

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW DID THE ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY COME ABOUT?

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During his state-of-the-state address in January of this year, Governor Doug Ducey called on Arizona's public universities to help increase the number of qualified teachers in Arizona's classrooms as part of a multipronged strategy to improve education in Arizona.

Arizona's public universities are the largest providers of teachers in Arizona. Governor Ducey asked the universities, in partnership with community colleges, to work with him to develop "a plan for the design of an Arizona Teachers Academy."

The universities eagerly answered the governor's call and designed the vision for the academy. A white paper was drafted by university system leadership after numerous meetings to design the academy. Each university will open their Arizona Teachers Academy during the 2017-18 academic year.

## HOW DOES THE ACADEMY WORK?

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Students who are admitted to the academy have multiple program options that are designed to meet the needs of traditional students and adult career changers. This allows individuals to participate at any point in their educational career from freshman to returning professionals.

## WILL THE ACADEMY BE OFFERED AT EACH OF ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES?

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Yes. Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona are opening their programs this fall.

## HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL BE ENROLLED DURING THE FIRST YEAR?

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Arizona's public universities are enrolling approximately 200 students during the first year and will build capacity to about 730 students in the academy's fifth year.

## WILL ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY STUDENTS RECEIVE FREE TUITION?

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Those accepted into the academy who agree to teach in Arizona public schools will receive an annual waiver for tuition and fees associated with their program of study, allowing students to graduate with low-to-no costs for their education as teachers. Students must teach for one year in an Arizona public school for each year the student receives a waiver. Graduates of the academy will have the opportunity to arrive in Arizona classrooms unburdened with debt from tuition for their education studies.

## HOW MANY YEARS ARE TEACHERS REQUIRED TO TEACH IN ARIZONA TO RECEIVE FREE TUITION?

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Currently teachers who graduate from the academy will be required to follow a year-for-year plan with students teaching for a year in an Arizona public school for each year the student receives a waiver

## **WHAT ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES OF ENROLLING IN THE ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY?**

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Academy students are exposed to a rich instructional experience, with a strong emphasis on practical experience. The academy represents a new mindset for teaching, one that is based on service, innovation and entrepreneurship. Students selected into the academy will demonstrate a commitment to high standards and service to others, and a drive to deliver high quality instruction to students in Arizona classrooms.

## **HOW CAN STUDENTS AT THE ACADEMY BE ASSURED OF SUCCESS?**

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With a ready job market waiting, academy graduates will have a job waiting for them after graduation. To ensure graduates of the academy are solidly launched into their chosen profession, the academy will also support newly minted teachers with additional services, programs and mentorship. The academy will feature significant connections to academy professors, scholars and other academy alumni to provide ongoing support to new teachers and a lifelong network of colleagues.

## **HOW WILL THE ACADEMY ADDRESS THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT NEW TEACHERS FACE?**

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The universities will help troubleshoot and overcome barriers that many new teachers face and will work to expedite new teacher's work in classrooms and help retain them once they are there. The universities will work with the community colleges, the Arizona State Board of Education and Arizona Department of Education, school districts and others to promote strong pathways and reduce other barriers keeping great teachers from rewarding careers in Arizona classrooms.

## **WILL THE ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY AFFECT THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN OUR STATE?**

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Yes. The academy is designed as one of many possible solutions to meet hiring needs, especially in high-needs schools.

## **CAN YOU PUT THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN PERSPECTIVE?**

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According to a 2017 Morrison Institute for Public Policy at ASU report titled "AZ in crisis over teacher pay, retention:"

- Forty-two percent of Arizona teachers hired in 2013 left the profession within three years.
- Seventy-four percent of Arizona school administrators surveyed said their campuses are experiencing a shortage of teachers.
- When adjusted for cost of living, Arizona elementary school teacher pay is the lowest in the nation. High school teacher pay ranks 48th of the 50 states.

## **WHY IS THE ACADEMY NEEDED IF ARIZONA’S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ARE ALREADY THE LARGEST PROVIDER OF TEACHERS IN OUR STATE?**

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While our universities have been very successful in preparing teachers for Arizona’s classrooms and graduate thousands of students with education degrees, population growth, an aging workforce and labor market factors increase the demand for more teachers.

In 2015, the Arizona Educator Retention and Recruitment Task Force reported “Arizona’s teacher shortage is having an intense impact on the school system. In 2014-15, 62 percent of school districts had unfilled teaching positions three months into the school year...the future outlook points to continued shortages.”

## **WILL THE ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY WORK THE SAME AT EACH OF THE UNIVERSITIES?**

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The goal of the Arizona Teachers Academy is the same at each of the universities – to bring more highly-qualified teachers into Arizona’s schools. Each university’s academy will offer slightly different programming to address specific needs.

For instance, Arizona State University academy participants will work in community-centric design labs developing new knowledge and tools to create schools of the future in rural and urban communities. Northern Arizona University is expanding its Grow Your Own partnerships with local schools to identify and train local teachers in places with teacher shortages. The University of Arizona offers a one-year masters-level certification program that targets career changers and those who have earned a bachelor’s degree in a major other than education.

## **I WOULD LIKE TO TEACH, BUT I ALREADY HAVE A BACHELOR’S DEGREE. WILL THE ARIZONA TEACHERS ACADEMY FIT MY NEEDS?**

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Yes. Programs are designed to address the needs of new students entering the field from high school, upper-division students who have chosen teaching as a major, and returning students who already have a bachelor’s degree and seek to train as teachers. Opportunities also exist for individuals who wish to specialize within the profession.