



Certifying Officer Training: Follow Up Q/A
April 2025

1. Didn't PDE previously say that certifying officers did not need to review test scores?

ANSWER: Yes, the policy has changed over the years. The current policy requires that Certifying Officers verify passing content test scores (cut scores or by utilizing the GPA Standard Deviation policy) before recommending candidates for certification as per Chapter 49, however test scores do not need to be displayed in TIMS to submit the recommendation:

§ 49.68. Evaluation of prescribed requirements and standards.

Institutions of higher education within this Commonwealth with approved educator preparation programs are authorized to evaluate, equate, and accredit educational experience and background of candidates for meeting the specific requirements for certification. A candidate may not be recommended for certification until providing evidence of satisfactory achievement in the assessments under § 49.18 (relating to assessment).

2. Is it correct that program completion cannot require that students complete the required test for their certification area?

ANSWER: No, program completion and recommendation for certification do require that students pass the required content tests. However, if a student does not pass the required test, an IHE is unable to prevent them from having their degree conferred.

3. If a student adds three certifications (certs) on one application but has not passed all the required assessments for each. Will this delay the approval of the completed assessments/certifications?

ANSWER: As we have been emphasizing, Certifying Officers should not submit recommendations in TIMS until all tests are passed. However, if an educator applies for multiple subject areas on the same application but does not have all of their required tests passed, we will allow you to recommend the candidate for all programs they have successfully completed. The evaluator will approve the certification(s) that the candidate qualifies for and will reach out to them to provide information on how to get the other area(s) approved. This is the only exception to the testing/recommendation policy.

- 4. Does PDE wait until the test results post to approve the TIMS application if the student submits it before the CO sees it?**

ANSWER: No, if the application is Ready for Review, which means the CO has submitted the recommendation, and the test is showing in TIMS, we will approve it. Having said that, you should not submit the recommendation until you have the passing test in hand.

- 5. If there are no scores on TIMS, may I enter the scores in the comments section if I have received them through Pearson or ETS?**

ANSWER: Yes, please enter the scores in the comments section and submit the recommendation. We are still required to match the scores to the candidate's profile in TIMS and will reach out to them to resolve the issue. You can be proactive with your candidates and have them attach their correct SSN to all of their tests during the registration process.

- 6. What is meant by Pending Test Score for TIMS status? Are you referring to the SAT/ACT basic requirement?**

ANSWER: Pending Test Score is a TIMS status that is used by the evaluator when an applicant is missing a passing test score. As described above, we are still required to match scores in TIMS so you may see that status if your candidate did not provide a correct SSN when they registered for their tests.

- 7. I have a student who took his test in OH, but DID use code 8033. His scores are not showing up on TIMS. Is there something I can do to check on this or correct this?**

ANSWER: You should recommend them in TIMS if you have the passing scores and an evaluator will work with the applicant to match their tests.

- 8. Can we use the Program GPA toward a GPA boost? For example, for a 2.8 GPA that needs a higher test score?**

ANSWER: The GPA used for certification is the overall degree GPA if a degree is being conferred, otherwise it is the program GPA. That is true whether the candidate has a low GPA and is using a high-test score or has a low-test score and is using a high GPA.

- 9. I receive email notifications of Praxis scores from ETS. Is there a system in place to receive PECT /PREK-4 notification of scores?**

ANSWER: Please reach out to Pearson to discuss the possibility of your institution receiving score notifications.

10. Can students once again get an add-on with their Instructional I application fee?

ANSWER: No, the intent of the slide was to remind you that your candidates can apply for up to 3 subject areas (must be the same credential type i.e. all Instructional I etc.) on the same application. When they are ready to apply for test only add-ons, they can apply for up to 2 subject areas on the same application.

11. If a graduate is a dual major PK4/Special Education PK12 and does the 5/6 add on, is there space to add one more in the initial application, or would this count as 3?

ANSWER: As stated above, we are not bringing back the free add-on with an In State Level I application. The candidate can apply for 3 subject areas of the same credential type for which they completed a program with your IHE. Please see below about 5/6 add ons.

12. Does the 5/6 add on count as one of the three that students could qualify for in one application?

ANSWER: No, see above. Grades 5-6 can only be done as a testing only add-on which is a separate application.

13. Can applications which include multiple certification areas be streamlined on the CO side of TIMS?

ANSWER: That is not currently being planned for TIMS, but we do plan to address those concerns with the new system.

14. Do you know if the TIMS reports you are currently showing are where the Act 82 report gets its data for IHE certification numbers?

ANSWER: No, the two reports are built differently and therefore function differently.

15. Does GMC refer only to criminal activity? If not, does PDE offer any guidelines for what would incur a response of no. Specifically with academic dishonesty, academic actions or potential behavioral disciplinary actions?

ANSWER: No, Good Moral Character (GMC) does not only refer to criminal activity. We advise that you should answer "Yes" to GMC unless you know of a reason to answer "No". However, we recommend consulting with your solicitor before answering the GMC question if you are unsure how to respond.

16. If something is found when students do their clearances, do we need to note that in GMC?

ANSWER: We recommend consulting with your solicitor regarding your student's clearances.

17. It was my understanding that students cannot even submit their application until the first day of the month in which they graduate. Is this correct?

ANSWER: TIMS currently requires the degree being entered must be in the same month that they are applying. However, on the preparation program section, they are asked to enter a "Start Date" and an "End/Anticipated Graduation Date" which does allow them to enter a future date. We are working to correct that but ask that you are diligent in not recommending a candidate before they have completed their program.

18. Can I affirm an application if all program requirements have been satisfied, but it is still a few days away from the date the student graduates (confers the degree)?

ANSWER: If it is the initial bachelor's degree, you must wait until after the degree has been conferred. If they already hold a bachelor's degree and have fully completed all the requirements of your program, even if an additional degree is being conferred, you can recommend them for certification.

19. Can I affirm an application if it has been over 5 years since the degree has been conferred?

ANSWER: Yes, you are required to review the current requirements and verify that the old program that the candidate completed meets them. You should enter notes in the comments section clearly stating that you completed the competency review.

20. We have three applicants that we have no records for or recollection of in our dashboard. Do we leave them there or is there something we should do with them?

ANSWER: We recommend that you submit the recommendation through TIMS so that we can follow up with the applicant. If you don't have record of them completing your program or they don't qualify for certification, answer "Yes" to the GMC question (unless you know of a specific issue) and answer "No" to the other questions; be sure to enter comments as to why you are answering no.

21. For immigrants, what document shows that they are "approved to work" outside of a green card?

ANSWER: See attached document.

22. Do we need to complete the out of state waiver if only 50% is out of state/ country?

ANSWER: No, you have to submit a notification form to PDE to notify us that up to 50% of a student teacher's placement will be conducted outside of Pennsylvania. Link to Form: [50% Out-of-State/Out-of-Country Placement Notification Form](#). Notification forms do not require approval, just submission.

23. Will you please repeat the new Student Teaching waiver information?

ANSWER: If you are requesting a student to be permitted to have a placement more than 50% outside of Pennsylvania, you will need to submit a waiver form. Link to Form: [100% Out-of-State/Out-of-Country Waiver Form for Student Teaching/Internship](#). Waivers may be approved or disapproved.