

Procedure for seeking Recognition as an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in North Carolina

There are two routes for gaining recognition as an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in North Carolina as outlined in §115C-269.5 (c).

The first would be to have been nationally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). If the applicant organization is CAEP accredited, official documentation acknowledging status is required for approving initial authorization. This process is in accordance with North Carolina statute.

The second route for initial authorization is approval by the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE).

The process for Board Authorization is outlined below and a discussion of each step follows:

1. Submit materials for peer review (see process below for this step)
2. The results of that review are leveraged for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to consider formal recommendation of the applicant to the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE).
3. The NCSBE formally considers the application and votes to approve or deny the application. According to law, the NCSBE has ultimate authority to officially recognize the applicant as initially authorized as an EPP in North Carolina.
4. Upon formal recognition of the applicant, the entity can engage in all the activities associated with North Carolina educator preparation including recruitment and training and will also be held to the same level of reporting and accountability as any other EPP in North Carolina. Additionally, all EPPs must adjust their programs and procedures where needed to fulfill any changes associated with educator preparation law or policy changes as they emerge.

For those already approved programs seeking to expand to additional sites, refer to section 5.

The purpose of the application for EPP authorization is to collect information about the applicant's proposal to effectively manage an educator preparation program and its alignment with North Carolina law and NCSBE policy. In addition to basic information about the program (license areas it seeks to offer, points of contact, communication lines), questions in the application explore the program's proposed content offerings and alignment with North Carolina Standards (links provided at end of document). The application requires detailed information about entrance/exit requirements for candidates, descriptions of key assessments demonstrating mastery of skills, and what quality assurances are in place to monitor program effectiveness. There is also a section seeking information on the field and clinical experiences the program intends to provide its candidates.

1. Submit materials for peer review

As part of the partnership with CAEP and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and to assure that the quality and rigor of the application process are strong and free of any perceived conflicts of interest, the collection of materials and peer review of those materials shall be in accordance with CAEPs Phase 1 and Phase 2 processes, which are explained below. The peer review shall be conducted by a team of CAEP reviewers, none of which are associated with already-recognized North Carolina EPPs. No fee is required for this review. The link to review the materials associated with this CAEP review process are located here:

<https://caepnet.org/accreditation/caep-accreditation/application>

There is no guarantee that acquiring EPP initial authorization in North Carolina will lead to achieving CAEP accreditation. The decision to pursue national accreditation is not required in North Carolina and remains up to each applicant. Authorization by the NCSBE, however, is a requirement for seeking CAEP accreditation if the applicant has no state authorization anywhere else in the country.

Phase 1 – Request for Evaluation

For Phase I, an applicant is ready to officially begin their submission for North Carolina EPP initial authorization and he or she communicates with the NCDPI.

NCDPI will coordinate the applicant with CAEP. CAEP will provide instructions and access to their online system and direct the applicant to submit the ‘Request for Evaluation’ material. In this portion of the process, the applicant provides basic information about his or her organization and regional accreditation if the organization has that recognition.

If the applicant’s organization does not have regional accreditation, the applicant must share information about the organization’s financial health and ability to implement the program. The completed Phase 1 application is then submitted to NCDPI who records the entry and submits the Phase I material to CAEP for review. While that portion is being considered, the applicant may begin working on materials for Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Self Assessment of Program with CAEP Standards

For Phase 2, the applicant will leverage the CAEP Revised 2022 Standards Workbook to develop a formal response, with supporting evidence where available, for each standard. The workbook provides the applicant a careful outline of each standard, its key concepts, guiding questions, and evidences to promote a thorough response. The workbook is located here:

<https://caepnet.org/accreditation/caep-accreditation/caep-accreditation-resources>

Completed materials will be submitted by the applicant directly on CAEP’s platform and a copy is also to be sent to NCDPI. It is important to understand that in many instances for a new educator preparation provider, the applicant may not have any data or artifacts to respond with evidence to each of the standards. If that is the case, the applicant should still do their best to share their intent and best thinking for implementation to meet the expectations of each standard.

2. Results of the Peer Review and Next Steps

When Phase 2 is formally submitted, three CAEP reviewers will conduct a peer review of the materials anchored off their readiness self-assessment checklist to assess the program's readiness to meet each of the standards. The results of that peer review are then shared initially with NCDPI.

At this point, based on the peer review, NCDPI determines whether it can formally recommend the application to the NCSBE for approval.

- If NCDPI can formally recommend the application for NCSBE approval based on the initial peer review and proposal materials, both the applicant and CAEP will be notified by NCDPI. Additionally, the peer review feedback will be shared with the applicant by the DEP. The application will then be sent to the NCSBE office and assigned as a discussion item in a future NCSBE meeting to begin the formal vote procedure (additional information on that process below). CAEP will then communicate with the applicant to determine whether the EPP desires to pursue full CAEP accreditation. Again, full CAEP accreditation is not a requirement for initial authorization, but state approval is a required step of CAEP accreditation.
- If NCDPI cannot formally recommend the application for approval to NCSBE based on the peer review proposal materials, both CAEP and the applicant will be notified, and peer review feedback of the proposal will be shared by NCDPI. The applicant will have a 60-day period to review the peer feedback and revise the application as needed. If revisions to the application have not been submitted to NCDPI by the end of the 60-day period, the application is removed from any future consideration for the remainder of the fiscal year and can be resubmitted the following fiscal year. Revised materials submitted to NCDPI within the 60-day window will be reviewed a second time by CAEP.
- Upon completion of the *second review*, CAEP will share its review with NCDPI. NCDPI will consider the application and CAEP peer review feedback and determine whether it will be in support of the application for NCSBE consideration based on the revisions made. The outcome of this decision is then shared with the applicant. One of three possibilities will happen after the second review:
 - o If NCDPI determines it can recommend that the proposal be approved by the NCSBE, NCDPI will notify both the applicant and CAEP and the application will be submitted to the NCSBE for the next available meeting for formal consideration. Feedback from the peer review will be shared with the applicant by NCDPI. CAEP will then follow up with the applicant to see if they are interested in continuing pursuit of full CAEP accreditation going forward.
 - o If NCDPI cannot recommendation that the proposal be approved by NCSBE based on the second review, both CAEP and the applicant will be notified by NCDPI. Feedback from the peer review will be shared with the applicant by NCDPI. At this point, the applicant can still request that NCDPI submit the application to the NCSBE for consideration without a NCDPI recommendation to approve.
 - o If the applicant chooses not to move forward with the proposal, resubmission can happen after a full year has passed.

3. NCSBE Considers Application

Formal consideration of the application to the NCSBE always follows a standard submission and voting procedure.

- The point at which the applicant formally requests its materials to go to the NCSBE, the materials will be sent to the NCSBE office for scheduling at a future meeting.
- The first time the application is presented to the NCSBE, it is generally for discussion only. The materials are presented by NCDPI. During this presentation, additional questions and follow-up from board members can emerge that the applicant will need to address. Answers to those questions must be provided prior to a return to the board for voting.
- Typically, the applicant returns to the NCSBE the next month for a vote to approve. In some cases, additional time may be needed by the applicant to respond to NCSBE questions during the discussion session. If this is the case, the application will return to the NCSBE agenda for a vote whenever those questions have been addressed.

4. Formal Authorization

Once approved by the NCSBE, the EPP can engage in all the activities associated with North Carolina educator preparations, including recruitment and training. The EPP will also be held to the same level of reporting and accountability as any other EPP in North Carolina.

- Contact information will be added to the website for the new EPP.
- NCDPI will work with EPP leadership to formally approve the individual licensure area programs they intend to offer.
- Going forward, approved EPPs must adjust their programs and procedures where needed to fulfill any changes associated with educator preparation law or policy changes as they emerge.
- Annual performance reporting will be required of all recognized EPPs and posted on the NCDPI website here: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educator-preparation/epp-performance>

Important Considerations

Development of a successful application is contingent on acknowledging and adhering to the various North Carolina standards and requirements. These include:

- [North Carolina Standard Course of Study](#),
- [North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards](#),
- [North Carolina Specialty Area Standards](#),
- [North Carolina Digital Learning Competencies](#),
- [Science of Reading](#), and
- Generally, prepare students toward the attainment of college- and career-readiness

A general understanding of TCED policy requirements along with LICN-001 and LICN-003 are critical for drafting a successful application. Policies can be located on the NCSBE website here: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=10399>

Careful study of session law 2017-189 which outlines requirements for educator preparation programs and licensure is also recommended. The law can be located here: <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2017/sb%20599>

At any time the applicant can communicate directly with the DEP to provide clarity or respond to any questions as they emerge.

5. Existing Approved EPP Expansion Process

For those programs whose frameworks to operate are already approved by the NCSBE, or are formally initially authorized EPPs within North Carolina, the process for establishing an expansion site is as follows:

- The program must submit an attestation document to acknowledge structures and processes leveraged in the initially approved site are to be in place at the expanded site. The attestation should include:
 - The name of the expansion site and the already approved initial site or framework.
 - The intended date to begin providing service.
 - The primary point of contact for the overall proposed program including phone number and email address.
 - The primary point of contact for reporting including phone number and email address. This can be the same point of contact for the overall proposed program.
 - The licensure areas the expansion site intends to offer.
 - Acknowledgement that the framework approved in the initial application will be adhered to in the expansion site. This includes the governing structure, coursework, content, assessment, and overall preparation strategy. If the site intends to deviate in any way from already approved program or framework, the application shall be referred to the process above for initial authorization.
 - Evidence of the applicant's current regional or national accreditation, if available.
 - Evidence of program effectiveness, where available, for any existing sites.
 - Acknowledgement of the responsibility for meeting all reporting, training, and accountability obligations outlined in policy and state law.
 - Acknowledgement that the data of the expansion site will be publicly reported, examined and held accountable to requirements in law and policy independent of other sites already authorized.
- The attestation document is to be submitted to NCDPI for consideration by the NCSBE. The schedule of NCSBE meetings can be located at this link: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/about-dpi/state-board-education/meeting-information> . For this documentation to be considered at any upcoming NCSBE meeting, it must be submitted to NCDPI by no later than the Friday before the preceding board meeting. Final scheduling of the application is always at the discretion of the NCSBE.

- The first time the attestation is presented to the NCSBE, it is generally for discussion only. The materials are presented by NCDPI staff. During this presentation, additional questions and follow-up from board members can emerge that the applicant will need to address. Answers to those questions must be provided prior to a return to the board for voting.
- Typically, the application returns to the NCSBE the next month for a vote to approve. In some cases, additional time may be needed by the applicant to respond to NCSBE questions during the discussion session. If this is the case, the application will return to the NCSBE agenda for a vote whenever those questions have been addressed.
- Once approved by the NCSBE, the expansion site can engage in all the activities associated with North Carolina educator preparations, including recruitment and training. The expansion site will also be held to the same level of reporting and accountability as any other EPP in North Carolina.
- Contact information will be added to the website for the new site.
- NCDPI will work with EPP leadership to formally approve the individual licensure area programs they intend to offer.
- Going forward, approved EPPs must adjust their programs and procedures where needed to fulfill any changes associated with educator preparation law or policy changes as they emerge.
- Annual performance reporting will be required of all recognized EPPs and posted on the NCDPI website here: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educator-preparation/epp-performance>