

Discussion and Approval of the Proposed Agreement with the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) October 2020

Overview of this Report

This item brings back the agreement that will govern how the Commission will work with the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) when a Commission-approved institution seeks accreditation from both the Commission and AAQEP for the Committee's review and approval.

Recommendation

That the Committee review the draft agreement, make any necessary edits, and approve the agreement.

Background

The Commission has a history of working collaboratively with both national and professional association accreditors. Information on the agreements and alignment matrices that have been developed is available on the [Alignment with the California Accreditation System](#) webpage.

As is described on the webpage identified above, the first step in coordinating accreditation activities between the Commission and another accreditor is for staff, working with the other accreditor to develop an alignment matrix. The matrix identifies showing where the organization's standards are aligned to the Commission's standards and where they are not aligned. The draft matrix is reviewed by institutions that prepare educator and the Committee and, when appropriate, the Committee approves the alignment matrix. At the [October 2019 Committee meeting](#), the Committee approved the alignment matrix with AAQEP.

The next step in the process is to develop an agreement that defines how AAQEP and the Commission's accreditation processes will work together. The [initial draft of the AAQEP agreement](#) was presented to the Committee at its February 2020 meeting. After that meeting, the draft agreement was shared with AAQEP, sent to all Commission-approved institutions that have indicated interest in AAQEP by staff, and AAQEP also provided the draft to any Commission-approved institution it had been in communication with. Feedback on the draft agreement was requested by the Commission staff.

Feedback was received from a number of institutions. In general, the feedback was positive. Institutional personnel responded that the agreement was clear and seemed appropriate. A few questions were asked by institutions such as, which specific programs (teaching credential, services credential, bachelor's degree, and/or advanced degree programs) would be included in the AAQEP process. The Commission focuses only on programs that lead to a credential or authorization. On the other hand, the AAQEP process is very flexible and can focus on any type of educator preparation program independent of the program leading to a license in the state. The inclusion of programs in the AAQEP process is a decision that is made by the institution as it

works with AAQEP, although the Commission will continue to focus only on the programs that lead to a credential, license, or authorization.

Another question that was asked was if a program holds national accreditation, such as the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) or the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), how would that program be included in the AAQEP process. For the Commission, nationally accredited educator preparation programs still participate in the Commission's accreditation process, often in a modified manner. With respect to AAQEP, the institution would work with AAQEP to determine if it is appropriate to include nationally accredited programs in the AAQEP process.

A final question was asked about Article 8 in the agreement. The question was who is responsible to ensure that the Administrator of Accreditation is included in correspondence between AAQEP and Commission-approved institutions. This agreement will be between the Commission and AAQEP and those are the two entities that would be agreeing to ensure that communication with Commission-approved institutions includes the Commission's Administrator of Accreditation.

Staff requests that the Committee review the agreement, make any necessary edits and then approve the agreement.

Next Steps

If the Committee approves the agreement, staff will work with the Executive Director to get the agreement signed and in place.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing — AAQEP Cooperation Framework

QUALITY ASSURANCE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between the
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
and the
Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) with regards to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of California. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by entities approved by Commission as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP. This agreement is valid for seven years from the date of the second signature.

AAQEP affirms the Commission’s efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of California’s children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by providers approved by Commission. By entering this agreement, California affirms AAQEP’s mission of promoting and recognizing quality educator preparation that strengthens the education profession’s ability to serve all students, schools, and communities.

1. Standards Used in Quality Assurance Reviews in California

Quality Assurance Reviews conducted by AAQEP in California will be guided by the current version of the AAQEP standards (available at www.aaqep.org) and in keeping with AAQEP policy regarding the application of those standards. In conducting reviews of programs approved by the Commission AAQEP will require that all relevant Commission-adopted program standards and the Commission’s Common Standards be addressed.

Any institution approved by the Commission to offer educator preparation in California must continue to demonstrate that it meets the appropriate standards adopted by the Commission. This includes the current [Common Standards](#) and all program standards for all educator preparation programs leading to a California license, credential or added authorization from the Commission.

In addition, providers are welcome to orient their Quality Assurance Review to other relevant professional standards. Providers may do so either by aligning program curricula with program-specific national standards or by seeking recognition from one or more of the associations. Any such alignment or recognition is at the discretion of the provider.

2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews in California

The scope of AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in California may include any or all programs approved by the Commission that require continuous accreditation by the Commission as specified in California Education Code §§44370-44374. The provider will clearly identify the programs included in the AAQEP process.

The provider may, at its discretion, choose to include additional programs of study leading to a degree or certificate designed for those intending to work as, or already working as, educational professionals for AAQEP review. For such programs of study, where no state standards are available or specified, the provider shall identify any standards in addition to the AAQEP standards to which its program is aligned.

If a provider's program holds national accreditation or recommendation, that meets the AAQEP requirements and the provider would not need to produce additional information for the AAQEP self-study. The program, if it is a program approved by the Commission, would still need to participate in the Commission's Program Review, Common Standard review, and site visit processes.

3. Quality Assurance Review Process

All Quality Assurance Reviews conducted by AAQEP will be guided by AAQEP's policies and procedures as specified in the Guide to Accreditation, available at www.aaqep.org. AAQEP's process includes an optional proposal review stage two to three years prior to a scheduled site visit. All Quality Assurance Reviews include an off-site review process two months prior to each site visit, conducted virtually, which Commission staff are welcome to attend, and an on-site visit the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity.

The institution's California accreditation activities as defined in the Commission's accreditation schedule will continue to take place. These activities include annual data submission, submission of Preconditions, Program Review and Common Standards Submission as well as the accreditation site visit. Should the Commission change its required accreditation activities in any way, the institution must adhere to those as well.

The AAQEP Quality Assurance site visit may be scheduled concurrent to the institution's Commission accreditation site visit. If the visit is scheduled concurrently with the Commission's accreditation site visit, the teams may share interviews and the review of data or other information. Both site visit teams (AAQEP's and the Commission's) will each prepare their own reports. Each report will continue through the agency's standard process.

4. Quality Assurance Review Team Composition

AAQEP will appoint a sufficient number of Quality Assurance Review Team members to each review case to ensure that the review is carried out thoroughly and efficiently. Each AAQEP review team will include at least one educational practitioner from California nominated by the provider hosting the review; that practitioner will receive training and support from

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AAQEP. The local practitioner(s) will support the review team's understanding of and respect for the local and state educational context.

In addition to the AAQEP-appointed members, one or more Commission staff member(s) may participate as observers. Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the host provider.

The provider will need to also participate in the Commission's site visit process to ensure compliance with all Commission standards that are not addressed in the AAQEP process. The [Commission-AAQEP Alignment Matrix](#) identifies the Common Standards that are not fully addressed by the AAQEP Process.

5. Reviewer Preparation and Qualifications

All review team members will meet AAQEP preparation and quality requirements. Reviewer training and professional learning opportunities will be made available to Commission staff at no cost (though the Commission remains responsible for any travel expenses); Commission observers need not have participated in the training as a condition for joining review teams as observers.

6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval

Institutions eligible to seek AAQEP accreditation must be a Commission approved program sponsor with full approval (may not be in provisional approval). All educator preparation programs leading to a California license, credential, or added authorization must be Commission approved. Any new programs that are proposed that would culminate in the recommendation for a California credential must complete the Commission's [Initial Program Approval](#) process. Continued program approval is embedded in the Commission's cycle of accreditation activities.

7. Accreditation Decisions

AAQEP accreditation decisions are made by the AAQEP Accreditation Commission. Accreditation statuses and terms are detailed in AAQEP's Guide and policy documents, available at www.aaqep.org. Full accreditation is for a term of 7 years. Observers from the Commission are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of California providers are considered (meetings are typically conducted via video conference). Accreditation decisions, including the reports on which decisions are based and the Accreditation Commission's rationale for each decision, will be shared with the designated administrator at the Commission, which for purposes of this agreement is: Cheryl Hickey, chickey@ctc.ca.gov 916-322-0695.

California's accreditation decisions are made by the Committee on Accreditation (Committee) a statutory body appointed by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The report from the Commission's site visit team will be presented to the Committee and the Committee will make the determination of the institution's accreditation status for California and the ability to

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continue to recommend program completers for California licenses, credentials, and added authorizations.

Whenever AAQEP contacts any institution approved by the Commission to sponsor educator preparation leading to a California license, credential, or added authorization, regarding implementation of policies or concerning an upcoming site visit, the identified administrator or designee at the Commission will be included in the communication.

8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration

Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that the Commission is apprised of the schedule of accreditation activities, particularly of target site visit dates. AAQEP and the Commission will make every effort to coordinate the dates for the concurrent site visits taking into account the current cycle of accreditation activities mandated for all Commission approved programs. Providers will also send electronically a final copy of or links to the final version of their Quality Assurance Report (the self-study) to the Commission at the same time they provide it to AAQEP.

The Commission and AAQEP will each notify the other entity if any action is taken regarding the accreditation or approval status of any program approved by the Commission and accredited by or seeking accreditation from AAQEP.

AAQEP will communicate scheduled times of off-site and on-site reviews with Commission staff and schedules for such events at least eight weeks in advance for the off-site review and nine months in advance for the on-site review. AAQEP will also apprise designated Commission staff of the schedule of Accreditation Commission meetings at which cases from California providers will be considered. In addition, AAQEP will provide designated Commission staff with copies of all reports or official letters for California providers generated by the review team and by the Accreditation Commission.

9. AAQEP Formative Support Option

AAQEP will make available to California providers, in cooperation with and at the discretion of the Commission, a formative support process designed to address identified programmatic shortcomings. AAQEP facilitates program and provider improvement for entities that have identified specific shortcomings in their work, including cases where shortcomings have been identified through external evaluations such as state or accreditation reviews. AAQEP will enter into an agreement with the provider and the Commission to establish a timeline, priorities, and outcomes for such reviews.

10. Membership

AAQEP views cooperation among accreditors, educator preparation providers, and state credentialing agencies as essential to effective quality assurance. It enters into this agreement with the intent of supporting both the Commission and providers authorized by it in ensuring

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the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. The Commission agrees to join AAQEP as a state member at no cost in support of these goals.

In support of shared goals, AAQEP will provide supportive services including workshops and webinars to providers in California at reasonable cost. Commission staff may participate in any AAQEP activities offered within California at no cost (with the exception of travel expenses, meals, or lodging). AAQEP will also provide one Commission staff member with a no-cost registration to its Annual Quality Assurance Symposium and provide any additional Commission staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, Commission staff may participate in AAQEP professional learning events, including reviewer training, at no cost (travel, etc., excepted, as above).

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CEO and President,
AAQEP

Date

Mary Vixie Sandy
Executive Director
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Date