

Title of Regulation:

Regulation No.: 43-53

CREDENTIAL CLASSIFICATION

Effective Date: 05/28/21

Constitutional and Statutory Provisions:

Section(s):

59-5-60(1).	General powers of [State] Board
50-5-65	Powers and responsibilities of State Board of Education
59-25-110.	System for examination and certification of teachers
59-25-115	Notice to enrollee in teacher education program regarding effect of prior criminal record; criminal records check and fingerprinting requirements.
59-26-40	Induction, annual and continuing contracts; evaluations; termination of employment for annual contract teacher; hearing.
59-26-85	NBPTS recertification; development of application fee loan program.

Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

20 U.S.C. § 6301, et seq. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
U.S. Code of Laws

State Board Regulation:

43-53. Credential Classification.

I. Types of Credential Classification

A. Initial Certificate

An initial certificate is valid for three years. Beyond the initial three-year validity period, teachers who do not yet meet the requirements for professional certification, but who are employed by a public school district at the induction or annual contract level, as defined in S.C. Code Ann. Section 59-26-40, may have their certificates extended annually at the request of the employing school district.

Teachers who hold initial certificates and are employed in a public school setting in a position that does not require certification or is not included in the ADEPT system may have their certificates extended annually for an indefinite period at the request of the employing school or school district, provided that certificate renewal requirements, as specified in Reg.43-55 (Renewal of Credentials) are met every five years.

Teachers who hold initial certificates and are employed in a nonpublic school educational setting may have their certificates extended annually for an indefinite period at the request of the educational entity, provided that certificate renewal requirements, as specified in Reg.43-55 (Renewal of Credentials) are met every five years.

Teachers who hold initial certificates but who are not employed by a public school district in a position requiring certification at the time the initial certificate expires, and who have not otherwise met the requirements for professional certification, may reapply for an initial certificate at such time as they become employed by a public school district or private school, subject to the requirements for initial certification in effect at the time of reapplication. To qualify for an initial certificate, the applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Earn a bachelor's or master's degree either from an institution that has a state-approved teacher education program and is accredited for general collegiate purposes by a regional accreditation association, or from a South Carolina institution that has programs approved for teacher education by the State Board of Education (SBE), or

from an institution that has programs approved for teacher education by a national accreditation association with which the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has a partnership agreement. Professional education credit must be earned through an institution that has a teacher education program approved for initial certification.

2. Submit the required teaching content area examination score(s) and the required score on the examination of general professional knowledge (pedagogy) as adopted by the SBE for purposes of certification.

3. Undergo a criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and a national criminal records check supported by fingerprints conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). If the applicant does not complete the initial certification process within eighteen months from the original date of application, the FBI fingerprint process must be repeated. Eligible applicants who have prior arrests and/or convictions must undergo a review by the SBE and be approved before a certificate may be issued. Background checks from other states or agencies are not transferable to South Carolina.

B. Professional Certificate

All professional certificates are valid for five years and may be renewed as specified in Reg. 43-55 (Renewal of Credentials). To qualify for a professional certificate an individual must

1. Meet all criteria to advance from an initial to a professional certificate as specified in Section 59-26-40.

OR

2. Meet all criteria to advance from an alternative route certificate as specified in the SBE-approved guidelines for the specific alternative route program.

OR

3. Meet all educator experience criteria as specified in Reg. 43-51 (Certification Requirements) to be issued a professional certificate if applying as a certified educator from out-of-state.

OR

4. Meet all criteria of Section 59-26-85 to be issued a professional certificate if applying from out-of-state as an educator holding a current, valid certification through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

C. Alternative Route Certificate

The alternative route certificate for an individual who qualifies under the rules and guidelines published by the SBE for one of the state's approved alternative route programs is valid for one year initially and may be renewed under the conditions specified in the rules and guidelines for that program. The teacher will be eligible for a professional certificate upon his or her successful completion of all requirements as outlined in the SBE-published guidelines for that program, including additional testing requirements approved by the SBE and the formative and summative evaluation of teaching performance and effectiveness as part of the state's system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT).

D. International Certificate

An International Certificate may be issued to a teacher from a country outside of the United States provided the individual has completed at least a bachelor's degree with a major in the teaching field. Organizations that recruit and select teachers from other countries to teach in South Carolina must assure that all cultural/educational visa requirements have been met. The International Certificate may be renewed annually for up to three years at the request of the local school district, provided the teacher has demonstrated content competency based on the SCDE review of the official transcript evaluation or has met the certification examination requirements specified by the SBE during the first year of certification.

E. Internship Certificate

1. Approved Educator Preparation Program. The Internship Certificate will be issued to individuals who are currently enrolled in an SBE approved educator preparation program in South Carolina and have completed all academic and bachelor's degree requirements, with the exception of the teaching internship, as well as all certification examination requirements. The certificate will be issued for up to one year, and must be requested by the employing school district. Upon completion of the teaching internship and verification by the college or university that all approved program requirements have been met, the internship certificate will be converted to an initial certificate.

2. School Psychologist. The Internship Certificate will also be issued to any individual who is serving the required internship for certification as a School Psychologist I or II under the supervision of a certified School Psychologist II or III, or who is serving the required internship for School Psychologist III under the supervision of a certified School Psychologist III.

The applicant for the Internship Certificate in School Psychology must submit official written verification from the college or university that he or she is currently enrolled and working toward full certification as a school psychologist, and that the internship is being served through an SBE-approved training program. The Internship Certificate may be renewed once on the basis of written documentation from the director of the school psychology program that the applicant is a full-time student in the program during the second year of the renewed certificate. Upon successful completion of the internship year(s) and recommendation for certification by the SBE-approved training program, the candidate for school psychologist will be issued a professional certificate.

3. Speech-Language Pathology. The Internship Certificate will also be issued to any individual who holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology issued by the American Speech-Hearing Association (ASHA) or who has completed a master's degree that includes the academic and clinical requirements for the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence and has achieved the minimum qualifying score on the required certification examination(s). The certificate will be effective for one academic year and must be requested by the employing school district. The Internship Certificate may be renewed once upon the written request of the employing school district. The Internship Certificate may be converted to an initial certificate upon verification of a successful formative evaluation in fulfillment of the state's induction requirements.

F. Limited Professional Certificate

The purpose of the Limited Professional Certificate is to provide a certificate advancement option for educators who hold South Carolina Initial teaching certificates and who are employed as educators in eligible, non-regulated educational entities in this state. In this context, "non-regulated" means that the entity is not required to comply with SBE regulations and guidelines for evaluating educator performance and effectiveness. Examples of eligible, non-regulated educational entities include South Carolina public charter schools that elect not to participate in the SBE-approved process for evaluating teacher performance and effectiveness, state or regionally accredited private and parochial schools in South Carolina, and South Carolina institutions of higher education that have programs approved for teacher preparation by the SBE.

1. In order to be eligible to advance from an initial certificate to a Limited Professional Certificate, the educator must be employed by an eligible, non-regulated educational entity in South Carolina and must have accrued a minimum total of three years of experience credit over the previous seven years in one or more of these entities. During the entirety of the qualifying time period, the educator must

(a) hold a valid South Carolina Initial teaching certificate,

(b) be employed as a teacher or a professional support specialist, such as a library media specialist, school guidance counselor, or other support professional, in an area in which the educator holds Initial certification, and

(c) successfully complete an annual performance evaluation process that is approved by the employing educational entity.

2. In order to activate the certificate advancement process (i.e., from Initial to Limited Professional), the educator must submit the following documents to the SCDE office that is responsible for educator certification:

(a) a request for change/action requesting advancement for the Limited Professional Certificate,

(b) official verification of experience,

(c) verification of successful annual performance evaluations from each employing entity, and

(d) a recommendation for the Limited Professional Certificate signed by the head of the educational entity in which the educator is employed at the time the certificate is requested.

3. All Limited Professional Certificates are valid for a period of five years.

4. Requirements for renewing Limited Professional Certificates, including the provisions for expired certificates, are the same as those for Professional Certificates, as specified in SBE Regulation 43-55 (Renewal of Credentials).

5. An educator who holds a valid Limited Professional Certificate and who applies for a position as a teacher or a professional support specialist in a “regulated” South Carolina public school is eligible for employment at the annual-contract level. Once employed under an annual contract, the teacher is subject to all requirements and sanctions for annual-contract teachers, as set forth in the applicable state statutes, regulations, and guidelines. Upon successful completion of the SBE-approved process for evaluating teaching performance and effectiveness, the educator is eligible to move from a Limited Professional Certificate to a Professional Certificate and to be employed under a continuing contract.

G. Certification Permit

A one-year certification permit may be issued to an educator who holds a valid South Carolina initial or professional teaching certificate and is assigned teaching duties for any amount of time in an area for which he or she is not appropriately certified. Permits may be issued to classroom-based teachers and for the areas of administration, library media specialist, and school guidance counselor. Certification permits are not issued for the areas of school psychologist and speech-language therapist.

The SCDE has the authority to develop guidelines for the issuance of certification permits in accordance with the provisions of this regulation to include eligibility for the issuance of a certification permit, annual coursework requirements and progress necessary for renewal of the permit, and final requirements for attaining full certification in the permit area. Certification permits must be requested by the educator and his or her employing school or school district.

II. Levels of Credential Classification

A. Bachelor’s degree: the educator must meet all criteria for an initial area of certification and have earned a bachelor’s degree that meets SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

B. Bachelor’s degree plus 18 hours: the educator must have 18 hours of graduate credit that he or she earns within seven years from the time the course work is started. Individuals who do not complete the requirements during the seven years must request that the college/university revalidate the course credits before the work can be submitted for credential advancement.

C. Master’s degree: the educator must have earned a master’s degree that meets SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

D. Master's degree plus 30 hours:

In order to advance to the level of master's degree plus 30 hours, the educator must fulfill one of the following requirements:

1. The educator must earn 30 semester hours of graduate credit above the master's degree with 21 hours of the graduate credit in one area of concentration. These hours may or may not be in the teacher's initial area of certification. The course work must be completed within seven years from the time it was started. Individuals who do not complete the course work during the seven years must request that the college/university revalidate the course credits before the work can be submitted for credential advancement.

OR

2. The educator must earn an additional master's degree that meets SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

OR

3. The educator must earn a specialist's degree that meets SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

OR

4. The educator must earn a single master's degree with at least 60 graduate semester hours that meets SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

OR

5. If the educator has earned a single master's degree containing 51 or more graduate semester hours, the educator must complete additional courses to equal at least 60 graduate semester hours in order to be eligible for the master's degree plus 30 credential classification. The master's degree must meet SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval, and the additional hours must be earned in a single concentration area and completed within seven years of the conferral of the master's degree. Individuals who do not complete the course work during the seven years will not be eligible for this option.

E. Doctorate: the teacher must have earned a doctoral degree that meets the SBE regulations for teacher certification and program approval.

III. Requirements for Credential Advancement

A. To advance his or her credential from one classification to another, the applicant must submit to the teacher certification office of the SBE the following:

1. Written request to have the certificate advanced on the designated action form.
2. Documentation, including transcripts, that the SBE requirements have been met for certificate advancement.
3. The specified fee, if such a fee is currently being charged.

B. The effective date of the credential advancement will be based on the following:

1. If an applicant completes the degree or coursework to become eligible for the advancement of his or her South Carolina educator certificate between May 1 and November 1, the effective date of the credential is July 1 of that year provided that all documentation is on file in the SCDE teacher certification no later than November 1.

2. If an applicant completes the degree or coursework to become eligible for the advancement of his or her South Carolina educator certificate after November 1 and all required documentation is received within forty-five days of completion and no later than April 30, the effective date of the credential is the completion date. If documentation is received forty-five or more days after completion and no later than April 30, the effective date of the credential is the date on which the last supporting document is received by the SCDE teacher certification office. If documentation is submitted after April 30, the effective date of the credential is July 1 of that year.