

The Framework for an Experience-Based Certification (EBC) Program: Specific Program Guidelines

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Introduction to Experience-Based Certification (EBC)

The fundamental purpose of a teacher preparation program approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the teaching profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge and skills to enable PK-12 students in Pennsylvania to achieve academic success. Pennsylvania's EBC is a professional certificate that entitles the holder to fill a full-time professional teaching position (22 Pa. Code § 49.1 et seq). The EBC program is an alternate route to certification, yet it is provided by an approved Pennsylvania program provider.

The purpose of this certification program is to aid candidates holding a bachelor's degree from a four-year degree in meeting Pennsylvania instructional certification requirements. EBC programs must provide flexible and accelerated pedagogical training to candidates who have demonstrated competency in a subject area, provided that the first year of teaching includes a minimum of one classroom observation each month by an approved college/university in this Commonwealth (22 Pa. Code 49.91(c)). The subject-specific content requirements for EBC programs continue to follow the [Chapter 354: Preparation of Professional Educators and the Program Framework Guidelines and Rubrics](#) for early childhood/elementary, secondary, and PK-12 certificates.

This document describes the professional knowledge, skills, and competencies that candidates in an EBC program will learn by completing a prescribed sequence of courses (including field placements as needed). In addition to specific requirements and competencies, these guidelines discuss: the EBC program design; professional core rationale; candidate competencies; faculty; field experiences; and new teacher support. EPPs should also consult and incorporate these existing guidelines:

- [Accommodations and Adaptations and ELL Program Framework Guidelines;](#)
- [Common Ground Framework Guidelines;](#)
- [Structured Literacy \(SL\) Program Framework Guidelines;](#) (if the EBC is in the following content areas: Grades PK-4, Grades 4-8, Reading Specialist, or Special Education PK-12) and
- [Professional Ethics \(PE\) Program Framework Guidelines.](#)

The Career and Technical Instructional Experience-Based Guidelines are not addressed by this document.

Program Design

The EBC Program includes a supervised classroom teaching experience under the supervision of program personnel and mentors who are well trained and demonstrate competence in teaching. The program also provides evidence that the criteria and competencies for exit from the EBC Program are assessed in coursework and field experiences (Stage 3 and Stage 4) and require the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and competence in fostering student learning.

The Professional Core courses, competencies, and experiences for the EBC Program are expected to address the broad set of issues, knowledge, and competencies that are relevant to the certificate grade band of the EBC. The EBC Program must prepare teachers who will be able to ensure students master all academic standards.

The philosophy and standards must permeate the candidates' course experiences, as well as their field experiences and the supervised classroom teaching experience. The program design must describe clearly how the relevant set of knowledge, skills, and competencies inform the program design, and must also indicate how the institution will assess whether candidates have acquired the required knowledge, skills, and competencies. All courses should be grounded in child and adolescent development with the goal of enabling candidates to gain the knowledge and experience needed to work successfully with family members and the broader community.

Professional Core

Each program design contains a component known as the EBC Program Professional Core, which differs from the professional core requirements of other educator preparation programs. The EBC Program Professional Core is comprised of two parts. The first part addresses the professional knowledge required in the specific instructional area, e.g., math or social studies. The second part consists of professional competencies that are common to all teacher experience-based certification programs. The EBC Program Professional Core consists of competencies (which may include experiences with children/students) which are met before the candidate enters into the supervised classroom teaching experience.

The supervised classroom teaching experience is a requirement of the EBC Program. The duration of the candidate Stage 3 and Stage 4 field experiences in a school district may extend up to five calendar years (24 PS § 12-1207.1(c)(3) and

(22 Pa. Code § 49.91(d)). The preparation program provider must make monthly observations within the first year of the internship placement (Stage 3 field experience) (22 Pa. Code §49.91 (c)). These observations must be documented.

Program Delivery

The EBC Program must satisfy regulatory based entrance requirements and include a supervised classroom teaching experience (the Stage 4 field placement) for its candidates to be recommended for an Instructional I certificate and maintain their certification.

- The EBC applicant must be a graduate of an accredited four-year college or university (24 P.S. § 12-1207.1(c)(2)) and (22 Pa. Code §49.91(d)).
- The applicant shall successfully pass the subject matter content test in the instructional area for which they are seeking certification. 24 P.S. § 12-1207.1(c)(2)
- Once the certificate is issued to the candidate, the candidate is required to be continually enrolled in a state approved EBC Program (24 P.S. § 12-1207.1 (c)(2) and (22 Pa. Code §49.91(d)).
- The EBC cannot be renewed (24 P.S. § 12-1207.1(c)(2) and (22 Pa. Code §49.91(d)).

EBC Programs are expected to be comprehensive and delivered through a combination of university classroom, school, and other appropriate settings. While some on-line courses may be a component of the program, programs are expected to include face-to-face components. Field experiences and the supervised classroom teaching experiences must be face-to-face.

Professional Core Rationale

Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, §354.25(a), as well as §354.32 (a)(1) and §354.33(1)(i)(A)-(H), enumerate aspects of the knowledge and skills that candidates for teaching in the Commonwealth are expected to learn and demonstrate. While this set of knowledge and skills is developed in university academic classroom settings and clinical practice, the program curriculum should reflect this centrality to the process of educator preparation. The candidate competencies detail specific assessable skills, concepts, and foundational understandings of the three areas overviewed below. This overview is meant to provide a context for the candidate competencies.

I. Professional Certificate Core

PDE has [subject-specific and professional core-specific guidelines](#) for all certification program areas developed by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality and approved by the Secretary of Education. EBC Programs are expected to follow the guidelines to ensure that the required subject-area content is completed prior to the completion of the program.

II. EBC Program Professional Core Competencies

The EBC Program is designed with accelerated pedagogical training to meet the needs of persons who graduated from a four-year, traditional undergraduate degree granting institution wishing to enter the teaching field. The program focuses on professional and pedagogical areas to supplement the candidate's content area in which they received their degree. The competencies apply to all candidates to ensure the pedagogical and professional skills needed in the supervised classroom teaching experience.

III. Accommodations and Adaptations for Diverse Students in an Inclusive Setting and Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

Program candidates will need to learn methods to deliver instruction to students with diverse needs. The Pennsylvania State Board of Education defines a diverse learner as a student who, because of limited English language proficiency or disabilities, may have academic needs that require varied instructional strategies to help the student learn (22 Pa. Code §49.13) (see Appendix A). Disabilities in a regular education classroom range from mild to severe and may include learning disabilities, physical, social, or emotional challenges. Students for whom English is not their first language may need accommodations to participate in general education classrooms. All teacher certification programs must include minimum credits (or hours) addressing these specific populations. Refer to the [Accommodations and Adaptations for Students with Disabilities in an Inclusive Setting and Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners Program Guidelines](#) for the candidate competencies that must be addressed in the credits or hours that institutions of higher education will use to implement 22 Pa. Code § 49.13(4)(i).

IV. Common Ground Framework Guidelines

The mission of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children

and adults to succeed as productive citizens. To fulfill that mission, it is critical that educators enter classrooms across the Commonwealth equipped with the knowledge they need to meet students where they are.

The Common Ground Framework includes three sets of competencies—Cultural Awareness, Trauma-Aware, Mental Health and Wellness, and Technological and Virtual Engagement—for teacher training, both preparation and professional development, to provide educators with the skills and approaches that will enable them to better serve learners from all walks of life. (See. 22 Pa. Code § 49.1, 49.14(4)(i), 49.16(c), 49.17(a)(6)).

This includes learners from varying socio-economic backgrounds and those with different abilities and is an effort to create an inclusive learning environment for all students. It also provides guidance to help educators handle issues related to mental wellness, trauma informed approaches to instruction, engagement with technological and virtual strategies, and myriad other factors that can inhibit student success in the classroom if unaddressed. Refer to the [Common Ground Framework Guidelines](#) for more information.

V. Structured Literacy (SL) Program Framework Guidelines

22 Pa. Code § 49.14(4)(i) requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to identify competencies and develop associated standards for educator training in structured literacy. Structured literacy supplements core instruction with an increased focus on the five essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). Research on Pennsylvania’s Dyslexia Pilot and Expansion project demonstrated significant impact for students and school systems in the use of structured literacy.

Chapter 49 requires instruction in structured literacy to be integrated in educator preparation and continuing professional development programs for professional employees who hold instructional certificates in early childhood education, elementary-middle level, PK-12 Special Education, English as a Second Language, and Reading Specialist. Refer to the [Structured Literacy \(SL\) Program Framework Guidelines](#) for more information.

VI. Professional Ethics (PE) Program Framework Guidelines

22 Pa. Code § 49.14(4)(i) requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to identify competencies and develop associated standards for educator training in professional ethics. Chapter 49 requires instruction in professional ethics to be integrated in educator preparation.

22 Pa. Code § 49.1. Definitions define “professional ethics” as the standards of behavior, values, and principles that inform and guide professional decision-making. These standards of behavior, values, and principles include those detailed in the Pennsylvania Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE), as adopted by the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Practices Commission. Refer to the [Professional Ethics \(PE\) Program Framework Guidelines](#) for more information.

Candidate Competencies

This section outlines the general competencies required for certification by Chapter 354: “The preparing institution shall ensure that candidates complete a well-planned sequence of professional educator courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry and application of technology related to each academic discipline the candidates plan to teach or in the academic disciplines related to the non-instructional certificate categories in which they plan to serve.” (22 Pa. Code § 354.25(a)(3)). The candidate demonstrates proficiency in the subject matter through the Department of Education’s assessments. [Subject Specific guidelines](#) for each content area can be accessed on PDE’s website.

Aligned resources and tools to support the acquisition of these competencies can be found on the [Standards Aligned System \(SAS\) portal](#). The program must ensure the candidate demonstrates skills required by the professional core for the certificate they are seeking. The core competencies can be accessed on PDE’s website based on the certification type: [PK-12](#) or [Secondary Grades 7-12](#).

Faculty

Certification programs submitted for review to PDE will include the qualifications of faculty assigned to teach each course within the professional core of the program. Faculty who teach in the professional core must have demonstrated expertise in education methods appropriate to engaging the minds of all learners, and in the K-12 grade content they are teaching, as well as advanced degrees in disciplines appropriate to teaching in the program.

Additionally, program proposals will be expected to include evidence of collaboration between arts and sciences faculty, and education faculty, along with current K-12 level teachers and administrators in all content areas (refer to Chapter 354 sections 354.25 and 354.26).

Field Experience

The supervised classroom teaching experience is similar to the student teaching requirement in Chapter 354 and may be preceded by other field experiences. Field experiences benefit the candidate's preparation by providing opportunities to apply principles and theories learned from the program to actual practice in the classroom. Field experience also provides opportunities to work with diverse populations, different ages and various school settings before the supervised classroom teaching experience begins (22 PA. Code §354.25 (d)).

Supervised Classroom Teaching Experience (Stage 3)

The EBC Program can include a supervised classroom teaching experience (Stage 3). Candidates participating in a supervised classroom teaching experience must be evaluated at least monthly for the first year.

The program must also provide evidence that the criteria and competencies required for exit from the certification program are assessed through coursework, field experience, and the supervised classroom teaching experience. In addition to incorporating a self-reflective emphasis, the program is expected to require candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and competence in fostering student learning and adolescent well-being. In addition to the monthly observations, candidates receive support and guidance during the monthly meeting with the program provider, including collaboration with the mentor and building principal.

Note: There may be instances when candidates come into an EBC program at Stage 4. These candidates may have already completed Stage 3 as part of their post-baccalaureate field experience.

Student Teaching Requirements (Stage 4)

The [PDE 430](#) is completed during formal Stage 4 coursework. [The Framework for Evaluation Pre-Service Teacher](#) is a helpful tool in completing the PDE 430 form. Two PDE 430s must be completed during this period, one at the midpoint of coursework and the other at the end to support a recommendation for an Instructional I certificate offered by the Department of Education.

New Teacher Support

The first year of teaching is the most critical in a teacher's career. New teacher support

is more a process than a program, involving the period of transition where new teachers evolve from being students of teaching to teachers of students. Section 49.91(a) provides that an EBC Program may include an induction (22 Pa. Code § 49.91(a)) and for these reasons, educator preparation programs are encouraged to develop and maintain a support program for their new teacher candidates. The role of the higher education institution is to provide access to professional networking, resource information, and job placement services. It may include graduate surveys which the program uses to assess its own effectiveness. The program is expected to attempt active outreach to its graduates.