



Non-teaching Occupational Experience Credit Guidelines

Pursuant to Act 29 of 2025-26, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-60

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Legislative Mandate

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Non-teaching occupational experience credit, requirements, eligibility, scope limitations

SECTION 1. Chapter 25, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 59-25-60.

(A) When reviewing an application by an individual for an educator certificate, the State Department of Education shall award years of experience on the educator certificate for non-teaching occupational experience in, or related to, the content field of the certificate for which the individual qualifies. One year of experience credit may be awarded for every two years of full-time relevant occupational experience completed by the individual. Years of experience shall be awarded solely for the purpose of advancement on the teacher salary schedule. Except for individuals seeking work-based certification, educator experience credit and relevant occupational experience eligible for educator experience credit must have been earned after the conferral of a bachelor's degree from a college or university meeting State Board of Education accreditation requirements. To be eligible for years of experience on the educator certificate, the individual must complete and submit a verification of relevant occupational experience form developed by the State Department of Education with the application for an educator certificate.

(B) Individuals who entered the teaching profession prior to July 1, 2025, with non-teaching occupational experience in, or related to, the content field of their teaching certificate may complete and submit the verification of relevant occupational experience form to the State Department of Education to have additional years of experience added to their certificate for the purposes of advancing on the teacher salary schedule. If additional years of experience are awarded, the eligible individual is entitled to have his pay adjusted at the beginning of the next school year, from the effective date of the adjustment, to reflect the new experience step on the employing district's salary schedule. However, the individual is not entitled to retroactive pay for the increased years of experience during prior years of teaching or for any purpose other than advancement on the teacher salary schedule.

(C) Nothing in this section alters any existing requirements for receiving an educator certificate. Individuals with the occupational experience identified in subsection (A) must still meet all other existing requirements in order to receive an educator certificate.

(D) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as allowing additional years of experience to be awarded for purposes other than advancement on the teacher salary schedule. Years of experience awarded pursuant to this section for relevant occupational experience are not considered service credit for the purposes of the state retirement or state health plans administered by PEBA.

State Department of Education directive

SECTION 2. The State Department of Education shall not add a full-time equivalent (FTE) position or partial FTE to evaluate and process certification requests as required to implement the provisions of this act.

State Department of Education directive

SECTION 3. The State Department of Education shall develop guidelines for purposes of implementation of this act and make available the non-teaching occupational experience verification form described in this act no later than one hundred eighty days after the approval by the Governor.

Time effective

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 8th day of May, 2025.

Approved the 12th day of May, 2025.

Purpose

These guidelines, developed by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and approved by the State Board of Education, support implementation of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-60, as created in Act 29 of 2025-26.

When reviewing an application for an educator certificate, the SCDE may award experience credit for non-teaching occupational experience that is directly related to the content area of the certificate for which an individual qualifies. This experience credit may be awarded solely for the purpose of advancement on the teacher salary schedule and cannot be considered as service credit for the purposes of the state retirement or state health plans administered by the Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA).

These guidelines define eligible non-teaching occupational experience, outline procedures for submitting work experience for review, and establish criteria for the review and issuance of experience credit.

Definitions

For these guidelines, the following definitions will be used.

Non-teaching occupational experience is defined as professional work experience in the public or private sector that is directly related to the content area of the educator certificate for which the individual qualifies.

Full-time employment is defined as a minimum of 35 hours per week per year.

Eligibility Requirements

Academic Certification Fields

For individuals seeking certification in an academic field, eligible occupational experience related to the certification field must be earned after the conferral of a bachelor's degree from a college or university that meets State Board of Education accreditation requirements.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Work-based Certification Fields

For individuals CTE work-based certification, eligible occupational experience related to the certification field must be earned after issuance of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Documentation Requirements

The educator is responsible for submitting all necessary documentation, including the items indicated below and any additional documentation the SCDE requests to complete the determination process.

- Verification of Non-teaching Occupational Experience Form

- The form must be completed and the work experience verified by each employer. Acceptable verifying parties include an employer’s human resources department, payroll department, or bookkeeper.
- Job Description
 - The job description must be provided by the employer and demonstrate that the position directly relates to the certification subject area.
- Self-employment Verification
 - Self-employment verified solely by the educator is not acceptable. For an educator who is self-employed, the verification must be completed by a third party such as an accountant, attorney, or business manager affiliated with the business.

Calculation of Experience Credit

Pursuant to the authorizing statute, one year of experience credit for compensation purposes may be awarded for every two years of full-time, relevant occupational experience.

Credit Calculation

- One year of experience credit may be awarded for every two years of full-time, relevant occupational experience.
- Full-time work is defined as at least 35 hours per week.
- A minimum of two years (i.e., 24 months) of full-time work experience is required to receive one year of credit.
- The employment must be full-time compensated work.

Effective Date of Experience Updates for Current Educators

- Educators who entered the profession prior to July 1, 2025, and possess qualifying non-teaching occupational experience may submit the verification form and additional documentation to request additional experience credit.
- If additional years are awarded, the educator is entitled to have his or her pay adjusted at the beginning of the next school year, from the effective date of the adjustment, to reflect the new experience step on the employing district’s salary schedule.
- An educator is not entitled to retroactive pay for the increased years of experience during prior years of teaching or for any purpose other than advancement on the teacher salary schedule.