

2025 - 2026

Program Guidelines

Educational Aide Exemption (EAE)



**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

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Educational Aide Exemption Program

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC) and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the relevant statutes and rules. The information in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not override the statute or rules for this program.

Program Authority and Purpose ([TAC Section 21.1080](#))

The Educational Aide Exemption (EAE) Program is authorized by [TEC, Title 3, Chapter 54, Section 54.363](#). Rules for administering the program can be found in [TAC, Title 19, Chapter 21, Subchapter II](#). The purpose of the EAE Program is to encourage certain Educational Aides to complete full teacher certification by providing need-based exemptions from the payment of tuition and certain mandatory fees at Texas public institutions of higher education.

Eligible Institutions ([TAC, Section 21.1082](#))

All public institutions of higher education, as defined by [TEC Section 61.003\(8\)](#), are eligible annually to participate in the EAE program.

Program Eligibility

Eligibility Requirements ([TAC Section 21.1083](#))

To receive an initial exemption, a student must:

- ✓ Be a Texas resident.
- ✓ Be registered with Selective Service or be exempt (see [Selective Service Statement](#)).
- ✓ Have financial need.
- ✓ Meet the institution’s financial aid GPA requirement for making satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward a degree or certificate in accordance with the institution’s policy.
- ✓ Have been employed by a public school district in Texas working in the classroom directly with the students on a full-time basis as one of the following:
 - An Educational Aide* for at least one school year during the five years preceding the term or semester for which the student received the initial exemption.
 - A substitute teacher for 180 or more full days during the five years preceding the term or semester for which the student received the initial exemption as defined in [TAC Section 21.1081\(5\)](#).
- ✓ Be employed in some capacity by a public school district in Texas during the full term for which the student receives the exemption.
- ✓ Be enrolled in courses required for teacher certification in one or more subject areas experiencing a critical shortage of teachers at public schools in Texas, as determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

The [2025-26 critical shortage areas](#) include the following:

- Bilingual/English as a Second Language
- Career and Technical Education – Secondary Level
- Computer Science/Technology Applications
- Special Education

*Certified by TEA as an [Educational Aide I,II,III](#)

To receive a renewal exemption, a student must:

- ✓ Meet all initial exemption requirements.
- ✓ If classified as an undergraduate, have not completed an excessive number of semester credit hours as defined in [TEC Section 54.014](#).

If the student received an exemption through EAE before fall 2012, the student must:

- ✓ Meet all initial exemption requirements (**excluding** the critical shortage area obligation).
- ✓ Be enrolled in courses required for teacher certification or, if enrolled in lower-level coursework, sign a statement indicating an intention to become certified as a teacher in Texas.

Additional Information

Graduate Student Eligibility

Students enrolled in graduate courses leading to teacher certification in a teacher shortage area are eligible for an exemption through this program.

Financial Need

While the EAE Program does not have a Student Aid Index (SAI) limitation, applicants must have financial need as defined in [TAC Section 21.1081\(8\)](#) to qualify.

An eligible applicant can be offered the amount required to exempt the student from payment of resident tuition and fees for courses taken during the applicable term, even if the exemption amount exceeds the student’s financial need.

School District Employee Eligibility

Eligible applicants can be employed in any capacity at a Texas public school district (e.g., bus driver), provided the applicant has the required Educational Aide work experience. Students offered the exemption must remain employed for the full term.

Application Deadline

Students must submit the [2025-26 EAE Application](#) to the financial aid office before the end of the semester in which they are enrolled to be considered for an exemption.

Child Support Arrearages

Per [Texas Family Code, Title 5, Section 231.006](#), a student who is obligated to pay child support and is more than 30 days delinquent is not eligible to receive a state-funded grant or loan.

Institutions determine how to best comply with this state requirement and should work with their legal counsel on questions related to this statutory mandate.

Discontinuation of Eligibility ([TAC Section 21.1083](#))

A student may **NOT** continue to receive this exemption in a subsequent semester or term if the student has attempted a number of undergraduate hours considered to be excessive under [TEC Section 54.2001\(a\)\(2\)](#).

The excessive hours calculation **excludes** hours:

- Earned exclusively by examination.
- Earned for a course credit received toward the person's high school academic requirements.
- Earned for developmental courses that the institution required the person to take under TEC, Section 51.331.
- Described in [TEC Section 61.0595\(d\)](#).

Note: At the start of a semester or term, if an undergraduate student is attempting hours considered to be excessive, the student may continue to receive this exemption if granted a hardship **extension** by the institution.

Hardship Provisions ([TAC Section 21.1088](#))

Institutions must adopt a hardship policy that may grant a student an **exception** from meeting the GPA requirement to satisfy the institution's SAP, or an **extension** of eligibility for excess undergraduate hours, when a student provides proof of a hardship or other good cause, including:

- A severe illness or other debilitating condition that could affect the student's SAP.
- An indication that the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured, or needy person and that the provision of care could affect the student's SAP.
- The student's active duty or other service in the United States armed forces or active duty in the Texas National Guard.
- Documentation of the birth of a child or placement of a child with the student for adoption or foster care, that may affect the student's academic performance;
- Any other cause considered acceptable by the institution.

All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

Note: A student who fails to earn a GPA that satisfies the institution's SAP requirement may have the ability to regain eligibility for this exemption if they meet the GPA requirement during a subsequent term or semester in which the exemption was not received. The student may also be granted a hardship exception by the institution.

Exemption from Student Teaching ([TAC Section 21.1087](#))

- An individual who receives a bachelor's degree required for a teaching certificate based on higher education coursework completed while receiving an Educational Aide Exemption is not required to participate in any field experience or internship consisting of student teaching to receive a teaching certificate.
- An individual who receives a bachelor's degree before receiving a first Educational Aide Exemption is not eligible for a student teaching exemption.

Selective Service Statement ([TAC Section 22.3](#))

Under [TEC Section 51.9095](#), an individual must file a statement of their Selective Service status with the institution confirming registration or exemption.

This statute applies to all state-funded financial aid, as well as “federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by this state.” The statement is required from students receiving federal aid, state-appropriated funds, or institutional funding, which includes programs funded by tuition set-asides, exemptions, and waivers.

Any of the following can be used to meet the statutory statement requirement:

- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status ([English Statement](#) or [Spanish Statement](#))
- Printout from [SSS.gov](#) website
- Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) if status is available*
- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status embedded in the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

*As of Fiscal Year 2023-24, registration status is no longer reported on the ISIR. Institutions can use any prior year ISIR that confirms registration to meet the statutory requirement for a student's status.

Institutions are **not** required to collect “proof” of registration or exemption from students or to verify the accuracy of the statement against external databases or other resources if conflicting information does not exist. See [Updated Guidance on Statutory Requirements that Impact Financial Aid Memo](#).

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS

In accordance with [Texas Education Code, Section 51.9095](#), male students must file a Selective Service Statement of Registration Status with their institution or other entity granting financial assistance. For more information about the Selective Service System, visit [sss.gov](#).

Please mark **one** option below:

<input type="checkbox"/> I was born female and not required to register.	<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am EXEMPT from registration because: (please briefly explain why you are exempt in the box below.)
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am REGISTERED with the Selective Service.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am over the age of 18. I am not registered with Selective Service and I am not exempt from registration with Selective Service.	

I, _____, hereby certify that the Selective Service status statement provided above is true and accurate.

Student ID: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Complete and return to the Financial Aid Office at your institution of higher education.

Selective Service Statement of Registration Status As of 09/28/2021

Additional Information

Collection Method

The institution has flexibility to create an online, paper, or alternate method to collect the statement as long as it uses the content developed and required by the THECB.

Frequency of Collecting the Statement

If the student's status will NOT change, the statement collected can be used for subsequent semesters at the same institution.

If the student is NOT registered for Selective Service, a statement must be collected each time they apply for financial aid or a student loan until the statement indicates registered or exempt.

Males Age 26 And Older

Individuals older than the maximum age at which an individual is required to be registered with the Selective Service System under federal law are not required to complete this status statement.

Retention Schedule

The status statement must be retained in the student's record based on the retention schedule outlined in the institution's Program Participation Agreement.

Packaging

All public institutions of higher education are invited annually to participate in the EAE Program by opting in or out of the allocation process. Those choosing not to participate will not be considered in the allocation calculation for the applicable award year. Those opting into the program will receive an even distribution of appropriated funds through the allocation process for the fiscal year.

Students enrolled in courses required for teacher certification in a critical shortage area and who meet all other eligibility requirements are eligible for the EAE program. Students receiving exemptions through the EAE Program will be exempted from the payment of the total resident tuition and required fees, other than laboratory and class fees, for courses taken during the applicable term. Institutions must determine the applicant's eligibility to receive the exemption and notify both the applicant and the school district employing the applicant.

Note: An exemption can only be applied to courses for which an institution receives formula funding. To determine which courses are formula funded, contact the institution's registrar or data reporting official.

Required Matching

Participation in the EAE Program requires that institutions use institutional funds (non-federal or state aid) to cover at least 10% of each recipient's exemption.

Note: Institutions can contribute beyond the 10% minimum requirement.

Example	Total Tuition & Fees	Institutional Percentage (10% minimum)	Institutional Funds	EAE Amount (Tuition/Fees <i>minus</i> Institutional funds)
Institution A	\$5,000	10%	\$500	\$4,500
Institution B	\$5,000	20%	\$1,000	\$4,000
Institution C	\$5,000	30%	\$1,500	\$3,500

Processing Funds

Institutions can **begin submitting** requests for funding on **August 15, 2025**. The THECB will **begin processing** funds after **September 2, 2025**. Institutions have through **August 3, 2026**, to request program funds. An official notification will be sent to institutions in the summer to provide instructions on how to request funds for Fiscal Year 2026.

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **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. Applicants must obtain their Educational Aide experience at a public school district or eligible charter school in Texas.

2. **Can an employee at a private charter school qualify for EAE?**

No. Private charter school employees do not qualify. Applicants must obtain their Educational Aide experience at a public school district or eligible charter school in Texas.

3. **Is a volunteer in a school district eligible to participate?**

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

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

No. The EAE amount is based on the tuition and required fees for formula-funded (tax-supported) hours for which the applicant is enrolled ([TEC Section 54.2002](#)).

5. **If a student did not meet satisfactory academic progress requirements in the fall, are they eligible for a spring exemption?**

No. Students must meet institutional SAP requirements for each term a student receives the exemption.

Exception: A student who is not meeting institutional SAP requirements at the end of fall is not eligible for the spring exemption, unless granted a hardship.

A student may have the ability to regain eligibility for a future exemption if they meet the GPA requirement during a term in which the exemption was not received.

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

No. An application that includes the verification of employment must be completed for each term.

7. **Can a student receive the exemption if they enrolled in hours that are considered excessive as defined in [TEC Section 54.014](#)?**

No.

Exception: At the start of a semester or term, if an undergraduate student is attempting hours considered to be excessive, the student may continue to receive this exemption if granted a hardship extension by the institution.

Appendix 2: Quick References

Contact Financial Aid Services	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Program Rules and Statutes	
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code TEC, Title 3, Chapter 54, Section 54.363
Texas Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code TAC, Title 19, Chapter 21, Subchapter A TAC, Title 19, Chapter 21, Subchapter II
Websites, Portals, and Guides	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
General college enrollment and financial aid information for students	My Texas Future
Grant and Aid Processing Platform (GAPP) Institutions can log into the GAPP to access TEXAS Grant, TEOG, TEG, TCWS, EAE, and Bilingual Education programs	GAPP Login GAPP Help Desk GAPP Account Creation Instructions [PDF]
Texas Education Agency Critical Shortage Areas and Educational Aide requirements	2025-26 Critical Shortage Areas Educational Aide I, II, III
Forms and Instructions	
Form for adding, updating, or removing a user's access for state financial aid web portals	User Access Form [PDF]
Instructions for returning funds electronically	Electronic Funds Transfer Information [PDF]
EAE 2025-26 Application	EAE 2025-26 Application [PDF]