

What you need to know about certification

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Incidental Teaching

Generally, a certified teacher cannot teach outside his or her certification area. However, the BOCES district superintendent may grant a school district permission to assign a teacher to teach a subject not covered by the teacher's certificate if no certified teacher is available, despite extensive recruitment efforts, and the teaching time does not exceed five classroom hours a week. This is known as "incidental teaching."

Revocation

A teacher's certificate may be revoked by the state for conviction of a crime or an act indicating lack of "good moral character," such as physical or sexual abuse of a student or minor; sale, possession, or use of illegal drugs; any crime committed either on school property or while in the performance of teaching duties; or other acts which bring into question the teacher's "good moral character." Under Part 83 of Commissioner's Regulations, a hearing is required before the certificate can be revoked.



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This brochure was prepared in collaboration with NYSUT's Research and Educational Services Department and the New Member Program

It's **your** responsibility

Keep in mind that it is an individual's responsibility to maintain certification. Members are strongly urged to maintain a certification file including copies of all transcripts, certificates, communications and professional development.

Members can check their individual New York state certification file through the TEACH system and obtain comprehensive certification information on the Office of Teaching Initiatives website at

www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/TEACH.

Members with specific questions and e-mail availability can contact the SED via e-mail by clicking on "Contact Us" at the website. The Office of Teaching Initiatives can also be contacted by telephone at 518-474-3901.

The regulations pertaining to specific situations regarding certification can be difficult. Contact your local union president for help. Be prepared to provide your name, Social Security number and a brief description of the situation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

NYSUT offers a variety of materials to help new members. Your union can make these items available at strategic times during the year.

For more information about your union and how your colleagues can help you build a successful career, contact your union representative or your local president.

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NM006/11

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Certification for teachers and teaching assistants in New York state



As you know, New York requires public school teachers and teaching assistants to be certified by the State Education Department. On Feb. 2, 2004, new certification requirements came into effect, which complicated things a bit.

This helpful brochure describes the certification process for those teachers who obtained their provisional certification by Feb. 1, 2004, as well as those who applied for initial certification after Feb. 2, 2004.

It also details the requirements for certification as a teaching assistant.

What you need to know about certification

Teachers

Prior to Feb. 2, 2004, a *provisional certificate* was the first credential an individual would receive upon satisfactory completion of all teacher preparation requirements. The certificate expires five years from the date of issuance, and a permanent certificate must be obtained within the five-year period of validity. The last provisional certificates were issued on Feb. 1, 2004.



A *permanent certificate* is valid for life in the area of certification and would be issued when an individual has completed the following requirements:

- Satisfied the requirements for the provisional certificate;
- Application with fee;
- Master's degree (The graduate study which will culminate in a graduate degree must be "functionally related" to the subject field or grade level in which certification is being requested. The term "functionally related" means that the graduate degree program is job-related, as determined by the Commissioner.);
- Two years of teaching experience in a public or nonpublic school (The teaching experience requirement means a minimum of two years of paid full-time elementary and/or secondary service. It is possible to combine different teaching experiences to meet the two-year requirement.); and
- United States citizenship or Permanent Resident status.

In addition, the following New York State Teacher Certification Examinations are required for only certain certification titles:

- Content Specialty Test (CST) in the certificate title; and
- Assessment of Teaching Skills-Performance (ATS-P); this is also known as the performance video.

The certification titles requiring these tests are Pre-Kindergarten – grade 6, English (grades 7-12), Mathematics (grades 7-12),

Languages other than English (grades 7-12), Social Studies (grades 7-12), Biology (grades 7-12), Chemistry (grades 7-12), Earth Science (grades 7-12), Physics (grades 7-12), and English to speakers of other Languages.

Please note that certification in career and technical subjects may not include all the identified requirements.

As of Feb. 2, 2004, major changes occurred in New York state teacher certification. An initial certificate replaced a provisional certificate as an entry credential for teaching in New York state, and, in turn, individuals holding initial certificates will be working toward a professional certificate as their final credential, not a permanent certificate. In addition, certification titles changed as new titles were introduced and others were focused on more limited student populations. Please note that certification in career and technical subjects may not include all of the following requirements.

In order to receive an *initial certificate*, an applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

- Application with fee;
- Baccalaureate degree;
- General education coursework core;
- Content coursework core;
- Pedagogical coursework core;
- Student teaching (Experience as an employed teacher within the range of grades and the subject area of the certification area may be accepted in lieu of this requirement.);
- Passing scores on the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST), Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (ATS-W) and a Content Specialty Test (CST) in the certificate area (The Speech and Language Disabilities certification title does not require the CST for initial certification);
- Child Abuse Identification workshop;
- School Violence Prevention workshop; and
- Fingerprint clearance.

Initial certificates are valid for five years, and the earliest effective date for individuals holding initial certificates was Sept. 1, 2004. Within those five years, an applicant for a *professional certificate* must have fulfilled the following requirements:

- Satisfied requirements for the initial certificate;



- Application with fee;
- Three years of teaching experience with the first year as a mentored teaching experience;
- Master's degree;
- PRAXIS II for the Speech and Language Disabilities certification title, if appropriate; and
- United States Citizenship Permanent Residence status.

In order to maintain the validity of the professional certificate, an individual will be required to complete 175 hours of professional development, consistent with the school district's Professional Development Plan, every five years.

Please note that there is no professional development requirement for maintaining the validity of a permanent certificate.

Teaching Assistants

Prior to Feb. 2, 2004, a *temporary license* was the first credential a teaching assistant would hold in New York state. A teaching assistant would then seek to obtain a *continuing certificate*.

Valid continuously, except when the holder has not been regularly employed as a teaching assistant for five consecutive years, a continuing certificate is portable across school districts and BOCES boundaries in the same way a teaching certificate is portable.

New requirements for certification apply to candidates who apply on or after Feb. 2, 2004, for their first teaching assistant credential.

An individual seeking certification would first apply for a *Level I certificate* and continue through progressive certification levels.

The requirements and time validity for each of the certificate types are as follows:

Level I Certificate

- Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- Pass the NYS Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills (ATAS) which tests proficiency in basic quantitative and communication skills;
- Child Abuse Identification Workshop;
- School Violence Prevention and Intervention Workshop; and
- Fingerprint clearance.

Level I certificates are valid for three years and can be renewed one time, only with a commitment for employment.

Level II Certificate

In addition to meeting the requirements for the Level I certificate:

- Complete nine semester hours of collegiate study toward meeting the requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree; and
- One year of experience as a teaching assistant.

Level II certificates are valid for three years and are not renewable.

- Individuals with one year of experience and 18 semester hours may apply directly for the Level III certificate.

Level III Certificate

In addition to the requirements for the Level II teaching certificate:

- Complete additional semester hours of collegiate study for a total of at least 18 hours toward meeting the requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree;

- Level III certificates are valid continuously, provided that the required 75 hours of professional development consistent with the district's professional development plan are completed every five years.

Pre-professional Certificate

In addition to the requirements for a Level III teaching certificate:

- The candidate must be matriculated in a program leading to teacher certification or its equivalent, or employed in a program with an articulation agreement with a teacher preparation program;
- Valid for five years and can be renewed with the completion of an additional 30 semester hours.

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