

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Alternative Teacher Certification Program?

The University of Texas at El Paso/El Paso Area Alternative Teacher Certification Program provides a unique opportunity to become a fully certified teacher in one calendar year. It is a training program designed to certify individuals who hold Bachelor's degrees in disciplines other than in education. If selected, participants will work as paid teachers in the classroom and begin two or three semesters of college course work in addition to completing 30 hours of field based experience, 6 hours of test preparation in the area they are seeking certification. Participants will work in the classroom as a teacher of record, receiving the same salary and benefits as an entry-level teacher. In addition, they will be supervised and supported by university personnel and be assigned a mentor teacher. During the twelve month training period, each participant will complete specified credit hours of course work. Most courses are graduate level courses and will count toward a master's degree. Each participant must also pass the TExES content exams in his/her particular field before applying for their Texas Teaching certificate. Participants employed by the Gadsden School District will need to pass the New Mexico Teacher Assessment exam(s). Upon satisfactory completion of the program and state exams, both U.T. El Paso and the school districts will recommend the individual to the State Board of Educators Certification for a Texas Teaching Certificate or to the New Mexico Department of Education for a New Mexico License.

What do I need in order to apply to the Alternative Teacher Certification Program?

In order to apply to the Alternative Teacher Certification Program, you must first meet the following requirements:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution of higher education
- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above on a four point scale; or a 2.75 in the last 60 hours
- Have passing THEA/TASP Scores: Writing—220, Essay—5, Math—230, Reading—250, or GRE scores of: 400 verbal and 400 Quantitative as a substitution. GMAT Scores: Verbal 28, Quantitative 35.

What if my degree is from an institution outside of the United States?

If your degree is from a foreign institution, you must check with the Alternative Teacher Certification Program for State Approved Foreign Credential Agencies. You will be required to submit your transcripts to one of the listed agencies first and then submit the translation/equivalency of your transcripts with your application. In addition, International Students must check with the UTEP Graduate School Admissions Office to see if they must also take the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). If required, the applicant must meet the minimum score of 500.

What if I don't have a 2.50 or 2.75 GPA? Can I still apply?

You may still apply to the program; however you will receive a letter stating how many additional credit hours you would need to take in order to raise your GPA to the required 2.50. The applicant will not be allowed to begin the program until the GPA requirement is met.

What if I don't have the required THEA/TASP Test Scores?

You must take the THEA/TASP before applying to ATCP and submit your scores at the time you apply to the program. You will be advised to contact the UTEP Testing Center immediately. All tests must be retaken until the required scores are met.

Can I be exempt from taking the THEA/TASP?

Yes, but only from the Writing and Mathematics sections of the exam. There are no exemptions from the Reading section. The only exemptions are to have taken and received a grade of "B" or better in the following courses:

For Mathematics:

- MATH 1319 or Math for Social Sciences 3120/1320 (UTEP) OR
- MATH 1324 (EPCC) OR
- MATH 131 (Park College) OR
- MATH 208 or 209 (University of Phoenix) OR Math 302 (UT Austin)
- College Level Algebra or Above

For Writing:

- ENGL 1311 (Expository English) OR
- ENGL 1312 (Research and Critical Writing) OR
- ENGL 1313 (Writing about Literature) OR
- ENGL 3359 (Technical Writing) OR
- ENGL 3361 (Introduction to Creative Writing)

What if I have a Master's degree or graduated before the TASP/THEA was administered? Will I still be required to take the TASP/THEA?

Yes. The state of Texas requires THEA/TASP scores for all applicants that wish to enter ATCP, regardless of any degrees they might hold beyond a Bachelor's degree.

Where do I take the THEA/TASP ?

The statewide Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test is offered at various locations in Texas. The quick THEA and the CAT THEA may also be offered. Registration is required and can be completed by mailing a THEA registration form available online. Contact a university or community college in your area for testing and fee information.

You can find more information about the THEA at their website <http://www.thea.nesinc.com/index.asp>

You can take the THEA at the UTEP Student Assessment and Testing Center, located in the Academic Advising Center, Room 127. You may also visit their website for information at <http://testing.utep.edu> or call 915-747-5009.

THEA study guides are available at the UTEP Bookstore and online.

Tutoring sessions are also offered at the UTEP Tutoring and Learning Center, located in the UTEP Library, Room 300, 915-747-5366.

You can practice the test online at <http://www.tasp.nesinc.com/practice.htm>

What is the cost of the program?

Participants must pay for tuition and books for college course work. All interns must also pay a Program Training Fee of \$3,000.00 which will be deducted from their salaries over the course of the year by the employing school district, charter or private school. Out of state tuition fees are applicable if coming from another state (Online students will not have out of state tuition fees)*.

Approximate Cost (Please refer to current catalogs or visit the UTEP website to view current cost and fees are subject to change without notice.)

\$150.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online Application/Evaluation Fee - for the initial evaluation of the areas for which you are interested in seeking certification ▪ On campus Application/Evaluation Fee – for the first three teaching areas, \$25 for each area thereafter.
\$50.00	
\$29.00 / \$50.00	THEA Exam / Quick THEA Exam
\$45.00	Graduate School Admission Fee
\$3,000.00	Training Fee – Billed through payroll deduction throughout the contract year for on campus students. / Online students
\$120.00	For each TEXES or BTLPT Exam
\$77.00	Texas Teacher Certificate Fee
\$3600.00**	Tuition and Fees for 15 hours of coursework (On Campus Program) and 18 hours of coursework (Online Program). These fees vary per semester. Please see current UTEP registration booklets.
\$950.00**	Other University Fees may include but not limited to: textbooks, parking decals, materials, etc.

Additional fees that may apply:

\$25.00	Reactivation fee – after one year of applying to ATCP
\$25.00	Reevaluation fee – for each additional teaching area

*Exemptions include Ex-Military personnel who establish Texas residency and those who reside in another state but in a county that borders Texas.

** Reflects approximate value

When do I pay the Program Training Fee?

The Program Training Fee will be deducted from your paycheck, for 10 months, once you begin your teaching assignment.

When do I have to pay for my classes?

You will be expected to pay your tuition by the beginning of each semester. Contact the University Business Office for information regarding deadlines and fees.

When must I complete the 30 hours of observation?

You will be required to complete a total of 30 hours in an accredited school classroom setting representative of the area in which the candidate is seeking certification. Check with the ATCP office for the Observation Log forms.

When must I complete the 6 hours of test preparation?

You will be required to attend 2 review sessions and take a practice exam to complete your six hours of test preparation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

How do I apply to the Online Alternative Teacher Certification Program?

Contact our office at (915) 747-6303 and we will mail out an application packet from the ATCP Office in Room 210 of the Education Bldg., or you may download it from our website (<http://coe.utep.edu/atcp/index.php/online>) Fill out the application completely, along with all required documents as stated on the application checklist, sign and date it. Return the documents via U.S. Mail.

What do I need to submit with my application?

You will be required to submit the following documents with your application through certified mail. Please keep copies for your own records.

- Official transcripts with degree posted and date degree was awarded.
- Translation/equivalency of transcripts if your degree is from a foreign university.
- Copy of official THEA/TASP Reading, Math, Writing and Essay scores.
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Evaluation Fee (check or money order only, payable to UTEP/ATCP)

Note: We will not accept any faxed or mailed documents; you must bring documents in with your application, (unless you are out of town applying as an online intern). Transcripts and THEA Scores should not be mailed to the ATCP Office. The only exception to this is for the online program.

How long does it take to find out if I meet the initial requirements?

You will receive a letter stating your status within 1 to 2 weeks after submitting your application packet to the ATCP Office.

What happens after I apply?

You will receive a letter stating your status within 1 to 2 weeks after submitting your application packet to the ATCP Office. Your letter will be mailed to the address provided on your application and will state either that you meet the initial requirements or it may state that you do not meet the initial requirements, in which case it will include what deficiencies must be completed in order to begin the program. In addition, the applicant must immediately apply for admission to the UTEP Graduate School, in order to be enrolled for the ATCP courses.

AFTER YOU APPLY

What do I do once I get a contract?

As soon as you get a contract with one of the local school districts you must provide a copy of your contract to the ATCP Office. You will make an appointment with a coordinator to review step 3 in regards to the requirements you must meet to complete the program.

When do I start taking classes?

You may start taking classes the next semester after you received your admittance letter to the program. You may take up to 9 credit hours (3 courses).

How do I know which classes to take?

The Alternative Teacher Certification Program's Coordinator will contact you before each semester on which classes you need to take. The classes you take will depend on the area and grade level you are teaching. You will not be able to register for classes if :

- You do not meet the initial course requirements, THEA/TASP Score or GPA requirements.
- You are not classified as a graduate student.
- You have any financial or academic holds on your record.

What do I need to get into Graduate School?

You may pick up an application at the ATCP Office, the Graduate School Office located in Room 223 of the New Academic Services Building on the UTEP Campus (915-747-5491) or on the web at <https://apply.embarc.com/grad/UTEP/20/> The application fee is \$45.00 (\$65.00 for international students) and you will also need to submit official transcripts with your application.

What if I don't get a contract before registration begins?

If you do not have a contract before registration begins, you may still be able to start the program on a probationary status. You may complete 9 semester hours of coursework before having a contract. For more information regarding this situation please speak with a coordinator at (915) 747-7605.

Alternative Teacher Certification Program * College of Education, Room 210 • University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968 Tel: 915.747.7605 • Fax: 915.747.8616 <http://coe.utep.edu/atcp/> Last Updated on: 01/2012