

UHCL Educator Certification Test Taking Policy for Graduate-Level Certification Candidates

House Bill 2205, which became effective September 1, 2015, limits the number of times a certification candidate may take a certification exam to five attempts. TEA is requiring that all EPPs implement test preparation plans for all certification candidates for every attempt of an exam in order to demonstrate that the candidates are ready to take or retake an exam.

If a candidate fails an exam five times and wants a sixth attempt of an exam, the candidate may submit a waiver to SBEC appealing for a sixth attempt. SBEC will consider the appeal during a regular board meeting, which occurs every other month. The waiver must be submitted to SBEC at least 45 days prior to the meeting date and requires detailed documentation of how a candidate has prepared for each attempt of the exam.

Graduate-level certification exams include Principal, Superintendent, School Librarian, School Counselor, Master Reading Teacher, Master Technology Teacher, Master Mathematics Teacher, and Master Science Teacher.

For most state exams, score reports are available within three days after the test date. When candidates need to retake an exam, they must register for a test date that is at least 45 days after their previous attempt of that exam. Exceptions:

1. Superintendent and School Counselor certification exams are limited-administration exams and can be taken only during designated test windows. Score reports are available 5-7 days after test administration. Test windows for these exams are set so that candidates may retake an exam during the next test administration window.
2. Master Reading Teacher, Master Mathematics Teacher, and Master Science Teacher exams are paper-based exams given twice during an academic year, with seven-day test windows. The Master Technology Teacher exam is a computer-administered test, administered two times during an academic year, with four-day test windows.

Superintendent candidates are exempt from the following test approval procedures. They will be granted approval for their first attempt of the exam upon admission to the Superintendent certification program. For subsequent exam attempts, EDLS faculty will determine remedial measures.

Test approvals will be removed for any candidates who, after one year, leave the program without having passed their required exams. See page 7 for test approval requirements for candidates who wish to take an exam one year or more after leaving the program.

The requirements listed below pertain to current candidates and candidates who have completed all coursework except practicum.

Test Attempt #1

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates must meet the following requirements before they will be given approval by the UHCL state assessments coordinator to register for the first attempt of any state certificate exam:

1. **School Counselor**: Successful completion of COUN 6534 with a score of at least 85% on the ETS paper-based School Counselor practice test.
2. **Principal**: (1) Be currently enrolled in one or more Principal certification classes at UHCL; (2) Successfully complete ADSU 6233, Principalship; and (3) Score at least 85% on the ETS paper-based Principal practice test.
3. **School Librarian**: Successful completion of 24 hours of SLIS coursework and a score of at least 85% on the ETS paper-based School Librarian practice test.
4. **Reading Specialist**: Successful completion of LLLS 6332, LLLS 6331, and LLLS 6732. Candidate may take the ETS Master Reading Teacher (MRT) practice test to prepare for the Reading Specialist exam (ETS does not provide a Reading Specialist practice test).

Contact the state assessments coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu to request test registration approval for test attempt #1. When coordinator has verified that requirements have been met, test approval will be granted. The candidate will be notified by e-mail when test registration approval has been granted.

Test Attempt #2

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates who fail a state exam on the first attempt and want to take the test a second time must complete the following tasks to receive test approval:

1. Meet all requirements for attempt #1, if not done already.
2. If you are currently enrolled in one or more courses related to your certification, you may continue to take the paper-based practice test until you earn the required 90% on it for the second attempt of the exam.
3. If you have completed all coursework required for your degree and certification except for practicum, you must take the professional preparation seminar related to your certification program (ADSU 5010, COUN 5010, LLLS 5010, or LLLS 5012).
4. While enrolled in the professional preparation seminar, (re)take the paper-based practice test and score at least 90%.
5. Identify weak competencies by studying the ETS score report.
6. Accrue at least 15 hours of studying, and log the hours on a personal study plan (PSP) form. Send the PSP to the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.

7. Receive an e-mail from the COE State Assessments Coordinator confirming your approval for the second attempt of your exam.

Test Attempt #3

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates who fail a state exam two times and want to take the exam a third time must complete the following tasks to receive test approval:

1. If you are currently enrolled as a certification-seeking student at UHCL, you may continue to take the paper-based practice test until you earn the required 90% on it for the third attempt of the exam.
2. If you have completed all coursework required for your degree and certification except for practicum, you must take/retake the professional preparation seminar related to your certification program (ADSU 5010, COUN 5010, LLS 5010, or LLS 5012).
3. While enrolled in the professional preparation seminar, take an online practice test published by ExamEdge. E-mail the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu to request access to and a promo code for the practice test. Take the practice test in Explanation Mode, and read all answer rationales as you go along. Note weak competencies.
4. Find appropriate study materials based on your weak competencies as indicated on your ETS exam score report and the ExamEdge score report.
5. Accrue at least 20 additional hours of study, and record the hours on a personal study plan (PSP).
6. Scan and send your PSP to the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.
7. Retake the ExamEdge practice test in Timed mode. You should score at least 85% on it. Send the new score report to the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.
8. Retake the ETS paper-based practice test and score at least 90%.
9. Receive an e-mail from COE State Assessments Coordinator confirming your exam approval for attempt #3.

Test Attempt #4

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates who fail a state exam three times and want to take the exam a fourth time must complete the following tasks to receive test approval:

1. If you are currently enrolled as a certification-seeking student at UHCL, you may continue to take the paper-based practice test until you earn the required 90% on it for the fourth attempt of the exam.

2. If you have completed all coursework required for your degree and certification except for practicum, you must take/retake the professional preparation seminar related to your certification program (ADSU 5010, COUN 5010, LLS 5010, or LLS 5012).
3. While enrolled in the professional preparation seminar, take a computer-administered practice test in Bayou Building 3608 computer lab during open hours (M-Th: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Fri & Sat: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Sign in at the front desk and use UHCL login on TExES-designated workstation.
 - Take this practice test in “study mode” first.
 - Read through all flash cards and print out any that need further study (may print up to 50 pages in computer lab).
 - Note all weak competencies.
2. Find appropriate study materials based on your weak competencies.
3. Accrue at least 25 additional hours of study, and record the hours on a personal study plan (PSP).
4. Scan and send your PSP to the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.
5. Retake the computer-administered practice test in “Timed mode” until you score at least 85% on it. Send the new score report to the State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.
6. Retake the ETS paper-based practice test and score at least 95%.
7. Receive an e-mail from COE State Assessments Coordinator confirming your exam approval for attempt #3.

Note: There is no computer-administered school librarian practice test, so school librarian candidates must take the paper-based practice test.

Test Attempt #5—Final Attempt

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates who fail a state exam four times and want to attempt the exam a fifth time must complete the following tasks to receive test approval:

1. Meet all requirements for test attempts 1, 2, 3, and 4, if not done already.
2. If you are currently enrolled as a certification-seeking student at UHCL, you may continue to take the paper-based practice test until you earn the required 90% on it for the fifth attempt of the exam.
3. If you have completed all coursework required for your degree and certification except for practicum, you must take/retake the professional preparation seminar related to your certification program (ADSU 5010, COUN 5010, LLS 5010, or LLS 5012).

4. Meet with your faculty advisor to develop a study plan. Keep a log of all test preparation activity on a personal study plan (PSP) and accrue at least 30 hours of test preparation. Scan and e-mail the PSP to the COE State Assessments Coordinator at stateassessments@uhcl.edu.
5. Once all of the above has been completed, candidates must appeal by e-mail to the SOE associate dean for a fifth and final attempt. The appeal should be in writing and contain full documentation of all test scores and test preparation.
6. Candidates must turn in a copy of all evidence of test prep and a copy of the e-mail response from the associate dean to the UHCL state assessments coordinator. When coordinator has verified that all requirements have been met, test approval will be granted. Coordinator will e-mail candidate when test approval has been granted. Score on the fifth attempt must be 240 to pass. If candidate scores between 235 and 240 on the fifth attempt, s/he may consider applying for a waiver from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

Test Attempt #6 Which Requires a Waiver Request to TEA/SBEC

All UHCL graduate-level certification candidates who fail a state exam five times and want to seek a waiver from TEA/SBEC to take the exam a sixth time must:

- Appeal to the College of Education's Associate Dean for permission to complete and submit a waiver.
- Meet with a College of Education faculty and/or staff member to complete the waiver application, following TEA's instructions and specifications, which are:

Any UHCL candidate seeking certification must pass the appropriate TExES and shall not retake an exam more than four times, unless the limitation is waived for good cause. The burden of proof shall be upon the candidate to demonstrate good cause in one of the following ways:

1. Candidate's highest score on an exam must be within one conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) of passing and candidate has completed 50 clock hours of educational activities.
2. Candidate's highest score on an examination is within two CSEMs of passing and the candidate has completed 100 clock hours of educational activities.
3. Candidate's highest score on an examination is within three CSEMs of passing and the candidate has completed 150 clock hours of educational activities.
4. Candidate's highest score on an examination is not within three CSEMs of passing and the candidate has completed 200 clock hours of educational activities.
5. If candidate's CSEM is not appropriate for an examination, the TEA staff will convene a panel of experts to review the candidate's performance on the five most recent examinations, identify the deficit competency or competencies, and determine the number of clock hours of educational activities required.

Note: List of average CSEM by test code is attached.

Educational activities are defined as:

1. Institutes, workshops, seminars, conferences, interactive distance learning, video conferencing, online activities, undergraduate courses, graduate courses, training programs, in-service, or staff development given by an approved provider or sponsor.
2. Being directly related to the knowledge and skills included in the certification examination competency or competencies in which the candidate answered less than 70% of competency questions correctly. The formula for identifying a deficit competency is the combined total of correct answers for each competency on the five most recent examinations divided by the combined total of questions for each competency on the five most recent examinations.
3. Documentation of educational activities that a candidate must submit includes:
 - a. The provider, sponsor, or program's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. The TEA staff may contact EPPs to confirm learning activity documentation.
 - b. The name of the educational activity (e.g., course title, course number).
 - c. The competency or competencies addressed by the educational activity.
 - d. The provider, sponsor, or program's description of the educational activity (e.g., syllabus, course outline, program of study).
 - e. The provider, sponsor, or program's verification of the dates of participation in the educational activity (e.g., transcript, certificate of completion).
 - f. The provider, sponsor or program's verification of the number of clock hours completed for the educational activity that demonstrates the candidate mastered at least 70% of the knowledge and skills included in the identified deficit competency or competencies (e.g., transcript, benchmarks, structured assessments, preparatory examination results, certificate of completion).
4. To request a waiver of the four-retake limitation, a candidate must meet the following requirements:
 - a. The candidate is otherwise eligible to take an examination. A candidate seeking a certificate based on completion of an EPP must have the approval of an EPP to request a waiver.
 - b. The candidate pays the non-refundable waiver request fee of \$160.
 - c. The candidate requests the waiver of the limitation in writing on forms developed by the TEA staff.
 - d. The request for the waiver is postmarked not earlier than:
 - i. 90 calendar days after an unsuccessful attempt at the fourth retake of an examination; or
 - ii. 180 calendar days after the date of the most recent denied waiver of the limitation request; or
 - iii. One calendar year after the date of the most recent unsuccessful examination attempt that was the result of the most recently approved request for waiver of the limitation.
5. The TEA staff shall administratively approve each application that meets the criteria specified above.
6. An applicant who does not meet the above-stated criteria may appeal to the SBEC for a final determination of good cause. A determination by the SBEC is final and may not be appealed.
7. Applicant must mail the waiver to TEA and ensure that SBEC receives it at least six weeks before the scheduled SBEC meeting. The remaining 2017-2018 SBEC meetings are as follows:

March 2, 2018
May 18, 2018
August 3, 2018
October 5, 2018
December 7, 2018

TEST APPROVAL POLICY FOR CANDIDATES WHO GRADUATED WITHOUT PASSING THEIR REQUIRED EXAM(S) AND WANT TEST APPROVAL ONE YEAR OR MORE LATER

Former candidates who graduated without taking/passing their required exam(s) must complete the following tasks:

1. Re-enroll at UHCL as a non-degree, certification-only candidate.
2. (Re)-take test preparation course (ADSU 5010, COUN 5010, LLLS 5010, LLLS 5012, or EDLS 7010) and any other coursework required by program faculty.
3. While taking the test preparation course, take and pass the ETS practice test with an 85% and perform a score analysis.
4. Follow the test preparation sequence for current candidates at the appropriate point, depending on how many times exam has previously been attempted.