

COVID-19 Emergency Provisions to Assist Current and Prospective Educators 2020-21 School Year

This document summarizes all emergency provisions related to the issuance of educator certificates by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and State Board of Education (SBE).

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Emergency Provisions for Certified Educators

1. One-Year Grace Period for Professional (including Limited Professional) Certificates Expiring June 30, 2020

- On July 1, 2020, the SCDE added a one-year grace period to Professional certificates for which renewal requirements had not been met or had not been processed by the June 30 expiration date. This included certificates with an extension for the 2019-20 school year. The new validity period with the grace year added is July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.
- If an educator has received the grace year but submits all renewal requirements before November 1, 2020, the SCDE will remove the one-year grace period and renew the certificate for the standard five-year validity period (or four years if the educator held an extension for 2019-20). *Important:* Renewal documentation submitted to the SCDE is scanned into educator files and then evaluated in the order in which received. As a result, renewal documentation submitted prior to June 30 will continue to be processed in date order and certificates with the grace year may be updated to a standard validity period if all requirements are met.
- For remaining certificates with the one-year grace period, educators must complete necessary requirements to renew the certificate expiring June 30, 2021.

2. One-Year Grace Period for Initial Certificates Expiring June 30, 2020

- On July 20, 2020—after the verification of 2019-20 ADEPT results—the SCDE advanced eligible Initial certificates to the Professional level.
- Subsequently, the SCDE added a one-year grace period to remaining Initial certificates that expired on June 30, 2020. Educators will then have the one-year grace period to complete remaining requirements, which might include a qualifying score on a pedagogy assessment or successful completion of ADEPT summative evaluation requirements.

3. Renewals for Certification Permits Issued for 2019-20

- Due to closures of Praxis testing centers and changes in college and university schedules, renewal requirements will be waived for educators issued a certification permit for 2019-20. Districts must request the permit for 2020-21, but educators do not need to submit coursework or Praxis scores for the renewal.

4. *Flexibility for Teachers with a Final Alternative Route Certificate Expiring June 30, 2020*

The maximum number of conditional or alternative route certificates that an educator may hold while pursuing full certification is established in South Carolina statute, as indicated below:

- Teachers pursuing certification through the American Board program are limited to a maximum of three conditional teaching certificates pursuant to Section 59-25-330.
- Teachers pursuing a Professional certificate through all other approved alternative route preparation programs (e.g., PACE, Teach for America, Teachers of Tomorrow, etc.) are limited to a maximum of four conditional teaching certificates pursuant to Section 59-26-30.

The COVID-19 public health emergency has affected the ability of some teachers holding their final conditional certificate to complete necessary requirements for a Professional certificate due to closures of schools and testing centers and changes to college and university course schedules.

- The SCDE will issue an additional Alternative Route certificate for 2020-21 to eligible educators unable to complete requirements for the Professional certificate due to circumstances related to COVID-19. These requirements may include:
 - successful completion of the state's summative evaluation of teaching performance at the annual contract level, and
 - earning a qualifying score on a pedagogy exam approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for certification purposes (i.e., the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching exam).
 - coursework requirements, if required by the specific alternative route program.

In order to be issued this Alternative Route extension for 2020-21, the educator must submit a [request](#) to the Office of Educator Services, and the district must submit confirmation of employment. This additional certificate year will allow the educator to complete the remaining requirement(s) to advance to a standard Professional certificate no later than June 30, 2021.

This additional certificate option is available due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and is not renewable beyond the 2020-21 school year.

Note: Educators on their final Alternative Route certificate who have completed all program requirements and have all documentation on file may submit a request to advance to a standard Professional certificate.

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Emergency Provisions for Prospective Educators

1. *Exemptions for Spring 2020 Student Teachers*

In a special called meeting held March 24, 2020, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved [Emergency Exemptions for Spring 2020 Clinical and Field Experiences due to COVID-19](#). Under the provisions of this emergency policy, the following SBE requirements are waived for the Spring 2020 student teaching semester: the minimum length of the clinical experience, the number of days of independent teaching, and the number of formative and summative observations as part of the state's ADEPT system.

Preparation program faculty in each college or university, in consultation with clinical supervisors and school-based cooperating teachers, have been granted flexibility to make decisions regarding a candidate's overall performance and eligibility for certification based the available observations, evidence, and documentation collected during the clinical experience.

2. *Provisional Educator Certificate for 2020-21*

To assist prospective educators impacted by the closure of testing centers, the SCDE will issue a Provisional certificate for the 2020-21 school year to eligible candidates. The purpose of the Provisional certificate is to provide a one-year, temporary certificate option for an individual who has successfully completed all requirements of a state-approved educator preparation program with the exception of one or more certification assessments required by the State Board of Education. An employing South Carolina school district must request the issuance of a Provisional certificate for an eligible candidate. For additional information on eligibility requirements, please review the [Provisional Educator Certificate](#) webpage.

3. *Certificate Eligibility Letters*

The COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted the ability of some prospective educators to complete the fingerprinting process and to take subject area and pedagogy tests required for certification. To assist these prospective educators, the Office of Educator Services will issue a Certificate Eligibility Letter to applicants who have met all requirements for an educator certificate, except for the exams and/or the criminal history review process. Applicants may present a copy of this advisement letter to districts where they seek employment.

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Emergency Provisions for Candidates Seeking Admission to an Alternative Route Program

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-26-30 and § 59-25-330, an individual must earn a qualifying score on the required subject area assessment in the certification field for issuance of a conditional (i.e., Alternative Route) certificate. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, closures of testing centers administering certification assessments have delayed candidates in completing the testing requirement for admission to an approved alternative route program.

Temporary Alternative Route certificate for the 2020-21 School Year

To assist these prospective educators affected by the closure of testing centers, the SCDE will issue a Temporary Alternative Route certificate for the 2020-21 school year to eligible candidates. The purpose of the Temporary certificate is to provide a one-year, non-renewable certificate option for an individual who has successfully completed all requirements to participate in an approved alternative route preparation program with the exception of one or more certification assessments required by the State Board of Education.

In order for the SCDE to issue a Temporary Alternative Route certificate for the 2020-21 school year, an eligible candidate must have the following documentation on file:

1. application for certification,
2. application fee,
3. official transcripts documenting qualifying degree and major from a regionally accredited college or university,
4. fingerprint-based criminal history clearance,
5. verification of successful completion of the pre-service training of the specific program, and
6. confirmation of employment in a public school district.

The Temporary Alternative Route certificate is valid only for the 2020-21 school year and is not renewable. No later than June 30, 2021, the candidate must have a qualifying score on the required subject area assessment on file with the SCDE for continued program participation and eligibility for certification. Issuance of an Alternative Route certificate for 2021-22 or beyond is contingent upon the candidate meeting the testing requirement, demonstrating successful progress in the specific preparation program, and continuing employment in a South Carolina public school district.

Restrictions

Candidates with three or more unsuccessful attempts on a required subject area assessment in the certification field are not eligible for the temporary certificate.

Note: An alternative route candidate who has all documentation on file and a qualifying score on the required subject area assessment(s) will be issued the customary Alternative Route certificate.

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Emergency Provisions for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Work-based Teachers

These emergency provisions apply to CTE teachers completing the five-year work-based teacher certification process.

1. Educators with a Year 1 Induction Certificate Expiring June 30, 2020

In order to advance from a first- to second-year Induction certificate, a CTE teacher must meet the following requirements by June 30, 2020:

- successful completion of DIRECT Institute 1: Methods of Teaching;
- successful completion of DIRECT Institute 2: Classroom and Lab Management; and
- attempt all three sections of the basic skills assessment adopted by the State Board of Education for the certification of work-based teachers (currently the WIN Ready to Work assessment).

Due to closures of testing centers and the cancellation of the DIRECT Institute 2 scheduled for June 2020, some first-year CTE teachers may be unable to attempt all three sections of the WIN assessment or to complete first-year DIRECT requirements by June 30, 2020. To assist these educators, the SCDE will waive the basic skills testing requirement and/or completion of DIRECT 2 for issuance of the second-year Induction certificate for the 2020-21 school year with confirmation of employment by the hiring school district. A CTE participant, however, must meet these requirements for issuance of a CTE certificate for the 2021-22 school year.

2. Educators with a Year 2 Induction Certificate Expiring June 30, 2020

In order to advance from a second-year Induction certificate to a three-year Pre-professional certificate, a CTE teacher meet the following requirements by June 30, 2020:

- successful completion of DIRECT Institute 3: Curriculum;
- successful completion of DIRECT Institute 4: Assessment;
- successful completion of a state competency exam, if required for the certification field, or a state or national industry certification, if required for the certification field; and
- participation in the appropriate level of the district's ADEPT program.

CTE educators who meet these requirements by June 30, 2020, will be issued the three-year Pre-professional certificate with confirmation of employment by the hiring school district.

Due to emergency closures affecting certification examinations and the cancellation of the DIRECT Institute 4 scheduled for June 2020, some second-year CTE educators may be unable to complete a state or national industry certification by June 30, 2020. To assist these educators who have been unable to complete a required industry certification or DIRECT Institute 4 due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the SCDE will issue the educator a one-year Pre-professional certificate for the 2020-21 school year upon confirmation of employment by the hiring district. The educator must successfully complete the industry certification and/or

DIRECT requirements no later than June 30, 2021, in order to be issued a Pre-professional certificate for an additional two years.

3. Educators with a Pre-professional Certificate Expiring June 30, 2020

In order to advance to a standard Professional certificate, a CTE educator with a Pre-professional certificate must meet the following requirements:

- successful summative performance evaluation at the annual contract level;
- successful completion of six semester hours of professional education coursework; and
- passing scores on all three sections of the basic skills assessment approved by the State Board of Education for CTE certification.

The certificate of a CTE educator who has met all requirements by June 30, 2020, will be advanced to the Professional level.

A CTE educator who is unable to complete all requirements for the Professional certificate by June 30, 2020, will be issued a one-year grace period for the 2020-21 school year with confirmation of employment by the hiring district. During the grace period, the educator must complete any remaining requirements successfully in order to complete the certification process and advance to a standard Professional certificate.

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