

Educator Preparation Program Accreditation Process and Procedures Manual



Approved by the Board of Public Education

July 2026

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Introduction

The purpose of accrediting an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) is to ensure that all professional education programs which lead to educator licensure meet established standards. The Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) guide these programs in developing curriculum, instructional strategies, aligned assessments, and relevant field and clinical experiences to prepare educator candidates to meet the learning needs of PK- 12 students.

This manual outlines the processes and procedures for the accreditation review of Montana's educator preparation providers.

Section I: Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS)

Adoption of PEPPS by the Board of Public Education (BPE) as Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) establishes the accreditation and accountability requirements for Montana's EPPs.

The PEPPS which make up Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Title 10, Chapter 58, Sub-Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, constitute the core of professional educator preparation programs in Montana. The PEPPS are aligned to national standards, specifically the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#) initial and advanced standards.

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, "[InTASC Standards](#)," have also been incorporated in [ARM 10.58.501](#). The standards outlined in ARM 10.58.501 and the InTASC standards are general requirements to assure a common set of expectations in the preparation of professional educators in all content and specialty areas.

Below is a description of each chapter of the [Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) Title 10 Chapter 58](#):

Sub-Chapter 1: State Administrative Procedural Standards

Outlines the process and procedures leading to the accreditation site reviews.

Sub-Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework of Professional Educator Preparation Programs

Repealed

Sub-Chapter 3: Curriculum Principles and Standards: Basic Programs

The Performance standards for initial licensure programs define the criteria that institutions and professional education programs must meet to demonstrate compliance and program quality. The initial licensure performance standards include content and pedagogical knowledge, clinical partnerships and practice, candidate quality, recruitment, progression and support, program impact, and provider quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Sub-Chapter 4: Teaching Areas: General Standards

Repealed

Sub-Chapter 5: Standard 501 - Teaching Standards

A common set of expectations in the preparation of professional educators in all content and specialty areas.

Sub-Chapter 502 - 534: Teaching Areas: Specific Standards

Performance-based standards for the preparation of educator candidates in each endorsement area for initial teaching licensure. These criteria must be considered in the development and implementation of program endorsement areas.

Sub-Chapter 6: Curriculum Principles and Standards: Advanced Licensure Programs

The Performance standards for advanced licensure programs define the criteria that institutions and professional education programs must meet to demonstrate compliance and program quality. The advanced licensure performance standards include content and pedagogical knowledge, clinical partnerships and practice, candidate quality, recruitment, progression and support, program satisfaction with preparation, and provider quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Sub-Chapter 7: Specializations: Supervisory and Administrative Programs

Performance-based standards for the preparation of educator candidates in each endorsement area for advanced licensure.

Sub-Chapter 8: Innovative and Experimental Programs

Processes and procedures for the approval of new curriculum programs.

Sub-Chapter 9: Standards for Approving Competency-Based or Performance-Based Programs

Repealed

Section II: Initial Accreditation Process

Preliminary Accreditation - Professional Education Provider

Before state accreditation is considered, an organization or institution seeking preliminary accreditation as a new educator preparation provider must have formal authorization from their administrative board charged with this responsibility. An institution can be either a traditional or alternative program. A traditional program refers to a program at an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) where candidates enroll with the specific goal of becoming a teacher and are awarded a degree. An alternative program can be either IHE-based or non IHE-based and designed to prepare individuals to become teachers. An alternative preparation program that is non IHE-based is defined in [20-4-120, MCA](#). To gain preliminary accreditation status from the Board of Public Education (BPE) for either a traditional, IHE-based alternative, or non IHE based alternative program, the following steps outlined in the chart below are required.

- Formal authorization from the administrative board of the institution or organization is submitted to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI);
- An IHE provides evidence of [institutional accreditation to the OPI](#);
- The new EPP completes the Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) with evidence demonstrating compliance with the BPE program preparation standards.
- The ISSR and supporting evidence are electronically submitted to the OPI.
- The OPI facilitates an off-site review of the ISSR. The off-site review process shall follow the approved state protocol outlined in the BPE-approved Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards and Procedures Manual;
- Based on the off-site review report, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend preliminary accreditation status to the BPE;
- If the recommendation from BPE is to preliminarily accredit, the new EPP may only be recognized as preliminarily accredited until the OPI conducts formal on-site visit within two years;
- The OPI site visitor team submits the state final report to the State Superintendent;
- The State Superintendent makes a recommendation to approve/disapprove the EPP for final accreditation to the BPE based upon the site team report;
- The BPE takes final action on the State Superintendent's recommendation.

APPROVAL FOR EPP PRELIMINARY ACCREDITATION PROCESS:

Administrative Rules of Montana 10.58.802

Step 1: Initial Approval	Date Submitted
Notify the OPI of intention to apply for a new EPP program and obtain necessary documents.	
Institutional governing body, i.e., board of directors, institutional leadership, or Board of Regents, as applicable, approves new program application.	
Verification of institutional accreditation, if applicable.	

Step 2: Application Process	Date Submitted
EPP completes the Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) to address Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)10.58.802.	
EPP completes sections of the ISSR addressing how the new EPP is aligned with ARM 10.58.311 – 315 for initial program and 10.58-605-609 for advanced program.	
EPP completes sections of the ISSR addressing ARM 10.58.501 Teaching Standards; and specific sections of ARM 10.58.502-534 related to the endorsement areas offered by the new EPP.	
EPP gathers supporting evidence aligned to the ISSR. Supporting evidence may include: course catalogs, course syllabi, candidate work samples, surveys, sample assessments, portfolios, supervised teaching handbooks, data artifacts, self reflection artifacts, lesson plans, professional learning logs, observation logs, and other appropriate evidence.	

Step 3: Application Submission	Date Submitted
EPP submits completed ISSR and supporting documentation electronically to the OPI.	

Step 4: Office Audit/Review	Date Submitted
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OPI conducts the audit/review of the application materials.	
OPI provides an electronic report to EPP with comments and specific requests for additional documentation.	
EPP submits a follow-up report/response to OPI, as necessary.	

Step 5: Preliminary Approval Process	Date Submitted
The OPI off-site review team submits the off-site report to the State Superintendent.	
The State Superintendent makes a recommendation to approve/disapprove the EPP for preliminary accreditation to the BPE based upon the off-site team report.	
BPE takes action on the State Superintendent's recommendation for preliminary accreditation status.	

Step 6: Final Approval Process	Date Submitted
The OPI shall conduct a site visit of the preliminary accredited professional education unit within two years;	
The site visitor team submits the site state final report to the State Superintendent.	
The State Superintendent makes a recommendation to approve/disapprove the full accreditation of the EPP to the BPE based upon the site team report.	
BPE takes final action on the State Superintendent's recommendation.	

Section III: Approval of New Curricular Programs

An accredited educator preparation provider may request the approval of a new curricular program by describing the purpose, need, and objectives of the program and the impact on K-12 education. Through the process, the EPP must assure that the program of study is based on current research, proven practice, and emerging trends in this field of K-12 school curriculum. The EPP will be required to demonstrate that it worked cooperatively with accredited school districts, education organizations, agencies, and P-20

stakeholders to design the program. Within the application process the provider will:

- Articulate initial and/or advanced candidates' learning expectations pursuant to ARM Title 10, chapter 58, subchapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.
- Align learning expectations and outcome assessments to the program objectives.
- Describe the professional learning process, plan, and timeline to prepare candidates.
- Establish assessment and evaluation systems to collect, analyze, use, and report initial or advanced candidates' progress in the program.
- Ensure that the program is supported by identifiable resources available to the program and resources not under the control of the program shall be outlined and confirmed by the Board of Public Education.
- Create a timetable that includes:
 - the program's proposed implementation date,
 - the sequence of activities that will occur,
 - selection and schedules of regular and systematic intervals of candidate and program evaluations,
 - the approximate date for submitting the program plan, timeline, and reports for program approval to the appropriate officials and to the OPI, and
- Ensure that program evaluations have definite provisions for performance criteria and follow-up at specified intervals, and the evaluations:
 - align to initial or advanced standards pursuant to ARM Title 10, chapter 58, subchapters 3, 5, 6, and 7, and
 - ensure continuous program improvement by using data to inform decisions that provide positive impact on candidates' professional growth and on program development.

Process for State Approval of Professional Education Programs Leading to Educator Certification:

Administrative Rules of Montana 10.58.802

Step 1: Initial Approval	Date Submitted
Notify the OPI of intention to apply for a new curricular	

program and obtain necessary documents.	
EPP's governing body, i.e., board of directors, institutional leadership, or Board of Regents, as applicable, approves new program application.	

Step 2: Application Process	Date Submitted
EPP completes the Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) to address Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)10.58.802	
EPP completes sections of the ISSR addressing how the new EPP is aligned with ARM 10.58.311 – 315 for initial programs and ARM 10.58.605-609 for advanced programs.	
EPP completes sections of the ISSR: ARM 10.58.501 Teaching Standards; and specific sections of ARM 10.58.502-534 related to the new program endorsement areas.	
EPP gathers supporting evidence aligned to the specific ISSR sections. Supporting evidence may include: course catalogs, course syllabi, candidate work samples, surveys, sample assessments, portfolios, supervised teaching handbooks, data artifacts, self reflection artifacts, lesson plans, professional learning logs, observation logs, and other appropriate evidence.	

Step 3: Application Submission	Date Submitted
EPP submits completed ISSR and supporting evidence electronically to the OPI.	

Step 4: Office Audit/Review	Date Submitted
OPI conducts the audit/review of the application materials.	
OPI provides an electronic report to EPP with comments and specific requests for additional documentation.	
EPP submits a follow-up report/response to OPI, as necessary.	

Step 5: Site Visit	Date Submitted
If the EPP is scheduled for a regular accreditation site review within the next two years, the new curricular program is included in the site-review	
If an EPP is not scheduled for a regular accreditation review within two years, the OPI will determine the necessity of a site review on a case-by-case basis. This decision will consider factors such as previous accreditation ratings, program variance, or the similarity of the new curriculum program to established programs.	
OPI facilitates the site review to verify the ISSR meets the PEPP Standards of the new curricular program.	

Step 6: Final Approval Process	Date Submitted
The site visitor team submits the state final report to the State Superintendent.	
The State Superintendent makes a recommendation to approve/disapprove the proposed new curricular program to the BPE based upon the site team report.	
BPE takes final action on the State Superintendent's recommendation.	

Section IV: Accreditation Process

The process leading to accreditation of Education Preparation Programs is outlined in [ARM 10.58.102](#). The BPE adopts procedures for the accreditation of EPPs and the State Superintendent is responsible for implementing the procedures and conducting the accreditation site reviews. The OPI establishes and trains a cadre of qualified educators to serve on the review teams. The accreditation site reviews occur every seven years or are adjusted based upon coordination with national accreditation or upon request of the EPP for approval from the BPE for a good cause extension.

A good cause extension is a formal request allowing an EPP to extend its accreditation term—typically for up to one year—due to unforeseeable, uncontrollable circumstances like natural disasters, major regulatory shifts, or new state/national standards. An EPP may submit a formal letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction explaining the basis for the request.

There are two types of accreditation site reviews: a state only review and a joint accreditation review. An EPP selects the type of accreditation review that they want conducted. The state only accreditation review is conducted by the OPI under the supervision of the superintendent, whereas the joint review is completed in cooperation with a national accreditation agency. Currently, there are three national accreditation agencies: the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#) (CAEP), the [Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation](#) (AAQEP), and the [Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education](#) (MACTE). Additional accrediting agencies that conduct particular reviews of standards are also part of a state or joint review if requested by an EPP, such as the [Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs](#) (CACREP) for school counseling and the [National Association of School Psychologists](#) (NASP) for school psychology.

The purpose of the accreditation review is to verify that an EPP meets the requirements of the Montana PEPPS. An accreditation review has two parts: the off-site review and the onsite review. The EPP submits to the OPI an Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR). Within the ISSR, the EPP provides evidence of standards, such as: catalogs, programs of study, assessment system information, surveys of need, course syllabi, candidate work samples, surveys, sample assessments, portfolios, supervised teaching handbooks, data artifacts, self reflection artifacts, lesson plans, professional learning logs, observation logs, and other appropriate evidence.

Using the evidence provided, each standard is rated as:

- **Standard is met:** Regular accreditation for a period of seven years.
- **Standard is met with notation:** Regular accreditation with minor deviations with most of the components of a standard met. This could involve incomplete items on the ISSR or clarification/corrections needed. As those items are rectified, the recommendation to the BPE will reflect the current and corrected status.
- **Area for Improvement (AFI):** Standard is met with weakness. The site review team identified a weakness in the evidence for a standard or component. Area for Improvement should be remediated by the next accreditation cycle, and progress toward improvement is reported annually through the annual report to the OPI/BPE. During the next accreditation review, the EPP must demonstrate that the AFIs have been corrected. If the AFIs have not been corrected, a

stipulation may be cited in the same area.

- **Stipulation:** A standard or component is not met. The site visiting team identified a deficiency related to one or more components of the BPE standard. A stipulation is of sufficient severity that a standard may be determined to be unmet. A stipulation must be addressed within two years to retain accreditation.

An EPP cited with an area of stipulation is required to submit a progress report to the BPE exactly one year following the initial scoring. Subsequently, the OPI will conduct an onsite evaluation at the two-year mark to review the status of the identified stipulation(s). Based on these findings, a final review and formal recommendation will be presented to the BPE to either remove the stipulation or initiate the revocation of accreditation.

Prior to a site accreditation visit, a cadre of qualified educators including teachers, college professors, administrators, and content specialists review the ISSRs provided by the EPP. After the review, the EPP is provided with a preliminary accreditation report. The EPP is given the opportunity to review the report and submit an addendum. The addendum is a formal, supplementary document that provides additional information, evidence, or clarification regarding specific issues identified during the accreditation review process. It is attached to the original report without changing the original content and becomes a formal part of the overall documentation. Based on the addendum, the identified areas are re-evaluated. A site review is then conducted. A site review is two-to-three days in which site reviewers conduct a summative review of the EPP ISSRs. Site reviews consist of focus groups of key stakeholders and interviews with EPP faculty to finalize standard ratings. After a site review is conducted, the State Superintendent provides the EPP with a draft of the final report. The report includes all review outcomes for each standard, including the review from national accreditation agencies if applicable. The EPP is given the opportunity to review the report and attach a rejoinder. The rejoinder is an optional written response to the site review report submitted by the EPP, post site review. This response allows an EPP to state whether or not they agree with the evaluation team's findings; however, an EPP cannot include new and/or additional evidence with the rejoinder.

State Review Protocol

Category	Procedure
Standards	
I. Program Standards	The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) has incorporated the CAEP standards into the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS).
II. Content Standards	State standards adopted by the BPE are used to accredit professional education programs that lead to specific licenses and endorsements. The Montana PEPPS are comprised of the BPE adopted requirements for all licensure and endorsement programs and are aligned with national content standards.
III. Accreditation & Approval	The BPE is authorized to establish accreditation standards and procedures and to determine accreditation status of the EPP's and state approved alternative programs.
IV. Team	
A. Team Composition	The OPI selects team members from a cadre of professionals who have completed training on the accreditation process. The OPI selects team members whose expertise, training and/or endorsement reflects programs to be reviewed. It is recommended that site review teams include at least one EPP representative.
B. Training and Qualifications	Program reviewers must have a minimum of five years of teaching or other appropriate experience. All program reviewers must complete training in the standards and the review process and procedures.
C. Professional Conduct/ Conflict of Interest	Program reviewers shall conduct themselves at all times while representing the BPE and OPI as thoughtful, competent, well-prepared, and impartial professionals. Reviewers must treat all matters confidentially and honor and support all consensus decisions of the team. All reviewers are required to sign and submit a Conflict of Interest form to the OPI. The program reviewers shall avoid conflicts of interest and should exclude themselves from the review team for any reason which may represent an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
D. Team Chairperson	An OPI representative who participates in and serves as the point of contact for the off-site and site reviews and works directly with the review team(s).
E. State Coordinator	An OPI representative who oversees the coordination and logistics of the accreditation review process.

Category	Procedure
F. Team Size	The size of the on-site review team shall be determined by the OPI.
G. Decision Making	The team shall make decisions by consensus and the team chairperson will resolve all conflicts.
H. Evaluations	Following the site visit, the performance of the team is evaluated by the OPI.
I. Expenses	The EPP covers the expenses of the on-site visit including the expenses of the non-OPI members of the site team. The OPI covers the expenses of the OPI team members.
V. Preparation	
A. Accreditation Cycle	Montana EPP's and state approved alternative programs follow a seven-year review cycle after successfully completing an initial accreditation review. A request for a good cause extension can be submitted for consideration. If granted, the extension is for one year only and does not alter the established accreditation seven year cycle.
B. Scheduling the Review	Twelve months prior to the site review semester, the dean of education of the EPP, or other appropriate official, shall work with the OPI to set the dates of the visit and review the list of specific programs to be reviewed. The visit shall not exceed three days.
C. Manual	The Educator Preparation Program Accreditation Process and Procedures Manual contain the standards, guidelines, forms, support and resource material for the unit reviews.
D. Institutional Self Study Report (ISSR)	The ISSR provides evidence to verify compliance with the standards pertaining to the unit and applicable program areas. The EPP and state approved alternative program submits to the OPI an electronic copy of the ISSR. The ISSR's must be received by OPI at least four months before the scheduled visit. In addition, the EPP will provide links to its catalog(s), syllabi, access to database materials, and other relevant information pertinent to the effectiveness of the review process. These materials must be evaluated by the team members starting at least 14 weeks prior to the on-site visit.

Category	Procedure
E. Program Report	The initial review of the EPP's programs is completed prior to the on-site visit using an off-site review process. The off-site program review is facilitated by the team chairperson and completed four months prior to the on-site review. The initial report of the off-site review is emailed to the EPP six weeks before the site visit. The EPP may submit an addendum to the preliminary report within three weeks prior to the onsite visit.
F. Pre Visit	Approximately 60 days before the visit, the state coordinator and team chair will meet with the EPP dean to plan the visit.
VI. Review Process	
A. Orientation to State Process/Protocol	The state coordinator and the team chair will conduct an orientation with the review team about the state accreditation process and accreditation protocol.
B. Access to Evidence	EPP's shall provide evidence that demonstrates what candidates know and are able to do. In addition, EPP's are required to provide evidence that data is used to evaluate student performance and modify programs. EPP's shall include data. <i>Evidence could include: assessments at admissions; verification of content knowledge; program assessments; follow-up studies.</i>
C. Off-site Review	An off-site review is a preliminary, virtual evaluation where review teams examine the ISSR and evidence. Conducted by the OPI, it verifies evidence before the on-site visit to ensure program compliance and quality.
D. Addendum	The EPP may submit a formal, supplementary document that provides additional information, evidence, or clarification regarding specific issues identified during the accreditation review process. It is attached to the original report without changing the original content and becomes a formal part of the overall documentation.
E. On-site Review	An on-site review for EPP accreditation is a mandatory, in-person (or virtual) evaluation conducted every seven years by a team representing the BPE and the OPI. This review verifies the accuracy of the ISSR and evaluates evidence of program quality, continuous improvement, and candidate performance.
F. Final Conference	The team chair conducts the final conference with the EPP and institution representatives.

Category	Procedure
VII. After the On-Site Review	
A. State Final Report	The standard ratings are completed and the state final report is drafted within one month following the on-site visit. The state final report is compiled by the team chair person in consultation with the state coordinator.
B. Rejoinder	The EPP may submit an optional written response to the report concerning errors or omissions within 3 weeks after the report is received and before it is submitted to the BPE for action. This response allows an EPP to state whether or not they agree with the evaluation team's findings; however, an EPP cannot include new and/or additional evidence with the rejoinder.
C. Action on State Final Report	The state final report is submitted to the BPE as an informational item, allowing the EPP to be present for discussion. The BPE will take action on the determination of the EPP's accreditation status at the next meeting. The determination will then be reported by the OPI to the EPP.
VIII. Annual Reviews	
A. Regional Accreditation	EPP's shall maintain institutional accreditation to continue state accreditation.
B. Annual Report	EPP's provide information to OPI as part of the requested Annual Report for the BPE.

State Review - Accreditation Cycle Timeline

Task	Timeframe	Who?
ISSR templates sent to EPP	8 months prior to onsite review	OPI
EPP Training/ Evaluation Team Formed	6 months prior to onsite review	OPI
Complete ISSRs/ Review Team Training	4 months prior to onsite review	EPP OPI/Review Team
State Off-site Review (Evaluation of ISSRs)	14 weeks prior to onsite review	OPI/Review Team
Pre- visit meeting	2 months prior to onsite review	EPP/OPI
Preliminary Draft State Accreditation Report	6 weeks prior to onsite review	OPI
Addendum	3 weeks prior to onsite review	EPP
State On-Site Review	1-3 days of a site visit scheduled 8 months in advance and detailed agendas are shared 4 weeks in advance of site visit	EPP/OPI
Final State Accreditation Report	1 month after onsite review	OPI
Rejoinder	3 weeks after final report	EPP
Information Item for BPE	1st available BPE meeting following report/rejoinder	OPI/EPP to BPE
Action Item for BPE	Consecutive BPE Meeting following the information item.	BPE

Joint CAEP/State Review Protocol

Category	Procedure
I. Agreements	
A. MOU	The agreement is between the BPE, CAEP, and the State Superintendent. Prior to joint reviews, CAEP and the State enter into an agreement detailing the State's preferences with regard to program review options and review team composition for accreditation Site Reviews conducted by CAEP of EPP's operating within the State and establishing the primary responsibilities each party has in supporting CAEP's accreditation activities involving all such EPP's.
B. State Accreditation & Approval	The BPE is authorized to establish accreditation standards and procedures and to determine accreditation status of the EPP's and state approved alternative programs.
C. CAEP Accreditation & Approval	The CAEP Accreditation Council considers recommendations by the CAEP site review team and makes final decisions regarding CAEP accreditation status, areas for improvement and/or stipulations, and standards met or unmet. Upon its decision, the CAEP Accreditation Council notifies the state for use in the final state/CAEP combined report.
II. Standards	
A. Program Standards	The Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) has incorporated the CAEP standards into the initial and advanced standards of the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS). For a joint review, CAEP assesses 10.58.311-315 for initial programs and 10.58.605-609 for advanced programs.
B. Content Standards	The state team reviews 10.58.501 teaching standards and any applicable content standards from 10.58.502-534 for initial programs and applicable content standards for ARM 10.58.705-707 and 10.58.610 for advanced programs. Results of these reviews are shared with the CAEP review team.
III. Review Teams	
A. State Team Composition	The OPI selects team members from a cadre of professionals who have completed training on the accreditation process. The OPI selects team members whose expertise, training and/or endorsement reflects programs to be reviewed. It is recommended that site review teams include at least one EPP representative.

Category	Procedure
B. CAEP Team Composition	CAEP oversees the selection, training, and evaluation of CAEP team members. Teams are typically composed of a team lead and four team members. An OPI representative sits as an observer in a non evaluative role.
C. Training and Qualifications	State program reviewers must have a minimum of five years of teaching or other appropriate experience. All state program reviewers must complete training in the standards and the review process and procedures. CAEP program reviewers are selected by CAEP and undergo CAEP training.
D. Professional Conduct/ Conflict of Interest	State program reviewers shall conduct themselves at all times while representing the BPE and OPI as thoughtful, competent, well-prepared, and impartial professionals. Reviewers must treat all matters confidentially and honor and support all consensus decisions of the team. All reviewers are required to sign and submit a Conflict of Interest form to the OPI and/or CAEP. The program reviewers shall avoid conflicts of interest and should exclude themselves from the review team for any reason which may represent an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
E. State Team Chairperson	An OPI representative who participates in and serves as the point of contact for the off-site and site reviews and works directly with the review team(s).
F. State Coordinator	An OPI representative who oversees the coordination and logistics of the accreditation review process.
G. CAEP Lead Site Reviewer	The head of the CAEP evaluation team who manages the site review and report process of an EPP's site review from the time of the formative meeting through the Accreditation Council decision.
H. Team Size	The size of the state on-site review team shall be determined by the OPI. CAEP determines the size of the CAEP team.
I. Decision Making	The teams shall make decisions by consensus and the state team chairperson and CAEP Lead will resolve all conflicts.
J. Evaluations	Following the site visit, the performance of the teams are evaluated by the OPI and CAEP.
K. Expenses	The EPP covers the expenses of the on-site visit including the expenses of the CAEP team and non-OPI members of the state team. The OPI covers the expenses of the OPI team members.

Category	Procedure		
IV. Preparation			
A. Accreditation Cycle	Montana jointly-accredited EPP's and state approved alternative programs follow a seven-year review cycle after successfully completing an initial accreditation review. Requests for a good cause extension can be submitted to CAEP and the BPE for consideration. If granted, the extension is for one year only and does not alter the established accreditation seven year cycle.		
B. Scheduling the Review	Eighteen months prior to the site review semester, the dean of education of the EPP, or other appropriate official, shall work with CAEP and the OPI to set the dates of the visit and review the list of specific programs to be reviewed. The visit shall not exceed three days.		
C. Manuals	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>The Educator Preparation Program Accreditation Process and Procedures Manual contain the standards, guidelines, forms, support and resource material for the unit reviews.</td> <td>CAEP Policies and Procedures are set out in the CAEP Workbook.</td> </tr> </table>	The Educator Preparation Program Accreditation Process and Procedures Manual contain the standards, guidelines, forms, support and resource material for the unit reviews.	CAEP Policies and Procedures are set out in the CAEP Workbook .
The Educator Preparation Program Accreditation Process and Procedures Manual contain the standards, guidelines, forms, support and resource material for the unit reviews.	CAEP Policies and Procedures are set out in the CAEP Workbook .		
D. State Institutional Self Study Report (ISSR)	The ISSR uses OPI-provided templates to document evidence to verify compliance with the standards pertaining to the unit and applicable program areas in ARM 10.58.501 teaching standards and any applicable content standards from 10.58.502-534 for initial programs and applicable content standards for ARM 10.58.705-707 and 10.58.610 for advanced programs. The EPP and state approved alternative program submits to the OPI an electronic copy of the ISSR. The ISSR's must be received by OPI at least four months before the scheduled visit. In addition, the EPP will provide links to its catalog(s), syllabi, access to database materials, and other relevant information pertinent to the effectiveness of the review process. These materials must be evaluated by the team members starting at least 14 weeks prior to the on-site visit.		
E. CAEP Self Study Report (SSR)	The CAEP Self Study Report uses the CAEP AIMS system and CAEP-provided templates to document alignment with CAEP standards R1-R5 for initial programs and RA1-RA5 for advanced programs. The CAEP SSR includes narrative and uploaded evidence for each standard and is due 9 months prior to the site visit.		

Category	Procedure
F. State Program Reports	The initial state review of the EPP's programs is completed prior to the on-site visit using an off-site review process. The off-site program review is facilitated by the team chairperson and completed four months prior to the on-site review. The initial report of the off-site review is emailed to the EPP 30 days before the site visit. The EPP may submit an addendum to the preliminary report within three weeks prior to the onsite visit.
G. CAEP Program Reports	The CAEP Self Study Report is submitted via the CAEP system nine months prior to the site review per the deadline assigned by CAEP. The CAEP team will complete an off-site review of the SSR. In response to the SSR, the CAEP team will provide a Formative Feedback Report (FFR) to the EPP 5 months prior to the site visit. The EPP will submit a Self Study Addendum (Addendum) to the CAEP team 60 days after the receipt of the FFR.
V. Pre Visit	Approximately 60 days before the visit, the state coordinator and team chair, and the CAEP team lead will meet with the EPP dean to plan the visit.
VI. Review Process	
A. Orientation to State Process/Protocol	The state coordinator and the team chair will conduct an orientation with the review team about the state accreditation process and accreditation protocol.
B. Access to Evidence	EPP's shall provide evidence that demonstrates what candidates know and are able to do. In addition, EPP's are required to provide evidence that data is used to evaluate student performance and modify programs. EPP's shall include data. <i>Evidence could include: assessments at admissions; verification of content knowledge; program assessments; follow-up studies.</i> Evidence used in the CAEP process is uploaded into CAEP's AIMS system. The OPI State Team Chairperson and State Team Coordinator are given access to evidence in the CAEP system per the MOU.
C. Off-Site Reviews	The state and CAEP teams will review evidence provided in the state ISSR and the CAEP SSR, respectively.

Category	Procedure
D. Addendums	Following reviews of the ISSR and CAEP SSR, the EPP may submit formal, supplementary documents that provide additional information, evidence, or clarification regarding specific issues identified during the accreditation review process. The Addendums are attached to the original reports without changing the original content and become a formal part of the overall documentation. The initial report of the state off-site review is emailed to the EPP 30 days before the site visit. The EPP may submit an addendum to the preliminary report within three weeks prior to the onsite visit. The CAEP team will provide a Formative Feedback Report (FFR) to the EPP 5 months prior to the site visit. The EPP will submit a Self Study Addendum (Addendum) to CAEP 60 days after the receipt of the FFR.
E. On-Site Reviews	A 2-3 day on-site review for EPP accreditation is a mandatory, in-person (or virtual) evaluation conducted every seven years by a joint team representing the BPE and the OPI and CAEP. This review verifies the accuracy of the state ISSR and CAEP SSR and evaluates evidence of program quality, continuous improvement, and candidate performance.
F. Final Conference	The CAEP Site Team Lead and the state team chair conduct a final conference with the EPP and institution representatives at the end of the site visit.
VI. After the On-Site Review	
G. State Final Report	The state final report is compiled by the team chair person in consultation with the state coordinator. The standard ratings are completed and the state final report is drafted within one month following the on-site visit.
H. CAEP Final Report	The CAEP Site Review/Final Report is compiled by the CAEP team and provided to the EPP one month after the site visit.
I. State Rejoinder	The EPP may submit an optional written response to the state report concerning errors or omissions within 30 days after the report is received and before it is submitted to the BPE for action. This response allows an EPP to state whether or not they agree with the evaluation team's findings; however, an EPP cannot include new and/or additional evidence with the rejoinder.

Category	Procedure
J. CAEP Rejoinder	The EPP may submit an optional written response to the CAEP report concerning errors or omissions within 30 days after receiving the CAEP Site Review/Final Report. The EPP cannot include new and/or additional evidence with the rejoinder. The CAEP Site Team Lead may submit a response to the CAEP Accreditation Council regarding the rejoinder. The CAEP Site Team Lead has 30 days to do so.
K. CAEP Accreditation Council Decision	The CAEP Accreditation Council reviews all materials and recommendations of the CAEP site review team and makes final decisions regarding CAEP accreditation status, areas for improvement and/or stipulations, and standards met or unmet. The CAEP Accreditation Council meets the semester after the site visit (Fall or Spring meetings) to make its determinations. Upon its decision, the CAEP Accreditation Council notifies the state for use in the final state/CAEP combined report.
L. Final Joint Accreditation Report	Following CAEP Accreditation Council determination, the state will combine the CAEP/State report to create the Final Joint Accreditation Report.
M. Action on Final Reports	The state and CAEP final reports are submitted to the BPE as an informational item, allowing the EPP to be present for discussion. The BPE will take action on the determination of the EPP's accreditation status at the next meeting. The determination will then be reported by the OPI to the EPP.
VII. Annual Reviews	
N. Regional Accreditation	EPP's shall maintain institutional accreditation to continue state accreditation.
O. Annual Reports	EPP's provide information to OPI as part of the requested Annual Report for the BPE. EPP's provide a yearly update submitted to CAEP, in which the EPP provides a summary of: (1) provider information; (2) progress on removing any areas for improvement/stipulations; (3) substantive changes; (4) links to candidate performance data on its website; (5) eight annual measures of program outcomes and impact; and (6) pathway specific progress, as requested.

Joint CAEP/State Review Accreditation Cycle - Timeline

Task	Date	Who?
EPP and CAEP schedule site visit	18 months prior to site review	EPP and CAEP
EPP submit CAEP self-study report	9 months prior to site review	EPP
CAEP Evaluation Team Assigned (State representative included)	9 months prior to site review	CAEP
State ISSRs templates sent to EPP (Endorsements ONLY)	8 months prior to site review	OPI
EPP Training/State Evaluation Team Formed	6 months prior to site review	OPI
EPP receives CAEP formative feedback report	5 months prior to site review	CAEP
Complete State ISSRs/ Review Team Training	4 months prior to onsite review	EPP to OPI OPI/Review Team
EPP submits CAEP self study addendum	60 days after formative feedback report	EPP to CAEP
State Off-site Review (Evaluation of ISSRs)	14 weeks prior to onsite review	OPI/ Review Team
Preliminary Draft State Accreditation Report	6 weeks prior to onsite review	OPI
State Addendum (Endorsements ONLY)	3 weeks prior to onsite review	EPP to OPI
CAEP and State Joint Site Review	2-3 days virtual site visit	EPP/CAEP/OPI
Final State Accreditation Report	1 month after state site review	OPI
CAEP Site Review Report	1 month after site review	CAEP
EPP submits rejoinder to CAEP	1 month after CAEP site review	EPP to CAEP

(optional)	report	
EPP submits rejoinder to State (optional)	3 weeks after final report	EPP to OPI
CAEP lead submits rejoinder response to CAEP accreditation council	1 month after rejoinder	CAEP
CAEP Accreditation Council Decision	Either fall or spring following the site review	CAEP
CAEP/State Combined Report	Following CAEP Accreditation Council determination (Spring or Fall meeting)	OPI
Final Joint Accreditation Report	3 weeks after CAEP Determination	OPI
Information Item for BPE	1st available BPE meeting following report/rejoinder	OPI/EPP to BPE
Action Item for BPE	Consecutive BPE Meeting following the info. item.	BPE

Section V: Accreditation Resources

A: Annual Report

Approved Programs Template

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA- COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Mailing Address	32 Campus Drive Missoula, MT 59812		
Website Address	www.umt.edu		
Dean	Daniel Lee, Ed.D.		
Email Address	dan.lee@umontana.edu		
Licensure Official	Kristine Steinberg		
Email Address	kristine.steinberg@mso.umt.edu		
Telephone	(406) 243-2121		
Accreditation Status	Regular Accreditation	Accrediting Entity	Board of Public Education
BPE Site Review	April 2022: Joint Review with CAEP and BPE	Required Action	None

Program/ Title	Undergrad	Graduate	Date of Initial Approval	YES if still approved or Date Discontinued	Month/ Year of Site Review
Art K-12	Major		1977	Major YES Graduate 1982, Minor 1996	April 2022
Biology	Major/ Minor	Graduate	1977	Major/ Minor YES Graduate 1982	April 2022
Business Education	Major/ Minor	Graduate	1977	Major/ Minor 2018 Graduate 1982	

Annual Educator Preparation Program Report



2025 Annual Educator Preparation Program Report

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. The Annual Accreditation Report is used to monitor and communicate the EPP's continued compliance to Montana's accreditation standards. The reported areas are as follows:

- The accreditation review schedule for the ten educator preparation programs
- The accreditation status of the EPPs, including the corresponding regional and national accreditation agencies, the initial and expiration dates of all accredited programs
- The endorsement areas offered at the EPPs
- Information demonstrating the EPP's progress and efforts in addressing Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and/or Stipulations from prior accreditation decisions
- Data on enrollment, number of completers, and completers by subject area from the EPPs

The information provided through this form will be used in conjunction with Title II information for the Board of Public Education's November 2025 meeting. Please take the time to ensure documents and submissions are updated with current information. **The form must be completed by October 31st, 2025.**

B: Good Cause Extension

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

Date Received by MT OPI:
Form GCERF (2-2026)

Good Cause Extension Request Form

Complete form along with: EPP Rationale: A formal letter from EPP leadership explaining the basis for the request.	
Submit documents via email to: crystal.andrews@mt.gov	
Educator Preparation Program:	
Requested By (Name and Title):	Contact Information (email):
Scheduled Visit Semester:	Scheduled Visit Type (e.g. Continued, First):
Requested New Visit Semester:	Requested Length of Extension: ____ one semester ____ one-year ____ two years

Basis for Requesting a Good Cause Extension*: ____ State or federal standards or legislation requiring significant programmatic change. ____ Substantive changes— CAEP Accreditation Policy V.4.01: Substantive Change (pg. 55). ____ Other extenuating circumstances such as, Act of God, natural disaster, or civil unrest.

The Montana Board of Public Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction maintain a 7-year accreditation cycle. The semester of the visit following a rescheduled visit will be based on the original scheduled visit, e.g., fall of 2025 may be the rescheduled visit request; rescheduled visit will occur during the fall of 2026. The next site accreditation visit would occur seven years from the original fall of 2025 schedule, which would be fall of 2030. <i>*The State Superintendent of Public Instruction reserves the right to approve or deny requests for Good Cause Extension and reserves the right to adjust the length of the extension based on the nature of the request. The EPP must provide sufficient justification to demonstrate need for an extension.</i>

C: State On Site Visit Agenda EXAMPLE

College Accreditation State Site Visit Date		
GENERAL INFO		
All meetings will occur in the following rooms: Site Team Work Room: Interview Rooms:		
Leadership Team	Primary Site Contact:	
IT Support	Help Desk: On-Call:	
Date		
9:30	Site Team arrives	
9:45	Tech & WIFI Check Location:	
10:00	College Leadership Team meets with Site Team upon arrival Site Team Schedule Review Location:	
10:30- 11:00	Orientation and Overview of College of Education Location:	
11:15 - 12:00	Interview: Standard Location:	Interview: Standard Location:
12:00- 1:00	Lunch	
1:00 - 2:00	Interview: Standard Location:	Interviews: Standard Location:
2:15 - 3:00	Interview: Location:	Interview: Location:
3:00- 3:15	Break	
3:15- 4:00	Interview: Location:	Interview: Location:
4:15 - 5:00	College Leadership Team Meeting with Site Team Progress of the visit and data needs Location:	

D: State Program Report Narrative SAMPLE

Number and Name of Standard:

Validating Statement:

- *Supporting materials were reviewed and interviews conducted with students and faculty (names, title, department). Brief description of what was observed with support documentation.*

Sources of Evidence:

- *Evidence gathered from general bulletin and catalog, course, syllabi, candidate portfolio, interviews with department faculty, students, cooperating teachers and others.*

Assessment Aligned to Standards:

- *Are the content topics in the assessments consistent with the standards?*
- *Do the assessments address the range of knowledge, skill, and dispositions that are delineated in the standard? Do the assessments address the majority of the standards content?*
- *Are the assessments congruent with the complexity, cognitive demands, and skill requirements described in the standards?*
- *Are scoring guides clear and are the levels of candidate proficiency distinct and appropriate?*

Evaluation:

- *Most of the required courses and aligned assessments provided in the IR meet the standards. Upon further investigation, the reviewers found no evidence to support that substandards _____ is met.*

Commendations:

Improvements:

Accreditation Recommendation:

- *Meets Standard*
- *Meets with Notation*
- *Area for Improvement*
- *Stipulation*

E: State Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSRs) EXAMPLE



Institutional Self-Study Report

10.58.502 AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION	TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INSTITUTION	
	Courses and Outcomes	Evidence/Assessments
(1) The program requires that candidates have one year (minimum 500 hours) of practical farm or agricultural-related experience within five years prior to completion of the program and that successful candidates:		
(a) demonstrate essential skills and knowledge including the scientific/technical, safety, and career information in the areas of:		
(i) agricultural, natural, and environmental resource science;		
(ii) agricultural business management and entrepreneurship;		
(iii) horticultural science;		
(iv) animal science;		
(v) crop science;		
(vi) soil science;		
(vii) food science;		
(viii) agriculture mechanical technology;		
(ix) biotechnology; and		
(x) technology applications in agriculture;		
(b) demonstrate a philosophy of career and technical education, which reflects the unique student/community and industry interaction and includes the biological, physical, and applied sciences, personal leadership, and school-to-career components of a comprehensive agricultural education program;		

F. State Definitions of Ratings

Met:

Regular accreditation for a period of seven years.

Met with Notation:

Regular accreditation with minor deviations with most of the components of a standard met. This could involve incomplete items on the Institutional Report or clarification/corrections needed. As those items are rectified, the recommendation to the BPE will reflect the current and corrected status.

Area for Improvement (AFI):

Standard is met with weakness. The site review team identified a weakness in the evidence for a standard or component. Area for Improvement should be remediated by the next accreditation cycle, and progress toward improvement is reported annually through the annual report to the OPI/BPE. During the next accreditation review, the EPP must demonstrate that the AFIs have been corrected. If the AFIs have not been corrected, a stipulation may be cited in the same area.

Stipulation:

A standard or component is not met. The site visiting team identified a deficiency related to one or more components or the BPE standard. A stipulation is of sufficient severity that a standard may be determined to be unmet. A stipulation must be addressed within two years to retain accreditation.