

**California Postsecondary
Education Commission**

**Improving Teacher
Quality Federal Grants
Program**



Administrative Handbook

Table of Contents

<i>Page</i>	<i>Section</i>
1	Letter of Introduction
2	Project Cycle Overview
4	Chronology of Grant Processes and Associated Forms
6	General Guidelines and Tips
	Keep us Informed
7	Contact Information
	Communication
10	Fiscal Processes
	Grant Funding
	Requesting Funds
11	Budget Revisions
12	Assessment and Dissemination Fees
13	End of Project year Processes
	Carryover Requests
14	Annual Fiscal Reports
	50 Percent Certification
15	Fiscal Reconciliation of Project Year
16	Summary of Expenditures by Project Year
	No-Cost Extension Requests
17	Project Closure Form

18	Program Monitoring and Reporting Processes
	Annual Project Directors' Meetings
19	Midyear Program Reports
20	Annual Program Reports
21	Additional reports and responses
22	Program Evaluation (A & D) Team
24	Conclusion
	Staff Contact Information
	Appendix
25	Appendix A – Grant Activation Form
26	Appendix B – Request for Distribution of Funds Form
27	Appendix C – Budget Revision Form
28	Appendix D – Annual Fiscal Report
29	Appendix E – 50 Percent Certification Form
31	Appendix F – Carryover Request Budget Form
32	Appendix G – Summary of Expenditures by Project Year
33	Appendix H – No-Cost Extension Request Budget Form
34	Appendix I – Project Closure Form
35	Appendix J – Midyear Report
36	Appendix K – Annual Program Report

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) has administered a federal program to help improve the quality of teaching in California for more than two decades. As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001—the federal law that supports elementary and secondary education—the current Improving Teacher Quality Program is a key tool in helping California teachers support the achievement of all of California’s K-12 students. It mobilizes the expertise of college and university educators throughout the state to provide high quality professional development that has served thousands of teachers and their students.

This handbook is designed to provide basic information on program administration for project directors, financial staff, and others involved in the management of projects that are funded through Improving Teacher Quality Program competitions. We hope that it serves as a handy reference tool, although it will not answer every question nor address every potential administrative issue relating to the program. This first edition will continue to be refined until reasonably final, and the handbook itself will be dynamic, changing as program needs require in the future. Considerable credit is due ITQ Program Assistant Natalie Sidarous for her excellent work to develop and refine this handbook.

In addition to using this handbook for reference, project personnel are encouraged to call or e-mail the Improving Teacher Quality Program staff whenever you have a question or concern. The Improving Teacher Quality website is also a resource for information on the program and its activities, and all forms referenced in this handbook will be easily accessible in PDF and other formats on that site. Our goal is to work with you for the smoothest, most effective operation of every project, consistent with federal and state law and good administrative practice.

Karen Humphrey, Administrator
Improving Teacher Quality Program
California Postsecondary Education Commission

Project Cycle Overview

The Improving Teacher Quality project cycle actually begins with the start of the competitive process that results in the awarding of project grants. Grants are awarded to California institutions of higher education (IHEs) that submit proposals and meet all the requirements of federal and state law and are determined to be worthy of funding through a competitive process. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) tries to hold such a competitive process (a Request for Proposals or RFP) in most years in order to disburse the funds it receives under Title II-A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The process begins with the creation of a Request for Proposals that is distributed to IHEs, school districts, and other interested parties. It specifies the nature of the projects to be funded and outlines the requirements for the submission of a proposal and the desired goals that projects should address, as well as a detailed budget for what the proposer expects to spend in each project year.

In the ensuing weeks, potential proposers have an opportunity to review the RFP, attend technical assistance meetings around the state to get more information, and prepare a proposal for submission. All proposals that are received by the deadline and meet the minimum qualifications are read by panels of expert educators who score them and recommend to the program staff which projects should be awarded funding. Often, the institutions that are finalists are invited to interviews that lead to selection of actual recipients. Recommendations for which projects to fund are made by the reader panels to the ITQ Program Administrator, who reviews them and submits recommendations to the Executive Director of CPEC for a final decision. At that time, award letters are mailed to the awardees. The actual administration of the grant cycle begins on the effective date of funding specified in the award letter.

In most instances, CPEC funds grants for more than one year, specifying the number of years and the amount of money that may be used in each year based on budgets submitted with the proposals. Generally, the grant automatically continues from year to year if it is progressing satisfactorily and unless the project director is

notified otherwise. However, the actual allocation of funds is handled on a year-to-year basis, closing out each year, as explained later in this handbook.

The following information is a chronology and brief description of the normal processes that are carried out during the life of the grant. Each will be discussed in greater detail in the appropriate sections to follow. All of the forms referenced in this handbook are available for downloading on the CPEC Improving Teacher Quality website: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/FederalPrograms/TeacherQuality.asp>.

Chronology of Grant Processes and Associated Forms

(Detailed explanations are provided in the sections indicated)

Grant Award (See Fiscal Processes Section)

Award Letter – Formal notice that an award has been granted to the institution of higher education.

Grant Conditions – Terms and conditions under which the grant is accepted by the institution of higher education.

Grant Activation – Activates grant and authorizes commencement of spending in accordance with the approved budget.

Requests for Funding (RDFs) (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Request for Distribution of Funds (RDF) – CPEC form used quarterly to request reimbursement for current expenditures.

Midyear Report (see Program Monitoring and Reporting Processes Section)

Midyear Program Report – Required approximately midway through the first (and sometimes other) project years. Collects data on the projects' progress toward realizing goals set forth in proposal.

Grant Revision (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Notice of Grant Revision (NGR) – Document completed by CPEC and copied to project when the award is altered. These are issued when grants are augmented (such as for the Assessment and Dissemination billing); when funds are carried over; when project end date is changed; when the allocation for the entire grant or any year is revised; or as otherwise necessary.

Assessment and Dissemination fee billing (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) Invoice – Sent annually to each project to cover Assessment and Dissemination fees.

Budget Revision Requests (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Budget Revision Form – When changes in a project's approved budget are needed, a revised budget for the year in question is submitted on a CPEC Budget Revision Form (spreadsheet) to CPEC. In some cases, advance permission to reallocate funds is required. Budget revisions within a single year do not require Grant Revisions.

Annual Program Reporting (see Program Monitoring and Reporting Processes Section)

Annual Program Report – Narrative and data report from each project describing activities and progress toward goals in the last Project Year.

Annual Fiscal Reporting (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Annual Fiscal Report – Report from each project describing final expenditures for the last project year.

50 Percent Certification Form – Certification from each project that no one of the three partners in the grant has received 50 percent or more of the year's allocation.

Carryover Funds (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Carryover Applications – If surplus funds are available after the close of a given project year, the project may apply for a carryover of funds by following the application process described in the Fiscal Processes Section. A Carryover Budget (spreadsheet) form must be submitted.

Fiscal Year Closeout (see Fiscal Processes Section)

Summary of Expenditures by Project Year (SEPY) – Document provided to each project by CPEC after their Annual Fiscal Report has been received and reviewed. (Fiscal Process)

Close of Project (see Fiscal Processes Section)

No-Cost Grant Extensions – As the end of the last project year approaches, if surplus funds are anticipated and justification can be made for continuing activities beyond the end date, projects may normally apply for a No-Cost Extension of the grant. In addition to justification, a No-cost Extension budget spreadsheet must be submitted.

Project Closure Report – When all reports have been reviewed after the close of the last year of a grant and all fiscal records have been reconciled, CPEC will provide the project with a Project Closure Report.

General Guidelines and Tips

Before we describe the specific processes utilized by the ITQ Program, there are some tips and general information that, if followed, will help your project run more smoothly and allow you to concentrate more on meeting the goals of the project than on administrative minutiae.

A word about terminology: this handbook is written informally but will utilize certain terminology on a consistent basis. "ITQ Program" refers to the overall Title II-A Improving Teacher Quality Program operated by the California Postsecondary Education Commission. When we refer to "ITQ Program" or "Program (staff/administrator/office)", we are referring to the CPEC staff and office responsible for ITQ (where "CPEC" is substituted, it means staff assigned to the ITQ Program). "Project" and "Project Director" are used with reference to the grants awarded by the ITQ Program. Whenever the term "project" is used, it refers specifically to the university/K-12 partnership that receives a grant and operates professional development and research activities. We do use the terms "program" and "fiscal" without capitalization to differentiate the administrative processes used during the life of a project. In this context, "program" refers to the actual activities the project delivers and is primarily applied to midyear and annual reports. Program reporting, project monitoring, and Assessment and Dissemination Team activities are "program" processes. Most of the rest of the administrative processes described here are "fiscal" processes. The following are some hints about how to make these processes work for you.

Keep us Informed

If any of the following changes develop over the course of the project, you should notify CPEC **and** your Assessment and Dissemination (A & D) contact(s) **immediately**.

- Changes in key staff membership (especially any staff identified in the original proposal)
- Changes in contact information for any project or fiscal staff
- Changes to activity schedules (this is particularly important to your A&D representative but should also be shared with ITQ Program staff)
- Changes in enrollment or disparities from the numbers originally proposed or planned for (any change of 10% or more must be reported)
- Any other change that will significantly affect your program design or activities
- Any other change that will affect data collection or any aspect of your research design.

Contact Information

Please provide us with *current and complete* contact information for all staff involved in the administration of the grant. This includes the accounting and fiscal staff who needs to stay informed of changes to the grant. When we have to sort out discrepancies with them periodically throughout the year, it is very helpful if they have been kept abreast of funding changes and decisions as they occurred. While it is the project director's responsibility to provide copies of all fiscal and related paperwork to the appropriate institution staff (CPEC will fax or mail more than one copy only under unusual circumstances), CPEC often is in direct contact with fiscal staff to resolve issues. We request that you make us aware of any changes as soon as you know of them. For all staff contacts, we need name, mailing address, phone, fax, e-mail address, and their role in the project.

Communication

We are always glad to provide information to you, address your concerns and answer your questions. However, in communicating with us, we would like to ask for a few favors that will save a lot of time and effort:

- ALWAYS provide us with your CPEC project number when you communicate with us. This is the number assigned to the project at the time of the grant award. Memorize it and consider it part of your project's identity. It starts with "ITQ" and is followed by a few numbers. *Please put this number in the subject line of all of your e-mail messages* and provide it somewhere on any paper document you send to this office. Failure to do so could, at worst, result in an e-mail being marked as spam and deleted by our filters. At best, it could create unnecessary work for Program staff and a lengthy delay for you.
- We like e-mail at CPEC and rely on it for much of our project correspondence. We have also tried to make electronic versions of all key documents available to project staff in order to encourage electronic communication. It is your responsibility (as it is ours) to maintain the appropriate paper or disk copies of documents related to your grant. We will work with you to make sure you have hard copies where those are required, and we will occasionally request you provide printed rather than electronic versions of documents.
- As a general rule, local project and fiscal staff should stay in regular communication with each other. If any issue arises that even remotely involves a fiscal issue, project directors should copy the appropriate person(s) in their correspondence and vice versa. Similarly, if you see that we have failed to copy the appropriate person(s) in e-mail related to such issues, please forward the communication to that person and alert us so that we may include them in future correspondence. This may occasionally provide someone with more information than they need, but we have found in the case of fiscal matters, too much information is usually better than too little.
- When there is an augmentation, carryover, or budget revision, or any other transaction for which we send you a printed document, please see that your fiscal contact(s) receives a copy of it. Over the life of the grant, you will require these

individuals' help preparing reports to meet CPEC deadlines; they will be unable to help you in a timely and accurate manner if they do not have all accounting documents related to the grant.

It is the Project Director's responsibility to ensure that the pertinent information gets to the person or people responsible for maintaining your project's accounting records—CPEC will not routinely send copies to other project staff.

- There will be a number of deadlines for you to meet over the life of this project. We understand that once in a while there may be circumstances that will prevent you from meeting these deadlines. That said, we normally allow more than sufficient notice of these dates, and unless there is some type of emergency that reasonably prevents you from meeting the imposed deadline, we respectfully ask that you plan for and adhere to the deadlines as we have set them.
- Finally, the ITQ Program staff and our colleagues at CPEC want to make the grant administration process as productive, pleasant, uncomplicated and undemanding as possible. We have to comply with some complicated state and federal regulations and guidance, so we are sometimes obliged to require some complicated paperwork from you. But we are here to help. **When in doubt, ask us!** We are happy to be of assistance.

Fiscal Processes

Grant Funding

At the time grant recipients are selected and awards are made, projects will receive an Award Letter, a Grant Activation Notice (Appendix A), and Grant Conditions. The Grant Conditions are to be signed by the official at your institution authorized to accept the grant. Once the grant conditions have been signed and returned to us, your grant is in effect and expenditures made pursuant to its terms (use and timeframe) are eligible to be funded. Except in unusual circumstances, all payments will be made on a quarterly reimbursement schedule. They may be requested by the process described in a later section.

At present, CPEC requires no additional process to continue a multi-year grant from one year to the next. The authority to continue activities into the next project year is continuous unless the project has been otherwise notified. **The actual payment of funds is handled on a year-to-year basis requiring a closeout each year and formal action to move unspent funds, if any, to a subsequent year.** However, while this is happening, the project is authorized to encumber previously awarded funds in the next project year. No separate formal notice of another year's funding is issued, but CPEC will provide an e-mail notice stating that the funding is ongoing if requested by the project. Additional processes may be put into place to formalize funding continuation; if and when that happens, more information will be provided.

Requesting Funds

As previously noted, payments of grant funds are normally made on a quarterly reimbursement basis. To request a payment, the institution of higher education must complete a CPEC form entitled *Request for Distribution of Funds* (Appendix B). This form is available on our website or by e-mail request. It can be filled out in Microsoft Word and then printed for signatures. The completed *original* form should be mailed to CPEC to the attention of "ITQ Program Assistant" for processing. Please note: to

process a payment, we must have an original signature; so it is important that you mail the original signed form as soon as possible after you download and fill it out.

Once we receive your request, it normally takes about four to six weeks for your institution to receive a check. Please try to plan your requests for funding so you do not have any funding emergencies, but also in a way that prevents funds from backing up in your account.

[Please note that we may incorporate a short form or checklist to be completed each time you request a payment, asking for a report on whether spending is going as planned. You will be notified by e-mail if and when this process goes into place and the form will be available for downloading from our website.]

Budget Revisions

Over the course of a given project year, you may need to make revisions to the budget approved at the time the grant was awarded. There are some types of budget revisions for which you need advance written permission from CPEC and others that you are free to make as needed as long as CPEC is notified subsequently in order that we may be able to complete an accurate year-end reconciliation. The rules regarding budget revisions are based on the language contained in the Grant Conditions issued at the beginning of the grant. Please be sure to reference them before you prepare a budget revision, and be sure that a copy is available to your fiscal staff (if you need an additional copy, please contact us). Here are the basic types of budget revisions:

- Changes to Travel and/or Personnel budget categories exceeding 10% of the category – prior written approval from CPEC is *always* required.
- Changes to Travel and/or Personnel categories that do NOT exceed 10% of the category – no advance approval is required but CPEC must be notified of the change and a Budget Revision Form (Appendix C) must be submitted.
- Changes to any other budget category that exceed 10% of the year's total grant allocation – prior written approval from CPEC is *always* required.

- Changes to any other budget category/ies that total less than 10% of the year's allocation – may be made without prior consent from CPEC, but CPEC must be notified of the change and a *Budget Revision Form* must be submitted.

If you need to request permission for a budget revision or report one for which no advance approval from CPEC was necessary, you may do so by e-mail or US mail. You must include a brief explanation of the reason for the change and include a CPEC *Budget Revision Form* (Appendix B). **All** budget reallocations must be reported to the Commission and a revised budget submitted within 30 days, *even if prior approval is not required*. Please note: Annual Fiscal Reports should be based on the budget as revised over the course of the entire project year.

Assessment and Dissemination (A & D) Fees

During the project year, usually in late winter or early spring, you will receive an invoice for Assessment and Dissemination (A&D) evaluation fees. This usually ranges between \$4,000 and \$9,000 or more, depending on the size of the project and the work involved in evaluation. At the same time, you will receive a grant augmentation to cover this expense, including the indirect costs associated with it. The purpose is to cover the annual cost of the A&D Team that works with each project (see p. 22). The invoices are from the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), which manages the A&D Project. **A check in the correct amount should be sent directly to AICCU at the address on the invoice, NOT TO CPEC**, as soon as possible after the bill is received.

At the same time you receive the invoice, you will also receive a Notice of Grant Revision providing an augmentation to cover the evaluation fees as well as the Indirect Costs associated with them. There will be a line item in the Annual Fiscal Report forms to capture this expenditure, but it is required only that it be reported on that form—no budget revision or spreadsheet needs to be submitted at the time of the allocation as it does not affect other budget categories.

End of Project Year Processes

The term “project year” refers to the annual periods into which the total grant is divided. These are normally 12-month periods starting with the Grant Award date, although the first “year” may be adjusted to be slightly shorter or longer to meet program needs. CPEC attempts to align project years with federal fiscal years (October 1-September 30), but that is not always how schedules work out. The project year dates will be indicated on your Grant Award documents—please keep them in mind throughout the life of your grant. Project years are more frequently referred to by number (“Project Year 1”) than by dates in most ITQ forms.

As you near the close of a project year, all project staff—project director, K-12 contacts, and fiscal contacts—should be thinking about where the project stands both programmatically and fiscally. For instance, do you anticipate underspending the year’s allocation? Are there activities you were not able to complete in the originally specified timeframe that you could realistically rebudget and carry into the next year? Once again, project and fiscal staff need to be in regular communication. Especially, ITQ Program staff at CPEC need to have advance warning about whether you will be requesting fiscal modifications as the year ends. While final decisions must await your submission of annual fiscal and program reports, advance information of what adjustments you want to make will be much appreciated.

Carryover Requests

If at the end of a project year, you find that the project will not expend the year’s allocation in full, you may request a “carryover” of funds into the next project year. This will allow you to take all or part of the unspent funds from “Project Year A” and add them into a revised budget for the subsequent “Project Year B.”

At the appropriate time, usually in the latter half of the project year, Program staff will make an announcement about applying for carryovers and provide you with a deadline for submission of your carryover application. If you would like to apply for a carryover, please follow the guidelines given below. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

To apply for a carryover, please submit the following two items:

1. A letter on institutional letterhead formally requesting the carryover and specifying the amount (this will probably be an estimate until your Annual Fiscal Report is complete). This letter must include a brief narrative explaining why the project failed to fully expend all its budgeted funds during the year and how the additional funds would be used in the upcoming year if the carryover is approved.
2. A completed CPEC *Carryover Request Budget Form* (Appendix F).

Please note that surplus funds are NOT automatically "rolled over" from one year to the next. Requests for carryover will be reviewed by CPEC for approval, modification, or disapproval; approval is also not automatic but is based on justification and a budget form that supports the request.

Annual Fiscal Reports

An *Annual Fiscal Report* (Appendix D) will be due approximately two months after the close of each project year. Funds can be encumbered through the final day of the project year and payments may be made on those encumbrances prior to filing the report. In a normal project year in which the end date is September 30, the report would be due November 30. If funds cannot be encumbered prior to the final day of the project year AND paid prior to submission of the Annual Fiscal Report, they cannot apply to the project year's activities. In most circumstances, funds that could not be expended due to fiscal processing issues will be allowed to be carried over.

50 Percent Certification

Each project will be required to submit a *50 Percent Certification* (Appendix E) form along with their *Annual Fiscal Report*. This form certifies that, in keeping with federal law and non-regulatory guidance, no one of the (at least) three partners in the grant has received more than 50 percent of the year's allocation. Near the top of the form, you should report the year's allocation *and* the year's expenditures. The dollar amounts associated with each of the partners on this form should sum to the year's

total *expenditures*, and the percent amounts should total 100. This form will be due at the same time as the *Annual Fiscal Report*. This form is also required to be submitted with the original budget proposal to certify an initial allocation that follows federal guidelines.

Fiscal Reconciliation of Project Year

The policy of the ITQ Program is to reconcile or close out each project year rather than to simply roll funds over into the next year. This requires submission of the Annual Fiscal Report, a reconciliation of the amounts spent with the approved budget and the amounts already paid to the project during the year. If CPEC paid the project more in one year than the project actually expended, the project must refund any excess reimbursement before funding will be paid in the subsequent project year. If, on the other hand, the project has not yet been reimbursed for all expenses, the final payment (normally not less than 10% of the annual budget) will be paid upon request after the project is reconciled for the year.

The following is a hypothetical example to illustrate how this might work. Assume that a grant project's award for their first year was \$100,000 and that CPEC paid the project \$85,000 over the course of the project year. At the end of the year (Year 1), the project submits an Annual Fiscal Report with expenditures that total, for the sake of illustration, only \$83,000. The excess \$2,000 received by the project may not be used to begin Year 2's expenditures—it must be returned to CPEC as a refund. After reconciliation and approval of a specific request to utilize all or a portion of the unspent \$17,000 in Year 2, the excess funds may be able to be used in a subsequent year.

Likewise, if your expenditures for a project year are equal to or less than the year's allocation and CPEC has not paid you the full amount owed, we will do so upon receipt and review of your annual reports. By utilizing a reimbursement-focused process to provide the grant funds to the projects, CPEC hopes to avoid most

circumstances where a refund might have to be tendered, but such an event may be necessary under some conditions.

Summary of Expenditures by Project Year

Once CPEC has received all of a project's end of year documents and has had a chance to review them and reconcile the project year, we will complete and forward to project directors for your records a CPEC form entitled *Summary of Expenditures by Project Year* (Appendix G). This form states for the record the final allocation for the year as well as the final expenditures and should be reviewed by both the fiscal and project staff for any discrepancies. This form is also our formal request for any refund that is due CPEC if underspending has occurred **or** our notice that CPEC has not yet paid the project the full amount owed. If the latter is the case, upon your receipt of the Summary of Expenditures by Project Year Form, you will need to complete and submit the Request for Distribution of Funds Form as described above.

No-Cost Extension Requests

As the end of a grant period approaches, projects often anticipate having unspent funds in their budgets. When project activities cease, any unspent funds revert to CPEC. If, however, you can make a case for continuing project activities and expenditures beyond the original closing date, *and can demonstrate that doing so would add significant value to the project outcomes*, you may consider applying for a *No-Cost Extension*. This is a request, accompanied by a budget, to utilize part or all of the funds remaining at the end of the project for additional or ongoing activities.

A few months before the end of your project, CPEC will usually announce a deadline for applications for No-Cost Extensions and the process by which they may be approved. If you would like to apply for a No-Cost Extension, you will be asked to submit either by e-mail or US mail the following two items:

1. A letter of request on institutional letterhead from the project director that answers all of the following questions:

- What is the exact time period requested for the extension? (This should be for no longer than necessary to complete the proposed activities and in no event more than 12 months).
 - What is the approximate amount of funding expected to be available? (Final amounts can be established after the annual fiscal report is submitted).
 - What changes in the project resulted in failure to fully expend the grant allocation?
 - What specific activities and services will be provided using the funds?
 - If the activities include additional professional development, how many teachers and students will be served?
 - What is the “value added” of a no-cost extension to the project and to the statewide Improving Teacher Quality Program? What would be lost by a failure to approve such an extension?
2. A CPEC *No-Cost Extension Request Budget* Form (Appendix H) which will be made available to you.

Please note that these requests will be considered on an individual basis and may or may not be approved.

Project Closure Form

When the project expires and all required documents have been reviewed, CPEC will provide a *Project Closure Form* (Appendix I). This form will document fiscal information for the life of the grant and serve as official notice that the award has been closed.

Program Monitoring and Reporting Processes

The responsibility for monitoring projects resides with the ITQ Program administration at CPEC. The staff uses your required annual reports, scheduled visits to projects by the administrator or other CPEC staff, and ongoing communication with project administrative and fiscal staff to ascertain that not only is the project meeting the goals it outlined in the original proposal (with any changes that are approved by the ITQ Administrator), but also that it is expending funds in compliance with federal law and regulations. ITQ Program staff attempts to visit each project at least once annually and reviews all program and fiscal reports that are submitted. It will be important for you to keep the ITQ office informed of all dates of institutes, workshops, meetings, and other project-related activities and to assure that all reports are submitted in a timely fashion. The Program staff also reviews A&D Team observations and reports, which are NOT considered monitoring reports but rather information resources for both the project and the ITQ Program staff (see p. 22).

Should there be a concern about project performance and/or administration of its funds, the ITQ staff will notify the project director of that concern, generally in writing; the seriousness of the concern dictates whether that is informal e-mail correspondence or a formal letter. Project directors and other staff will always have an opportunity to respond to the concern, to meet with ITQ staff (and A&D staff as appropriate), and to work together to seek a resolution that ensures the project's continuation.

Annual Project Directors' Meetings

Though not strictly a "monitoring" process, it should be noted that one way the ITQ Program tries to both support projects and keep informed on what is happening in the field is through annual project director meetings that are usually held in January or February of each year. Projects are required to send a team to attend these meetings that consists of the main university Project Director, the K-12 Director, and the

Research Director. Additional members of the team are welcome to attend. CPEC pays for the costs of the meeting, including meals and hotels for required team members; projects are expected to assume the remainder of travel costs associated with the meeting.

These meetings are an opportunity for projects to share information with the ITQ Program staff, the Assessment and Dissemination Team, and each other. They incorporate informational sessions and discussions of how to improve the overall delivery of ITQ-funded and other teacher professional development in California. In addition, research staff for the projects have an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by the evaluation research they are doing on the projects. The meetings are usually one to two days long and are held at a facility easily accessible to a major airport. Project directors will be notified well in advance of the next scheduled meeting.

The reports that CPEC utilizes as part of the monitoring process are as follows:

Midyear Program Reports

Approximately midway through their first project year, all projects will be required to submit a *Midyear Report* (Appendix J) on their activities for the first part of the year (projects may be asked to do these in subsequent years, but it will generally only be required in the first year). You will be notified well in advance of the due date and a Midyear Report form will be made available on the CPEC website prior to the submission deadline. This form changes from year to year and the version provided in the Appendix is only a sample.

This report is usually relatively short, simple and straightforward, posing a few simple questions that can be answered in a series of short answers. No extensive data will be required for this report. The purpose is to monitor the projects' progress toward realization of the goals set forth in their proposals, and to identify if any problems are arising that could affect the ability of the project to achieve those goals.

Annual Program Reports

After the close of each project year, all projects are required to submit an *Annual Program Report* (Appendix K) on a CPEC form that is made available on the website. The due date for this report is usually about one month after the end of the project year, and will be announced well in advance. These reports are expected to include significant amounts of data collected over the year about the project participation and activities and the people who are receiving the professional development, and project directors are encouraged to review the report forms in advance to identify the kind of data they should collect from the beginning (no changes in data required will be put into place without sufficient lead time to allow it to be collected).

As CPEC includes greater expectations in its projects about evaluation research on teacher and student outcomes from activities provided by the grants, some of that data will likely be incorporated in the annual reports, although much of it may be reported separately by the project research staff to the extent it is unique to the project. The Annual Program Reports also request demographic data that CPEC can provide to federal and other agencies. They also provide an opportunity for narrative on how the project was implemented to date, whether or not goals are being met, what problems and new opportunities have arisen from project implementation, and what outcomes seem most significant at this point in the project. This report becomes the basis for ascertaining whether the project is meeting the goals laid out in the original grant proposal and also provides CPEC staff with updates on how project conditions may be changing. Like the Midyear Program Report, this form changes over time, and the one provided in the Appendix is merely a sample.

[NOTE: At the end of the final project year of your grant, all of the annual reports will be due as usual; there is no specific separate "end of project" report, although it is desirable for projects in their final year to summarize the total project outcomes.]

Additional reports and responses:

No other formal reports are routinely required of ITQ projects except those identified above. However, questions may arise during the course of the year regarding project progress or activities, and these may result in requests for additional information from the project. Depending on the nature of these, the correspondence may be handled by e-mail exchanges or sometimes by a request for formal written responses, for which deadlines may be imposed. In addition, projects will normally be copied with the annual report on their activities written by the Assessment and Dissemination Team member assigned to them, and may wish to submit a formal or informal written response to those reports to ITQ Program administration.

Program Evaluation (Assessment & Dissemination Team)

CPEC has long utilized a team of expert program evaluators—all experienced and skilled educators—to help ensure the highest quality and effectiveness in this federally-funded effort, first under the Eisenhower Program and now under the Improving Teacher Quality Program. The group, known as the Assessment and Dissemination (A&D) Team, works to gather data on the program overall and on individual projects, to provide evaluation feedback and technical assistance to individual projects, and to compile what it has learned about teacher professional development through the projects into information that is disseminated more widely in the education community.

The key role of the A&D Team is to review the work of the projects assigned to each member, to work directly with the project in evaluating its implementation and identifying and solving problems, and to understand the results it provides. The team member should be considered a resource to the project and should be kept informed of all significant project information, including any changes made along the way. The A&D Team member will visit project professional development and other activities, will provide their observations to the project staff and feedback on adjustments, and will submit an annual written report to ITQ Program administration of their observations. In addition, A&D Team members collaboratively develop reports of overall program outcomes, and they provide direct assistance to Program administration on program improvements and the development of Requests for Proposals.

It is very important that each project team establish open and frequent communication with their assigned A&D Team member. A&D Team members (and the Program administration as well) should have early written notice of dates, times and places of all planned project activities (except day-to-day planning or administrative meetings). They should be copied on letters or e-mails between the project partners and/or between the project and CPEC related to changes or other significant information. You can anticipate that they will review all formal reports and

much of the informal communication regarding the project that is submitted to ITQ administration. The A&D Team is an independent team whose activities are funded by mandated allocations of a portion of each annual grant (due to the difficulty of anticipating yearly costs for multi-year projects, A&D charges are not usually built into project budgets at the start but are calculated and added to budgets on an annual basis, along with additional grant funding to cover them, as explained previously).

Conclusion

This Administrative Handbook is meant to be a dynamic document, and will frequently be updated as CPEC and ITQ Program needs dictate. Project staff are invited to provide recommendations for modifications to the processes described in it as well as to the handbook itself. In addition, any other suggestions you have for the ITQ Program, its website, and its overall operation are always welcome. Finally, remember that the ITQ Program staff members at CPEC are here to help you succeed in improving the quality of California's teachers and the achievement of its students. We look forward to hearing from you any time.

Karen Humphrey, Administrator
916-445-1504
khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov

Natalie Sidarous, Program Assistant
916-322-7984
nsidarous@cpec.ca.gov

Ilna Manzyuk, Student Assistant
916-324-4016
imanzyuk@cpec.ca.gov