



UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

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## UAA School of Education Accreditation FAQ

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### Why are these FAQs changing?

We want to ensure that students have the best, up to date information about their options. As we learn more about options and practical solutions, we will update these FAQs. Please check back periodically.

### Will UAA School of Education Students be able to get teaching certificates/licenses?

Yes. The three universities in the University of Alaska system are working closely together--and with the State Board of Education and Early Development--to ensure that students have a path to licensure either at UAA, or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS. Here are some things to consider in weighing options.

Seniors Graduating in Spring or Summer 2019:

DEED Commissioner Michael Johnson has stated that the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) will accept UAA's teacher licensure recommendations for students completing UAA's initial licensure programs during spring and summer 2019. Following through on that commitment, on Monday February 4 DEED will seek the State Board of Education's approval, which, if granted, would allow those students to obtain teaching certificates in Alaska. The Commissioner and DEED have been extremely supportive of students so we have every reason to expect that approval will be granted.

### Non-Seniors:

After summer 2019 the UAA teacher preparation programs do not presently provide a path to licensure. We are working with DEED on whether it is feasible to apply to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation program in the absence of CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome at this time. It may be less disruptive to complete the semester at UAA and consider a transfer when more information is available later this semester

### All Affected Students:

In any case, if students elect to transfer, either now or at the end of the semester, UA will facilitate transfers to accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS, make accommodations for place-bound students in Anchorage, and hold students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers. We will ensure that students have a path to licensure either at UAA, or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS.

### Reciprocity/Recognition by Other States:

Interstate reciprocity is much more complex than we initially appreciated and we apologize for the confusion. The following is based on our review of information provided by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) <https://www.nasdtec.net/page/InterstateAgreements>

Under the Interstate Agreement for Educator Licensure, an “approved program” is “a planned program of study leading to licensure in the appropriate Member Jurisdiction...” Under that definition, the UAA program would be considered “state approved” for interstate licensure purposes for spring and summer 2019 graduates. **Please note that each state is free to adopt, amend, and interpret its own standards, and that those standards also may change over time.**

“State approval” of a teacher preparation program is an important, but not the only, consideration for interstate licensure. Some states appear to offer no reciprocity. Other states have requirements such as specific training, testing, or experience in addition to a license granted by a member state. Only one state, Kentucky, specifically requires “program accreditation,” such as NCATE or CAEP accreditation. However, other states indicate that state approval is based on national standards or that approval must be “substantially similar to the state’s standards. **While you can get a sense of how interstate reciprocity works by careful review of the NASDTEC site, for detailed information regarding a specific state, you should contact the appropriate state office or visit that state’s website.**

If you apply for and receive your teaching certificate in Alaska, you should be eligible for reciprocity in states that simply require licensure by another state. Please note that other states have additional or more nuanced requirements, each state is free to adopt, amend, and interpret its own standards, and those standards also may change over time.

Whatever you decide to do, UAA will do its best to reduce the impact on you.

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## Frequently-Asked Questions

### Who should an impacted student call if they have questions or need help?

To minimize the number of calls an impacted student has to make or offices they have to visit, UAA has created the School of Education Student Assistance Line, (907) 786-6200 as a single point of contact. Staff are available on the Assistance Line to help find answers to questions impacted students may have, as well as research solutions to continuing difficulties a student may be experiencing. For matters that may require further research, the Assistance Line staff will create a research ticket and a content specialist will return a call directly to the student. The Assistance Line is staffed 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### What is accreditation and why does it matter?

There are two types of accreditation at UAA. The first is institutional, which accredits UAA as a whole. Institutional accreditation recognizes institutional quality, effectiveness and sustainability in meeting the whole institution’s mission. UAA has been accredited by the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities since 1974 and recently received notice that it successfully passed re-accreditation review.

The other type of accreditation is programmatic, or “specialized” accreditation. Only certain programs at UAA seek or need programmatic accreditation, a process by which programs are evaluated based on discipline or profession-based standards. The School of Education initial licensure programs were seeking reaffirmation of programmatic accreditation with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), which is a relatively new accrediting body. The programs were formerly accredited by the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The State of Alaska requires that educator preparation providers be approved by the State Board of Education and Early Development, based on substantial compliance with CAEP accreditation standards.

## **Did CAEP's revocation of initial licensure programs in UAA's School of Education affect other UAA programs?**

No. Only the initial licensure programs in the School of Education were involved in the CAEP accreditation decision.

## **What can Alaska's state board of education do in this instance? Does it step in to help ensure students can be licensed?**

Commissioner Michael Johnson has stated that DEED will accept UAA's teacher licensure recommendations for students completing UAA's initial licensure programs during spring and summer 2019. Following through on that commitment, on Monday February 4, DEED will seek the State Board of Education's approval, which, if granted, would allow those students to obtain teaching certificates in Alaska. The Commissioner and DEED have been extremely supportive of students so we have every reason to expect that approval will be granted. After summer 2019 the UAA teacher preparation programs do not presently provide a path to licensure. We are working with DEED on whether it is feasible to apply to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation program in the absence of CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome at this time. That said, the three universities in the University of Alaska system are working closely together to ensure that students have a path to licensure.

## **Can the State Board simply approve the program despite CAEP's accreditation decision?**

To grant interim approval, the State Board of Education likely would need to find that UAA has made the necessary changes to substantially comply with quality standards set by CAEP. Because the State Board of Education does not generally conduct program evaluations itself, and because it is unclear whether sufficient documentation of changes is yet available, it's not clear whether that can be done.

## **Why did these programs in UAA's School of Education lose accreditation?**

The initial licensure programs in the School of Education lost accreditation primarily due to deficiencies in how assessment data were collected, reported, and used by the school to continuously improve its programs. The final decision to deny programmatic accreditation was based on submission of a self-study report by UAA to CAEP on August 31, 2017, and subsequent actions taken to meet quality standards required by CAEP. The self-study report did not call out any deficiencies in the quality of faculty or student experiences, but focused primarily on the quality of management and reporting and use of data. The final assessment by CAEP occurred after a UAA site visit in April of 2018.

## **What steps are the Board of Regents taking on this issue?**

The Board of Regents received an in-person briefing on January 18. At that time the Regents requested the upcoming February 12th meeting with UAA education students to hear from them about their educational concerns and share with them some options that could assist students in the affected programs. The Regents want to ensure that the actions they take are meaningful and address the needs of students. The Board of Regents plans to consider a range of options to assist affected students at its regularly scheduled meeting in Anchorage on February 28th.

## **What is UAA doing about the loss of accreditation to SoEd's initial licensure programs?**

The three universities in the University of Alaska system are working closely together--and with the State Board of Education and Early Development--to ensure that students have a path to licensure.

## **What are UAA's next steps?**

Commissioner Michael Johnson has stated that DEED will accept UAA's teacher licensure recommendations for students completing UAA's initial licensure programs during spring and summer 2019. Following through on that commitment, on Monday February 4, DEED will seek the State Board of Education's approval, which, if granted, would allow those students to obtain teaching certificates in Alaska. The Commissioner and DEED have been extremely supportive of students so we have every reason to expect that approval will be granted.

We are working with DEED on whether it is feasible to apply to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation program in the absence of CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome at this time. UAA School of Education met with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development on January 22. Next, on Feb. 4, UAA will participate in a work session with the Alaska State Board of Education. Even if licensure through UAA is not approved beyond Summer 2019, the three universities in the University of Alaska system will continue to work together and with the State Board of Education and Early Development to ensure that students have a path to licensure.

### **What is edTPA and why is it important?**

UAA's School of Education has adopted edTPA. EdTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system developed by Stanford University. This system is widely regarded nationally as the gold standard in assessment of education programs. All UAA SoEd initial licensure programs now use this assessment system, and its adoption addresses many of the improvements that CAEP requires, including using common key assessments across programs, rather than isolated program-based data. This is important because CAEP's revocation of programmatic accreditation rested largely on inadequate collection, reporting, and use of data prior to adoption of the edTPA system.

### **How many students are currently affected by the accreditation issue in the UAA School of Education?**

As of January 2019, there were approximately 330 students enrolled in affected programs this spring semester. The number of students at other stages in the programs impacted by the accreditation revocation is larger, approximately 475.

### **What is being done to take care of students in the program? Is UAA helping students transfer to other programs, or something else?**

UAA is committed to providing each student with options best suited to his or her situation, including transfer to UAF or UAS. Students should review the information on licensure and reciprocity in this FAQ and make the decision that is best for them. For students who choose not to transfer, we will continue to support the programs while the university works through this process with DEED. After summer 2019, the UAA teacher preparation programs do not presently provide a path to licensure. We are working with DEED on whether it is feasible to apply to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation programs in the absence of CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome at this time. It may be less disruptive to complete the semester at UAA and consider a transfer when more information is available. Even if licensure through UAA is not approved beyond Summer 2019, the three universities in the University of Alaska system will continue to work closely together and with DEED to ensure that students have a path to licensure.

### **Does this accreditation issue have anything to do with the creation of UA's College of Education in Juneau?**

No, this decision is unrelated to the creation of the University of Alaska's College of Education at UAS. UAA is one of three schools of education in Alaska, and all three operate independently, though with support from the Alaska College of Education. For example, UAF's School of Education recently was reviewed by CAEP for accreditation, and it was approved.

### **Where can students get information/guidance as it pertains to their personal situation at UAA's SoEd?**

Students should consult directly with their advisors and faculty advisors in the School of Education.

## **How long would it take for the School of Education to earn accreditation again?**

UAA's School of Education may apply for accreditation on January 11, 2020—exactly one year from the date it received the letter of notification. CAEP's process would start again at that point and could take up to three years to complete..

## **Will UAA be closing its School of Education?**

Teacher education will continue to be provided at UAA, either through a UAA program approved by the State Board of Education, or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS at UAA.

## **Should students show up for their education classes moving forward?**

Yes! Please do not simply stop attending. Consider the information on licensure and reciprocity in this FAQ, consult with advisors and make a decision to stay, transfer to a program offered through UAF or UAS, or a different program at UAA.

## **What if students want to transfer to UAF or UAS?**

Students who want to transfer now should work with their program advisor ASAP. We are working with DEED on whether it is feasible to apply to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation programs in the absence of CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome at this time. It may be less disruptive to complete the semester at UAA and consider a transfer when more information is available later this semester. In any case, if students elect to transfer, either now or at the end of the semester, UA will facilitate transfers to accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS, make accommodations for place-bound students in Anchorage, and hold students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers.

## **How does this affect SoEd faculty?**

There are no plans to change the status of current faculty or administration within the School of Education at this time.

## **Will this affect UA's annual funding from the State of Alaska?**

We have no reason at this time to believe funding will be impacted by this accreditation issue.

## **Will students be given a tuition discount if they continue in UAA's initial licensure program?**

We are evaluating all options to provide students with paths that enable them to successfully acquire a degree in education from UAA that enables licensure. In any case, if students elect to transfer, either now or at the end of the semester, UA will facilitate transfers to accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS, make accommodations for place-bound students in Anchorage, and hold students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers.

## **How does revocation of accreditation of SoEd programs impact any scholarships that are or will be awarded to students?**

Revocation of program accreditation does not impact how financial aid is awarded to students.

## **I am attending UAA in one of the School of Education programs that are no longer accredited by CAEP. I'm paying for school with my VA benefits, which stipulate I can only attend an accredited school. What am I going to do now?**

The VA requires that you attend an accredited institution, not specifically one with a programmatic accreditation. UAA is accredited as an institution by NWCCU. Your standing with the VA is not affected by the revocation of program-level accreditation of programs within UAA's School of Education.

### **Does this have any impact on the value of the degrees that UAA alumni have previously earned from UAA's College or School of Education?**

No. The School was accredited through December 31, 2018. In addition, DEED will accept UAA's teacher licensure recommendations for students completing UAA's initial licensure programs during spring and summer 2019. All students in the program will be provided a path to licensure. See information on licensure and reciprocity in this FAQ.

### **How will this impact UA's ability to improve the number of teachers it graduates to serve our state?**

Teacher education will continue to be provided at UAA, either through a UAA program approved by the State Board of Education, or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS. Those students currently in the program will be provided a path to licensure. UA remains committed to and confident in its ability to increase the number of its Alaska trained teachers.

### **Why wasn't UAA transparent about the risk of losing accreditation at the School of Education? Why weren't we informed of problems with the accreditation process?**

Even though interim feedback was negative, UAA administration and faculty worked hard to respond to deficiencies identified by CAEP. In retrospect, the former leadership of UAA and the UAA School of Education should have worked closely with our sister universities and the system to address the issues raised by CAEP's interim feedback, and should have brought students into that conversation.

### **I feel like I did not get what I paid for. Should I get the money I've paid for tuition, books and parking back?**

Your work has tremendous value. Your credits are from an accredited institution and will apply to licensure paths through UAA, UAF or UAS, or to other programs if you so choose. Students have the option of pursuing licensure at UAA, or transferring their credits to accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS. If you elect to transfer, either now or at the end of the semester, UA will facilitate transfers, make accommodations for place-bound students, and hold students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers.

### **If these programs in the School of Education achieve re-accreditation, will our cohort's degrees be retroactively recognized as coming from an accredited program?**

No, but state licensure is typically the most important consideration (see discussion on reciprocity in this FAQ). UAA remains institutionally (regionally) accredited.

### **Will school districts still pay graduates the Master's rate if the program does not hold CAEP accreditation?**

While employers can set and interpret their own policies, additional pay for advanced degrees is generally based on the degree being from a regionally accredited institution like UAA.

### **Is it possible to transfer my credits from UAA to either UAF or UAS to complete my education degree?**

Yes, but please work with your academic or faculty advisor to determine what is specifically necessary to transfer UAA education degree credits to either UAF or UAS. UA is committed to holding affected students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers.

### **Will degree requirements change as a result of the loss of accreditation?**

Degree requirements are unaffected by loss of program accreditation. No changes are planned.