



COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between the
Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation
and the
Arizona Department of Education and Arizona State Board of Education

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), 173 Milkweed Dr. Lake Frederick, VA 22630, and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), 1535 W Jefferson St. Phoenix, AZ 85007, and the Arizona State Board of Education (SBE) with regard to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of Arizona. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation recommended by the ADE for approval by the SBE as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP.

The term of this agreement shall begin December 11, 2023, and end June 30, 2028. The agreement may be modified whenever ADE/SBE, and AAQEP find it appropriate during this term.

AAQEP affirms ADE/SBE's efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of Arizona's children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by AAQEP-member providers approved by the SBE. By entering this agreement, ADE/SBE affirms AAQEP's mission of promoting and recognizing quality educator preparation that strengthens the education profession's ability to serve all students, schools, and communities.

1. Standards Used in Quality Assurance Reviews

Quality assurance reviews conducted by AAQEP in AZ will be guided by the current version of the AAQEP standards (available at <https://aaqep.org>) and in keeping with AAQEP policy regarding the application of those standards. In conducting reviews of programs approved by ADE, AAQEP will require that all relevant AZ standards outlined in Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.) R7-2-602 and R7-2-603 be addressed.

Providers approved by the SBE must meet all requirements for educator preparation program approval set forth under Arizona statutes or administrative code to obtain state approval.

In addition, providers are welcome to orient their quality assurance review to other relevant professional standards (for example, those from professional associations such as the National Council for Social Studies, the International Literacy Association, the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, etc.).

2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews

The scope of the AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in AZ will be determined by the provider in consultation with AAQEP. The provider will clearly identify which aspects of its work are and are not accredited in all public displays that make note of accreditation.

3. Quality Assurance Review Process

All quality assurance reviews conducted by AAQEP will be guided by AAQEP's policies and procedures as specified in the *Guide to AAQEP Accreditation*, available at <https://aaqep.org>.

- AAQEP's process includes an optional proposal review stage two to three years prior to a scheduled site visit.
- All quality assurance reviews leading to 'accreditation' status (7 years) include an off-site review conducted virtually two months prior to each site visit which ADE staff are welcome to attend, and an on-site visit, the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity.
- All quality assurance reviews leading to 'initial accreditation' (5 years) status include a preliminary virtual meeting with program staff and a virtual site visit which includes stakeholder meetings and review of data when appropriate; ADE/SBE staff are welcome to attend these meetings.

4. Review Team Composition

AAQEP will appoint a sufficient number of Quality Review Team members with appropriate qualifications to each review case to ensure that the review is carried out thoroughly and efficiently. Each AAQEP review team will include at least one educational practitioner from AZ nominated by the provider hosting the review; that practitioner will receive training and support from AAQEP. The local practitioner(s) will support the review team's understanding of and respect for the local and state educational context and participate as a full member of the Quality Review Team.

In addition to the AAQEP-appointed members, one or more ADE or SBE staff members may participate as observers. The additional cost, if any, will be paid by the appropriate state agency.

Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the host provider. The additional cost, if any, will be paid by the observers.

5. Reviewer Preparation and Qualifications

All review team members will meet AAQEP preparation and quality requirements. Reviewer training and professional learning opportunities will be made available to ADE staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel and lodging expenses); ADE observers are invited to participate in training prior to joining review teams as observers. Training is not a condition for participation as observers.

6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval

All decisions for state approval of education preparation programs for each content or specialty area are within the sole authority of the Arizona State Board of Education with the approval process implemented by the ADE. State decisions to approve or not approve provider programs are made independent of AAQEP determinations regarding the accreditation of the provider. AAQEP acknowledges that the rules and standards that govern state approval of a provider and its programs in AZ are subject to change at any time by the Arizona State Board of Education and ADE.

AAQEP's process requires disaggregation of evidence by licensure, certificate, or endorsement area as well as by program site and/or mode of delivery. This allows for quality judgments to be made regarding each licensure, certificate, or endorsement area program under the scope of accreditation. Quality assurance at the program level provides evidence for how AAQEP standards on candidate and completer performance are being met and facilitate comprehensive judgment of the provider as a whole.

7. Accreditation Decisions

AAQEP accreditation decisions are made by the AAQEP Accreditation Commission. Accreditation statuses and terms are detailed in AAQEP's *Guide* and policy documents, available at <https://aaqep.org>. Accreditation status is granted for a term of seven years, contingent on the completion of annual reports and any other required reports. Initial accreditation status is granted for a term of five years, contingent on the completion of annual reports and any other required reports. Observers from AZ are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of AZ providers are considered (meetings are typically conducted via video conference). Accreditation decisions, including the reports on which decisions are based and the Accreditation Commission's rationale for each decision, will be shared with the ADE.

8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration

Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that ADE is apprised of the schedule of accreditation activities, including scheduled site visit dates. Providers will also send a copy of or links to the final version of their Quality Assurance Report (the self-study) electronically to ADE at the same time they provide it to AAQEP. AAQEP will inform ADE of the Accreditation Commission meeting(s) at which a provider's case will be considered.

AAQEP will send copies of all reports or official letters generated by the review team and the Accreditation Commission to the ADE educator preparation inbox, EPP.inbox@azed.gov.

In addition, ADE and AAQEP agree to share information regarding any changes to state approval and national accreditation status.

9. AAQEP Capacity Review and Formative Support Options

In cooperation with and at the discretion of ADE, AAQEP will make available to AZ providers following additional services:

- AAQEP Program Performance Review. AAQEP provides a means for accomplishing both EPP accreditation and program review simultaneously based on the preparation of a single report. This assures that program-level review is based on the most current available evidence and that the EPP and program-level evaluation and planning are integrated. Program performance review is based on the disaggregated evidence presented in the standard AAQEP Quality Assurance Report, supplemented by additional analysis by programs that is appended to the report. The review addresses program-specific standards alignment and evidence regarding content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and instructional performance, and includes analysis of program-specific data and planning for improvement based on that data. The State makes the final decision on the approval of any program.
- System Improvement Support: AAQEP facilitates program and provider improvement for entities that have identified specific shortcomings in their work, including cases where shortcomings have been identified through external evaluations such as state or accreditation reviews. AAQEP will enter into an agreement with the provider and ADE to establish a timeline, priorities, and outcomes for such reviews.
- Special projects: With ADE's collaboration, support, and input, AAQEP will create a quality assurance and improvement solution that may not lead to formal accreditation status for AZ providers.

10. Membership

AAQEP views cooperation among accreditors, educator preparation providers, and SEAs as essential to effective quality assurance. It enters into this agreement with the intent of supporting both ADE and providers authorized by it in ensuring the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. ADE agrees to join AAQEP as a state member at no cost in support of these goals.

In support of shared goals, AAQEP will provide the following supportive services to ADE staff:

- Workshops and webinars: AAQEP will offer free registrations for ADE/SBE staff to participate in webinars and in-person workshops AAQEP offers within AZ (AAQEP does not cover travel expenses, meals, or lodging).

- AAQEP Annual Events: AAQEP will provide one ADE staff with a no-cost registration to its annual Quality Assurance Symposium and to the AAQEP Institute and provide any additional ADE staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, ADE staff may participate in AAQEP professional learning events, including reviewer training, at no cost (travel, etc., excepted, as above).

Signatures:

Mark LaCelle-Peterson

Mark LaCelle-Peterson, President and CEO, AAQEP

1/2/2024

Date

Steven Paulson

Digitally signed by Steven Paulson

Date: 2023.12.20 14:05:21 -07'00'

Name of SEA Representative, SEA

Date