

The California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA)

Frequently Asked Questions

The information presented in this guide is meant to serve as introductory information. After reading this document, candidates should have a good overview of the CalTPA. Much of the information presented in this guide is taken from materials provided by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

1. What is the Teaching Performance Assessment?

The CalTPA is a new assessment requirement for all teacher candidates studying for a Preliminary teaching credential. The assessment is designed to give candidates the opportunity to develop, refine, and demonstrate teaching knowledge, skills, and abilities during the teacher preparation program. The TPA is embedded in your coursework and is designed to be both formative and summative in its usage.

The CalTPA was developed over a two-year period. Staff and consultants from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) led the development of the CalTPA. Educators (both K-12 and Teacher Education faculty) served on various teams that informed the development of the CalTPA.

2. What is the CalTPA designed to measure?

The CalTPA is designed to measure aspects of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE). The TPEs are a set of standards that clearly outline what beginning teachers should know and be able to do before receiving a Preliminary credential. Each task on the CalTPA measures aspects of a number of TPEs and many TPEs are measured in more than one task. The TPEs are measured holistically within each TPA.

3. Is the CalTPA the only way I can provide evidence for my competency in the TPEs?

No, it is only one component. While the CalTPA is an important assessment instrument, candidates and faculty members in Teacher Education programs must keep in mind that the CalTPA is only one way of demonstrating a candidate's knowledge and skills related to the TPEs.

4. Can I be recommended for a CA preliminary credential if I demonstrate competence in the TPEs in other ways other than passing the CalTPA?

No. A candidate must pass all four tasks of the CalTPA in order to be recommended for a preliminary teaching credential even if he/she can produce other evidence from their coursework that they have competence in the TPEs. Passing is considered earning a total score of 12 with no individual score lower than 3.

5. How many tasks must a candidate complete for the CalTPA?

Candidates must complete and pass four tasks. These tasks are separate but are inter-related. Each task was designed with a specific sequence in mind. As the tasks increase in complexity, candidates are asked to make more choices and decisions in response to the prompt, as well as provide more detailed evidence to support those choices and decisions.

6. Is there a fee for taking the CalTPA at PUC?

Yes, there is. The cost is \$100 per TPA which is charged to your student account each quarter you register for a Student Teaching Seminar. The lab fee covers the cost of paying assessors to grade each TPA and other expenses associated with the TPA program.

7. What else do I have to do to take the CalTPA?

Information about the TPA will be given at during the mandatory Autumn Quarter Orientation meeting. You will actually write the TPA as part of your ST Seminar class requirements. Be sure to pay special attention to deadlines and submission guidelines.

8. At PUC, how do I take the CalTPA if I'm a Multiple Subject or Dual Candidate?

Each TPA will be taught within a student teaching seminar. The seminars are aligned with a methods credential course whose content matches the emphasis of that TPA, and with either a field experience where the TPEs are observed and practiced or with field observations embedded in the methods course.

Autumn Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter	Student Teaching Quarter
EDUC 353 Beginning Reading & Writing	EDUC 345 Elementary Math & Science	EDUC 356 Intermediate Reading & Writing	EDUC 493 Full-Time Student Teaching
EDUC 493 Field Experience	EDUC 493 Field Experience	Field Observations embedded in EDUC 356	
EDUC 491 ST Seminar	EDUC 492 ST Seminar	EDUC 490 ST Seminar	Participation in a weekly Student Teaching Seminar is a requirement of the Student Teaching experience. The final TPA is part of this seminar.
TPA Task: Designing Instruction Note: You must pass Designing Instruction with a score of 3 or higher before submitting next task.	TPA Task: Assessing Learning Note: Must pass Assessing Learning with a score of 3 or higher before submitting next task.	TPA Task: Subject Specific Pedagogy Note: Must pass Subject Specific Pedagogy with a score of 3 or higher before starting Student Teaching and the final task.	TPA Task: Culminating Teaching Experience Note: Must pass with a score of 3 or higher.

9. At PUC, how do I take the CalTPA if I'm a Single Subject Candidate?

Each TPA will be taught within a student teaching seminar. The seminars are aligned with a credential course whose content matches the emphasis of that TPA and with a field experience where the TPEs are observed and practiced.

Autumn Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter	Student Teaching Quarter
EDUC 360 Introduction to Secondary Methods	EDUC 361 Middle School Teaching Strategies	EDUC 362 Secondary Content Area Teaching Strategies	EDUC 494 Full-Time Student Teaching
Field Observations embedded in EDUC 360	EDUC 494 1st Field Experience	EDUC 494 2- Field Experience	
EDUC 490 ST Seminar	EDUC 491 ST Seminar	EDUC 492 ST Seminar	Participation in a weekly Student Teaching Seminar is a requirement of the Student Teaching experience. The final TPA is part of this seminar.
TPA Task: Subject Specific Pedagogy Note: You must pass Subject Specific Pedagogy with a score of 3 or higher before submitting next	TPA Task: Designing Instruction Note: Must pass Designing Instruction with a score of 3 or higher before submitting next task.	TPA Task: Assessing Learning Note: Must pass Assessing Learning with a score of 3 or higher before starting Student Teaching and the final task.	TPA Task: Culminating Teaching Experience Note: Must pass with a score of 3 or higher.

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10. What kind of support should I expect to receive as I complete the CalTPA?

The CalTPA is an example of an “open assessment system”. This means that candidates can ask assistance from any faculty member in the department of Education. You may also seek assistance from colleagues and practitioners in the field, and from the Teaching and Learning Center, located on the PUC Campus. You will be trained specifically how to write each TPA in the quarterly Student Teaching Seminar. Despite all the assistance, however, you will be asked to sign a statement certifying that the responses to the CalTPA task are a product of your own effort. In other words, while you may seek assistance from others, it is required that you will complete the final writing of the response.

11. How can I prepare for the CalTPA?

The coursework within your credential program will prepare you for the TPAs. You should become very familiar with the different CalTPA tasks by reading all the materials that are made available. Furthermore, faculty members in the Education department are familiar with the CalTPA tasks. Faculty members will prepare candidates for the TPA tasks by giving assignments and activities in their classes that serve as practice exercises for the CalTPA.

12. What materials will I have to complete the TPA?

Candidates will need to purchase a copy of the handbook produced by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The handbook provides an overview of the CalTPA tasks, guidelines, and directions & is available at the bookstore. One handbook is all you need for all four tasks. Candidates will also be provided access to benchmark responses. These benchmark papers, posted on D2L, give examples of responses that received a score of “4”. Templates for the CalTPA tasks are posted on D2L. You will download the tasks onto your computer and type your responses to the prompts.

13. How do I submit my TPA responses? When are they due?

Submit your TPA in hardcopy form to Julie Jensen, TPA Coordinator by the 5:00 p.m. due date. The TPA office is located in the basement of the Education Department. Specific submission instructions vary from task to task. Detailed instructions will be given to you by your instructor. Consult the calendar posted in the Education Department, on D2L, and in the TPA Handbook, Chapter 8, for important submission deadlines. Late submissions will be scored on the next scoring day. No extensions. No exceptions.

14. What are the four CalTPAs all about?

Following is a brief description of each task:

1. Subject Specific Pedagogy Task
 - a. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of principles of content-specific pedagogy and developmentally appropriate pedagogy.
 - b. Candidates will respond to scenarios and will be asked to respond to questions related to assessment, developmentally appropriate pedagogy, adaptation of content for English language learners, and adaptation of content for students with special needs.
2. Designing Instruction Task
 - a. Candidates demonstrate that they are able to collect information about their students and are able to plan a lesson based on these student characteristics.
 - b. Candidates will create lesson adaptations for English language learners and a child with special needs.
3. Assessing Learning Task
 - a. Candidates will demonstrate the ability to plan a unit of study and plan and administer an assessment.
 - b. Candidates will give an assessment, make assessment adaptations for students with specific learning needs and then diagnose student needs based on the assessment.

4. Culminating Teaching Activity Task
 - a. Candidates will design a lesson, make lesson adaptations, implement the lesson and analyze evidence of student learning.
 - b. Candidates will video-record their lesson and include a paper response.

15. How will the responses to the CalTPA be assessed?

Independent trained assessors will score candidate responses. Assessors must participate in intensive training before they can score candidate responses and they must recalibrate on a regular basis to remain assessors. Additionally, trained professors in the Education Department may also score responses. Note that faculty will not be scoring the students in the TPA Seminar which they teach.

16. What score must I get to pass the CalTPA?

Each CalTPA task is scored on a 4-point scale. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has determined the passing score for the CalTPA must total 12 points. At PUC candidates must score a 3 or 4, with a total of 12, on each TPA to pass.

17. Is my score on the CalTPA recorded on my official PUC transcript?

No. You will have a separate CalTPA record that will be kept internally in the Education Department at PUC. You will have access to this record which contains your actual scores for each task of the CalTPA. You may request, in writing, a copy of your TPA record from the TPA Coordinator.

18. Will a prospective employer have access to my CalTPA scores?

Prospective employers are not entitled to have access to the actual scores of the candidate for each task. An employer may request to see the scores, but candidates are not required to share their scores. Remember, the actual scores are kept in an internal document and these are not on your official PUC transcript. If you wish to share your TPA scores you may request, in writing, a copy of your TPA record from the TPA Coordinator.

19. Is it possible to retake a CalTPA task if I do not pass it the first time? Is there an additional fee?

Yes. You can write a CalTPA task up to three times. If you do not pass the CalTPA on your first attempt, your course instructor will coach you on ways you can improve your work. You must resubmit by the posted deadline and pay a \$50 reassessment fee. If you do not pass on the second attempt, you must participate in another remediation session, pay a \$50 reassessment fee, and resubmit a third time by the published deadline.

20. What if I do not agree with the score I received for a CalTPA task? Can I appeal?

Yes. Candidates who do not pass a CalTPA task can appeal their scores. For more information on the appeal process, see Chapter 8 in the Candidate Handbook.

21. What happens if I still do not pass a CalTPA task after my third attempt?

Course instructors and tutors at the Teaching Learning Center on campus are committed to helping students pass the TPA. However, if you do not pass after the third attempt, you will be required to withdraw from the credential program. See the Candidate Handbook, Chapter 8, for more information.

22. How do I receive my score for my TPA?

The TPA Coordinator will send you an email informing you that your TPA score is ready. Email correspondence related to the TPAs is considered official notice. If you received a score of "1" or "2", you will need to see the TPA Coordinator for feedback prior to resubmitting your response.

23. If I have any more questions, who can I contact?

You may contact you Student Teaching Seminar instructors or Julie Jensen, TPA Coordinator.
jjensen@puc.edu, Office: 707-965-6649