

Experimental Programs for Educator Preparation

Rationale for Experimental Programs

The experimental program option is designed to encourage innovation in educator preparation and investigation of those innovations, with the aim of increasing the profession's understanding of professional learning and improving professional practice for the benefit of all students in California.

Institutions or program sponsors are particularly encouraged to develop proposals for experimental programs to address specific needs in California: the need for quality teachers in low performing schools and/or those serving large numbers of minority students, poor students, and English language learners; and, the need for highly qualified teachers given the expected future teacher shortage.

According to Darling-Hammond, 2004, and Esch et al, 2005, un- and under- prepared teachers are found in disproportionate numbers in low-performing California schools and in schools serving large numbers of minority students, poor students, and English language learners. Institutions are encouraged to develop programs aimed at preparing teachers for these areas of great need.

Moreover, The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning warns in their 2005 status report, that the state is facing a shortage of tens of thousands of teachers within the next decade and that California will need to replace at least 100,000 teachers, a full one-third of the teacher workforce, as baby boomer teachers retire over the next ten years. It is expected that these retirements, along with declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs, will amplify the shortage of fully prepared teachers, with a shortage of 27,000 expected as early as the 2007-08 school year.

Institutions or program sponsors are encouraged to develop experimental programs incorporating innovative and new ways designed to attract newer generations to the profession and prepare highly qualified teachers to meet the expected shortage.

In general, experimental program options should be designed with the aim of improving educator preparation and professional practice for the benefit of all educators and students in California's schools. Program improvement should be an ongoing professional process whereby programs develop, implement and investigate preparation approaches informed by the latest research and literature. The results of these investigations should then be disseminated within the profession and the policy arena, to encourage as appropriate, broader use and adaptation to current practice.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 106(10), 1936–1966.

Esch, C. E., Chang-Ross, C. M., Guha, R., Humphrey, D. C., Shields, P. M., Tiffany-Morales, J. D., Wechsler, M. E., Woodworth, K. R. (2005). *The status of the teaching profession 2005*. Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

Goals for Experimental Programs

The goals for experimental programs include the following:

1. Program completers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to teach all children in the California public schools so that they meet the state adopted standards.
2. Program completers can, through their practice, contribute to the success of English Learners, closing the achievement gap and/or meeting the needs of other populations that have been underserved.
3. The program sponsors contribute to the dissemination of practices to improve the quality of the service authorized by the credential.

Policy Principles Underlying the 2006 Redesign of Experimental Program Policies by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The principles are guidelines related to the proposal, review and evaluation of Experimental Programs.

1. The Commission encourages experimental programs that seek to resolve significant questions regarding educator preparation. Experimental programs must have a scholarly focus and proposals must be research-based and clearly identify the issue being investigated, the intended outcomes and the evidence that will be collected.
2. Colleges, universities and school district educator preparation programs should be encouraged to develop experimental programs that depart from the Commission's own standards for traditional programs, if the proposed program meets the goals of the statement above.
3. Experimental programs should be approved providing their proposal has the potential to improve the quality of service authorized by the credential as required by Education Code.
4. The Commission will approve experimental programs that adhere to the experimental program standards. As part of this process the institution must describe how it will investigate and evaluate the program. Biennial reports of research findings will be required.
5. An Experimental program proposal will be determined to have merit based upon an analysis of its proposed design to address fundamental issues in schooling in California and preparing educators for those settings..
6. Experimental programs will be reviewed and evaluated based upon the proposal and the data collected related to program quality and candidate competence. The potential for improving the quality of service authorized by the credential will be determined on the basis of analysis of the indicators of program effectiveness that the institution submits as part of their program proposal.

Experimental Program Standards

Standard 1: Program Rationale

The experimental program proposal provides a credible rationale for the program, one which is embedded in relevant and recent scholarly and research literature in the field. Experimental programs have a scholarly focus and proposals are research-based with a clear plan for investigating an issue of significant importance for the theory and practice of educator preparation. This includes the intended outcomes and the evidence that will be collected.

Standard 2: Research Question

The proposal clearly identifies the topic of investigation and submits one or more research questions, hypotheses or objectives that the experimental program is expected to address that relate to fundamentally significant issues in the selection, preparation or assessment of prospective professional educators.

Standard 3: Program Design

The proposal submits a complete and thorough description of the proposed program. The proposal includes details of the activities and coursework that candidates will complete as well as indicators of outcomes of candidate competence for program completion.

Standard 4: Research Design

The proposal clearly illustrates the connection of the Program Philosophy and Goal, Research Question and Program Design to the implementation of the experimental program and investigation of the issue. The proposal includes details of how the institution plans to collect evidence in relation to the issue being investigated as well as a timeline for the investigation.

Standard 5: Anticipated Outcomes

The proposal identifies the anticipated outcomes of implementing the experimental program and how the implementation and investigation will add to the knowledge base of learning to teach. The proposal includes details about how the efficacy of the program will be assessed, and how the program will ensure that program completers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to work in the California public schools and support students in meeting the adopted student standards.

Standard 6: Contribution to the Profession

The proposal clearly shows that the knowledge generated by implementing the experimental program will improve the quality of the service authorized by the credential. The program and the scholarship generated from the research should lead to improvements in the preparation of professionals and guide education policy.

Procedures for submitting an experimental program for Commission approval:

- Institution or program sponsor identifies an issue, question, or problem that can be addressed through a preparation program that varies from the Commission's adopted program standards.
- Institution or program sponsor submits a 3-5 page paper describing the issue, question, or problem and the proposed program response to the Commission.
- Staff reviews the proposal brief and provides technical assistance to the institution or program sponsor in developing the full program proposal.
- Institution or program sponsor submits the full proposal, addressing the Standards for Experimental Programs.
- Program proposal is reviewed by a panel of educators (peer review). Panel may ask for additional information if the proposal does not meet the Experimental Program Standards.
- Program goes to the Committee on Accreditation for approval once the panel of educators agrees that the proposal meets the Experimental Program Standards.
- Program begins implementation.
- Program participates in all accreditation activities in concert with the institution or program sponsors schedule.
- Program submits biennial reports focused on research findings and measures of candidate competence.
- Program participates in the program review by submitting the approved program proposal and any biennial reports completed to date.
- Candidates, graduates, faculty, and employers from the program participate in the site review activities as scheduled.
- Program submits an evaluation of the program according to the approved Research Design.