

**School of Education
Certification Office**

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Teacher Certification

1. How can I obtain a NJ Substitute teacher Certificate?

60 semester hours on college transcripts are needed. Candidates can contact administrative offices of any NJ local school district, where the substitute teacher application process begins. Local County Superintendent of Schools Offices process documents; federal background check, fingerprinting, and application fee are required. The cost is approximately \$100. Some school districts require brief “substitute teacher training.”

The College recommends obtaining a substitute teacher certificate during the junior or senior year.

2. How and when will I receive my NJ certificate? I am a TCNJ education major.

How: Obtain, complete, and return NJ certification application materials through the TCNJ Certification Office, **during** the semester in which you will graduate.

When: **After** the degree is posted on the transcript, TCNJ submits documents to the NJ State DOE Office of Licensing, where documents are linked with passing praxis test scores; certificates are issued, printed and mailed to candidates to the address entered on the (pink) application form.

May graduates usually receive certificates in mid- June; December graduates receive certificates in January/February. August graduates receive certificates in September (or, if hired, in August).

3. What should I tell interviewers regarding my certificate? Some districts have asked for a Letter or Certificate “of Eligibility” and/or a “security background check.”

School district personnel usually know that certificates cannot be issued before program completion: final grades and degrees appear on the transcript, and certification fees are processed through TCNJ offices.

In NJ, the initial certificate is the CEAS, “Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing,” meaning that an approved teacher preparation program was completed and the candidate can be hired to teach. The hiring district obtains a “Provisional Certificate” under which mentoring occurs during the first year of teaching. The “Standard,” or permanent, certificate is issued after successful completion of the provisional time period under the CEAS and provisional certificates.

Provide districts with a copy of your passing praxis test score. A transcript may help, even if it does not show final grades or the degree. After you are “cleared” for graduation, the TCNJ Certification Office can provide a letter indicating that you are expected to complete a state-approved program at the end of the current semester and that the certificate will be processed soon afterwards. (allow 1 week to receive the letter after requested)

NJ does not require a background check for teacher certification. (However, a background check **is** required for substitute certification.) School districts may require an updated background check in order to be hired.

4. Explain graduation and certification “timing.” Also, what is my status if I need a summer class or fall classes in order to graduate?

TCNJ graduates students 3 times a year – May, August, and December. TCNJ submits application materials to the State **after** the degree is posted on the transcript and the official transcript is available....

Candidates with degree dates in May: degrees are posted in mid-May;

Candidates with degree dates in August: degrees are posted in mid-August;

Candidates with degree dates in December: degrees are posted in January. It is *highly recommended* that December graduates obtain a NJ substitute certificate (through any local school district) in order to teach in early January.

5. Is there other important information I need to know?

Praxis test score report: Review and file your report; the *social number must be accurately indicated*. The score report must indicate that the *NJ State Department of Education* as a score recipient. Contact ETS if either of these 2 is not evident. Certification candidates must submit a test score report copy to the TCNJ Certification Office. The “top” page and the page indicating “sub-scores are needed.

6. How do I go about getting certified in another state?

PA – The TCNJ Certification Office provides an information sheet describing the process, requirements, and tests needed.. www.pde.state.pa.us

Other states –

- (1) Take appropriate (praxis or other) tests required by the specific state in your teaching area.
www.ets.org/praxis Click on “State Requirements.”
- (2) Obtain a certification application from the specific state (on-line, or through mail). Visit the specific state’s website- look under “education”- then “licensure.” Directions will explain the certification process in that state.
- (3) Each state requires a “College/University Verification Form” (included in certification application materials). Complete information in the top section of the form and forward it to the TCNJ Certification Office. After you graduate, we will complete the form and return it to you to be included with your certification application to the state in which you seek certification. A TCNJ transcript indicating the degree and teacher ed. classes will also be needed (through TCNJ on-line request).

A list of Departments of Education websites for all states is available in the Certification Office.

7. How can I obtain an additional NJ certificate based upon college credits and additional praxis test(s)?

Candidates who hold initial certificates through a TCNJ teacher ed. program can apply directly to the State for additional certificates (endorsements) in other teaching areas. Be aware that these endorsements are recognized by NJ schools only.

Applications may be submitted on-line; transcripts and other documents are sent by ground mail. Website – www.state.nj.us/education Click on “licensing” in the drop-down box. Candidates may also contact the NJ County Superintendent of Schools Office in the county where they live or teach.

8. What is the NJ health/hygiene requirement for certification?

NJ currently requires new teachers to have basic knowledge of general health and wellness information. The requirement may be met through completion of: basic military training, any college course in biology, nutrition, health problems, personal/family/school/ or community health and wellness, etc. A “health & hygiene” test may be taken at any of the NJ County Superintendent of Schools Offices for candidates who did not take a course in any of these areas. www.state.nj.us/education lists all NJ County Superintendents’ Offices.

9. When do certificates expire?

CEAS certificates do not expire; they remain valid *until* a position is offered and accepted. Provisional certificates are effective for 1 or 2 years, during which time the candidates work “under” the CEAS. Standard Certificates never expire.

Note: In New Jersey, non US citizens receive a 5-year teaching certificate which may be renewed only once. By that time, US citizenship must be obtained in order to become “Standard.”

Forms appear on the NJ State Department of Education website including information www.state.nj.us/education for:

- Obtaining a duplicate copy of a NJ certificate
- Changing a name on a certificate
- Non-citizen forms
- No Child Left Behind
- Teacher Recruitment in NJ

These policies are subject to change. We recommend obtaining the certificate even if you do not plan to teach immediately.