

Educational Aide Exemption Program

Frequently Asked Questions

The Educational Aide Exemption (EAE) Program encourages educational aides to complete full teacher certification. Recipients are exempt from the payment of tuition and certain mandatory fees at participating Texas public institutions of higher education. Each term, applicants must complete and submit a separate EAE application to the Financial Aid Office ([Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\), Title 19, Part 1, Section 21.1080](#)).

1. What is the definition of the term *Educational Aide* for program eligibility?

An **Educational Aide** is a person who:

- Has been employed by a public school district in Texas in a teaching capacity, working in the classroom directly with the students on a full-time basis for at least one school year, within the last five years from the term or semester of the applicant's initial award; **OR**
- Has worked 180 or more full days as a substitute teacher at a public school district in Texas in a teaching capacity, working in the classroom directly with the students, within the last five years from the term or semester of the applicant's initial award.

2. What subjects are eligible for this exemption?

In accordance with [TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Section 21.1083\(a\)\(6\)](#), applicants must be enrolled in courses required for teacher certification in one or more subject areas determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to be experiencing a critical shortage* of teachers at public schools in Texas.

*The [Critical Shortage Subject Areas](#) are published annually on the TEA website.

3. What are the program requirements outside of employment?

In addition to having the required **Educational Aide** work experience and being enrolled in eligible courses, the applicant must also be classified as a Texas resident, demonstrate financial need, be registered for Selective Service or be exempt, and currently be employed in some capacity by a public school district in Texas for the full term in which the applicant is awarded.

4. Are there a certain number of hours in which the applicant must be enrolled?

No. The EAE award amount is based on the tuition and required fees for formula-funded (tax-supported) hours the applicant is enrolled in ([Texas Education Code \(TEC\), Title 3, Section 54.2002](#)).

NOTE: Formula funding is defined as the method used to allocate appropriated sources of funds among institutions of higher education. Check with the institution to confirm if courses are covered by this benefit.

5. Do all applicants receive the exemption?

No. Educational Aide Exemptions are awarded based on an applicant's eligibility, the availability of funds, and institution participation in the EAE program.

6. Do Texas private or independent institutions of higher education participate?

No. The EAE program is only for eligible public community colleges and public universities in Texas.

7. Are all Texas public school district employees eligible to participate?

Yes. Any applicant employed in some capacity by a school district in Texas can apply, regardless of position, if the applicant has the required **Educational Aide** work experience and is enrolled in eligible courses.

8. If an applicant did not meet satisfactory academic progress requirements in the fall, is he or she eligible for a spring award?

No. Applicants must meet the academic progress standards of the institution in the fall to be eligible for the spring term, unless granted a hardship.

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9. Is a volunteer at a school district eligible to participate?

No. The applicant must be **employed** for the full term by a Texas public school district.

10. Is an applicant who is unemployed eligible to participate in the program?

No. The applicant must be employed by a Texas public school district for the full term in which the exemption is received.

11. Are applicants enrolled in Alternative Certification Programs eligible to participate?

Yes, but only if the institution receives formula funding (tax support) for the hours in which the applicant is enrolled.

12. If an applicant obtains one school year of full-time Educational Aide experience outside of Texas, does the experience count toward the eligibility requirements?

No. EAE program rules require that the applicant obtain their Educational Aide experience at a public school district in Texas.

13. Who is exempt from student teaching?

- Applicants who are awarded EAE before obtaining a bachelor's degree and meet the eligibility requirements will not be required to participate in any field experience or internship consisting of student teaching to receive a teaching certificate.
- Applicants who obtained a bachelor's degree prior to receiving their first EAE award are **not eligible** for a student teaching exemption.

14. Can the EAE application be used as employment verification for more than one term?

No. An application, including verification of employment, must be completed for each term awarded.

15. Can an applicant receive the exemption if he or she is enrolled in hours that are considered excessive as defined in [TEC, Title 3, Section 54.014](#)?

Yes. The institution may grant the student an extension of eligibility if the student has a documented hardship. Each institution must adopt a hardship policy and have the policy available for public review upon request. All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

16. Are all public institutions in Texas required to participate in the EAE Program?

No. All public institutions, as defined by [TEC, Title 3, Section 61.003\(8\)](#), are invited annually to participate in the EAE allocation process. Each year, an updated list of participating institutions is published on the [College for All Texans website](#) after the annual EAE allocation process is finalized.

Contact Information

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Website Inquiry: Contact us by completing an [online inquiry form](#). Select "Financial Aid Question" as the Contact Reason.