

## CAEP STATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
and  
The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation  
Partnership Agreement**

**2015-2018  
(November 2015-December 2018)**

To promote excellence in educator preparation by coordinating state approval and national accreditation reviews of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), as the licensing authority, enter into this partnership agreement. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and The University of Massachusetts President's Office are also committed signatories on the agreement. The agreement describes the partnership and delineates the processes and policies for CAEP accreditation and state approval<sup>1</sup> in Massachusetts.

### **Overview**

During the period of this short-term partnership agreement all Massachusetts EPPs will undergo state review. With considerations made for the results of state review, EPPs currently accredited under NCATE or TEAC will be afforded an extension<sup>2</sup> of that existing accreditation status. Below is a list of MA EPPs that are considered under the terms of this agreement:

- University of Massachusetts Lowell, NCATE accreditation extended through Fall 2018
- Westfield State University, NCATE accreditation extended through Fall 2018
- Boston College, TEAC accreditation extended through Fall 2018
- Cambridge College, TEAC accreditation extended through Fall 2020
- Fitchburg State University, NCATE accreditation extended through Spring 2021

State review of these EPPs will occur according to currently established state timelines. State approval will not result in CAEP accreditation. If an EPP forgoes the extension and wishes to seek CAEP accreditation they may do so under the terms outlined in Section V. In pursuing CAEP accreditation, the EPP waives the right to an extension and agrees to the provisions outlined here within.

### **I. Standards for National Accreditation & State Approval of Educator Preparation Providers**

- A. CAEP educator preparation provider standards must be met on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence to merit national accreditation by CAEP.
- B. Massachusetts Program Approval standards must be met on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence to merit approval in Massachusetts. Massachusetts Program Approval standards evaluate EPPs at both the EPP level and by program.

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<sup>1</sup>The partnership agreement governs state approval for purposes of educator licensure. Program Approval for the purpose of licensure is under the authority of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department of Higher Education operates program review for purposes of degree approval. The Department of Higher Education coordinates the review and approval of all new academic programs at Massachusetts public colleges, universities and independent institutions chartered after 1943, and out-of-state institutions seeking to offer courses for college credit in Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup> The CAEP Accreditation Council approved the extensions in October 2015.

## II. Process of National Accreditation for Educator Preparation Providers

- A. The process required for national accreditation by CAEP is outlined in CAEP Policies. EPPs seeking CAEP Accreditation must satisfy eligibility requirements, submit a self-study in a CAEP-approved format for formative feedback through off-site review, facilitate the posting of a call for public comment and distribution of third-party surveys to stakeholders, host a site visit, and complete an approved program review process for all programs of study leading to professional practice in a school setting.
- B. Terms of accreditation shall be for seven (7) years. Eligibility status terms shall be for five (5) years. EPP accreditation status is subject to CAEP policies, including annual payment of dues and submission of an annual report as required.
- C. As explained in the overview (Section 1), EPPs that are approved or approved with conditions by the state will be granted extensions of their current NCATE/TEAC accreditation status. There are no additional process requirements, with the exception of Annual Reporting (see Section VII), expected by CAEP in order for the NCATE/TEAC accreditation status to be extended as outlined in the overview above.

## III. Process of MA State Approval for Educator Preparation Providers

- A. The process required for state approval by ESE is outlined in state policies, including the Program Approval Guidelines. EPPs seeking continued approval as a sponsoring organization in the state must undergo a formal review which includes: submitting needs assessments, preparing offsite documentation in support of evaluation criteria, providing evidence of effectiveness in preparing candidates and hosting an onsite visit during which ESE will engage with various EPP stakeholders (which the EPP will coordinate/provide).
- B. Formal approval is for a period of up to seven (7) years. ESE may conduct an interim review on an as-needed basis during the seven-year cycle per state regulations.

## IV. Standards and Processes for Program Review

- A. The educator preparation provider must use the program review option listed in IV.C below that is approved by the State in this partnership agreement. EPPs will submit program reports following the time line determined by the state for formal review. The state authority has sole responsibility for program approval.
- B. As evidence of quality, CAEP accepts the decisions of national accrediting organizations for specialized professional program areas that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Proper documentation of current accreditation must be presented by the EPP. The state accepts the decisions of those national organizations specified in state regulations (e.g. National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)). Proper documentation of current accreditation must be presented by the EPP. See 603 CMR 7.00.
- C. For purposes of state program approval, the state authority recognizes the following program review option for the duration of this Partnership Agreement (November 2015-December 2018):
  - 1. *State Review by Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education:*  
The state authority conducts program reviews for purposes of state approval and informs CAEP accreditation. The state authority provides forms and instructions on how to meet all State Standards for licensure/certificate program approval. Additional evidence in support

of program approval is collected during the onsite visit and is triangulated with offsite evidence and output measures in order to make a determination about program approval. The state authority makes the final decision on approval of all programs.

2. *CAEP Program Review with National Recognition:*

For purposes of pursuing National Recognition, the CAEP Program Review with National Recognition applies Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) standards in the SPA review process and can result in National Recognition. See: websites of CAEP and of particular SPAs for more information.

- i. MA EPPs may continue to pursue National Recognition via the CAEP Program Review with National Recognition option but the SPA review process will not replace the State Review process for state (program) approval.
- ii. EPPs granted accreditation extensions under the terms of this agreement will also be granted concurrent extensions for any Nationally Recognized programs.

#### **V. Accreditation Review Team Composition**

A. During the period of this agreement, in the cases where an EPP is undergoing state review with a NCATE/TEAC extension, the state team will conduct all visits according to state policies. **If an EPP opts to pursue CAEP accreditation during this time they do so under their own volition. In such a case, the following provisions will apply:**

1. Concurrent Visit: State and CAEP teams operate independently, but conduct their visits at the same time. The state team reviews and makes decisions about state standards; the CAEP team provides an analysis of the quality, sufficiency, and appropriateness of the evidence the EPP provided in relation to the standards. CAEP team members do not make decisions on whether or not standards are met. The Accreditation Council makes the final accreditation decision. CAEP team members must have successfully completed CAEP visiting team members' training. State team members must have successfully completed state reviewer training.

B. The following conditions apply to Concurrent Visits:

1. MA will work with CAEP to coordinate to the extent possible and as outlined in 2-6 below. Coordination does not guarantee a unified outcome or consistency in judgments made by concurrent teams. Coordination efforts should not in any way influence or significantly alter the processes of the review for either entity—the agreements outlined below are meant solely to lead to a more effective and efficient review for the EPP by both CAEP and ESE.
2. Prior to the onsite visit, the ESE representative and CAEP team lead will engage in one conversation during the previsit for the purposes of:
  - i. Sharing key questions/areas for follow up identified during the offsite portion of the reviews. This may be done through sharing the offsite report.
  - ii. Coordinating requests to EPPs for the onsite, including but not limited to: interviews, observations, files, etc.
  - iii. Collaborating on a proposed schedule such that efforts are not duplicated.
3. CAEP/MA will adhere to the current timeline for previously scheduled Joint Visits (see attached).
4. When scheduling a concurrent visit, CAEP will work with ESE and the EPP to schedule a date in alignment with the Massachusetts schedule of formal review visits. Should CAEP need to

change or revise a scheduled visit, ESE and the EPP would be notified with at least 6 months' notice. ESE will accommodate the revised timeline to the extent possible.

5. CAEP/MA will share all available evidence, data, and reports during the review process. ESE will access CAEP information via the AIMS platform. CAEP will access MA information via public profiles. The CAEP team lead will share the action report with the state team lead prior to the exit interview. CAEP will arrange a call between the CAEP team lead, the state team lead, and the state consultant to discuss the onsite report once it is generated. Only factual errors may be corrected.

C. The following conditions apply to the CAEP Team that is part of a Concurrent Visit:

1. All members of Review Teams must have successfully completed CAEP Site Visitor training.
2. A P-12 practitioner shall be a member of each site visit team.
3. The state teachers' association(s) may appoint an observer for the onsite review at the associations' expense.
4. The EPP will assume all expenses-including travel, lodging and meals-for CAEP and state-authority-appointed team members as well as the periodic evaluation fee. Onsite team activities will be conducted according to CAEP Policy.
5. The CAEP site visit report will be shared with the state partnership member.
6. To assure educator preparation providers and the public that CAEP reviews are impartial and objective, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to promote equity and high ethical standards in the accreditation system, all site visitors will adhere to CAEP's Code of Conduct.

D. The following conditions apply to the state team that is part of the site visit:

1. All members of state Review Teams must have successfully completed ESE reviewer training.
2. The EPP will assume all expenses-including travel, lodging and meals-for state review team members. Onsite state team activities will be conducted according to ESE policy and guidelines.
3. The ESE report will be shared with CAEP.
4. To assure educator preparation providers and the public that state formal reviews are impartial and objective, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to promote equity and high ethical standards in the state program approval system, all site visitors will adhere to ESE's Code of Conduct

## **VI. Massachusetts-specific Terms and Conditions**

A. Massachusetts is committed to employing an approval/accreditation process that effectively identifies program impact and spurs continuous improvement. During the 2017 accreditation year, a Massachusetts team will audit three (3) out-of-state accreditations. Agreements related to this "audit period" include:

1. Ability to have six (6) individuals, identified by the state, trained in the CAEP accreditation process. This includes attending site visitor trainings.
2. CAEP will identify and coordinate on MA's behalf the details of these "audit" visits to the out-of-state EPPs. MA will inform the selection of which EPPs to attend based on criteria established by ESE such that it will allow for meaningful consideration of a process that would occur in MA EPPs if adopted; such considerations may include the different MA EPP

pathways choices (*SI, IB, TI*), team composition, state context, demographics, and other specified criteria

3. CAEP will coordinate necessary permissions and logistics with out-of-state EPPs for:
    - i. Observing three (3) offsite visits via webinar
    - ii. Observing three (3) onsite visits
      - a. Funded with the support of the Council of the Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), there will be two (2) individuals from MA on each onsite visit
    - iii. Access for assigned state designees to review documents in AIMS for each audited EPP, including reports and Commission Determinations
  4. During the accreditation audits, participating MA state observers will have no authority or influence in the decisions relative to the accreditation of the 3 out of state EPPs. Purpose is simply to inform our own understanding of the process and its ability to uphold the rigor of the CAEP standards. All participating MA state observers will adhere to CAEP's code of conduct.
- B. CAEP leadership (or an appointed designee) will participate in one state-run meeting in 2017 in advance of the audits. Purpose is for orientation/preparation for audit visits described in VI.A above. CAEP is invited, but not required, to attend a meeting held in 2018 to discuss results and conclusions reached as a result of the audit.
1. Meetings will be held in Massachusetts
  2. Travel costs for CAEP representatives will be covered by CAEP. CAEP may also participate via webinar or conference call. In-person attendance is preferred when possible.
  3. State participants will consist of:
    - i. ESE staff
    - ii. DHE staff or appointee
    - iii. Advisory members
    - iv. Representatives from MA CAEP EPPs
- C. Massachusetts-specific Engagement with EPPs:
- ESE will select and convene a state advisory group in support of the ongoing development of the CAEP/MA partnership agreement. The advisory group will include at least one representative from both the UMass System as well as the State Colleges. The Advisory responsibilities will include (but are not limited to):
1. Annual meetings with ESE staff during which the partnership agreement will be reviewed and amended according to evolving state needs.
  2. Development of a crosswalk to support organizations (EPPs) in navigating CAEP standards and the MA state review criteria
  3. Engage in the audit activities outlined above in VI.A
  4. Explore the possibility of creating a State Specific Addendum.
  5. Provide early feedback on revisions to existing partnership agreement (2015-2018) and the development of a new partnership agreement in 2018.

## VII. Other Terms and Conditions

- A. CAEP will collaborate with the state authority to plan, design and implement a range of training opportunities for reviewers. As part of this agreement, state representatives may participate in all

web training, on-site conferences and training for no registration fee, but must assume other expenses. CAEP will assume all expenses for one state authority representative to attend the annual CAEP Clinic, with additional welcome at their own expense. Additional training events may be arranged, including events in the state, on a cost-recovery basis with arrangements negotiated according to CAEP's policies regarding fees and expenses for training.

- B. The state authority will receive copies of all pertinent accreditation and specialized program area approval documents and reports through access to the Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS); agency personnel will be supplied with login information, passwords, and technical support.
- C. EPPs must continue to meet CAEP's annual reporting requirements.
- D. CAEP will notify the state authority in writing of new EPPs interested in seeking national accreditation, any change in program or accreditation status, any action taken in response to annual reporting, or other state-related matters.
- E. The state authority will notify CAEP within thirty days of action taken when a CAEP accredited educator preparation provider has had a "Change in State Status" as a result of a decision on specialized professional program status by the state authority for educator preparation or for other reasons pertaining to state policy or regulation.
- F. Responses to the final reports by the EPP and will follow procedures and timelines established in CAEP and state policy.
- G. State EPPs that are seeking CAEP accreditation or hold CAEP accreditation status will pay annual CAEP dues. There are no state fees associated with review and approval beyond those incurred in coordination of the onsite visit.
- H. The state authority will be responsible for annual CAEP membership dues. Final accreditation decisions are posted on CAEP's website.
- I. CAEP sends the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education a letter with the official accreditation decision. The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will forward the official accreditation decision letter to the Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education or the President of the University of Massachusetts, as appropriate. Additionally, CAEP provides written notice of all accreditation decisions to the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, all accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the public (via the CAEP website).
- J. The partnership agreement shall be for an initial period of approximately three years (October 2015-December 2018) and may be modified by the two parties during that time, if deemed to be necessary.
- K. The state will work with associations that represent P-12 educators (NEA, AFT, NBPTS), education preparation providers, and education administrators to establish credit toward continuing education units or professional development requirements at the local district level in return for

the state's P-12 educators professional contributions to the work of CAEP as visiting team members or program reviewers.

- L. The terms of this agreement have been reached by mutual consent and have been read and understood by the persons whose signatures appear below. The parties agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the plan as set forth herein.

Christopher Koch, President  
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Designated State Authority

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education  
Committed Signatory

Martin T. Meehan, President  
University of Massachusetts President's Office  
Committed Signatory