

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action Item:

Update from Approved National Accreditor: Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

Staff Recommendation:

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should approve the update from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). The reported changes support quality assurance, foster continuous improvement, and are aligned with Kentucky's priorities for effective teaching and learning.

Rationale:

AAQEP has complied with the requirements of the regulation and provided the EPSB with a written update and rationale.

Action Question:

Should the EPSB approve the update from AAQEP?

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 161.028, 16 KAR 5:010

History/Background:

Existing Policy: AAQEP was approved by the EPSB as a national accreditor of educator preparation providers (EPP) in October 2021. When applying for EPSB approval, 16 KAR 5:010, Section 4(2) requires a national accreditor to submit proof of the following:

- a) Established rigorous standards for educator preparation that align with KRS 161.028(1)(b) and guide institutions in establishing and maintaining high quality programs that produce evidence of academic achievement and educator performance;
- b) Attestation that all accreditation standards be met in order for an EPP to obtain and maintain accredited status;
- c) The scope of accreditation;
- d) The capacity for staff and resources to carry out the operations of the organization;
- e) Public dissemination of information about the accreditation status of EPPs including length of a term of accreditation, reasons for awarding accreditation status, information about any deficiencies in relation to accreditation standards and policies and reasons for conditional approval or denial of accreditation;
- f) A system of quality assurance for standards, policies and procedures that is reviewed on a cyclical basis;
- g) Policies and procedures and a governance structure that support the established accreditation and decision-making processes; and,
- h) Letter(s) of support and interest from a Kentucky EPP.

Once a national accreditor is approved, 16 KAR 5:010, Section 4(3) requires the accreditor to update the EPSB in writing of any changes and include the rationale for the changes.

Summary: AAQEP has provided the EPSB with an update regarding their revised accreditation standards and the establishment of an Initial Accreditation Pathway Option. AAQEP is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which requires accreditors to revisit and as needed, revise their accreditation standards on a regular basis; in addition, AAQEP's own bylaws commit to revisiting standards on a seven-year cycle. In keeping with this commitment, the AAQEP Quality Expectations Committee recently completed a thorough review and revision of AAQEP's 2018 standards, consulting widely with EPPs, state leaders, other accreditors, and educators across the nation.

The 2025 Expectations Framework was adopted by the AAQEP Board of Directors in December 2024. The new standards are available for use immediately and become mandatory for use in all AAQEP accreditation reviews beginning January 1, 2027. The four standards remain substantially unchanged: two standards address completer performance, and two address program practices. A crosswalk comparing the 2018 and 2025 standards is available and provides guidance to EPPs through the transition.

The 2025 standards increase the number of aspects under each standard from six to seven in order to disambiguate some original aspects and to address dimensions of educator preparation that warrant a separate statement. Four new elements are introduced in the 2025 standards, each in response to clear and consistent demands from the multiple constituencies consulted in the review.

The Initial Accreditation Pathway option is designed to facilitate providers' entry into the AAQEP system, particularly in cases where an EPP is transitioning to AAQEP's standards from another state or national accreditation system and can benefit from the opportunity to revise its assessment system and to receive a thorough review of its data collection and reporting protocols.

AAQEP's initial accreditation process utilizes a virtual site visit and incurs a lower site visit fee than the in-person visits for 7-year accreditation, which can ease the initial financial burden on EPPs as they transition to the AAQEP accreditation system.

AAQEP's Initial Accreditation Pathway supports both newly authorized EPPs and EPPs that are new to the AAQEP accreditation standards. Programs meeting the standards are awarded a 5-year, nonrenewable term of accreditation.

The update from AAQEP is included for EPSB review.

Budget Impact: There is no budgetary impact.

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