

Chapter 4 – Routes to Obtaining Licensure

Overview

How to obtain licensure

A license can be obtained by:

- completion of a state approved education program in an accredited college or university
 - reciprocity
 - lateral entry, or
 - direct licensing by the Department of Public Instruction (Licensure Section)
 - international licensing (**See SBE Policy QP-A-002**)
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Earning Licensure Through an NC Approved Education Program

Introduction

Completion of an approved education program in an accredited college or university is the standard, preferred basis for licensure established by the State Board of Education (SBE). Such programs require SBE approval. They are designed by colleges and universities to follow specific standards prescribed by the state. These programs are competency based. The state does not mandate specific courses or number of credit hours. (**See SBE Policy QP-A-002, 2.00**)

With the exception of career-technical education areas and Junior ROTC, approved education programs at various degree levels are offered for most areas of licensure.

Note: Licensing in areas when approved programs do not exist is based upon direct evaluation by the Licensure Section.

Earning Licensure Through an NC Approved Education Program

Stages of the application process

Responsibility for efficient and correct application for a license is shared by

- the graduating student
- the student's college or university, and
- the local education agency (LEA) where the student participated in a student teaching program

The stages of the initial application follow:

Stage	Description
1	The local education agency (superintendent or designee) evaluates the success of the student teaching experience and verifies it on Form S (Student Teaching/Interning Performance: Evaluation by North Carolina Local Education Agency). Note: A decision that the student teaching experience was not successful should be carefully documented by local school officials.
2	The applicant fills out Form A (Application for a North Carolina License) and submits it to his or her institution of higher education (IHE). Applications can be obtained from the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IHE licensure officer • an LEA, or • the Licensure Section of the North Carolina DPI www.ncpublicschools.org/licensure
3	The IHE official sends the complete application packet to the Licensure Section.

Components of a complete application

A complete application packet sent by the IHE officials (stage 3 above) consists of the following components:

Item	Description
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form A (Application for a North Carolina License) filled out by the student • Form V (Verification by Institution: Completion of Approved Education Program) • Form S (Student Teaching/Interning Performance: Evaluation by North Carolina Local Education Agency)
Transcripts	Original transcripts (Grade reports and computer-generated copies are not acceptable. Transcripts from the degree-granting institution must show the type of degree and the date it was awarded.) Official transcripts for all coursework used for HQ purposes must be included with the application.
Scores	Copies of Praxis score reports if required for the license area.

Reciprocity

Introduction

Reciprocal licensing plans allow educators from outside North Carolina to establish eligibility for licensing in this state. Reciprocity applies to the extent that out-of-state education programs are equivalent to North Carolina's standards for approved education programs.

Note: Reciprocity does not guarantee that all areas of licensure transfer directly from one state to another, but applicants receive the closest comparable North Carolina license areas. In some cases, North Carolina grade levels differ from those in other states, and such a difference may be reflected on the North Carolina license. (See **SBE Policy QP-A-002, 2.10**)

NC reciprocity requirements

North Carolina recognizes four teacher education and reciprocal licensing approaches:

- Completion of an education program accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
 - Completion of an education program that follows National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) standards
 - Reciprocity based on interstate agreements
 - Completion of a state-approved program
 - not accredited by NCATE
 - not approved through interstate agreement, or
 - not based on NASDTEC guidelines.
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What is not covered by reciprocity

Requirements specific to North Carolina, such as testing for some license areas, are not covered by reciprocity and must be met before a clear North Carolina license can be issued.

States that have reciprocal contracts with NC

The following lists approximately 37 states/jurisdictions that have reciprocal contracts with NC:

Alabama	Indiana	Oklahoma
Arkansas	Kentucky	Oregon
Arizona	Louisiana	Pennsylvania
California	Maine	Rhode Island
Colorado	Maryland	South Carolina
Connecticut	Massachusetts	Tennessee
Delaware	Michigan	Texas
Florida	Mississippi	Utah
Georgia	New Hampshire	Vermont
Hawaii	New Jersey	Virginia
Idaho	New York	Washington
Illinois	Ohio	West Virginia
		Washington, D.C.

Reciprocity

How to apply for a North Carolina license

The applicant for a North Carolina license must send the following information to the Licensure Section:

Item	Description
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form A (Application for a North Carolina License)• Form V (Verification by Institution: Completion of Approved Education Program) or a copy of the out-of-state license• Verification of Highly Qualified (HQ) status if applicable• Form E or NE (as appropriate) if the applicant has relevant experience
Certificates/ Licenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of certificates or licenses held in other states
Transcripts	Original transcripts (originals or legible, unaltered copies) that show type of degree and date awarded. Official transcripts for all coursework being used for HQ purposes must be included with the application.
Scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of the NTE/Praxis scores (if required for the license)• North Carolina accepts out-of-state tests for teaching areas
Fee	\$85

The Licensure Section evaluates the individual's record in detail to determine deficiencies or test scores, then issues a license.

Note: General Statute 116-143.5 states:

Any teacher or other personnel paid on the teacher salary schedule who (i) has established a legal residence (domicile) in North Carolina and (ii) is employed full-time by a North Carolina public school, shall be eligible to be charged the in-State tuition rate of courses relevant to teacher certification or to professional development as a teacher.

Licensure dating/ renewal cycles

The Licensure Section issues a Standard Professional II license to teachers who have:

- three or more years of teaching AND
 - met North Carolina's Praxis testing requirements OR
 - National Board Certification. (See SBE Policy QP-A-005, 5.00, 5.20, and 5.20)
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Lateral Entry

What is lateral entry?

The lateral entry policy allows skilled individuals outside of the public education system to enter the teaching profession. A lateral entry license entitles the holder to be employed by and serve as a teacher in the North Carolina schools while completing an approved program.

The Licensure Section authorizes lateral entry licenses on a provisional basis in licensure areas that correspond to the individual's academic study.

Lateral entry license holders are subject to the regulations that apply to other beginning teachers in North Carolina. Lateral entry employees must meet program and testing requirements within three years. **(See SBE Policies QP-A-1.00, 1.70 & QP-A-014)**

Length of license and annual requirements

A lateral entry license is issued for three school years. By the end of the first year, the holder must have earned six semester hours; by the end of the second year, the holder must have earned a total of 12 semester hours. All required course work and the Praxis II specialty area exam must be met by the expiration date of the three-year license.

For a lateral entry license to remain valid, an individual must meet the testing and progressive credit requirements within the three-year limit, whether or not employment continues in a North Carolina school system.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for lateral entry, individuals must:

Employment

(1) Be selected for employment by a North Carolina school system; **AND**

Relevant major or Praxis II

- Hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university in the subject area in which they are employed to teach **OR**
- hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university **AND**
- have satisfied Praxis II testing requirements for the license area **AND**

*To be designated "**Highly Qualified**," elementary and exceptional children's teachers must pass a rigorous state assessment (currently Praxis II exams). To be designated "highly qualified," middle school, high school, and special subject area teachers (e.g., art, music, second languages) must hold a bachelor's or master's degree in the specific area, or have 24 semester hours in the area, or pass a rigorous state assessment (currently Praxis II exams) in the area.*

Lateral Entry

Grade point average requirement

(2)

- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5, **OR**
- have five years of experience considered relevant by the LEA, **OR**
- have passed the Praxis I exams, **AND**
- have attained one of the following:
 - a GPA of at least 3.0 on all work completed in the senior year;
 - a GPA of at least 3.0 in the major; or
 - a GPA of at least 3.0 in a minimum of 15 semester hours of course work completed within the last 5 years **after the bachelor's degree.**

While considered a full state license for purposes of determining HQ status, a lateral entry license is not considered a clear license for tenure purposes.

Who is not eligible for lateral entry

Those not eligible for lateral entry are

- graduates of approved programs who are not recommended for licensing by an IHE
 - individuals who have completed an approved teacher education program, but have not satisfied testing requirements (if applicable).
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How to acquire a lateral entry license

The applicant and the employing school system submit a joint application to the Licensure Section. The application should include the following items:

Item	Description
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form A (Application for a North Carolina License) • Form LE (Request for a Lateral Entry License) • Form E or NE & RN (as appropriate) if the applicant has relevant experience.
Education Information	Original transcripts that show type of degree and date awarded.
Scores	Praxis or ACTFL scores, if required for the license to be issued.
Fee	\$85

Lateral Entry

Lateral entry licensure requirements

When a lateral entry license holder completes an approved IHE teacher education program or SBE approved alternative licensure program and any other licensing requirements, the IHE or RALC (Regional Alternative Licensure Center) submits a recommendation to the Licensure Section to clear the license.

Individuals licensed through lateral entry must meet the following requirements:

Item	Requirement
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved teacher education program in their area of licensure at a college or university, OR • a program of study prescribed by the Regional Alternative Licensure Center with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or greater, • one year of successful teaching experience in the license area (verified by the LEA) can substitute for the student teaching requirement, • at least 6 cumulative semester hours of required coursework must be completed annually. All required coursework must be completed within the 3-year period.
Scores	Earn the required score on the designated Praxis II or ACTFL specialty area test or subject assessment if the exam(s) was/were not the basis of qualifying for the license.
Training	<p>Completion of a staff development program that includes a two-week training course prior to beginning the work assignment. The training must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lesson planning, • classroom organization, • classroom management, including positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint, • an overview of the ABCs program, including the standard course of study and end-of-grade and end-of course testing, and • the identification and education of children with disabilities.
Programs	Complete the Beginning Teacher Support Program (See SBE Policy QP-A-004)

Lateral Entry

Accelerated Track

Individuals who possess five or more years of experience considered relevant by the LEA, and who satisfy testing requirements (currently Praxis II) for the licensure area within the first year of teaching, shall be issued a Standard Professional I License upon:

- Completion of the NC TEACH modules or the equivalent through an approved teacher education program: 1) The Teacher, The Learner, and The School; 2) Diversity; 3) Content Area Pedagogy. (Note: The NC TEACH modules are offered and administered through NC colleges and universities with approved teacher education programs.) **AND**
- Completion of the NC TEACH module on Instructional Technology or the equivalent through an approved teacher education program, community college, or through professional development offered by the LEA; **AND**
- Completion of one year of successful teaching, verified by the employing LEA.

Formal commitment from employing LEA

LEAs using the Lateral Entry policy to employ teachers are required to formally commit to supporting the individual by:

- providing a two-week orientation that includes
 - lesson planning,
 - classroom organization,
 - classroom management, including positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint,
 - an overview of the ABCs Program including the standard course of study and end-of-grade and end-of-course testing, **AND**
 - the identification and education of children with disabilities
 - assigning a mentor on or before the first day on-the-job,
 - providing working conditions as appropriate for all novice teachers,
 - providing regular focused feedback for improving instruction, and
 - assisting in accessing prescribed course work and professional development opportunities.
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Emergency Permits

Who can request an emergency permit?

An LEA Superintendent or designee may request **an emergency permit** to practice for a teacher by submitting a statement of critical need. (See **SBE Policies QP-A-001, 1.90 & QP-A-014**)

Eligibility

To be eligible for an emergency permit to practice an individual must

- hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college/university
 - not qualify for a license under any other licensure approach.
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Length of validity

An emergency permit to practice may be issued only for the remainder of the current school year.

Extensions

No extensions are available for an Emergency Permit to Practice.

How to apply

The applicant and the employing school district submit a joint application to the Licensure Section. The application should include the following items:

Item	Description
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form A (Application for a North Carolina License)• Form EP (Emergency Permit to Practice)
Education Information	Original transcripts that show type of degree and date awarded.
Fee	\$85

Experience and degree issues

The Emergency Permit to Practice is issued at the A-00 pay level only.

Alternative Entry License

What is alternative entry?

Alternative entry licenses were issued to individuals on the recommendation of a local board of education which had determined there was, or anticipated there would be, a shortage of qualified teachers available for specified subjects or grade levels. The local board must also have had developed a plan to determine the individual's competence as a teacher, including review of the performance of students taught by the individual. The alternative entry license was a one-year (maximum) provisional license.

Note: This policy expired by law on September 1, 2006. However, licenses issued through this policy remain valid.

Eligibility requirements

To be issued an alternative entry license the individual had to

- hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, or the equivalent, **AND**
 - be eligible for re-employment by his or her prior employer; **AND**
 - hold a valid out-of-state license with a minimum of one year classroom teaching experience considered relevant by the local board to the grade or subject to be taught (Category A); **OR**
 - have at least one year of full-time classroom teaching experience considered relevant by the local board to the grade or subject to be taught, as a professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or visiting lecturer at a regionally accredited college or university (Category B); **OR**
 - have three years of other experience provided the local board determines that both the individual's experience and postsecondary education are relevant to the grade or subject or subject to be taught (Category C).
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LEA responsibilities for alternative entry licensure

LEAs using alternative entry policy to employ teachers were required to

- determine shortage or "anticipated" shortage license areas
 - develop a plan to determine competence as a teacher including a review of the performance of students taught
 - report semi-annually to the State Board of Education the number of individuals employed in each category
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Regional Alternative Licensure Centers

What are the RALCs? The DPI Division of Human Resource Management has established 4 Regional Alternative Licensure Centers. The centers are authorized to review transcripts, prescribe plans of study leading to licensure, and directly recommend teachers for licensure. These centers work with state-approved teacher education programs and LEA personnel to provide assistance to lateral entry and provisionally licensed teachers. (See **SBE Policy QP-A-002, 2.20**)

Where are the RALCs? The RALCs are in Charlotte, Fayetteville, Nashville, and Catawba. Each center works with assigned LEAs.

How to Contact a Center	Catawba	Phone: 828-241-5838	Fax: 828-241-5897
	Charlotte	Phone: 704-792-2709	Fax: 704-793-4130
	Fayetteville	Phone: 910-483-1495	Fax: 910-678-2535
	Nashville	Phone: 252-451-0134	Fax: 252-451-0613

Direct Licensure

Introduction On a case-by-case basis the Licensure Section evaluates individual records for the purpose of establishing eligibility for licensing. IHEs or other authorized recommending parties are not involved. (See **SBE Policy QP-A-002, 2.30**)

Conditions for direct licensure Direct licensing process is contingent upon the following:

- Extenuating circumstances prohibit fair and equitable evaluation through the normal routes to licensure.
- **Applicants must qualify for the lateral entry classification to be eligible for an initial license based on direct licensure.**
- Employees earning a license through the direct process must comply with all current
 - provisional regulations
 - BTSP requirements
 - testing requirements, and
 - experience requirements for the area of licensing sought.

Requirements Employers must ensure that employees participating in the direct licensing process are in compliance with procedures by providing documentation of

- any course work or experiences used to satisfy provisions
- acceptable scores on required tests.
