

## **Educator Preparation Program Exit Policy**

### **Revised 7/24/24 Approved 8/5/2024**

Candidate--An individual who has been admitted into the educator preparation program (EPP) at UTRGV.

This policy applies to the following programs in the UTRGV EPP Teacher, Principal, Superintendent, School Counseling, Educational Diagnostician and Reading Specialist.

### **A. Purpose**

All individuals who apply for admission to The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in the College of Education P-16 Integration (CEP) must be able to demonstrate essential abilities and dispositions. In addition to these essential abilities and dispositions, all candidates for a recommendation to the State of Texas for certification are expected to demonstrate that they are prepared to work with children and youth. This preparation results from the successful completion of university coursework and demonstrating professionalism, ethical behavior and other characteristics and behaviors adopted as standards for these professions.

The rules in 19 TAC Chapter 228, *Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs*, establish the requirements for educator preparation programs in the preparation of candidates for Texas educator certification.

The state of Texas requires all educator preparation programs to have an exit policy for the dismissal of candidates that is published, reviewed, and signed by candidates when they are admitted to the program. See 19 TAC §228.31(b)(approved February 16, 2024 to be effective September 1, 2024).

### **B. Grounds for Dismissal from the Educator Preparation Program**

An educator candidate may be dismissed from the EPP in the event they demonstrate behavior not consistent with the professional and ethical expectations of an educator in Texas. A candidate's dismissal from the EPP may be based on various grounds including, but not limited to:

1. Failure to meet coursework requirements and/or program milestones.
2. Failure to demonstrate appropriate, consistent matriculation.
3. Failure to demonstrate adequate level of professional or personal competency after an attempt at remediation.
4. Failure to abide by requirements established by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the University of Texas System, or the CEP, and/or the program requirements established by EEP or by the State Board for Educator Certification as published in the Texas Administrative Code.
5. Failure to communicate effectively with university faculty, field supervisor or mentor teacher to fulfill requirements related to field experiences, clinical teaching, practicum and internships (i.e. contacting field supervisor for scheduling formal observations) after an attempt at remediation.

6. Any action deemed a violation of the Fitness to Teach, Fitness to Practice, or Fitness to Lead policies or [Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#), after an attempt at remediation
7. Any action deemed a violation of the UTRGV HOP STU 02-100, Student Conduct and Discipline, or the Vaquero Honor Code, including without limitation academic dishonesty.
8. Having been charged or convicted of a criminal offense.
9. Any action deemed a violation of school district and/or campus policy during the field-based experiences, clinical teaching, residency, practicum or internship.
10. Suspension or expulsion from UTRGV or dismissal from the CEP.

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list of reasons upon which a dismissal decision may be based.

### **C. General Dismissal Policies and Procedures**

The dismissal of a candidate from the EPP is a significant event for the candidate, the program, and the program faculty and represents the determination by the faculty that the candidate should be dismissed based on one or more grounds set forth above.

Dismissal of a candidate based on concerns relating to professional dispositions or abilities is typically the outcome of careful inquiry and collection of data from multiple sources, as well as communication with the candidate regarding dispositions concerns and a growth action plan as outlined in the Fitness to Teach, Fitness to Practice, or Fitness to Lead policies. Dismissal from the EPP is determined by the Educator Preparation Committee (EPC). This may occur at any time while the candidate is enrolled in the EPP. Matters involving recurring or serious dispositional concerns as determined at the department level by faculty/staff, and/or administrators, will be referred to the Co-Chairs of the EPC who will schedule a meeting to address these concerns with the EPC. Any other matter involving one or more potential grounds for dismissal of a candidate shall be reported to the EPC Co-Chair or EPC for consideration.

The EPC Co-Chairs will determine whether the candidate's matter should be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) for review under the applicable University policies. If the matter is not referred to SRR, the EPC shall review and decide the outcome of the candidate's matter. The EPC may request and gather information in relation to its review.

Candidates will be notified in writing that their matter is being reviewed by the EPC and the date, time and location of the EPC meeting during which the matter will be discussed. At the EPC meeting the candidate may:

- Attend the EPC meeting in person or virtually in the case of a virtual meeting (e.g. Teams, Zoom);
- Submit a written statement and supporting documentation in response to the matter being reviewed by the EPC;

- Represent themselves at the meeting and address the EPC.

If, after reviewing the information presented, the EPC determines that the candidate should not continue in the program, the EPC will advise the candidate of their dismissal from the program. The EPC's determination of dismissal will be provided to the candidate in writing, including the reason(s) for dismissal and the effective date of dismissal.

A dismissed candidate may dispute the decision of the EPC by appealing to the CEP Dean whose decision is final. The dismissed candidate must file a written appeal to the Dean within five (5) business days of receipt of the EPC's written decision. The candidate's appeal must include a justification statement for appeal and all documentation provided by the candidate to the EPC.

Within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the candidate's appeal, the Dean will provide a written decision to the candidate and the EPC Chair. The decision of the Dean is the final appellate review.

#### **D. Withdrawal from the Educator Preparation Program**

A candidate who decides to voluntarily withdraw from the Educator Preparation Program must send a written notice of that intent from a UTRGV email account and include their Student ID to OEPA@utrgv.edu. The candidate must also contact the Registrar's Office to drop courses and, if applicable, to withdraw from the university. Withdrawal from the University constitutes automatic withdrawal from the EPP.

#### **E. Dismissal of Inactive Candidates**

An inactive candidate is one who is no longer completing coursework, training, and testing requirements with an EPP and is not a completer of the EPP.

After one academic year (two long regular semester terms) of inactivity, candidates enrolled in the EPP will be notified that they will be dismissed from the EPP and must follow university policy for readmission and then apply for readmission to the EPP. Dismissed candidates will be removed from the "other enrolled" list by OEPA.

#### **F. Readmission Process for Dismissed Inactive Candidates**

In order to be readmitted to the EPP after a period of inactivity, a dismissed candidate must follow the re-admission processes required by UTRGV Admissions and by the Office of Educator Preparation and Accountability (OEPA).

Readmission to the EPP will be considered on an individual basis. Program requirements may change over time because of revisions in certification rules or educator standards; therefore, re-admittance could mean that there are new criteria that the re-admitted applicant must meet.