

## **South Carolina Educator Preparation Guidelines: Standards, Policies, and Procedures** *New Provider Eligibility, Preliminary Approval, and Initial Accreditation*

Pursuant to Regulation 43-90, Program Approval Standards for South Carolina Teacher Education Institutions, each educator preparation provider (EPP) must meet the standards of the national accreditation association with which the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has a partnership agreement. In 2015, the SCDE established an agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Public institutions must seek and receive national accreditation; private institutions may seek national accreditation or meet national standards through a state process that is aligned with that of the national accreditor. Whether a provider seeks national accreditation or state approval, statutory authority to determine accreditation decisions for educator preparation programs is granted to the State Board of Education (SBE).

### **New Provider Eligibility and Preliminary Approval**

An institution seeking to establish as an EPP will complete the following steps:

- The institution submits a Statement of Intent (SOI) to the SCDE at least two years prior to anticipated program implementation. At the time of notification, private institutions must consult with the SCDE while public institutions must consult with both the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the SCDE. The national accreditor with which the state currently has a partnership, CAEP, must also be consulted if the provider will seek national accreditation.
- After a review of the SOI, the SCDE notifies the institution as to whether or not it is eligible to submit a provider proposal.
- Once the institution is deemed eligible, the SCDE issues a procedures memorandum outlining the process to become a provider. This memorandum includes information regarding national standards and state policies and specifies a proposal submission timeline. Providers must participate in required technical assistance with the SCDE as a part of this process.
- The institution submits a provider and program proposal. The SCDE refers the submitted proposal for evaluation by an external review team and the Professional Review Committee (PRC). If warranted, the SCDE conducts an on-site visit to verify or clarify information found in the proposal before review by the PRC.
- The institution addresses any feedback from the external peer review team and the PRC.
- The PRC renders one of the following recommendations for the institution: provider approval, preliminary approval with conditions or further development, or non-approval.
  - If the PRC recommends provider approval, the recommendation will be presented to the SBE for consideration.
  - If the PRC recommends preliminary approval with conditions or further development, the institution must resubmit the proposal with necessary revisions.

- If the PRC recommends non-approval, the institution must wait a minimum of six months from a decision of non-approval to submit a new SOI to establish provider eligibility.
- The SBE considers the PRC recommendation to grant an institution approval to become an EPP and offer an educator preparation program. If the SBE approves the PRC recommendation, the new provider may then begin program implementation and the process of evidence collection to seek initial accreditation.

### **New Provider Initial Accreditation**

The provider seeking first-time accreditation through a national or state process begins the accreditation process through the following steps:

- The new provider implements the approved program and gathers appropriate evidence to meet accreditation standards and state requirements. For more information, see the SBE policy, National Provider Standards and South Carolina Provider Requirements.
- When the provider reaches ten completers, it must begin submitting annual reports to the SCDE or CAEP.
- The EPP must collect sufficient evidence to ensure that the initial accreditation review takes place within five years of the date of provider and program approval. For more information on accreditation, see the SBE policy, National and State Accreditation Decisions.
- Whether a provider seeks national or state accreditation, the SBE has authority to determine final accreditation decisions for educator preparation providers.
  - If the provider meets accreditation standards and state requirements are met, the SBE may grant initial, first-time accreditation. The provider may continue to offer the approved preparation program(s) and engage in the cyclical, ongoing accreditation process.
  - If a provider does not meet the accreditation standards and is denied initial accreditation, the provider must terminate the existing approved program(s). For more information, see the SBE policy, Provider Termination of Accreditation and Reestablishment. If denied accreditation, the provider must wait a minimum of one calendar year from the SBE decision to submit a new SOI to establish provider eligibility.