



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Education Deans and EPP Certification Contacts

**FROM:** Mary Hipp  
Director, Office of Educator Services

**DATE:** March 29, 2021

**RE:** Updated Candidate Application Procedures Following the Clinical Experience

Within the next few months, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will deploy a new educator certification and information system, SC Educator. In preparation for this new certification system and its case management functions, the Office of Educator Services has updated the application requirements for your educator candidates—specifically, the steps they must follow at the completion of the student teaching or clinical experience.

The primary change in procedure requires candidates to submit two applications: an application for clearance *prior* to student teaching and an application for initial certification *after* the clinical experience. This second application ensures that each candidate has up-to-date information on file with the SCDE and initiates the case creation process for issuance of the educator certificate. Although candidates must submit an additional application, they are not required to submit an additional fee unless they do not complete the certification process within three years of applying for student teaching clearance. The steps before and after student teaching are summarized below.

*Prior to the Student Teaching or Clinical Experience*

- Candidates will continue to apply online for student teaching or clinical experience clearance by February 15 for clinical experiences that will begin with the upcoming fall semester and June 15 for clinical experiences that will begin the next spring semester. The clearance application process includes submission of the required application and certification fee and completing the fingerprinting and criminal history review process. Complete information for candidates is available on the webpage for [Applying for Student Teaching or Clinical Experience Clearance](#).

*After the Student Teaching or Clinical Experience*

After completing the student teaching or clinical experience, the candidate must submit the following documentation to the SCDE Office of Educator Services:

- an online Academic Application for initial certification through the [Educator Portal](#) and
- official score reports verifying qualifying scores on required subject area and pedagogy assessments, if these scores are not already on file.

Additionally, each candidate must request that the college or university submit the following documentation to the SCDE:

- the official transcript showing the date of any degree conferred and
- the College Recommendation for Classroom Teaching Fields or for Service & Leadership Fields, as appropriate.

Please note the following timelines regarding the validity of criminal history reports and application fees:

- Fingerprint-based criminal history reports are valid for up to eighteen months from the date of completion.
  - For clearance, the reports on file must be valid as of the date the clinical experience begins. Otherwise, the candidate is not approved to begin the clinical experience. In this instance, the candidate must repeat the fingerprinting and criminal history review process before being cleared to begin the student teaching or clinical experience.
  - For certification, the reports on file must be valid as of the date all required documents for certification are received. Otherwise, the applicant must repeat the fingerprinting and criminal history review process before being issued an educator certificate.
- Fee payments for certification purposes are valid for up to three years. So long as a candidate completes all requirements for certification within three years of applying for student teaching clearance, no additional fee is required.

I ask that you advise your educator candidates of this updated procedure and encourage them to review the webpage for [Applying for Student Teaching or Clinical Experience Clearance](#).

As always, the Educator Services team appreciates your many efforts in preparing educators to serve South Carolina students in classrooms and schools throughout our state. Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you.