

Frequently Asked Questions about Educator Licensure in Ohio

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How do I earn an initial educator's license, or add a teaching area to my current certificate or license? To become a licensed educator in Ohio's elementary or secondary schools, or to add a new area to an existing certificate or license, a person must:

- Successfully complete a preparation program at an approved teacher education institution;
Pass applicable portions of the Praxis II exams; and
- Successfully complete a background check by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCII) and/or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (The BCII/FBI step is not required for licensed educators who are applying for a teaching area to be added to a currently valid certificate or license.)

There are approximately 50 baccalaureate degree-granting institutions in Ohio that offer teacher preparation programs. Visit the Ohio Department of Education's web site at www.ode.state.oh.us for a complete listing of approved teacher preparation institutions in Ohio.

Individuals who have completed the above-mentioned requirements should complete the prescribed application form and submit it through their respective college office. The Dean or head of the teacher preparation program must send your application along with his/her recommendation to the Ohio Dept. of Education, Office of Educator Licensure for issuance of the appropriate certificate or license.

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What Praxis II exam must I take to be issued a new certificate or license? If you completed a program at an Ohio college, you should consult with your advisor to determine the appropriate test(s) you must complete for your certification/licensure area. If you completed a program

outside the state of Ohio, please call the Office of Certification/Licensure at 614-466-3593 to request an out-of-state application packet which contains all test information.

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Where do I take the test? Tests are given in locations nationwide. Call the Educational Testing Service at 609-771-7395 for a test bulletin, or consult with your college advisor for times and locations in your area.

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What is the cost of a certificate or license in Ohio? The fees vary according to the duration of the certificate or license requested. The general rule for processing certificate and license application requests, either new or renewal is \$12 per year of certification or licensure. The appropriate fee structure is noted in the general instructions for each application, or can be accessed via the Ohio Department of Education web page (www.ode.state.oh.us).

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What is the difference between the issue date and the effective date of my certificate/license? All certificates or licenses issued in Ohio have an effective date of July 1st of the year requested. The effective date is the date on which the certificate or license becomes valid and the educator is authorized to begin work. The issue date is the date on which all requirements have been reviewed and approved and the certificate or license is issued. The issue date is the beginning date on which the educator may begin to earn credits toward the next renewal.

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I am moving to Ohio soon. How do I get an Ohio teaching certificate? If you hold a standard certificate/license in another state, or are eligible for one based on completion of an approved program, you may request an application and information packet from the Office of Certification/Licensure at 614-466-3593, or check the interactive Web site (www.ode.state.oh.us).

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What are the requirements to renew my professional certificate? Educators holding a professional (eight-year) certificate may renew that certificate one time prior to September 2, 2006 by meeting the 1987 Standards. An eight-year professional certificate may be renewed upon completion of the equivalent of 12 semester hours of coursework since the latest issue date of the certificate to be renewed. This requirement may be reduced by one semester hour of coursework for each year of verified experience during the valid period of the certificate to be renewed. The signature of the superintendent of the school district where the experience occurred is required for verification. Substitute teaching of at least of 120 days in a school year is considered one year of successful experience.

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What are the requirements for renewing a provisional license? The provisional teacher license, valid for two years, shall be required for entry to an Entry Year Program (beginning September 2002) and may be used for substitute teaching. If a full-time teaching position has not been secured, the provisional license may be renewed upon completion of three semester credit

hours of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of specialization. The coursework must be taken since the issuance of the license to be renewed. The provisional principal license, valid for two years, shall be required for entry to an Entry Year Program. If a principal position has not been secured, the provisional license may be renewed without additional coursework as long as the standard teaching certificate or license is maintained.

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What are the requirements for renewing a professional or associate license? The professional or associate license is valid for five years and may be renewed upon completion of six semester credit hours of appropriate course-work related to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure, 18 continuing education units (180 contact hours), or other equivalent activities as approved by the Local Professional Development Committee of the employing school or school district.

NOTE: Renewals of certificates/licenses for all educators employed in Ohio schools at the time of application are submitted through the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC). Renewals for educators not employed in Ohio schools are submitted to the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Certification/Licensure, and do not require the approval of an LPDC.

1 semester hour = 1.5 quarter hour = 3 CEUs (continuing education units)
CEUs completed prior to July 1, 1998 must be Ohio Department of Education approved.
Professional development activities after July 1, 1998 must be LPDC approved. Coursework should be completed at an accredited, baccalaureate degree granting college.

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If I have multiple certificates, may I use the same coursework/experience to renew them all? Yes. As long as appropriate coursework, CEUs, experience, etc. was completed after the issue date of a given certificate, it may be used to renew any number of certificates an educator holds.

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May I renew an expired certificate or license if I am not currently teaching? Yes. It is not required that you be working in a school in order to renew a certificate or license. A person may apply for renewal of an expired certificate or license at any time that all requirements have been met by submitting an application to the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Certification/Licensure.

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Are there additional requirements for not renewing my certificate or license before it expires? No, if you make application for renewal in a timely manner. If you have a four-year provisional certificate, currently expiring or expired, you may renew the certificate without penalty until September 1, 2002. If you hold an eight-year professional certificate, currently expiring or expired, you may meet renewal requirements without penalty until September 1, 2006.

If you apply after these dates, and you are holding a certificate, you will be transitioned to a five-year license and you must meet licensing requirements.

The holder of a four-year certificate that has been expired for up to five years must successfully complete nine semester hours of appropriate coursework to transition to a professional license. The holder of a certificate that has been expired for more than five years must complete 12 semester hours of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure, and have the recommendation and signature of the dean of a state-accredited college of education to transition to a professional license.

The holder of a two-year provisional license that has been expired for up to five years, may be reinstated upon completion of six semester hours of course-work relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of specialization since the issuance of the license to be renewed. If you hold a provisional license which has been expired for more than five years, the license may be renewed upon completion of nine semester hours of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure, and the recommendation of the dean or head of teacher education at an institution approved to prepare teachers. The coursework must be taken after the issuance date of the license to be renewed.

The holder of a five-year professional or associate license that has been expired for up to five years, may renew the license upon completion of nine semester hours of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure. The coursework must be taken after the issuance date of the license to be renewed. If you hold a professional or associate license that has lapsed for more than five years, it may be renewed upon completion of 12 semester hours of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure, and the recommendation of the dean or head of teacher education at an institution approved to prepare teachers. The coursework must be taken after the issuance date of the license to be renewed.

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May I teach with an expired certificate or license? No. A person serving as an educator in the schools of Ohio must have a currently valid certificate or license for the position in which they are working.

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Can I assume that the coursework I have completed at my college is acceptable for a certificate or license? Yes. As long as coursework is taken for credit at an accredited, baccalaureate degree granting college or university, it is acceptable for renewal of a certificate under the 1987 Standards.

However, if you are transitioning to a license, or renewing a license under the 1998 Standards, coursework must be in professional education or in an area of certification/licensure you hold. If you are currently employed, the coursework must fit your approved individual professional development plan (IPDP). See your LPDC for specific requirements.

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I am no longer working but I want to renew my certificate. When I was working, I completed continuing education units (CEUs) through my LPDC. Are those CEUs still acceptable for renewal? Yes. Completed professional development activities approved by an LPDC will be honored by other LPDCs and by the Ohio Department of Education. It is your responsibility to obtain the approved/signed authorization form and submit it to your new LPDC or the Ohio Department of Education at the time of application for renewal.

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May I use experience I acquired while teaching in another state to renew my Ohio certificate? Yes. Persons who have had experience working under a standard certificate outside the state of Ohio may verify that experience in a signed letter, on letterhead, from the superintendent or head of personnel of the out-of-state school/district. The experience can be used to reduce the coursework requirement for renewal under the 1987 Standards, providing the experience was gained during the valid period of the Ohio Certificate being renewed.

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What is the difference between a certificate and a license? Teaching certificates are approved for four-year and eight-year periods and are classified as Provisional, Professional, and Permanent.

The new licensure standards establish an initial two-year Provisional License, which is required for entry year and may be used for substitute teaching if the applicant is not employed full-time. After completion of the entry year requirements, a series of five-year professional licenses may be earned. A specified amount of coursework or other professional development activity is required for each five-year renewal.

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Do I have an option regarding whether apply for certification or licensure? Whether a person receives an initial certificate or an initial license is a matter of timing and is determined upon acceptance into an approved college or university teacher education program. Persons who were enrolled in a certification program prior to September 1, 1998 may complete the approved program and still receive a certificate until September 1, 2002. Persons who completed a certification program and earned a certificate will retain those same certification fields on a license after they transition to a five-year professional license. Individuals who enroll in an approved licensure program after September 1, 1998 will receive a provisional license upon completion of the prescribed coursework and PRAXIS II test.

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How do I transition from a certificate to a license? An expiring certificate may be transitioned to a five-year professional license with evidence of six semester hours of coursework in professional education or an area of certification held (or the equivalent if applying through an LPDC). When transitioning to a license, experience may no longer be used to reduce the coursework requirement.

Persons employed in an Ohio chartered school at the time of application will process the application through the LPDC for approval of transition requirements, prior to submission to the Department of Education. Persons not employed in an Ohio chartered school at the time of application must submit the application and official transcripts directly to the Ohio Department of Education.

Persons employed in an Ohio school who have exercised their 'grace renewals under the 1987 Standards are working toward the transition to licensure from the date of that renewal. An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) must be written and submitted to the LPDC for approval and then completed before the certificate expires. LPDCs may not grant retroactive

credit for professional development activities and/or coursework completed prior to approval of the IPDP.

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Do I have to develop an IPDP for each certificate or license I hold? No. Persons who hold multiple certificates will transition each certificate to a license when it comes due for renewal. An Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) covers a period of time. A plan can be developed to address more than one area of certification/licensure. Professional development activities can be applied to more than one of the areas of certification/licensure if the activities align with the stated IPDP goals in an approved plan and the activities have taken place since the latest issue date of the certificate to be transitioned.

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Do I need to transition to a license if I hold a permanent certificate? No. An educator who holds a permanent certificate will continue to hold that certificate without further requirements.

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How do I transition my certificate to a license if I hold a license through an Ohio professional board? If you hold the following certificates you do not renew through an LPDC: School Social Worker, School Audiologist, School Speech-Language Pathologist, School Nurse, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist Assistant, Occupational Therapist Assistant.

You must maintain your licensure through the respective Ohio license board and send your application directly to the Ohio Department of Education, with a copy of your currently valid board license, to transition your ODE certificate.

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Can I upgrade my certificate through my LPDC? No. Applications to upgrade Ohio certificates are submitted directly to the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Certification/Licensure for evaluation. LPDCs do not deal with upgrades.

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What are the requirements to upgrade from an eight-year professional certificate to a permanent teaching certificate? The Ohio Department of Education is authorized to issue permanent teaching certificates to eligible persons until September 1, 2003 if the applicant:

- Is employed full-time in an Ohio school at the time of application;
- Shows evidence of five years of full-time experience in Ohio under the professional certificate to be upgraded since its initial issuance;
- Shows evidence of a master's degree in professional education or in an area for which certification is held, with completion of at least 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours of appropriate graduate coursework since the initial issue date of the professional certificate to be upgraded.

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What is the purpose of a temporary full-time teaching license? Temporary full-time teaching licenses may be requested by an employing school district superintendent if a position has been posted with the Ohio Department of Education for two weeks or longer and a suitable candidate with the required certificate or license cannot be found. The request for the license must come from the school district and the license is valid for one year.

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What are the requirements for obtaining a temporary full-time License?

- The candidate must hold a current valid standard teaching certificate or license.
- The candidate must be enrolled in an approved program in the subject/content area for which the temporary license is requested.
- The candidate must have successfully completed a criminal background check.

There are additional requirements for various types of temporary teaching licenses, i.e. early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence/young adult, multi-age, intervention specialist, early education of the handicapped, and pre-kindergarten. An employing superintendent may request additional information from the Office of Certification/Licensure.

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Can temporary full-time teaching licenses be renewed? Temporary full-time teaching licenses are issued for one year only, but may be renewed no more than four times. Renewals may be processed at the request of the employing school district if the candidate has completed a minimum of six semester hours of course work in the field for which the temporary license is sought, in an approved teacher-education program, since the latest issue date of the temporary license.

NOTE: The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments of 1997 §612(a) (15) (c) mandate that personnel working under temporary certification or licensure obtain standard certification or licensure within three years. This federal requirement applies to teachers of students with disabilities and is more stringent than Ohio's new rule for temporary licenses (Rule 3301-23- 44). The Ohio rule states that a temporary teaching license may be renewed no more than four times. The new rule for temporary licenses became effective on January 1, 1999. Licenses issued under this rule became valid on July 1, 1999.

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Is there a temporary license for other school positions? A temporary pupil service license for school audiologist, school social worker, school speech-language pathologist, or school nurse may be issued to an individual who holds a currently valid license issued by the respective Ohio licensure board.

Like the temporary full-time teaching license, the temporary pupil service license must be requested by the school district due to a lack of properly licensed and suitable candidates, and the vacancy must have been posted for at least two weeks. The Temporary Pupil Service License may be renewed at the request of the employing school district upon evidence of a currently valid license issued by the respective Ohio licensure board.

A temporary school psychologist license or a temporary school counselor license may be issued at the request of a school district and is limited to individuals enrolled in the prescribed

preparation program who are completing the program internship in the school district making the request. Both licenses are limited to one year and are non-renewable.

A temporary administrator license (new or renewal) may be issued at the request of a school district upon evidence of justification and need. A school district superintendent should contact the Office of Certification/Licensure for additional requirements and application procedures.

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How can I get a license to substitute teach in Ohio? All Substitute Teaching Licenses must be initiated by a school/district. Interested persons may contact a school district in their area to begin the application process.

Requirements are as follows:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution;
- A completed criminal background check;
- Payment of the prescribed fee.

Substitute licenses are designated as short-term (for periods of five days or less) or long-term (for periods longer than five days). An evaluation of the applicant's credentials by the Office of Certification/Licensure will determine the designation.

Individuals may apply for a one-year substitute license, or a five-year substitute license. Either license may be used in any school or district, public or non-public, in the state. Substitute licenses may be renewed at the request of an employing school/district.

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When is a BCII/FBI background check required? A background check by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification is required for all persons applying for a new type of Ohio teaching certificate, license, or permit (including those who already hold other types of Ohio certificates, etc.). If the applicant has not lived continuously in Ohio for the past five years, a criminal background check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation also is required. Both the BCII and the FBI require submission of fingerprint impressions.

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Where can I arrange for my background check and fingerprint impressions? Fingerprint impression cards may be completed at a county sheriff's office, municipal police department, or any other law enforcement entity. In addition, some universities and county educational service centers offer Web Check Centers that allow teacher candidates to submit their fingerprints electronically.

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How long does it take for the Department to receive the results of my background check?

Persons who submit their fingerprints electronically through an educational service center or university can expect the results to be at the Ohio Department of Education within one week. Applicants who submit fingerprint cards to the BCII office by mail may expect a four-six week turn-around time. The FBI check may take up to three months.

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How can I check the status of my BCII/FBI report(s)? Applicants may visit the Ohio Department of Education's interactive Web site at www.ode.state.oh.us, or call the Office of Certification/Licensure at 614-466-3593 to determine if the report has been received. Or, you may check the status of a BCII or FBI report by calling the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCII) at 740-845-2375.

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What is an alternative educator license? An Alternative Educator License is a non-renewable two-year license issued to an individual who has not completed the professional education coursework required for regular certification and licensure. The license is valid for teaching a specific subject area in grades 7-12 and must be requested by the superintendent of a city, educational service center, local, exempted village, or joint vocational school district.

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What are the requirements for an alternative educator license? The person recommended for this special license must evidence the following:

- Good moral character;
- A baccalaureate degree;
- A major with a minimum 2.5 grade point average (GPA) in the subject area to be taught, or extensive work experience directly related to the subject area;
- Completion, within the past five years, of six semester hours of specified-professional education course work from a college or university approved to prepare teachers, with a minimum 2.5 GPA; and
- Successful completion of the PRAXIS test in the content area for which the alternative educator license is sought.

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Are there other requirements of the employing school district? The school district requesting the license is expected to provide a mentoring program for the alternatively licensed educator and is expected to provide assistance in the development of instructional skills, classroom management, and knowledge of the school curriculum.

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Can the holder of an alternative educator license earn a provisional license? A provisional license will be issued to the holder of an alternative educator license upon successful completion of two years of successful teaching experience, completion of 12 additional semester hours of specified professional education coursework, and successful completion of the PRAXIS test of professional knowledge. (SEE STANDARDS BOOK)

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Can the holder of an alternative educator license earn a professional license? After receiving the two-year provisional license, the educator must meet the teacher licensure standards to transfer from a provisional to a professional license.

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What is a Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC)? Senate Bill 230 authorized the establishment of Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) in every school district and chartered nonpublic school by September 1998. One of the primary functions of an LPDC is to ensure that the professional development of educators aligns with the rising expectations for students, schools and teachers, and contributes to the ongoing continuous improvement of a district and school. The LPDC members also review the course work and other professional development activities proposed and completed by educators within the district to determine if the requirements for renewal of certificates or licenses have been met.

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How does this committee affect my ability to get or renew a certificate or license? If you are employed in an Ohio chartered school (public or non-public) and are renewing a four-year provisional or eight-year professional certificate, transitioning to a five-year professional license, or renewing a five-year professional license, you must submit your documentation to your LPDC for approval before the application is sent to the Ohio Department of Education. LPDCs have established procedures for reviewing coursework, CEUs and other equivalent activities in accordance with written guidelines and an educator's approved individual professional development plan (IPDP).

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When does my LPDC meet? Each LPDC should have a written schedule of meetings which is posted or distributed to all district educators. It is important for educators in a school or district to be aware of submission deadlines posted by their LPDC. Failure to submit appropriate materials to the committee in a timely manner may result in considerable processing delays.

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What is an individual professional development plan (IPDP), and how do I write my plan in conjunction with my LPDC? An individual professional development plan (IPDP) identifies your goals for learning. The IPDP development process enables you to reflect upon your practice and take responsibility for your continued professional development. The LPDC will have a format for the IPDP to be used by the educators in your district, school, or consortium, and a process for the approval of such plans. You are responsible for keeping your own IPDP and maintaining documentation that the goals and related activities outlined in the plan have been completed.

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When should I complete my IPDP? The Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) should be developed prior to taking any coursework or activities. This allows the LPDCs to determine if the proposed plan meets the requirements of the educator licensing rules.

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Under what circumstances would an educator apply for certification/licensure directly to the Ohio Department of Education rather than through an LPDC? There are some instances when it is necessary to contact the Office of Certification and Licensure directly, i.e.:

- If you are not currently employed by a school, or are working in a setting that does not have an LPDC;
- If you are upgrading a certificate to professional or permanent status under the 1987 standards;
- If you are applying for a new certificate or license, or adding new certification areas;
- If you are renewing a two-year provisional or substitute or temporary certificate or license.

For additional information about requirements and procedures, there is a certification/licensure contact person in the office of the superintendent of each educational service center and each chartered school or district in Ohio (including local, city, exempted village schools; private schools; joint vocational schools; etc.). You may call the office of the superintendent to determine who the contact person in your school district is.

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