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Intern Certification Flexibility Due to COVID-19

JUNE 10, 2020 • Karen Dooley



Governor Abbott has suspended certain provisions of law and rules allowing new and continued certification for identified certification candidates as indicated in the [Texas Education Agency \(TEA\) Educator Certification Updates dated June 8, 2020](#).

The goal of the Governor's action is to ensure the safety of students and certification candidates while providing for a well-prepared teacher workforce to meet district demands. The flexibility provided by the suspension creates the possibility for candidates who are admitted to an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) but have not completed testing requirements to receive the one-year intern certificate.

Benefits will allow teacher candidates to be certified and complete their internship, districts to hire interns, and EPPs to prepare and support the candidates. In addition, it is will be possible for candidates to complete these experiences in a virtual setting.

Eligibility

The suspension is applicable to the following:

- Teacher candidates beginning an internship in Fall 2020
- Teacher candidates completing clinical teaching in 2020–2021
- Non-teacher candidates completing a practicum in 2020–2021
- Teacher candidates completing field-based experiences in 2020–2021

To be eligible for the intern certificate, a candidate must be without a certificate and:

- Be admitted to an EPP—post-baccalaureate or alternative certification route
- Have not yet passed required certification exams
- Completing an internship in 2020–2021
- Offered employment for the 2020–2021 school year

Process

Eligible candidates should submit a completed application for the intern certificate, including fingerprinting, along with the required application fee (\$78). EPPs will review candidate eligibility and recommend for an intern certificate. Candidates may apply now through October 1. The intern certificate will be valid for one year.

At this time, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is not planning to modify TEA or the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) fingerprinting requirements for certificate applicants, non-certified employees, or any other individuals. Identogo, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) vendor, is operating in about half of its locations in Texas at this time, resulting in a decrease in fingerprinting appointments available. A video tutorial for certification applicants and additional fingerprinting information can be found on the [TEA website](#).

Support

TEA has posted [information](#), clarification, and an FAQ on its [COVID-19 Support: Texas Educators](#) webpage. The support will consist of a step-by-step technical guidance, information for EPPs to share with candidates, and the EPP reporting documentation template.

Information on a waiver allowing certain educator certification candidates to qualify for a one-year probationary certificate is available in the HRX article, [Educator Certification Flexibility in Response to COVID-19](#).

Karen Dooley is a senior HR consultant at TASB HR Services. Send Karen an email at karen.dooley@tasb.org.

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P.O. Box 400, Austin, Texas 78767-0400
800.580.7782 • hrservices@tasb.org