

Certification Requirements for Teaching Assistants



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Background

In February 2004, the NYS Education Department implemented new regulations governing the certification of Teaching Assistants in NYS to reflect the policy initiatives of the Board of Regents. These policy initiatives increased the preparation requirements for teaching assistants and created a career ladder for teaching assistants.

Table of Contents

Regulations Governing Teaching Assistants	1
Summary of Teaching Assistant Certification Requirements	2
Portability of Teaching Assistant Credential	3
Registering with SED and CTLE Hours	3
NYSUT'S Education & Learning Trust.....	4
Frequently Asked Questions	5
State Education Department Contact Information.....	6

This Fact Sheet focuses on certification requirements for teaching assistants post February 2004. It also summarizes the duties of teacher aides and teaching assistants in the areas of employment, job duties, licensing and certification, including New York State laws and regulations governing each area. Finally, it addresses the most frequently asked questions related to certification and licensure.

The document is provided for general information purposes only. An official response on the interpretation of certification regulations or the determination of individual certification status can only be obtained from the Office of Teaching Initiatives of the New York State Education Department.

Teaching Assistants

According to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Section 80-5.6:

A teaching assistant “is appointed by a board of education to provide, under the general supervision of a licensed or certified teacher, direct instructional service to students” (emphasis added). The teaching assistant is provided “general” (as contrasted with direct or personal) supervision by the certified teacher(s) who are responsible for the student’s instruction.

Commissioner’s Regulations also describe the duties of a teaching assistant:

- ❖ Working with individual pupils or groups of pupils on special instructional projects;
- ❖ Providing the teacher with information about pupils that will assist the teacher in the development of appropriate learning experiences;
- ❖ Assisting pupils in the use of available instructional resources, and assisting in the development of instructional materials;
- ❖ Utilizing their own special skills and abilities by assisting in instructional programs in such areas as: foreign languages, arts, crafts, music and similar subjects; and
- ❖ Assisting in related instructional work as required.

Teaching assistants, unlike teacher aides, are members of the teaching staff and must be given a probationary appointment as a teaching assistant and are eligible for tenure according to Section 30.8(d) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Summary of Teaching Assistant Certification Requirements post February 2004

Level I	Level II	Level III	Pre-Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high school diploma or equivalent ▪ pass ATAS* ▪ Child Abuse workshop ▪ School Violence Prevention workshop ▪ 6-hour Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention training ▪ valid for three years ▪ may be renewed once for three years with a commitment for employment ▪ commitment for employment must be verified by district/BOCES using superintendent statements via TEACH online services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high school diploma or equivalent ▪ 9 semester hours of collegiate study for applicants after February 1, 2007 ▪ work for one year as teaching assistant ▪ valid for three years ▪ not renewable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high school diploma or equivalent ▪ 18 semester hours of collegiate study ▪ work for one year as teaching assistant ▪ continuously valid with 100 hours of professional development every five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high school diploma or equivalent ▪ 18 semester hours of collegiate study ▪ matriculation in teacher preparation program ▪ work for one year as teaching assistant ▪ valid for five years ▪ may be renewed if individual has taken 30 semester hours in the previous five year period

*New York State Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills Test

All applications for teaching assistant certificates are done using the State Education Department's TEACH online system - <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/home.html>. When applying for a certificate, please note the following:

- SED requires that all documents (letters, high school diplomas, college transcripts) submitted for certification purposes must include the applicant's name as it appears on TEACH, the last four digits of the applicant's social security number, and the applicant's date of birth. If this information is not on the actual document, attach a cover letter including this information to the document before sending it to SED.
- SED provides guidance for submitting proof of a high school diploma or equivalent for Level I certificates at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/submitdocs.html>.

- As of September 1 2016, SED requires applicants to use a form to verify employment as a teaching assistant to progress to Level II or Level III. The Verification of Experience form can be found at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/form.html>.
- The 6-hour DASA workshop is required for any application for certification submitted after January 1, 2014. Individual in need of the workshop can check for approved providers at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/dasa-applicant.html> and can also check with local BOCES, NYS colleges/universities that offer teacher education programs, and teacher centers.
- The Level III certificate is continuously valid, provided that the Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) hours' requirement of 100 hours every five years is met.
- It is possible to move from Level I to Level III directly after one year of employment as a TA if the applicant has the appropriate number of college credits completed.

Portability of Teaching Assistant Credential

A continuing certificate as well as a Level I, II or III certificate or a Pre-Professional certificate is portable across school district and BOCES boundaries, in the same way a teaching certificate is portable. A teaching assistant is not required to obtain a new certificate if they choose to seek employment in another school district or BOCES.

Registering with SED and CTLE Hours

As of July 1, 2016, all Level III teaching assistant certificate holders are required to register with the State Education Department (SED) using the TEACH online system. Each registration begins a 5-year cycle during which Level III certificate holders are required to complete 100 hours of Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) hours. Individuals whose Level III Teaching Assistant certificates are issued by SED after July 1, 2016 will be automatically registered. For additional information on the registration process and CTLE requirements, please see [NYSUT Fact Sheet 16-2: Registering with the State Education Department and CTLE Hours: Teaching Assistants](#).

School districts or BOCES are also required to continue their compliance with regulations that govern the development, content, and implementation of professional development plans – Part 100.2(dd). School districts or BOCES are required to provide CTLE hours so that faculty and staff remain current with their profession, meet the learning needs of their students, and are able to maintain their certificates in good standing based upon successfully completing 100 every five years as prescribed in [Part 80.6 of Commissioner's Regulations](#).

The Professional Development Plan (PDP) as defined in Part 100. 2(dd) of Commissioner's Regulations requires that each school district and BOCES develop a professional development plan that ensures that “holders of Level III teaching assistant's certificates... are provided the opportunity to participate in the professional development program of the district or BOCES.”

Thus, districts that employ Level III teaching assistants who work full-time (90 or more days in a school year) are required to provide opportunities for the Level III TAs to accumulate the required 100 CTLE hours necessary to maintain their certificates.

NYSUT'S Education & Learning Trust

NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust (ELT) offers a variety of professional development/CTLE opportunities to assist teaching assistants in meeting their certification requirements. These include:

Undergraduate Courses: The Education & Learning Trust has partnered with a number of colleges throughout New York State to offer online, face-to-face, and CD-based undergraduate courses. The courses are designed for teaching assistants seeking NYS certification, and those interested in furthering their education, including pursuing a degree in teaching.

Professional Development Workshops: To maintain their certification, Level III teaching assistants are required to complete 100 CTLE hours every five years. ELT is a state-approved sponsor for CTLE hours and offers over 15 workshops to meet the CTLE requirements. Topics include: Helping Students Succeed; Disability Awareness; Dealing with Difficult Students; Supporting Students with Autism; Strategies for Struggling Readers, and Using the IEP to Support Student Instruction.

For additional information on courses, workshops and other programs available through NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust, please call 1-800-528-6208 or visit the website at www.nysut.org/elt.

Teacher Aides

According to Education Law, Section 3009 (2)(a):

A teacher aide is appointed by a board of education to assist teachers "in the performance of their teaching functions by performing those non-teaching duties (emphasis added) otherwise performed by such regular teacher or teachers."

Commissioner's Regulations, Section 80 – 5.6, Supplementary School Personnel, describe the duties of a teacher aide. They include:

- ❖ Managing records, materials and equipment;
- ❖ Attending to the physical needs of children; and
- ❖ Supervising students, and performing such other non-teaching duties which support teaching when such services are determined and supervised by the teacher.

Teacher aides are classified employees, whose employment rights are governed by Civil Service Law. They are not subject to licensure and certification requirements under Education Law.

For historical background of the impact of NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals on the current requirements for teaching assistants in New York, please refer to the NYSUT Information Bulletin "Teacher Aides and Teaching Assistants - NCLB Requirements for Paraprofessionals" (No. 200312, August 2003).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What impact, if any, will the post-2004 certification requirements have on teaching assistants holding a continuing certificate?

The requirements of the post-2004 certificate titles (Levels 1,2,3) and the post July 1, 2016 registration and CTLE requirements do not apply to TAs with the continuing certificate. Those TAs holding a continuing certificate will retain it indefinitely unless the individual has not been regularly employed as a teaching assistant in a public school for five consecutive years.

2. Will teaching assistants holding a continuing certificate be required to take the New York State Teacher Assistant Certification Examination?

No. Only those applying for certification on or after February 2, 2004 will be required to take the test, unless a continuing certificate holder chooses to apply for a Level I, II, or III teaching assistant certificate.

3. Are there different job duties assigned to each of the levels leading to the pre-professional teaching certificate?

According to Commissioner's Regulations, the description of job duties contained in Section 80-5.6 (b) (1) (ii) (a), applies to all teaching assistants, whether they hold a Level I, II or III certificate. However, the job duties of pre-professional certificate holders are more specialized (see p. 4 of this Fact Sheet). It will be left up to the local union and school district to negotiate the job duties and commensurate pay assigned to each level, should they choose to do so.

4. All Level III teaching assistants are required to complete 100 CTLE during their 5-year registration cycle to maintain their certificate. Who is responsible for providing the CTLE activities and will it be available to Level I and Level II teaching assistants?

Commissioner's Regulations, Part 100.2(dd), require a school district and BOCES to include in their professional development plan (PDP) how they will provide teachers and Level III teaching assistants with substantial professional development opportunities to maintain their certificates in good standing.

The district is required to make professional development available during the normal school day and school year. Professional development taking place outside of the normal school day and school year needs to be collectively bargained.

5. What are the requirements for certified teachers to be hired as teaching assistants?

Certified teachers may be hired as teaching assistants based upon their classroom teaching certificate. Please note that some districts may require certified teachers to obtain a teaching assistant certificate for employment.

Resources

- **Commissioner’s Regulations § 80-5.6 Supplementary school personnel.**
 This section of regulations provides definitions and duties for Teacher Aides, Teaching Assistants, as well as licensure and certification requirements.
<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/part80-5.html>

- **Commissioner’s Regulations § 80-6 Registration and Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) Requirements for Classroom Teachers and School Leaders Holding a Permanent or Professional Certificate, and Level III Teaching Assistant Certificate Holders effective 7/1/2016.**
 This section of regulations provides specific information related to the 100 CTLE hours’ requirement for Level III teaching assistants, including adjustments to the requirement and reporting responsibilities. <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/part80-3.html>

- **Commissioner’s Regulations § 100.2(dd) Requirements for Professional Development Plans**
 This section of regulations provides specific information related to the development and adoption of a PDP, measuring the impact of a PDP, and reporting and recordkeeping requirements.
<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/regulations.html>

STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Only the State Education Department’s (SED) Office of Teaching Initiatives can officially interpret certification regulations and make determinations regarding the certification status of individual applicants.

Issue	Contact
Locked out of, or trouble accessing TEACH, password re-sets, TEACH Technical Support	E-Mail: TEACHHELP@nysed.gov Phone: 518-486-6041
General questions about teacher/TA certification	E-Mail: TCERT@nysed.gov Phone: 518-474-3901
Pre-1983 Certificate Information not listed on TEACH	E-Mail: OTIregistration@nysed.gov Phone: 518-474-3901
Questions about CTLE from professionals subject to the new requirements	E-Mail: CTLE@nysed.gov Phone: 518-474-3901
Questions about Registration from professionals subject to the new requirements	E-Mail: OTIregistration@nysed.gov Phone: 518-474-3901
Prospective or Approved Providers of CTLE	E-Mail: CTLEsponsor@nysed.gov Phone: 518-474-4661