epsilen.com/>;
- Utilize the TEA developed training for meeting “Teachers’ Responsibilities for the STAAR test administration at <http://texas.testsecuritytraining.com/TestAdministratorTraining.aspx>. It may be used for a

whole group or individually. A certificate can be printed upon completion. This is the same training that teachers must complete prior to STAAR testing; and

- Utilize the dyslexia information found on the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4434> or at <http://www.region10.org/dyslexia/>.

Component IV: Program Delivery and On-Going Support:

- Have candidates sign a FERPA agreement prior to student teaching;
- Provide Continuing Professional Education (CPE) to cooperating teachers/mentors, and advisory committee members to encourage continued participation.

Component VI: Professional Conduct

- Consider utilizing the TEA approved Ethics training for both candidates and staff within the program to ensure that this topic is adequately addressed by the program & maintain evidence that that the training has occurred. For more information visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ethics/>;
- Have faculty and candidates sign and date an acknowledgement that they have read, understand, and will abide by the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Standard Recommendations:

- Continue to follow the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and the State Board of Education (SBOE) meetings and/or review the minutes to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about current Texas Administrative Code;
- Participate in Annual Deans/Directors Meetings to ensure that the program director is knowledgeable about current Texas Administrative Code and future changes to Texas Administrative Code (Webinar Series);
- Continue to participate in webinars provided by the Division of Educator Certification & Standards to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about current requirements and changes in Texas Administrative Code;
- Continue to maintain communication with the program specialist assigned to the program for the purpose of asking questions about current requirements in TAC for Governance; Admissions; Curriculum; Program Delivery & On-Going Support; and Program Evaluation (TAC § 227-229);
- Align the verbiage of the program to that of current Texas Administrative Code. For example: Applicant / Candidate / Field Supervisor / Internship / Clinical Teacher;

- Ensure that the Dean/Director/Program Staff utilizes the EPP Staff Information page <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/eppinfo.aspx> to access pertinent information that EPP's frequently request; and
- Ensure that TEA staff has the most current & up-to-date contact information by sending an email to notifying the program specialist assigned.