

## Class A Programs for Teaching Fields

### Section 290-3-3-.41

#### 1) Purpose of Class A Programs for Teaching Fields.

Class A educator preparation programs shall be designed to help teachers more effectively serve the purposes defined for the same teaching field at the Class B level provided such programs exist. The intent of the Class A program shall be to help the teacher develop higher levels of competence than is possible in the Class B program. Additional information specific to Alternative Class A programs is provided in Rule 290-3-3-.42.

#### (2) Institutional and Program Requirements.

(a) The provision of Class A programs shall be limited to institutions that meet the standards for accreditation at the master's degree or higher level by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

(b) Institutions must have and enforce policies that preclude a candidate who took a course for undergraduate credit from taking the same course for graduate credit.

(c) Completion of a Class A program for a teaching field requires at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit appropriate to the teaching field and not used for prior-level certification or degree in any teaching field or area of instructional support.

**(3) Unconditional Admission to Class A Programs for Teaching Fields.** Each institution shall establish and enforce a policy that specifies when the candidate must meet criteria for unconditional admission to the program. Admission to the graduate school is not equivalent to unconditional admission to an approved program. Requirements for unconditional admission shall include:

(a) A criminal history background check. Additional information is provided in the current Educator Certification Chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code.

(b) A valid bachelor's-level professional educator certificate in the same teaching field(s) in which the Class A Professional Educator Certificate is sought, except for special education and as prescribed in the rules for Alternative Class A programs, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and reading specialist (Rules 290-3-3-.42 -.45).

1. Unconditional admission to a Class A special education program or a Class A ESOL program requires at least a valid bachelor's-level certificate in any teaching field.

2. Unconditional admission to a Class A reading specialist program requires two full years of full-time classroom teaching experience.

3. It shall be the responsibility of the educator preparation provider to ensure that Class B competencies as well as Class A competencies are met at the completion of a Class A program for which the individual does not hold a valid Class B Professional Educator Certificate.

4. If an individual is unconditionally admitted to a Class A program based on a valid bachelor's-level professional educator certification from another state, completes a Class A program and subsequently applies for Alabama certification at the Class A level, then the individual must hold a valid Alabama Class B certificate before applying for Class A certification.

5. Program Options. At the Class A level, the teacher may complete either of two types of programs, each of which requires at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit not used for prior level certification or degree in any teaching field or area of instructional support. In addition, both traditional and Alternative Class A programs require extensive clinical experiences.

(i) Traditional educator preparation program.

(I) At least one-third of the program shall consist of teaching field courses.

(II) English language arts, general science, and general social studies programs shall require at least one course in two areas within the broader field.

(ii) Alternative Class A program. Full information is provided in Rule 290-3-3-.42.

**(4) Standards Applicable to Traditional Class A Educator Preparation Programs for EPPs with On-Site Visits Scheduled Fall 2022 and Thereafter.** (See additional applicability information provided in Rule 290-3-3-.41(2)(c)2.) The following standards are based on the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards for Advanced Programs and are applicable to all teaching fields and areas of instructional support.

**(a) Candidate and Pedagogical Knowledge.** The provider ensures that candidates for professional specialties develop an understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and facilitates candidates' reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The provider is intentional in the development of the provider's curriculum and clinical experiences for candidates to demonstrate their ability to effectively work with diverse P-12 students and their families.

**1. Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions.** Candidates for advanced preparation demonstrate their proficiencies to understand and apply knowledge and skills appropriate to their professional field of specialization so that learning and development opportunities for all P-12 students are enhanced, through:

(i) Applications of data literacy;

- (ii) Use of research and understanding of qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research methodologies;
- (iii) Employment of data analysis and evidence to develop supportive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive school environments;
- (iv) Leading and/or participating in collaborative activities with others such as peers, colleagues, teachers, administrators, community organizations, and parents;
- (v) Supporting appropriate applications of technology for their field of specialization; and
- (vi) Application of professional dispositions, laws and policies, codes of ethics and professional standards appropriate to their field of specialization.

**2. Provider Responsibilities.** Providers ensure that advanced program completers have opportunities to learn and apply specialized content and discipline knowledge contained in National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or national discipline-specific standards.

**(b) Clinical Partnerships and Practice.** The provider ensures that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions appropriate for their professional specialty field.

**1. Partnerships for Clinical Preparation.** Partners co-construct mutually beneficial P-12 school and community arrangements, including technology-based collaborations, for clinical preparation and share responsibility for continuous improvement of advanced program candidate preparation.

**2. Clinical Experiences.** The provider works with partners to design varied and developmental clinical experiences that allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills that the courses and other experiences of the advanced preparation program emphasize. The opportunities lead to appropriate culminating experiences in which candidates demonstrate their proficiencies, through problem-based tasks or research (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed method, action) that are characteristic of their professional specialization as detailed in Rule 290-3-3-.41(4)(a)1. (i) -(vi).

**(c) Candidate Quality and Selectivity.** The provider demonstrates that the quality of advanced program candidates is a continuing and purposeful part of its responsibility so that completers are prepared to perform effectively and can be recommended for certification.

**1. Recruitment.** The provider presents goals and progress evidence for recruitment of high-quality candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations that align with the provider's mission. The provider demonstrates efforts to know and address community, state, national, regional, or

local needs for hard-to-staff schools and shortage fields. The goals and evidence should address progress toward a candidate pool which reflects the diversity of America's P-12 students.

**2. Candidates Demonstrate Academic Achievement and Ability to Complete**

**Preparation Successfully.** The provider sets admissions requirements for academic achievement and gathers data to monitor candidates from admission to completion. The undergraduate GPA of each cohort of candidates admitted to Class A programs during every semester or term must equal at least 3.0, beginning fall 2022 and thereafter.

**3. Monitoring and Supporting Candidate Progression.** The provider creates criteria for program progression and uses disaggregated data to monitor candidates' advancement from admissions through completion. The provider ensures that knowledge of and progression through transition points are transparent to candidates. The provider plans and documents the need for candidate support, as identified in disaggregated data by race and ethnicity and such other categories as may be relevant for the EPP's mission, so candidates meet milestones. The provider has a system for effectively maintaining records of candidate complaints, including complaints made to the Alabama State Board or Department of Education or CAEP, and documents their resolution.

**4. Competency at Completion.** The provider ensures candidates possess academic competency to help facilitate learning with positive impacts on diverse P-12 student learning and development through application of content knowledge, data literacy and research-driven decision making, effective use of collaborative skills, and application of technology in the field(s) where certification is sought. Multiple measures are provided, and data are disaggregated and analyzed based on race, ethnicity, and such other categories as may be relevant for the EPP's mission.

**(d) Satisfaction with Preparation.** The provider documents the satisfaction of its completers from advanced preparation programs and their employers with the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation.

**1.Satisfaction of Employers.** The provider demonstrates that employers are satisfied with the completers' preparation for their assigned responsibilities.

**2.Satisfaction of Completers.** The provider demonstrates that advanced program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that preparation was effective.

**(e) Quality Assurance System and Continuous Improvement.** The provider maintains a quality assurance system that consists of valid data from multiple measures and supports continuous improvement that is sustained and evidence-based. The system is developed and maintained with input from internal and external stakeholders. The provider uses the results of inquiry and data collection to establish priorities, enhance program elements, establish goals for improving, and highlight innovations.

**1. Quality Assurance System.** The provider has developed, implemented, and modified as needed, a functioning quality assurance system that ensures a process to document operational effectiveness. This system documents how multiple measures enter the system, how the data are used in decision making, and the outcomes of those decisions for programmatic improvement.

**2. Data Quality.** The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative, and actionable measures to ensure that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

**3. Continuous Improvement.** The provider regularly, systematically, and continuously assesses performance against its goals and relevant standards, tracks results over time, and documents modifications and the effects of those innovations.

**4. Stakeholder Involvement.** The provider includes relevant internal (e.g., faculty, staff, candidates, EPP administration) and external (e.g., alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and other defined by the provider) stakeholders in the program design, evaluation, and continuous improvement process.

**(5) Requirements for Class A Certification for Teachers.** Readiness to serve on the Class A level as a teacher shall include:

(a) At least a valid Class B Professional Educator Certificate. Additional information is provided in Rule 290-3-3-.41(3)(b).

(b) An official transcript from a regionally accredited institution documenting an earned master's degree.

(c) A survey of special education course is required unless that course was taken for prior level certification. [See Rule 290-3-3-.01(51) ]. An individual who completed a survey of special education course prior to the semester when the individual met requirements for unconditional admission to a Class A program July 1, 2017, and thereafter, must take a course focused primarily on one of the following categories: methods of accommodating instruction to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities in inclusive settings, multicultural education, teaching English language learners, rural education, or urban education. A diversity course used to meet this requirement for one level of certification may not be used to meet the requirement for a higher level of certification.

(d) Satisfactory completion of a State-approved program with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on all courses in the Alabama State Board of Education approved educator preparation program. For candidates who meet requirements for unconditional admission to a traditional Class A program July 1, 2017, and thereafter, a minimum GPA of 3.25 on all courses used to meet the requirements on the approved program checklist for Alabama State Board of Education educator preparation program. Rule 290-3-3-.42(4)(b) provides information about the GPA requirement for completion of an Alternative Class A program.

(e) Successful completion of an internship in the Alternative Class A program, English for speakers of other languages, gifted, and reading specialist programs. In all disciplines except Alternative Class A programs, internship experiences may be integrated throughout the program. Internships must comply with Rule 290-3-3-.03(6)(e)2.

(f) Successful completion of a practicum for initial certification in a special education teaching field. For programs that meet rules for Grades K-6 and 6-12 or Grades P-12, the practicum must include both elementary and secondary placements.

(g) A valid Class B Professional Educator Certificate in the same teaching field(s) in which a Class A Professional Educator Certificate is sought, except for Alternative Class A teaching fields, ESOL, reading specialist, and special education programs. English for speakers of other languages, reading specialist, and special education programs require a valid Class B Professional Educator Certificate in any teaching field.

**(6) Testing for Class A Certification for Teachers.** Applicants for initial Class A certification in a teaching field must meet the requirements of the Alabama Educator Certification Assessment Program (AECAP) as a precondition for certification. Additional information is provided in Rule 290-3-3-.01(3).

**(7) Interim Employment Certificate.** An Interim Employment Certificate (IEC) allows a superintendent or administrator to employ an applicant who is completing requirements for initial Class A certification in some teaching fields through a State-approved Class A program at an Alabama institution. Additional information, including requirements and restrictions is provided in the current Educator Certification Chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code.

Ala. Admin. Code r. 290-3-3-.41

New Rule: December 19, 1978. Amended: Filed December 13, 1990; effective February 1, 1991. Repealed and Replaced: Filed January 9, 1997; effective February 13, 1997; operative July 1, 1997. Repealed and New Rule: Filed September 11, 2003; effective October 16, 2003. Repealed and New Rule: Filed July 13, 2004; effective August 17, 2004. Repealed and New Rule: April 14, 2005; effective May 19, 2005. Repealed and New Rule: Filed August 6, 2007; effective September 10, 2007.

Reserved by Alabama Administrative Monthly Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 11, August 31, 2015, eff. September 17, 2015.

Amended by Alabama Administrative Monthly Volume XXXIX, Issue No. 11, August 31, 2021, eff. October 15, 2021.

*Previous Rule.42 was renumbered.41 per certification published August 31, 2021; effective October 15, 2021.*

Author: Dr. Eric G. Mackey

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§ 16-3-16, 16-23-14, 16-39-5.

Source: <https://casetext.com/regulation/alabama-administrative-code/title-290-alabama-state-board-of-education/chapter-290-3-3-teacher-education-professional-services/section-290-3-3-41-class-a-masters-degree-level-programs-for-teaching-fields>