



# PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

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**DATE:**

January 09, 2026

**NUMBER:**

26-01

**SUBJECT: RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER INTERN PROGRAM**

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**Summary:**

This Program Sponsor Alert (PSA) provides information for all teacher preparation programs offered through an intern pathway. The purpose of this PSA is to highlight certain unique aspects of intern programs and to remind the field of the additional restrictions and requirements related to operating a teacher intern program.

**Background**

California Education Code authorizes teacher education programs to be delivered through an intern pathway. Intern pathways are a critical part of the educator preparation pipeline and play an essential role in addressing California's teacher shortage. An intern pathway allows a candidate to complete their preparation program while employed on an intern credential in a public school setting. The intern credential for each candidate is restricted to a specific employing agency. Any changes in a candidate's employing agency, preparation program, content area, or credential type must be accompanied by changes in the intern document.

School districts that are unable to fill a teaching position with a fully credentialed teacher may request to employ as the teacher of record an individual who holds a teaching intern credential. Pursuant to California Education Code §44225.7, districts must demonstrate to the Commission that they have made reasonable efforts to staff the classroom with a fully certified teacher prior to employing an intern. This is often referred to as the hiring "hierarchy." As stated above, interns are employed as teacher of record while they are enrolled in a Commission approved educator preparation program to earn their preliminary credential. Interns may not serve in private schools.

Because of the uniqueness of the intern pathway, intern programs must adhere to additional program standards and preconditions that do not apply to traditional preliminary student teaching programs.

## Key Provisions:

### Part I: All Teacher Intern Programs

1. Partnership between the employer and approved program sponsor: Up-to-date Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or other agreements must be in place between the approved preparation program and each employer. Signed MOUs may be reviewed by the Commission during accreditation site visits. For more information on specific intern-related items that must be included in each MOU or other agreements, please review the program-specific intern preconditions located on the [Commission's Preconditions webpage](#).
2. All teacher intern programs must include a minimum of 120 clock hours (or the semester or quarter unit equivalent) of preservice preparation, which includes the following:
  - Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist intern program preservice must include foundational preparation in the following:
    - a) General pedagogy, including classroom management and planning,
    - b) Reading/language arts,
    - c) Specialty or subject-specific pedagogy,
    - d) Human development, and
    - e) Specific content regarding the teaching of English learners.
  - PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction intern program preservice must include foundational preparation in the following:
    - a) State adopted student content standards and frameworks for early childhood education grades PK-3 (i.e., the K-3 Mathematics Standards and Framework and the Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks in the core curriculum areas for grades PK-3),
    - b) General pedagogical strategies for PK-3 children, including classroom management and planning,
    - c) Subject-specific pedagogy, as appropriate to content areas for children in PK-3 settings,
    - d) Effective developmentally appropriate strategies in literacy and mathematics development for children in grades PK-3, and
    - e) Instruction in English Language Development for multilingual and English learner students.

Preservice requirements must be satisfied before an intern candidate can be recommended for the intern credential and begin assuming responsibilities as the teacher of record.

3. A professional development plan (PDP) must be in place for each teacher intern. The PDP is a standalone document, developed and implemented in consultation with the employing district that shall include all the following:
  - Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist intern program professional development plan shall include all the following:
    - a) Provisions for an annual evaluation of the intern,
    - b) A description of the courses to be completed by the intern,

- c) A plan for the completion of preservice and clinical practice,
  - d) Additional instruction during the first semester of service, for interns teaching in kindergarten or grades 1 to 6 inclusive, in child development and teaching methods, and special education programs for pupils with mild and moderate disabilities, and
  - e) Instruction, during the first year of service, for interns teaching children in bilingual classes in the culture and methods of teaching bilingual children, and instruction in the etiology and methods of teaching children with mild and moderate disabilities.
- PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction intern program professional development plan shall include all the following:
    - a) Provisions for an annual evaluation of the intern,
    - b) A description of the courses to be completed by the intern,
    - c) A plan for the completion of preservice or other clinical training,
    - d) Additional instruction during the first semester of service, for interns teaching in preschool through third grade inclusive, in teaching methods and in inclusive settings for pupils with mild and moderate disabilities, and
    - e) Instruction, during the first year of service for interns teaching children in bilingual classes, in the methods of teaching multilingual children.
4. Supervision and support while serving on an intern document: Although teacher interns are teacher of record, very specific requirements exist around the support and supervision that must be provided to them while serving on the intern document and completing their preliminary program. Supervision and support are the responsibility of both the employer and the approved program and must be provided on a regular basis. Programs must provide all teacher interns no less than 144 hours of support and supervision annually, plus 45 hours of supervision specific to teaching English Learners. Interns must receive a minimum of five hours of support from the district-employed supervisor each week. This supervision and support must be provided by the employer and the approved program even after the individual has completed program coursework and fieldwork requirements for as long as they continue to serve on the intern document.
  5. Education Code §44464 states that an intern credential shall be valid only as long as the candidate is in good standing in the teacher intern program.
  6. The program sponsor must notify the Commission in writing when the holder of an intern credential is no longer enrolled in an intern program by completing the "[Withdrawal from Intern Program.](#)"

An application and full processing fee will be required to reactivate the intern credential if the individual is readmitted to the intern program at a later time, even if the individual is readmitted to the same program with the same employer. The timeframe for the reactivated intern document will be dependent on a variety of factors but will not exceed the original 2-year period of validity.

7. Program sponsors must immediately notify employer partners when interns withdraw from

preparation programs and when intern credentials are withdrawn.

8. Likewise, if an employer terminates its relationship with the intern candidate, it must also notify the program immediately.
9. Programs must inform candidates if their intern documents are withdrawn.
10. Program sponsors shall not request extensions of intern credentials without the knowledge and concurrence of their employer partners.
11. Program sponsors and employing agencies should advise their candidates concerning the withdrawal and re-admittance policies, as applicable, of their intern programs as early as possible at the beginning of the program.
12. When a candidate completes all requirements, the approved program must recommend the individual for the appropriate preliminary credential.
13. Upon recommendation for the preliminary credential, the program sponsor does not need to send information to have the intern credential withdrawn. The preliminary credential will supersede the intern credential.
14. Length of Validity and Extensions: As specified in Education Code §44251 and §44325, each intern credential will be valid for a period of two years. However, a credential may be valid for three years if the intern is participating in a district intern program leading to the attainment of an Education Specialist credential, or for four years if the intern is participating in a district intern program leading to the attainment of both a Multiple Subject or a Single Subject teaching credential and an Education Specialist credential. Approved programs may be completed in less time than is allowed by statute for the term of the intern credential.

Conversely, intern credentials may be extended for up to one year upon application for an extension. Requests for the one-time, one-year extension as specified in Title 5 Regulations may be made at the end date of the credential or anytime up to one year prior to the credential's expiration date. Programs must also submit verification that the educator is still enrolled in the program, along with the application. For more information, please see the RGA-20 appeal process located on the [Extension by Appeal for Credentials and Permits \(AL-3\) webpage](#).

15. Title II Reporting: The current federal Title II Report requires teacher preparation programs to provide the average number of clock hours of supervised clinical experience that candidates must complete prior to student teaching. For intern programs, approved programs need to report the average number of hours of supervised early fieldwork that interns must complete before serving as teacher of record, using an intern credential. Program standards require no less than 600 hours of clinical practice for all teacher credential candidates, regardless of pathway.

## **Part II: Multiple Subject/Single Subject Early Completion Option (ECO)**

The Early Completion Option (ECO) is intended to provide first-time credential candidates who have the requisite skills and knowledge an opportunity to challenge the coursework and fieldwork

portions of a Multiple Subject (MS) or Single Subject (SS) intern credential program. All Commission-approved MS and SS intern programs (both university and district) must offer the ECO and must advise prospective candidates about the ECO. The ECO does not waive the entire program but allows for an expedited pathway by waiving preparation program coursework and fieldwork requirements for those candidates who meet the criteria.

For more information about the ECO, please visit the [Early Completion Intern Option](#) webpage.

**Sources:**

The following list of applicable California Education Code sections is not exhaustive.

Teaching Intern Credential Education Code Sections:

Education Code [§44452](#)

Education Code [§44325](#) and the sections following

Education Code [§44464](#)

Intern Credential Period of Validity:

Education Code [§44251](#)

Education Code [§44325](#)

Title 5 Section 80055 – University and District Intern Credential Extensions

Early Completion Option:

Education Code [§44468](#)

Intern Professional Development Plan:

Education Code [§44830.3](#)

The Hiring “Hierarchy”

Education Code [§44225.7](#)

**References:**

Commission Program Standards - [Standards- Educator Preparation](#)

Commission Preconditions - [Standards- Preconditions](#)

**Contact Information:**

Intern Program Technical Support

[intern@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:intern@ctc.ca.gov)

Requirements for and Extensions of Intern Credentials:

Licensing Branch: [Contact Us](#)