New Business Item 26-12
Introduced November 13, 2026

TITLE: Approval of a One-Year Extension of University of Hawai'i at Hilo School of Education Accreditation

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The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) approves a one-year accreditation extension for the University of Hawai'i at Hilo's (UHH) School of Education (SOE) from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). This one-year extension will expire in June 2029.

Upon approval of this New Business Item (NBI), UHH SOE faculty must seek approval of their extension from AAQEP. A copy of the approval extension letter must be submitted to the HTSB Executive Director or designee and included in the UHH SOE HTSB Annual Report.

UHH SOE accreditation review should be based on the UHH SOE Initial and Advanced (i.e., add a teaching field) licensure programs and its ability to meet the current version of the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), HTSB policies, AAQEP's partnership agreement, and AAQEP accreditation standards.

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Rationale/ Background

The Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) §8-54-21(1) Procedure for Continuing Review states,

> *It is the unit's responsibility to apply for renewal of state approval and submit all documentation required for the board's review at least six (6) months in advance of the expiration of provisional approval.*

The UHH SOE provided the attached letter and rationale for their extension request. Below is their accreditation timeline

- November 16, 2018 - Provisional state approval of Teacher Leader Program (NBI 18-12).
- January 1, 2022 - Granted state approval through June 30, 2028 (NBI 21-06).
- October 14, 2022 - AAQEP accreditation was modified to add the Teacher Leader Added Field program (NBI 22-31).
- January 17, 2025 - Received HTSB approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Educational Science in Elementary Education (NBI 24-20).
- March 28, 2025 - Approved modification of Bachelor of Arts in "Educational Studies" in Elementary Education (NBI 24-20 Revised).
- April 2028 – UHH SOE submits Quality Assurance Report (e.g., self-study) to AAQEP.
- June 2028 - UHH SOE Current State Approval expiration (NBI 21-06).
- September 2028 - AAQEP Site Visit.

- December 2028 - AAQEP decision and send accreditation documents to HTSB for review.
- March/April 2029 - HTSB Board Accreditation Decision.

Cost:
All costs are included in the current staff job duties/responsibilities.

Submitted by: Jonathan Gillentine
Referred to: Teacher Education Committee

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
THE HEART of OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY
UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I
HILO

November 2, 2026

Dr. Mitzie Higa, HTSB Interim Executive Director

CC: Dr. Gillentine, HTSB Board Chair,
Dr. Jamie Simpson Steele, Teacher Education Committee Chair
Dr. Jennifer Padua, HTSB Licensing Specialist
Dr. Karen Lowenstein, AAQEP President

Aloha Dr. Higa,

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo respectfully requests a one year extension on our accreditation.

Rationale for extension: A timeline with six (6) month advance submission of all documentation to the HTSB currently places the AAQEP site visit for UHH in Fall 2027. Our site visit was initially scheduled for Spring 2028, however, our accreditation is only valid through Spring 2028, so it has been moved up to Fall 2027. There have been several major events that have occurred within the School of Education at UH Hilo that have significantly impacted our ability to meet this deadline.

1) We had one post-baccalaureate teacher preparation at the time of our initial accreditation. Since that time, we have added two additional programs: our MED Teacher Leader credential (approved in 2022), and our undergraduate elementary preparation program (EEP) (approved in 2025). Thus, we now have three programs we need to submit for reaccreditation, which is substantially more work than our previous submission, especially given the major changes AAQEP has made to their framework objectives and requirements since our initial application.

2) We have had substantial changes in our faculty, which has impacted our capacity. While we gained two new positions, we are down capacity by almost half, with two retirements and two departures over the past 2 years. Of the 6 current faculty, 2 are new junior faculty, hired over the past year and who are new to our accreditation processes. We have four open searches at this time, three faculty and one education specialist. Even with hiring of lecturers, all of our faculty currently have teaching and/or service overloads this school year. As such, there is limited time and capacity to complete our two self-studies for AAQEP and the collaborative processes that AAQEP embraces cannot include our new faculty and staff members, who will not be fully hired and onboarded until Fall 2027 at the earliest.

3) At the same time, we launched our first undergraduate major in Education Studies in Fall 2026 and our undergraduate elementary teacher preparation program which will start in Spring 2027, both of which have become popular quickly. To date, we have 56 majors and 19 minors, up 50% in just one year. We are currently reviewing applications for our first cohort. If our extension is approved, we will be able to include initial outcomes for our first cohort of completers in our reaccreditation report.

Length of extension and final date: We therefore, respectfully request a one-year extension on our current accreditation.

Timeline of proposed accreditation activities:

- November 16, 2018 - Provisional state approval of Teacher Leader Program (NBI 18-12).
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Affected pathways (Initial and Advanced Licensure):

- Post-Bachelorette teacher preparation program (MAT) for initial licensure
- Undergraduate Elementary Education Preparation Program (EEP) for initial licensure
- Master of Education Degree (M.Ed.) with Teacher Leader credential for advanced licensure

Sincerely,

Dr. Diane Barrett

Diane Barrett, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Teacher Education