



September 23, 2016

Subject: TEAC/NCATE Accreditation and TEACH Grant Program Eligibility

Dear President,

We are contacting you because your institution established eligibility for the TEACH Grant Program, in part, on the basis of accreditation of its teacher preparation programs by Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) or National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). On September 22, 2016, the Department issued a determination to end its recognition of TEAC and NCATE. These two accrediting agencies were the only ones recognized by the Department for accreditation of teacher preparation programs. The two agencies are in the process of merging into a single entity, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), with its own standards and procedures. However, CAEP is not currently recognized by the Department, and there are no other specialized accrediting agencies that are recognized for accreditation of teacher preparation programs.

Because TEAC and NCATE have lost Departmental recognition, it is not currently possible for an institution to establish or maintain eligibility for the TEACH Grant Program on the basis of accreditation of its teacher preparation program. Therefore, we need additional information from you in order to determine whether TEAC and NCATE's loss of recognition will impact your institution's continued participation in the TEACH Grant Program. Below, we provide additional information regarding the requirements for TEACH Grant Program eligibility and the information we need from your institution.

#### TEACH Grant Program Eligibility Requirements

The TEACH Grant Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 686 require institutions to provide a high-quality teacher preparation program at the baccalaureate or master's degree level that, among other things, meets at least one of the following requirements under the definition of a TEACH Grant-eligible institution in 34 CFR 686.2(d):

1. The program is accredited by a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Department for the accreditation of professional teacher education programs; or

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2. The program is:
  - a. Approved by a State;
  - b. Includes a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time pre-service clinical experience, or its equivalent; and
  - c. Provides either pedagogical coursework or assistance in the provision of such coursework.

Additional information on institutional eligibility requirements for the TEACH Grant Program are provided in [Dear Colleague Letter GEN 08-07](#).

Because your institution established TEACH Grant eligibility on the basis of accreditation of its teacher preparation program by either TEAC or NCATE, your institution now has three options with respect to its participation in the TEACH Grant Program, as described below:

- **Option 1 – State Approval:** The institution provides a teacher preparation program(s) at the baccalaureate or master’s degree level that is (1) approved by a State, (2) includes a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time pre-service clinical experience, or its equivalent, and (3) provides either pedagogical coursework or assistance in the provision of such coursework.
- **Option 2 – Provisional Certification and 18-Month Extension:** The institution requests that its TEACH Grant eligibility be maintained for 18 months following its accrediting agency’s loss of recognition while it seeks to meet all applicable TEACH Grant Program eligibility requirements as discussed in Dear Colleague Letter GEN 08-07. The institution would be placed on provisional certification under 34 CFR 668.13(c)(2).
- **Option 3 – Withdrawal from the TEACH Grant Program:** The institution ceases to participate in the TEACH Grant Program.

These three options are described in greater detail below:

#### Option 1: State Approval

An institution that seeks to meet Option 1 for TEACH Grant Program eligibility must provide documentation of State approval.

For purposes of determining eligibility to participate in the TEACH Grant Program, the Department defines “State Approval” broadly. This includes specific approval of an institution’s teacher preparation program(s) by a State, or general authorization by a State to provide such a program(s). We also consider an institution’s teacher preparation program to have been approved by a State if requirements for teacher

licensure or certification in the State would be fulfilled through completion of the teacher preparation program(s).

As noted above, Option 1 requires that the institution's teacher preparation program(s) include a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time pre-service clinical experience, or its equivalent. The program must also provide either pedagogical coursework or assistance in the provision of such coursework.

If you believe that your institution would remain eligible to participate in the TEACH Grant Program based on State Approval, your institution must notify the Department by returning the attachment titled "Choice of Option for TEACH Grant Program Eligibility" within 30 days of the date of this letter. In order to maintain TEACH Grant Program eligibility through State Approval, you must also update your institution's E-App and provide the supporting documentation in accordance with the instructions in the attachment titled "TEACH Grant Program Institutional Participation Request Process" within 30 days of the date of this letter.

#### Option 2: Provisional Certification and 18-Month Extension

If your institution does not meet the State Approval option, it may request an extension of its TEACH Grant Program eligibility for 18 months through provisional certification under the requirements in 34 CFR 668.13(c)(2) while it seeks to either obtain specialized accreditation, if and when, the Department recognizes a specialized accrediting agency for teacher preparation programs or State Approval.

Although the institution may select the accreditation alternative, the Department cannot predict whether a specialized accrediting agency will gain recognition for the accreditation of professional teacher education programs during the 18-month Teach Grant eligibility extension. If no such agency is recognized, or if an agency is recognized but the institution relying on this alternative has not obtained specialized accreditation from that agency by the end of the 18-month extension, the institution will lose TEACH Grant Program eligibility at that time.

If an institution requests an 18-month extension on its TEACH Grant Program eligibility, it will be placed on provisional certification for the 18-month period while it attempts to fulfill the requirements for TEACH Grant Program eligibility.

If the institution subsequently re-establishes TEACH Grant Program eligibility, either by gaining specialized accreditation of its teacher preparation program by a recognized agency or by meeting the State Approval option, the institution must provide documentation of its fulfillment of these requirements to the appropriate School Participation Division (SPD). In either circumstance the institution must apply for recertification by the end of the provisional period. If the Department approves this

application without conditions, the Department will place the institution on full certification.

If your institution chooses the Provisional Certification option, you must notify the Department by returning the attachment titled “Choice of Option for TEACH Grant Program Eligibility” within 30 days of the date of this letter and indicate that you choose Option 2 and wish to seek the 18-month extension under provisional certification. The Department will then provide you with information about the next steps in that process, which will include signing and having countersigned a provisional Program Participation Agreement (PPA).

### Option 3: Withdrawal from Participation in the TEACH Grant Program

If your institution does not meet the State Approval Option and does not wish to seek the 18-month extension of its TEACH Grant eligibility under provisional status, it must withdraw its participation in the TEACH Grant Program. To do so, your institution must notify the Department by returning the attachment titled “Choice of Option for TEACH Grant Program Eligibility” and indicate that you choose Option 3 within 30 days of the date of this letter and indicate your decision to withdraw from the TEACH Grant Program. You must also indicate withdrawal from the TEACH Grant Program using the Department’s E-App system, as described in the attachment “TEACH Grant Program Institutional Participation Request Process” within 30 days of the date of this letter.

After withdrawing from participation, an institution may re-apply at a later date when it has met all the eligibility requirements for the TEACH Grant Program, including those described above.

### TEACH Grant Disbursements

If an institution does not choose Option 1 or Option 2, it is considered to have lost eligibility for the TEACH Grant Program effective September 22, 2016. If this date falls within a payment period you may continue to make TEACH Grant disbursements to an eligible student for that payment period, but only under the following conditions:

- The institution continues to provide, through at least the end of the payment period, its TEACH Grant teacher preparation program(s);
- The student is enrolled in and is attending the TEACH Grant teacher preparation program during that payment period; and
- Prior to September 22, 2016, the student has submitted a valid Student Aid Report to the institution or the institution received a valid Institutional Student Information Report.

If your institution loses eligibility to participate in the TEACH Grant Program, you must cease making disbursements of TEACH Grant Program funds to students following the end of the payment period, as discussed above. You must also immediately notify students enrolled in a TEACH Grant eligible teacher preparation program that your institution's participation in the TEACH Grant Program has ended and that the students will no longer be eligible for TEACH Grant funds.

If you have questions about requirements for TEACH Grant Program eligibility or other issues described in this letter, please contact the SPD with responsibility for oversight of your institution, or send an email to [CaseTeams@ed.gov](mailto:CaseTeams@ed.gov) for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Bennett".

Ron Bennett, Director, PMP  
School Eligibility Service Group  
Program Compliance  
Federal Student Aid

### Choice of Option for TEACH Grant Eligibility

Please indicate below which of the three options described in the cover letter, your institution chooses regarding its TEACH Grant eligibility:

- Option 1:** My institution provides a teacher preparation program that is approved by a State, and the program includes a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time pre-service clinical experience, or its equivalent; and provides either pedagogical coursework or assistance in the provision of such coursework. I will update the E-App and provide the appropriate supporting documentation in accordance with the attachment “TEACH Grant Program Institutional Participation Request Process” within 30 days of the date of this letter.
  
- Option 2:** My institution wishes to request an 18-month extension of its TEACH Grant eligibility while we seek to meet the accreditation or state approval requirements for eligibility. We acknowledge that we will be placed on provisional certification during that time.
  
- Option 3:** My institution wishes to withdraw from the TEACH Grant program. I will update the E-App to indicate our intent to withdraw from the program according to the instructions in the attachment “TEACH Grant Program Institutional Participation Request Process”.

Please check the appropriate box above, sign below, and return this form to the Department within 30 days of the date of the cover letter by emailing it to [CaseTeams@ed.gov](mailto:CaseTeams@ed.gov). The email should have the subject line “Choice of Option for TEACH Grant Eligibility”, and the form should be attached to the email in PDF format.

If you choose Options 1 or 3, a signature from your institution’s Financial Aid Administrator is sufficient.

If you choose Option 2, your Financial Aid Administrator and your institution’s Chief Executive Officer must both sign the form.

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Signature of the Institution’s Financial Aid Administrator Date

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Print Name and Title

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Signature of the Institutions’ Chief Executive Officer Date

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Print Name and Title

## **TEACH Grant Program Institutional Participation Request Process**

This attachment provides step-by-step instructions for institutions requesting approval to continue to participate in the TEACH Grant Program based on State Approval combined with clinical experience and pedagogical coursework (Option 1), and for institutions wishing to end their participation in the TEACH Grant Program (Option 3). Before beginning this process, the institution should carefully review the TEACH Grant regulations, paying particular attention to the definition of a “TEACH Grant-eligible institution,” in section 686.2.

Using the Department’s E-App website ([eligcert.ed.gov](http://eligcert.ed.gov)):

- Step 1 – In Question 1, check “Update Information” as the reason you are submitting the application.
- Step 2 – From the “Update Information” pick-list choose “Add TEACH Grant Program” for Option 1 or Option 3.
- Step 3 – Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Go to Section,” enter “K” in the box, then click OK/Save Data
- Step 4 – Scroll down to Question 69 and type in the appropriate text as described below in footnote 1, and click OK/Save Data. This will take you to Section L
- Step 5 – In Section L, check the box indicating that “the President/CEO/Chancellor in Question 10” will sign the signature page and then print the required signature page.
- Step 6 – Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Submit the Application” then click “OK/Save Data”.
- Step 7 – The system will tell you if all required entries have been made on your application, if it does click on “Submit Application”. If not, make any necessary corrections and then submit the application.
- Step 8 – The system will advise you that your application has been received by the Department of Education and it will provide you with the address to send the signed signature page.
- Step 9 – Obtain the required institutional signature.
- Step 10 – Mail the signed and dated signature page to the Department per the instructions on the page.

Because Question 69 of Section K is free form, an institution requesting to withdraw from participation in the TEACH Grant Program must type such a request in this field. An institution requesting to continue participation in the TEACH Grant Program must type into Question 69 the information that applies to its request using the format and words as provided below.

[Name of Institution] requests approval to continue to participate in the TEACH Grant Program. Based upon the information provided in Dear Colleague Letter GEN-08-07, we seek approval because we:

[Include all of the following that apply:]

Offer a high-quality teacher preparation program at either the baccalaureate or masters level that is approved by a state and provides a minimum of 10 weeks of pre-service clinical experience, or its equivalent, and the program provides or assists in providing supervision and support services to teachers.

Provide a two-year program of study that is acceptable for full credit to a baccalaureate teacher preparation program at [include the name and OPEID of at least one and no more than three other institutions]

Provide a two-year program of study that is acceptable for full credit to a baccalaureate degree program in a high-need field at [include the name and OPEID of at least one and no more than three other institutions].

Offer a baccalaureate degree that will prepare a student to teach in a high-need field and have an agreement with another institution that offers a teacher preparation program or a post-baccalaureate program [include the name and OPEID of at least one and no more than three other institutions].

Offer a post-baccalaureate program that will prepare a student to teach and we do not offer a baccalaureate teacher preparation program.

As part of its E-App submission, the institution must also send supporting documentation for each of its statements above.

When the Department receives the E-App, supporting documentation, and the signature page, we will review the application and other information concerning the institution and make a determination as to the eligibility of the institution to continue to participate in the TEACH Grant Program. If the institution is approved, it will receive a notice to print the approval letter and updated Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR) from the E-App website. If not approved, you will receive a letter explaining why you were not approved.

If you have questions regarding the participation request process, please contact the School Participation Division for your state. Contact phone numbers are on the E-App homepage ([eligcert.ed.gov](http://eligcert.ed.gov)).