Teacher Certification

The University conducts a large, field-based educator preparation program leading to certification for future teachers, administrators, and educational support personnel. This program is evaluated each year by the State of Texas and by the federal government. The results of these evaluations attest to the high quality of educator preparation at the University. Teacher preparation requires extensively supervised field experiences, with most programs requiring approximately 800 hours in the field. Based on certification exam pass rates for all applicant demographic groups, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) rated the University educator preparation program "accredited," its highest rating.

The University recommends students for teacher certification to TEA. To be recommended for a certificate to teach in elementary or secondary school, an undergraduate student must earn a degree as well as complete an approved teacher certification program. Students complete the following requirements for approved programs in conjunction with degree requirements:

a. *Enrollment.* Students seeking certification to teach at the elementary school level (option a below) must register in the College of Education and major in education, an interdisciplinary program. Students seeking secondary (option b), or all-level (option c) certification must earn a degree from the college or school that houses the academic program in their prospective teaching field. Students should be advised by both an advisor in their academic department and a teacher certification advisor to confirm that the courses for which they register are applicable to their certification program.

   Students who are seeking teacher certification should select from the following options:

   a. Elementary (early childhood through grade 6): ESL generalist or ESL bilingual generalist
   b. Secondary (grades 6 through 12): dance; (grades 7 through 12): mathematics, science, computer science, English language arts and reading, history, or social studies
   c. All-level: special education, art, music, theatre, or languages other than English

b. *Admission to the Professional Development Sequence.* All students seeking teacher certification must complete a sequence of professional development courses. Admission to the Professional Development Sequence is restricted, and students must apply for admission. Academic performance, completion of prerequisite courses, documented evidence of proficiency in reading and in oral and written communication, and the number of hours needed to complete the program may be factors in the admission decision.

   For students seeking early childhood through grade six or all-level generic special education certification, admission to the Professional Development Sequence requires a minimum University grade point average and minimum course grades prescribed by each program. To progress within the sequence, the student must maintain the minimum grade point average for the program. In addition, when they enter the Professional Development Sequence, students seeking early childhood through grade six and all-level generic special education certification may lack no more than one class outside the sequence. Additional information about these requirements is available in the Student Division Office, College of Education.

   For students in other teacher certification programs, requirements for admission to and continuation in the Professional Development Sequence are set by the college in which the student majors.

c. *Certification exam.* An individual seeking certification is required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on the appropriate Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) test to be approved for initial or additional certification. Students who do not apply for their teaching certificate within three years of completing student teaching may be required to complete additional fieldwork hours and coursework before applying for the certificate.

d. *Legal questions.* In accordance with state law, the commissioner of education may suspend or revoke a teaching certificate or refuse to issue a teaching certificate for a person who has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for a crime that directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the teaching profession. Information about legal issues is available from the teacher certification officer, George I. Sánchez Building, Certification Office, (512) 471-3223.

For students who hold a bachelor's degree, separate programs are available that lead to teacher certification at all levels. The requirements of these postbaccalaureate programs may be different from those of the undergraduate certification programs.

For more information about teacher certification programs, students should see an academic advisor in the Student Division Office of the College of Education, in the George I. Sánchez Building.

Criminal History Acknowledgement

As required by HB1508, teacher certification applicants need to be aware of the following:

- In order to earn a State of Texas teacher certification, you must pass a criminal history background check.
- If you have been convicted of an offense that is considered not appropriate for an educator, you could be ineligible to earn a teacher certification from the State of Texas. Details about potential eligibility of persons with a criminal history can be found in Texas Administrative Code, §249.16.
- You have a right to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter from the Texas Education Agency before admission into a program. The Texas Education Agency currently charges a fee for this criminal history evaluation. More information about the preliminary criminal history evaluation is online at https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Investigations/Preliminary_Criminal_History_Evaluation-FAQs/.