

A GUIDE TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION FOR NON-EDUCATION MAJORS

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE FLORIDA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

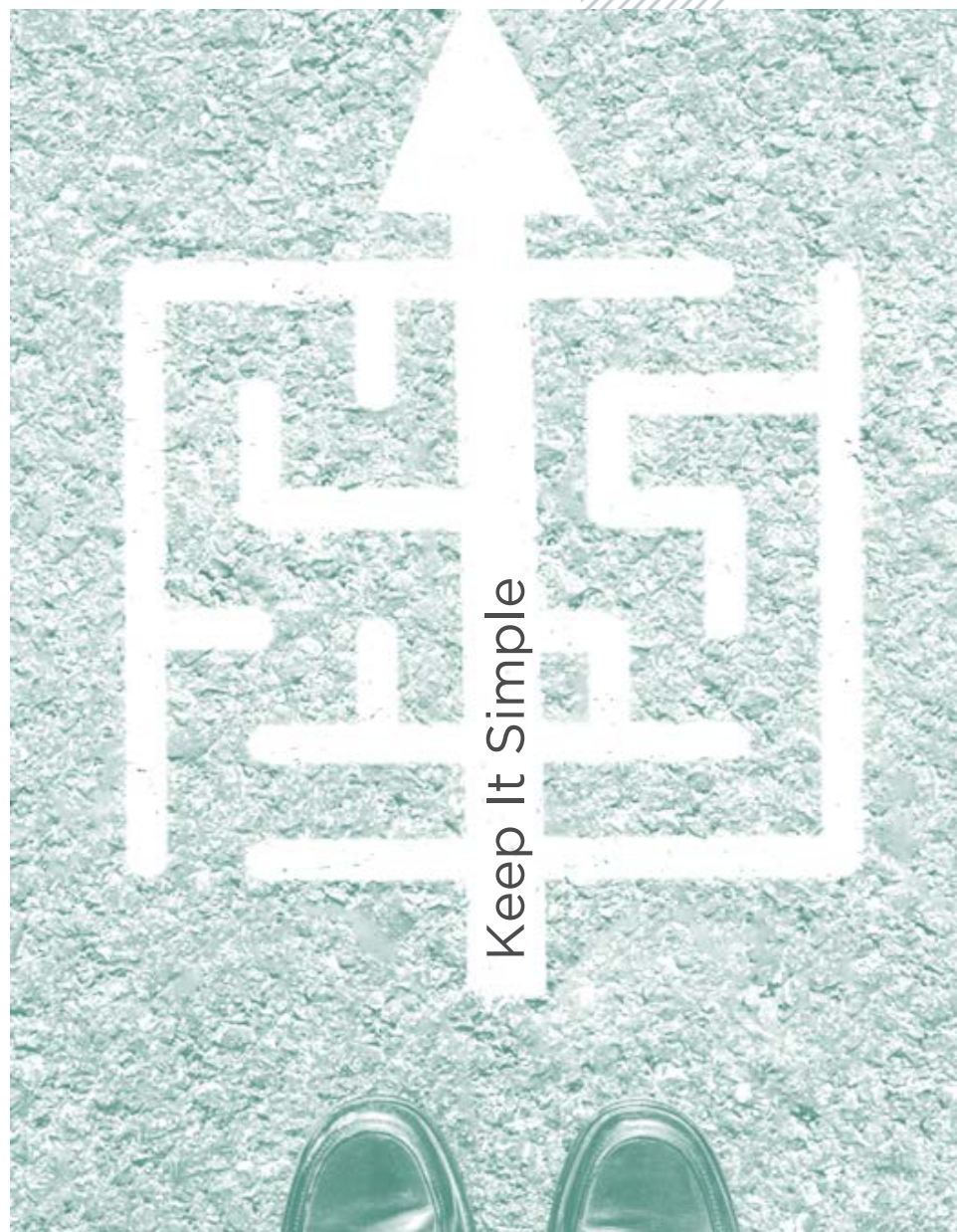


TRANSFER CERTIFICATION TO ANOTHER STATE

The red-tape of teacher certification can be confusing. If you visit a Department of Education website or call a representative, you might end up feeling more lost than when you started.

There are so many “if this, then that” possibilities for would-be teachers who did not graduate with an education degree. Of course, each situation is unique, but the bones are the all same.

We believe in the old *Keep It Simple* adage. In this guide, we translate the certification requirements into understandable terms, answer some common questions, and dispel a few misunderstandings.



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PATHS TO CERTIFICATION FOR NON-EDUCATION GRADUATES

1

EDUCATOR PREPARATION INSTITUTE (EPI)

Through an EPI program, anyone with a bachelor's degree can apply for certification in the state of Florida. This is the most common solution for career-changers and recent graduates without teacher certification. The EPI program will provide you with the knowledge, training, and field work to meet certification requirements. Alongside the program, you will take the three Florida Teacher Certification Exams. Once you complete the EPI program and pass your tests, you will be eligible for certification.

AVERAGE PROGRAM LENGTH: 9 – 18 months

2

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

These programs are offered through the school district. Much like an EPI program, they are designed to provide the training needed to be effective in the classroom. You will also complete the three Florida Teacher Certification Exams. However, these programs are only offered to current school district employees. You must be already working for the district to participate. Only some districts offer these programs.

AVERAGE PROGRAM LENGTH: 18 – 24 months

3

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

These programs are graduate-level. If you plan to be a school administrator, you may be interested in joining an Education Leadership Program. Through your training, you will also receive an initial teacher certification. You will also be required to pass the three Florida Teacher Certification Exams.

AVERAGE PROGRAM LENGTH: 18 – 24 months

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TEACH?

Choosing a subject area is one of the most important decisions you need to make. What do you want to teach?

The good news is that you are not limited to your degree area. This is a common misconception. There are only a few subject areas that require a degree specific to the content. All other areas are open to you. Here is a list:

- Art (K-12)
- Agriculture (6-12)
- Art
- Biology (6-12)
- Business Education (6-12)
- Chemistry (6-12)
- Computer Science (K-12)
- Drama (6-12)
- Earth-Space Science (6-12)
- Educational Media Specialist (PK-12)
- Elementary Education (K-6)
- Middle Grades English (5-9)
- English (6-12)
- English to Speakers of Other Languages (K-12)
- Exceptional Student Education (K-12)
- Family and Consumer Science (6-12)
- French (K-12)
- German (K-12)
- Latin (K-12)
- Spanish (K-12)
- Middle Grades General Science (5-9)
- Health (K-12)
- Hearing Impaired (K-12)
- Humanities (K-12)
- Engineering and Technology Education (6-12)
- Marketing (6-12)
- Middle Grades Mathematics (5-9)
- Mathematics (6-12)
- Music (K-12)
- Physical Education (K-12)
- Physics (6-12)
- Prekindergarten/Primary Education (Age 3-Gr 3)
- Preschool Education (Birth - Age 4)
- Middle Grades Social Science (5-9)
- Social Science (6-12)
- Visually Impaired (K-12)



APPLYING WITH THE STATE

One of your first steps when you join any certification program will be to apply with the Florida Department of Education for *an initial subject area evaluation*.

You will do that, here: <https://certify.fldoe.org/publicweb/default.aspx>

This is where you will tell the state what you want to teach and your educational background. The state will then send you a “Statement of Eligibility” document that lists the requirements that you need to meet to be certified in that subject area.

You will provide this document to your certification program staff.

DECIPHERING YOUR “STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY”

The Florida Statement of Eligibility is a document that you receive when you apply for certification through the State of Florida. This document is intended to outline the steps you need to take to become a certified teacher in your chosen subject area. **However, it only outlines one possible set of requirements.**

Your Statement of Eligibility will only list the requirements for someone planning on going back to college to meet traditional credit requirements. Most likely, this is not your plan. At the bottom of the last page, you will see a statement indicating that there are more ways that you can qualify for certification than what is listed on the document.

Here are some answers to your most pressing questions:

DO I HAVE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL TO EARN MORE CREDITS IN MY SUBJECT AREA?

No. Instead, you can prove your subject area knowledge when you pass the Subject Area Exam portion of the Florida Teacher Certification Exams (which you must take, anyways).

DO I HAVE TO EARN COLLEGE CREDITS IN THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AREAS LISTED ON THE STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY?

No. You will be required to complete the training offered by your chosen program. Completing this training will replace the credit hour requirement.

DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE ONE YEAR OF FULL-TIME TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN A CLASSROOM?

No. You will instead complete the number of field hours necessary to meet your program’s requirements. These will range in number. Some programs will require full-time field work and some programs will allow part-time field work. Part-time is ideal if you are working another job. Make sure to ask about these requirements from the program you will be joining.

DO I HAVE TO PASS THE FLORIDA TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMS?

Yes. No matter what path you choose to earn your certification, you will be required to pass the exams.

THE FLORIDA TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMS

Just like all professional certifications, you will need to take the state exams to qualify for certification:

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

SKILLS: Writing, Reading, Math, and English

COST: **\$130** (1st attempt); **\$150** (re-take)

PASSING SCORE: **Essay Subtest:** At least 8 out of 12 points

English, Reading, and Mathematics Subtests: 200 points per skill area

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- The math portion of this exam has the lowest pass rate of any other certification exam for Florida.
- You should study independently for this exam. Most who do not study, do not pass.
- If you have recently taken the GRE, you may be able to substitute your GRE for this exam.

SUBJECT AREA EXAM

SKILLS: Knowledge of your subject area(s) content and teaching methods

COST: **\$200** (1st attempt); **\$220** (re-take)

PASSING SCORE: 200 points

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- This exam determines your eligibility to teach your chosen subject area.
- If you choose to be certified in more than one subject area, you will take this exam for each subject area.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXAM

SKILLS: Your mastery of classroom skills and effective teaching practices, as well as Florida-specific guidelines.

COST: **\$150** (1st attempt); **\$170** (re-take)

PASSING SCORE: 200 points

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- This exam will cover the same concepts that you will learn in your program coursework.
- You should also study independently for this exam.

PLAN YOUR EXAMS

The Florida Teacher Certification Exams can be taken at any time; ***so, don't wait until the last minute.*** It will take 4 weeks for your official scores to be reported to the state. You can't move forward with your certification paperwork until this happens. So, if you can complete your exams at least 4 weeks before you finish your coursework and field hours, you should plan to do that.

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE STUDY RESOURCES LIST BELOW:

FLORIDA TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMS

— INFORMATION PACKET —

DOWNLOAD

FILING FOR YOUR CERTIFICATION

You've completed all your coursework, finished your field hours, and passed the exams. *What should you expect from here?*

1. Once your official exams scores have been reported to the state (remember, this takes about 4 weeks), the state will send you a new "Statement of Eligibility".
2. Your new "Statement of Eligibility" will show that you are eligible for certification pending a background check.
3. You will send this document to your certification program staff.
4. Your certification program staff should file the proper documentation with the Florida Department of Education, clearing you for certification, once the state has processed your background check.
5. You will submit your fingerprints to the Florida Department of Education in one of the following ways:

☐ LIVESCAN

You can submit your fingerprints electronically through this option. This is only available to you if you have access to an approved service provider. To find out, go here: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/cms/home.aspx>

☐ FINGERPRINT CARD

If you do not have access to a Livescan provider, you will call the Florida Department of Education and ask them to mail you a fingerprint packet. When you receive the packet, you will have your fingerprints taken at a local police precinct or consulate office.

FLDOE CONTACT:

E-MAIL: edcert@fldoe.org

PHONE: 800-445-6739 (inside U.S.) or 850-245-5049 (outside U.S.)

HOURS: Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM (EST)

TAKING YOUR CERTIFICATION TO ANOTHER STATE

The first thing to understand is that every state is different. Each state has its own process and certification requirements for someone who is already certified in another state. This process is called **reciprocity**.

Typically, this process will include any combination of the following:

- Fill out the state's application for certification
- Provide your college transcripts
- Provide proof of your current Florida Professional Teacher Certificate
- Pass the state's exam for certification

If you are planning to take your certification to another state, it is very important to contact the state department and ask them what their reciprocity requirements are.

Before you do, make sure that you are prepared with the right question:

“If I currently hold a full professional Florida Teacher Certification, what process do I need to follow to become certified in [your state]”.

Write everything down. Then, ask them to email you that information.

Visit our state certification transfer map to access all state department of education websites and contact information:

<https://www.teacherready.org/certificate-transfer-map/>



WE ARE HERE TO HELP

TeacherReady® has been helping non-education degree holders become certified teachers for over a decade. We have worked with over 3,500 future teachers.

We've seen and learned a lot. If you have questions, we are here to help:

TeacherReady.org

850-898-3949

teacherready@studereducation.com