
FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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Teacher Licensure and Alternative Pathways

Overview

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) and the Iowa Department of Education (DE) establish standards for educational practitioners pursuant to their authorities under Iowa Code chapter [272](#) and Iowa Code chapter [256](#). The BOEE is charged with the overall responsibility of regulating the licensure standards for teachers, administrators, paraeducators, and coaches. The BOEE sets standards for the issuance of licenses, endorsements, and authorizations to educational practitioners and sets standards for license renewal, and the DE is charged with regulating standards for all practitioner preparation programs. The BOEE also investigates ethics complaints and monitors compliance of licensees with orders issued by the BOEE.

Initial Licenses

Teacher candidates in the State of Iowa can receive an initial teaching license after completion of a bachelor's degree and an approved teacher preparation program at an accredited institution. Teacher preparation programs take two forms:

- **Traditional Pathway.** Approved teacher preparation programs are traditionally a part of either a bachelor's degree program or a master's degree program at an accredited institution.
- **Alternative Teacher Pathway.** The Regents Alternative Pathway to Iowa Licensure (RAPIL) allows a teacher applicant who has an existing bachelor's degree to complete the required coursework for a teaching license primarily online during the applicant's first year and then be hired as a full-time teacher in the second year of the program in place of student teaching. The University of Northern Iowa, the University of Iowa, and Iowa State University have collaborated to provide this [program](#). Morningside College also offers a similar teacher intern [program](#).

When a teacher has received an Iowa teaching license, the teacher may add additional endorsements to that license to teach in a specific content area. Teachers can apply for conditional licensure, which allows them to immediately teach in the endorsement area and gives them two to three years to complete the required coursework needed to receive the endorsement.

Exchange Licenses

Teachers from out of state who wish to teach in Iowa can apply for an exchange license. These licenses take several forms, including:

- **Traditional Exchange License.** Applications are evaluated against Iowa practitioner preparation requirements, and if 75.0% of the program requirements are met, a conditional license may be issued. The conditional license allows applicants to begin work immediately and gives the applicant two to three years to complete any deficiencies in required coursework. Depending on the situation, some deficiencies can be waived.
- **Military Exchange License.** A military exchange license is a full Iowa teaching license for veterans or military traveling spouses who have already completed a teacher preparation program in another state. No additional assessments are required, and any course deficiencies are waived. The Troops to Teachers program is a federal Department of Defense program designed to assist military

More Information

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personnel in their pursuit of teaching as a second career. The Iowa Troops to Teachers [program office](#) is located at the University of Iowa.

- **International Exchange License.** An international teacher exchange license may be issued to applicants who have completed a teacher education program in another country and are participating in a teacher exchange program administered through the Iowa Department of Education (DE), the U.S. Department of Education, or the U.S. Department of State. Such a license lasts one year unless specific authorization is made as part of the teacher exchange program under which the applicant is granted the license.

Limited Teaching Authorizations

An authorization allows an individual to provide teaching in limited subject areas without the requirement of completion of a teacher preparation program. Teaching authorizations are available in two areas:

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Authorization.** To receive a CTE authorization, 6,000 experience hours or 4,000 experience hours and a bachelor's degree are required. CTE authorization applicants can begin teaching immediately while completing pedagogy courses online, and no additional testing is required.
- **World Language Authorization.** Applicants whose native language is one other than English can receive a native language speaker authorization with a completed bachelor's degree and passage of a content test in their native language. World language authorization applicants can begin teaching immediately while completing pedagogy courses online. Both authorizations require a position offer, and the native language speaker authorization requires the school district to show that no properly endorsed candidates were available for the position.

Preservice Substitute Authorization

The preservice substitute authorization allows a student in a teacher preparation program who is a junior or senior to serve as a substitute teacher when the student does not have scheduled classes or student teaching responsibilities. Applicants for the authorization must be at least 21 years of age and be recommended by their Iowa teacher preparation program. Applicants cannot miss any scheduled college classes to serve as a substitute teacher, serve as a substitute teacher for their cooperating teacher during student teaching, or count substitute teaching toward required field experiences.

Other

Teacher licensure is not required for instructors teaching community college courses. A school district may hire a nonlicensed instructor for community college courses offered by a school district at a high school through a concurrent enrollment agreement.