

TIMS FAQs
For Educational Specialist, Administrative Applications and
PDE Endorsements

If you are reading this document, it means that you are on the exciting path to becoming an Educational Specialist, an Administrator or an Educational Specialist in Pennsylvania! In order to complete the certification process, you must learn how to use TIMS (Teacher Information Management System), the online certification application program.

If you have completed your coursework in School Psychology, Counseling Psychology, the Social Emotional Behavioral Wellness endorsement or Educational Leadership, you will use this system to complete your application. Once you have completed your program, you should begin the process of applying to PDE for certification. During this process, your Program Director/Coordinator will review your student records and send confirmation of program completion to the Office of Professional Certification (OPC) for final approval in the TIMS system. Please read this document to learn how and when this process begins for you.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Please review the following guidelines:

Become familiar with TIMS. Review the online guide on the PDE webpage.

Know what is required. Have you checked that you have completed all of the requirements of your program, took all tests, etc.? Ultimately, the question is, will Lehigh be able to approve your application?

Apply after you receive your final GPA from the Registrar's Office. *Before you begin*, you can register for an account with PDE, get your Professional Personnel I.D., or PPID, from the PDE website, check your citizenship status and establish your profile with PDE.

Read each screen carefully. Sometimes we think that we can review items on a website quickly. Don't make that assumption with the TIMS system. Make sure you are reviewing everything on each screen. If you are unsure about something, click on the "Home" button at the top of the screen and log out. The system will save everything you have done until you get an answer.

Upload (one large document) or mail your required proof items. PDE will indicate what, if anything, you need to send with your application. In general, most of our applications do not require

back-up or proof items. Pay attention to the last screen. If it says “other”, you don’t need to send anything. If PDE needs something from you, they will ask you directly via email or telephone.

Check for messages and/or status changes periodically. You should add a reminder on your calendar to check TIMS weekly for any updates.

Once approved, print your unofficial certification from the TIMS home page. PDE does not mail certificates any more, so don’t wait by the mailbox.

FAQs & OTHER INFORMATIVE ITEMS

Do I need to take the PAPA or Praxis basic skills tests?

NO! The TIMS application is geared towards undergraduate students. You, as a post-graduate student do not need basic skills tests.

What is the cover sheet? Sometimes, you need to send additional documents to the state. When you reach the end of the application, there will be a reminder to check for additional documents required and to then print the cover sheet. At this point, you can upload items requested (see next question) or prepare to mail them. Review the cover sheet listing carefully; gather and send copies of the items needed to PDE.

What do I do when I have more than one document to upload? Combine them into one document and submit as one upload BEFORE you hit the submit button at the end of the application. If you don’t upload before you hit submit, you will have to mail copies of your proof documents to PDE with the cover sheet. That could add two to four weeks to the application processing time.

My application states “Pending Documentation or Scanning”. What does that mean? Review the application again on TIMS. You may need a professional certificate. In the case of School Psychology, Lehigh is certifying you and you do not already have a psychologist license. At the end of the application, be sure to print out the cover sheet and in the box on the right that corresponds to “Professional License in Area”, write the following: “The School Psychologist is my initial certificate. Test results have been submitted.” If you cannot determine why the application states “Pending Documentation or Scanning”, call the TIMS hotline 1-717-PA-TEACH for assistance or submit a ticket within the TIMS system. There may be a glitch in the system that would just need to be fixed with a call.

My cover sheet changed! Why? As PDE receives information from you, the items are removed from the application file and cover sheet. This means that you are one step closer to being reviewed!

How soon does Lehigh get my application to review?

The Program Coordinator will complete a checklist that is signed by your Program Director. This is a list of the program requirements and items required by PDE, including an affirmation of your good moral character. They will then send this checklist to the OPC for review and final TIMS approval. These applications are reviewed on a weekly basis.

How long does it take to process my application?

After the OPC approves your application, it is up to you and PDE! If you have to send proof documents, respond to PDE's representative and send them immediately. Upon receipt, the state sends them to be microfilmed and added to your file. When everything has been received, the file will go to the "Awaiting Evaluation" status and will be assigned to an evaluator. Unofficially, you could wait 12 weeks if your application is perfectly submitted. If you have missed something or did not send a proof document in, it will take much longer.

If my application is correct, is it completed faster? Yes. If there is anything missing from your application, it will delay processing. If everything is there when the evaluator reviews it, s/he can approve it immediately.

If my application is incorrect, what happens? The evaluator will send you a message in TIMS and by email. Sometimes, s/he may call you to let you know what needs to be fixed. Check your TIMS and email messages at least once a week while you are waiting for approval.

What if I realize I made a mistake, but I already hit the SUBMIT button?

You have to call PDE between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. any day of the week. In addition, PDE now has a chat feature that is better because it is quicker and you can get a transcript sent to your email address for your records. The phone lines and chats are answered by just a few people, so please be patient and understanding with the representatives. It is not unusual to be on "Perma-hold" for an hour or more, so be prepared to do something else while you are waiting for help. Once you get help on the phone, the representative can review your file and reset it to incomplete for you to fix.

Do I need to send transcripts? No. You are attending a Pennsylvania-approved educator-preparation program, so PDE does not require transcripts. If this appears on your cover sheet or application as required, write a note in the comments box "not required."

Do I need to add work experience to my application? For Ed Leadership students, yes. PA requires you to have several years of experience of classroom teaching and/or other experience. Enter the information as requested. If you have in-state experience, there will be an opportunity for that LEA to approve your employment information. If it is out of state experience, you will need to have that entity complete and sign the PDE 338V. That will need to be sent to PDE once it is completed.

Is my GPA needed on the application? You need to have your **final GPA** to complete the education section on the application.

How do I make sure that Lehigh is able to review my application? In the education section, you will be asked for your undergraduate degree information. Input your undergrad institution and major. The system will ask, “Did you complete the PDE-Approved Educator Preparation Program(s) for the subject area at this institution?” Answer NO.

You are applying for your certification through Lehigh, so you must then add Lehigh as your teacher (or other) preparation program. After you enter Lehigh and your major, select YES to the question, “Did you complete the PDE-Approved Educator Preparation Program(s) for the subject area at this institution?” If you do not identify Lehigh as the institution that prepared you to teach, then we will never see your application. It will sit on the PDE website forever!

How do I submit my application? Once you think you have completed all aspects of the application, click the Home button and go back and review it. If you can upload any of the Proof Documents that may be required, upload them before you complete the application. Once everything is as complete as possible, go back and hit the Submit button. At that time, it will go into the queue for review once it is complete.

What is the date of graduation and how do I find it?

If you’re completing your program in the Spring, use May 20.

If you’re completing your program in the Fall, use December 20.

If you’re completing your program in the Summer, use August 20.

Are there any other sources that I can use before I begin my application?

Yes. Review the PDE website for user guides and other FAQs. In addition, the Office of Professional Certification will be glad to assist you with your application. Please call Lisa Collins at 610-758-2805 to schedule an appointment.

*If you need help with the information above or with your TIMS application, please feel free to contact me at 610-758-2805 or lisacollins@lehigh.edu.
Lisa Collins, Director, Office of Professional Certification*