

CAEP Accreditation FAQs

May 29, 2014

How does an EPP change pathways for accreditation (i.e. from Continuous Improvement to Transformation Initiative)?

If you would like to change your pathway for accreditation, please inform CAEP staff as soon as possible, but at least one year prior to submitting your self-study for your next visit. There may be specific requirements that must be met depending on which pathway you would like to move into. You may inform the Accreditation staff at accreditation@caepnet.org.

Can an EPP host a dual accreditation visit using either NCATE standards and CAEP standards or TEAC Quality Principles and CAEP standards?

Dual accreditation using both the legacy and CAEP standards is no longer an option for conducting accreditation visits. You may either select NCATE/TEAC legacy standards/quality principles (if your visit is hosted before fall 2016) or CAEP standards. CAEP standards are required if your visit is hosted in fall 2016 or later.

Is it a requirement that program reports be submitted to CAEP via AIMS?

The program review options available to your EPP are determined by your state protocol. If your state requires EPPs to submit program reports to Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) for national recognition, you will complete these reports in AIMS. If your state requires state program review, you will adhere to your state determined process for program review and upload the state findings as evidence in your self-study.

The CAEP AIMS website contains the same information as the legacy NCATE and TEAC AIMS websites. All Program Reports submitted to SPAs should be submitted in this redesigned site along with all documents related to accreditation (Annual Report, Self-study Report, etc.).

If we are currently accredited by NCATE/TEAC, should we advertise ourselves as NCATE/TEAC accredited or CAEP accredited?

Your accreditation is dependent on which standards were used at your previous visit. If you used TEAC Quality Principles, you are TEAC accredited. If you used NCATE standards, you are currently NCATE accredited. EPPs will be granted accreditation by CAEP after hosting an accreditation visit using the CAEP standards and receiving a positive decision. After undergoing this process you may advertise that your EPP is accredited by CAEP.

What are CAEP's criteria for cooperating teachers (mentor teachers)?

According to Standard 2, Component 2.2, clinical educators, including cooperating/mentor teachers, should be high-quality clinical educators, drawn from discipline-specific, pedagogical, and P-12 professionals, who are co-selected, prepared, evaluated, supported, and retained as a result of collaborative efforts between EPPs and school personnel. High quality clinical educators meet or exceed the standards by which candidates are to be measured, including demonstrating the expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as well as a positive impact on P-12 student learning. Those serving as cooperating/mentor teachers should also demonstrate a positive impact on teacher candidates' development (via formative or summative evaluation). EPPs should work collaboratively with their partners, using "multiple indicators and appropriate technology-based applications to establish, maintain, and refine criteria for selection, professional development, performance evaluation, continuous improvement, and retention of clinical educators in all clinical placement settings". Beyond the expectation that clinical educators are high-quality, and that EPPs choices are logical and defensible, CAEP does not dictate specific criteria for cooperating/mentor teachers.

Our institution uses a nationally-normed ability/achievement test for admissions. To which group average should we compare our cohort's performance: the national average, or the institution average?

According to Standard 3, Component 3.2, if an EPP uses nationally-normed ability/achievement test results for admission, the average for the admitted cohort should be compared to the national average for the relevant assessment. EPPs are free to also compare the cohort average to the institution average.

What do you mean by "technology-based collaborations", as referenced in Component 2.1? Could you provide a couple of examples? Does this refer to EPP faculty/staff communicating or what our teacher candidates are doing in their field experiences?

As Standard 1 endorses the InTASC teacher standards in their entirety and educators must know how to use technologies to guide learning, the clinical practice provides an essential venue for candidates to develop their skills on how to use digital and interactive technologies for efficiently and effectively achieving specific learning goals. Standard 1 also states that providers are to "ensure that completers model and apply technology standards as they design, implement, and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning and enrich professional practice." Some examples of technology-based collaborations in clinical experiences may include assessments of candidate proficiencies in technology, video analyses and reflections, technologies to support data sharing among EPPs and school partners, technologies to support training clinical educators, online communications between candidates and clinical educators, and virtual classroom settings.

Could you further clarify what is meant by clinical experiences of sufficient depth and breadth, as referenced in Component 2.3? Could you provide a couple of examples?

The EPP may demonstrate that its clinical experiences are of sufficient depth and breadth by providing evidence that candidates and completers are able to develop and apply content and

pedagogical knowledge and skills primarily in school-based situations and augmented by community-based and virtual situations. Clinical experiences may integrate applications of theory from pedagogical courses or modules in P-12 or community settings or be aligned with the school-based curriculum (e.g. Next Generation Science Standards, college- and career-ready standards, Common Core State Standards).

When Standard 5 refers to needing multiple measures of evidence, is it two or more?

The references to multiple measures in Standard 5 and elsewhere are in recognition that all sources of evidence have both strengths and weaknesses. The EPP should assemble evidence that balances these strengths and weaknesses. The focus is not necessarily on how many measures are needed, but whether the combination of measures creates a compelling case. In some cases, two well-balanced measures will be sufficient; in other cases, several measures would be more appropriate.

What are some examples of additional selectivity factors mentioned in CAEP Standard 3?

The *CAEP Commission Recommendations to the CAEP Board of Directors* notes that “There is strong support from the professional community that qualities outside of academic ability are associated with teacher effectiveness,” and lists the following examples:

- “grit”
- the ability to work with parents
- the ability to motivate
- communication skills
- focus
- purpose
- leadership
- perseverance
- commitment to mission
- experimentation and inquiry
- disposition toward writing, dialogue, and questioning

What is the CAEP accreditation review process?

The review for CAEP accreditation begins with the submission of the self-study report and evidence by the EPP. Next there is a formative review of the report with feedback provided to the EPP. The formative stage of the process is slightly different under each pathway, but the intention is to provide feedback to the EPP as it prepares for the summative, onsite visit. Each pathway has a slightly different approach to the onsite visit, but there are some commonalities. All site visit teams will interview faculty and candidates to verify statements made in the self-study. The teams will also review documents not available at the time of the formative review. The team writes a summative report which addresses each standard based on their review of the self-study and the onsite visit. The team’s report will not make recommendations on whether

standards are met or not met. Teams can, however, make recommendations on areas for improvement and stipulations. The EPP will have the opportunity to respond to the team's report.

The Accreditation Council is charged with making the final accreditation decisions for all EPPs. It is comprised of three Commissions (IB Commission, CI Commission, and TI Commission). The Commissions and Council meet at least twice a year to review EPPs that had site visits during the previous semester. The review is a three step process:

- First, an initial review team from the appropriate commission will look at all relevant documentation for a selected group of EPPs and make preliminary decisions on areas for improvement, stipulations, and accreditation status.
- Second, the initial review teams meet in pairs as joint review teams. Each case reviewed by an initial team is presented to and discussed by the joint team. The joint team prepares recommendations for the Accreditation Council.
- In the last step, the Accreditation Council makes the final decision on areas for improvement, stipulations, and accreditation status for each EPP.

For additional information about the CAEP accreditation process, please refer to the Guide to CAEP Accreditation on the web at <http://caepnet.org/accreditation/guide-to-self-study-reports-and-evidence/>.

What are the consequences of an accreditation decision of Probation?

Probationary accreditation is awarded to EPPs that meet or surpass all but one of the CAEP standards. An EPP with probationary accreditation must present evidence within two years that the CAEP guidelines for all five standards have been met to be granted accreditation for an additional five years. Otherwise the EPP returns to candidate status.

Why are EPPs required to report on areas for improvement related to NCATE standards/TEAC Quality Principles?

EPPs hold NCATE or TEAC accreditation until they are reviewed under the CAEP standard. EPPs are required to continue to meet all requirements of the legacy accreditation agency until that time. As the successor to NCATE and TEAC, CAEP is required by the US Department of Education to ensure that all EPPs have addressed outstanding issues related to the previous accreditation review. CAEP teams will review areas for improvement related to NCATE standards and TEAC Quality Principles during the first visit under the CAEP standards.

Can a Continuous Improvement Plan be submitted prior to submission of the self study?

A Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) can only be submitted with the self study at the beginning of an accreditation review cycle. EPPs may begin work on a CIP at any time however. If work is started prior to the self study, the EPP would present the plan and report on

progress in the report. EPPs starting work early should keep in mind that feedback on the CIP cannot be provided prior to submission of the self-study.

Are the 2013 CAEP Standards and accreditation efforts exclusively focused on those preparing to be classroom teachers who are seeking initial licensure/certification?

Yes. The 2013 CAEP Standards are focused on the initial preparation of P-12 teachers. Following the adoption of the CAEP Standards, the Board of Directors and Standards Committee began drafting standards that will be applied to programs for educators who are not receiving initial licensure and other school professionals. These standards are in the development phase and will be released for public input during the summer 2014. It is anticipated that the CAEP Board of Directors will adopt standards for advanced programs at its June 2014 meeting.

Do we have to apply to CAEP after our NCATE/TEAC legacy visit?

No. In July 2013, NCATE and TEAC merged to form CAEP. Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) that were accredited by NCATE or TEAC do not need to apply for CAEP eligibility and accreditation. All educator preparation programs that are accredited by NCATE and TEAC will automatically be scheduled for their next accreditation visit using the CAEP Standards beginning in 2016.

April 22, 2014

What is the fee to apply to CAEP?

There will not be an application fee associated with an EPP's submission of application materials to CAEP. All references to an application fee will be removed from application guidance documents. Payment of annual dues will begin in the year of an EPP's application to CAEP. The Annual Dues and Fees schedule for EPPs can be found here: <http://caepnet.org/about/dues-and-fees/>.

If an EPP does not currently require nationally-normed admissions tests, should we start requiring them in order to satisfy CAEP Standard 3?

CAEP emphasizes, in the rationale for Standard 3, that it does not require particular assessments for admission, stating, "It would be shortsighted to specify particular metrics narrowly because of the fast-evolving interest in, insistence on, and development of new and much stronger preparation assessments, observational measures, student surveys, and descriptive metrics. Instead, CAEP should ask that providers make a case that the data used in decision-making are valid, reliable, and fair."

The motivation for Standard 3 is based in large part on research that indicates that the academic quality of teachers impacts their effectiveness. Accordingly, a goal of Standard 3 is to ensure that

EPP candidates are of high academic quality. EPPs that use a nationally-normed test for admission are able to show directly that each cohort is in the top third of those taking that test, but EPPs that do not use a nationally-normed test can show that the academic performance of their cohorts is equivalent or better to those scoring in the top third of an appropriate nationally-normed test by establishing correspondence between the EPP's admission standards and scores on the test. Note that the establishment of this correspondence, which is likely to take the form of a correlational analysis between the EPP admission standards and the test scores, must be compelling at the level of peer-reviewed research. Alternately, EPPs may show that their admission standards are based on a model that empirically predicts effective teaching.

Standard 3, component 2 refers to cohorts. What flexibility does an EPP have in defining a cohort? At admissions, at graduation, or by program?

The CAEP Standards Commission wrote Standard 3: Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity to give EPPs more authority on who enters the field therefore strengthening education as a profession. For the purposes of the standard, and component 2 especially, a cohort is defined as all candidates admitted at the same time to all of the provider's programs. The EPP should define "admitted at the same time" as appropriate to their admissions policies and practices. As evidence of selectivity at admissions, the EPP presents the average GPA and national assessment score for the cohort. EPPs are encouraged to consider other selectivity factors in component 3.3. Selectivity during and at completion of the program is addressed in components 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6.

How should EPPs that have areas for improvement related to NCATE standards 5 and 6 respond in the annual report?

EPPs should continue to report on progress on all areas for improvement cited for the NCATE standards in the EPP Annual Report until they are removed by the Accreditation Council.

Do EPPs report on movement toward target on an NCATE standard(s) in the EPP Annual Report?

Yes, EPPs using the Continuous Improvement Pathway report on progress toward the target level on at least one NCATE standard in the EPP Annual Report. EPPs are required to meet all NCATE requirements until they receive CAEP accreditation.

How should add-on endorsements or other programs not leading to stand-alone certification be addressed in the self-study, and in program review?

The CAEP Policy Manual indicates that, "The CAEP review includes all specialty areas that prepare candidates to work in preschool through grade 12 settings and lead to a professional license, certificate, or endorsement; it also includes graduate and non-certification programs for licensed educators who are extending their knowledge and skills for working in school settings. Programs that lead to endorsements, add-ons, or their equivalent for which its state or country requires national or state program review must be included in the CAEP self-study report."

Can student teaching be graded pass/fail, or must it be graded with letter grades?

As is noted in Appendix B of the CAEP Standards, the CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting were guided by the motive to “foster innovation and rigor, to draw from research, and to create a performance-based, evidence-informed accreditation system.” It is therefore not in CAEP’s interest to require elements of program design.

However, the EPP may find that a pass/fail system would not provide information about the candidates’ competencies at a sufficiently fine-grained level to diagnose program strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, although the EPP would be free to include the pass/fail assessment in support of a CAEP Standard, it may elect not to in favor of including assessments that provide more information.

What constitutes evidence that an assessment is valid? Would a rubric suffice?

An EPP should think about establishing the validity of an assessment in terms of both the results the assessment is designed to yield and the results it actually yields. Providing the rubric for an assessment may be an effective way to demonstrate what results the assessment is designed to yield when the link between rubric expectations and the competencies being assessed are clear. However, validity is ultimately not a property of the assessment but of the assessment results and their interpretation. The EPP should therefore be able to also demonstrate that the assessment was used as designed, for example, in the case in which the assessment is scored using a rubric, the EPP could audit a sample of scored assessments to determine the match between the competencies demonstrated in the sampled assessments and the rubric descriptions for the scores given to those assessments, and/or that the assessment results correspond to or predict the relevant competencies as measured in other ways.

Will the CAEP standards have Rubrics?

CAEP has not developed Rubrics to accompany the new standards. CAEP has, however, published a number of Guides to support Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) as they complete the self study. The Guides for each of the three pathways are available on the CAEP website at <http://caepnet.org/accreditation/guide-to-self-study-reports-and-evidence/>. In addition, comprehensive explanation of CAEP’s expectations for EPPs can be found in the CAEP [Accreditation Standards](#), [Glossary](#), and [Evidence Guide](#). EPPs are encouraged to review the standards and rationale statements, and to use the standards as a basis for reflection on their current program operations and, in particular, their current capacity to use valid and reliable data to monitor and improve program elements.

What accreditation decisions are awarded to EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation for the first time?

EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation for the first time or after a lapse of accreditation will be granted one of the following accreditation decisions by CAEP’s Accreditation Council:

- Accreditation for 5-7 years, depending on the state partnership agreement;
- Exemplary or “gold” accreditation for 5-7 years, depending on the state partnership agreement (currently under development); or
- Denial of accreditation.

To be granted accreditation, an EPP must meet all of the CAEP standards. An EPP that is awarded exemplary or “gold” accreditation must meet all of the CAEP standards and surpass a combination of standards; this designation will be awarded to a small number of providers. An EPP is denied accreditation if it fails to meet one or more of the CAEP standards. An EPP’s first accreditation bid results in an “up or down” decision and no probationary accreditation is granted in first accreditation cases.

EPPs seeking accreditation for the first time have a choice of two routes to accreditation: Accreditation Eligibility or Candidacy for Accreditation. Accreditation eligibility status is the appropriate starting point for EPPs that judge themselves to be ready to engage directly in an accreditation review and are confident that they will have sufficient evidence of meeting all five CAEP standards within five years. Candidacy for Accreditation is the appropriate starting point for EPPs that opt to enter the developmental/diagnostic process in order to ensure that they are better prepared to address all of CAEP’s standards successfully in their accreditation bid. Additional information about each of the routes can be found at <http://caepnet.org/accreditation/application/>.