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# **Program of Alternative Certification for Educators - Cohort 2026 Participant Handbook**

Year 1: 2026-27

Year 2: 2027-28

Year 3: 2028-29

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### **Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE)**

As part of the 1984 Education Improvement Act, the South Carolina General Assembly provided for a conditional certification program to address critical teacher shortages in the state. As originally designed, the program sought to meet the staffing needs of school districts and enabled individuals who had earned a college degree, but had not completed a traditional teacher preparation program, to gain employment in a South Carolina public school in a critical needs subject or geographic area. Now known as the Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE), this teacher certification pathway has evolved in purpose through State Board of Education (SBE) guidelines from a critical needs program to become a true alternative route preparation program. PACE provides an entry way into the teaching profession for individuals who have not completed a teacher preparation program but have at least a bachelor’s degree in a certification subject area. Qualified PACE candidates are able to seek employment teaching program-approved subject areas in public schools, including public charter schools, throughout the state.

#### **PACE Cohort 2026**

Qualified PACE candidates whose employment is confirmed by the hiring school district will be assigned to PACE Cohort 2026 and one of two training sections for the cohort. PACE I training will be virtual.

- Summer Cohort 2026: Qualified candidates with employment confirmed by June 15, 2026, will be assigned to Summer Cohort 2026 and attend the ten-day PACE I training in July 2026.
- Winter Cohort 2026: Qualified candidates with employment confirmed between June 15 and October 15, 2026, will be assigned to Winter Cohort 2026, and attend the ten-day PACE I training in November/December 2026.
- Due to preparation and staffing timelines for the PACE I training, qualified candidates with employment confirmed after October 15, 2026, are not eligible to attend training with Cohort 2026. These candidates may be eligible for the [PACE Adjunct Certificate](#) outlined in this document and assignment to PACE Cohort 2027.

## **PACE Requirements for Professional Certification**

PACE is a three-year alternative route preparation program that allows a participant to work as a teacher of record while completing all requirements of the alternative route to earn a Professional teaching certificate. Participants who do not complete all requirements for the Professional certificate within the three years of program participation may be eligible for a fourth-year extension at the request of the employing school district. While completing PACE, participants are issued an Alternative Route teaching certificate for each program year upon successful completion of training requirements and continued employment. To advance from the annual Alternative Route teaching certificate to a standard, renewable Professional teaching certificate valid for a period of five years, active PACE participants must meet the following four requirements:

1. **PACE Training Program.** Participants must successfully complete all PACE training sessions which have been designed to prepare them for the instructional environment. These program components will include, but may not be limited to, training institutes and seminars, online learning modules, and professional development activities.
2. **Continued Employment and Successful Teaching.** Participants must maintain employment and complete three successful years of teaching in a South Carolina public school, including successful completion of the appropriate processes of the state's system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT). The Expanded ADEPT system components for beginning teachers will include successful participation in the employing district's structured teacher induction program including mentor-guided formative feedback, successful completion of the state's summative (formal) evaluation process at the annual contract level, and successful evaluation in the district-recommended ADEPT process during an additional year of teaching. PACE participants are not eligible for a continuing contract until they have completed all PACE requirements and are eligible to advance to a Professional certificate.
3. **PACE-approved Courses.** During their three-year participation in PACE, participants must complete three approved college courses with a grade of B or better. The purpose of the PACE course requirement is to build upon the foundation of knowledge and skills provided during training institutes and seminars to promote each candidate's professional growth and teaching effectiveness. Courses successfully completed to fulfill PACE requirements must be in the identified core areas. Courses must be selected from the pre-approved list in the PACE Course Book or must be formally approved by the Office of Educator Services. Approved courses completed in the three years prior to the first alternative-route certificate may be used to meet this requirement. Courses completed more than three years

prior to the first alternative route certificate may be accepted if revalidated by the college or university.

4. **Pedagogy Assessment.** Participants must earn a passing score on the required Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) examination for their certification grade spans. The PLT is required only for educators certified in a classroom teaching field. PACE participants certified in the service field of School Librarian are not required to take the PLT.

## **PACE Training Program**

PACE is both rigorous and intensive and requires an extensive time commitment over the three-year period of the program. PACE participants must successfully complete each training component to achieve and maintain teacher certification. Because PACE is an accelerated, intensive alternative route teacher preparation program, attendance at all training sessions is mandatory.

The PACE training program includes three major components:

1. PACE I Training Institute,
2. PACE II Training Institute, and
3. Seminars and Continued Learning Assignments

The timeline of the PACE training program for Cohort 2026 is indicated below:

### 2026-27 School Year (Year One)

- PACE I Institute
  - Summer Cohort 2026: July 6-17, 2026
  - Winter Cohort 2025: November 14-15, 21-22, December 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 2026
- Spring Seminar                      March 20, 2027
- PACE II Institute                      June 7-18, 2027

### 2027-28 School Year Academic (Year Two)

- Continued Learning Assignments (Online – Fall 2027)
- Fall Seminar      October 16, 2027

### *PACE I Institute*

The ten-day PACE I Institute is offered twice annually, once in July and once in November/December. The summer session is typically held over a consecutive two-week period in several regional training sites. The winter session is held on weekends and over

the holiday break. Due to the current public health emergency, PACE I will be conducted virtually and not in regional training sites.

Applicants who meet all admission criteria and whose employing public school district has submitted a confirmation of employment (COE) form to the Office of Educator Services must attend and successfully complete the next available ten-day PACE I Institute to earn the first Alternative Route teaching certificate. Participants must submit the registration and non-refundable registration fee prior to attending PACE I. The registration fee covers a portion of the training costs associated with PACE I.

*Passing Status.* A participant must earn at least eighty percent of the total points available to complete PACE I successfully. The Office of Educator Services will issue the teaching certificate with validity dates of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, for successful summer PACE I participants or January 1, 2027, through June 30, 2027, for successful winter PACE I participants.

*Failing Status.* At the conclusion of the training institute, the regional lead instructor will automatically review the performance and evaluation of any participant who has failed to earn at least eighty percent of the total points available. If the participant's primary instructor is the regional lead, the review will be conducted by an instructor designated by the SCDE Office of Educator Services.

Following this review, a participant with failing status will be allowed one opportunity to revise and resubmit the final lesson plan to achieve a passing score, under the following conditions:

- The participant must have submitted all assignments during the institute.
- The participant must be able to earn enough points by revising and resubmitting the final lesson plan to complete the institute successfully.

The SCDE will notify the participant and the employing school district if the participant is eligible to resubmit the final lesson plan and the deadline for doing so. The resubmitted lesson plan will be evaluated by a PACE instructor designated by the SCDE. If, after the evaluation of the resubmitted lesson plan, the participant has not achieved passing status, the resubmission will be reviewed for a final time by a lead instructor outside the participant's training region.

After all reviews are completed, the SCDE will notify any participant and his or her employing district if the individual has failed to complete PACE I successfully and is not eligible to be issued an Alternative Route teaching certificate.

Please note: A participant's employment and compensation may be impacted by failure to

complete the PACE I Institute successfully and earn an educator certificate.

*Options to Continue.* A participant who fails PACE I during the first attempt will be allowed one opportunity to attend the next available PACE I and complete the training successfully. However, the employing school district must provide a letter of support to the SCDE Office of Educator Services for the participant to attend the next available PACE I Institute.

A participant who has failed PACE I and has district support to repeat the training but fails to attend the next scheduled PACE I Institute will be dismissed from the program. If the participant seeks readmission to PACE in the future, the individual must meet all current admission requirements at that time and has one opportunity to complete PACE I successfully. Any participant who fails PACE I for a second time will be dismissed from the program.

#### *Continued Learning Assignments and PACE Seminars*

Upon successful completion of the PACE I Institute, PACE participants must begin the continued learning requirements and seminar sequence for their cohort. Continued learning assignments are extensions of the training institute and require participants to analyze, evaluate, and reflect upon their professional practice in the classroom. Seminars build upon the learning experiences embedded in the training institutes by introducing new content and elaborating on topics from previous sessions. Due dates for continued learning assignments are scheduled throughout the school year, posted in Moodle, and communicated by instructors.

*Passing Status.* A participant must earn at least eighty percent of the total points available in a continued learning sequence or seminar to successfully complete the training components and remain in good standing.

*Failing Status.* At the conclusion of each training component (e.g., a continued learning sequence or a seminar) the regional lead instructor will automatically review the performance and evaluation of any participant who has failed to earn at least eighty percent of the total points available for that session. If the participant's primary instructor is the regional lead, the review will be conducted by an instructor designated by the SCDE Office of Educator Services.

Following this review, a participant with failing status will be allowed one opportunity to resubmit designated assignments to achieve a passing score, under the following conditions:

- The participant must have submitted all assignments as part of the training sequence, and

- The participant must be able to earn enough points by revising and resubmitting the assignments to complete the institute successfully.

The SCDE will notify the participant and the employing school district if the participant is eligible to resubmit assignments and establish the deadline for doing so. A participant who is given the opportunity to resubmit designated assignments must also submit a non-refundable re-grading fee of \$50.00. The resubmissions will be evaluated by a PACE instructor from another training region. If, after the evaluation of the new assignments, the participant has not achieved passing status, the resubmission will be reviewed for a final time by a lead instructor outside the participant's training region.

After all reviews are completed, the SCDE will notify any participant and his or her employing district if the individual has failed to complete the training component successfully.

*Options to Continue.* The SCDE will notify the participant and the employing school district if the participant has failed a training session. If the participant's employing school district provides a letter of continued support, the participant will be given one opportunity to repeat the training component with the next cohort or during a make-up session if one is offered.

Participants who do not attempt the next make-up seminar will be dismissed from PACE. If they seek readmission to PACE, their case will be reviewed using the admission criteria in place at the time of request. Without district support, the participant is not eligible to continue program participation and will be dismissed from PACE.

Participants who fail a training component a second time will be dismissed from PACE and will not be eligible for readmission. Participants who fail more than one training component will be dismissed from PACE and will not be eligible for readmission. Participants who do not attempt the next make-up seminar will be dismissed from PACE. If they seek readmission to PACE, their case will be reviewed using the admission criteria in place at the time of request.

### *PACE II Training Institute*

A participant's first year in PACE culminates with the ten-day PACE II Institute. Program participants who were issued the first Alternative Route certificate during a given school year must attend and successfully complete the PACE II Institute held during June of that academic year. For example, a participant issued the first Alternative Route certificate during the 2026-27 school year will attend the PACE II held during June 2027. The participant is not required to have a 2027-28 COE on file prior to the training program; however, confirmation of continuous employment, 2026-27 ADEPT results from your

employing school district, and Darkness to Light completion certificate is required to receive the second annual alternate-route certificate and to continue PACE participation. The participant must register for and submit a non-refundable registration fee prior to attending the PACE II Institute.

*Passing Status.* A participant must earn at least eighty percent of the total points available to complete PACE II successfully. The Office of Educator Services will issue the second one-year teaching certificate with validity dates of July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2028, for successful PACE II participants with a COE on file for 2027-28.

*Failing Status.* At the conclusion of the training institute, the regional lead instructor will automatically review the performance and evaluation of any participant who has failed to earn at least eighty percent of the total points available. If the participant's primary instructor is the regional lead, the review will be conducted by an instructor designated by the SCDE Office of Educator Services.

Following this review, a participant with failing status will be allowed one opportunity to revise and resubmit the final assignment to achieve a passing score, under the following conditions:

- The participant must have maintained at least eighty percent of the professionalism points during the training.
- The participant must have submitted all assignments during the institute.
- The participant must be able to earn enough points by revising and resubmitting the final lesson plan to complete the institute successfully.

The SCDE will notify the participant and the employing school district if the participant is eligible to resubmit the final assignment and the deadline for doing so. The resubmitted lesson plan will be evaluated by a PACE instructor from another training region. If, after the evaluation of the resubmitted lesson plan, the participant has not achieved passing status, the resubmission will be reviewed for a final time by a lead instructor outside the participant's training region.

After all reviews are completed, the SCDE will notify any participant and his or her employing district if the individual has failed to complete PACE II successfully and is not eligible to be issued an Alternative Route teaching certificate. A participant's employment and compensation may be impacted by failure to complete the PACE II Institute successfully and earn an educator certificate.

*Options to Continue.* A participant who fails PACE II during the first attempt will be allowed one opportunity to attend the next available PACE II Institute and complete the training successfully. However, the employing school district must provide a letter of support to

the SCDE Office of Educator Services for the participant to attend the next available PACE II Institute. A participant who fails PACE II during June 2027 would repeat the training during June 2028. To be eligible for the second Alternative Route certificate for 2027-28 school year, a participant who has failed the PACE II Institute and has district support must maintain employment and complete one of the required PACE courses successfully, as documented on an official transcript. If the official transcript with request form is received before November 1, 2027, the certificate will be issued with an effective date of July 1, 2027. If the official transcript with request form is received after November 1, 2027, but before May 1, 2028, the effective date will be the date the documentation was received by the Office of Educator Services. If the official transcript with request is received after April 30, 2028, the SCDE will be unable to issue a certificate for the 2027-28 school year as outlined in State Board of Education regulation.

A participant who has failed PACE II and has district support to repeat the training but fails to attend the next scheduled PACE II training will be dismissed from the program. If the participant seeks readmission to PACE in the future, the individual must meet all current admission requirements at that time and has one opportunity to complete PACE II successfully.

Any participant who fails PACE II for a second time will be dismissed from the program and will not be eligible for readmission.

### *Absences from Training Sessions*

#### PACE I and PACE II Absences

PACE is an accelerated, intensive teacher preparation program. Attendance at all training sessions is mandatory.

A participant may request a one-time absence for a maximum of four consecutive morning or afternoon hours during the PACE I or PACE II Institute. The participant must submit the request with supporting documentation in writing to the Office of Educator Services. The documentation must include a letter of support from the personnel administrator of the employing school district. An absence request for the PACE I or PACE II Institute must be submitted no later than the Monday prior to the first day of training. If approved, the participant will be responsible for all regular assignments in addition to make-up assignments.

In case of an emergency that leads to an unexpected absence during the PACE I or PACE II Institute, the participant must submit a written explanation along with documentation and a letter of support from the employing school district's personnel administrator. Again, if approved, the participant will be responsible for regular assignments in addition to any

make-up assignments. Participants are expected to notify their instructors and the Office of Educator Services | immediately in the event of an emergency.

Any absence over the allowable four-hour time period outlined above during the PACE I or PACE II Institute, no matter the reason, will not be approved.

Absences submitted after the approval deadline for each session, whether emergency or not, may or may not be approved. Such an absence may result in the participant having to repeat the entire program, being dismissed from PACE, and/or being delayed in receiving certification.

If a participant has a medical or health-related reason, one supported by documentation from his or her attending medical practitioner, that leads to missing more than the four allowable hours of the PACE II Institute, the participant may request to defer attendance of the PACE II Institute to the following year. This request must include a letter outlining the reason for missing the session, the medical documentation, and a letter of support from the personnel administrator in the employing school district. If approved, the participant will be required to attend the next available PACE II Institute. In addition, the PACE participant—unless unable to do so because of the medical situation—must complete one of the required courses during the summer of the postponed PACE II Institute to maintain eligibility for certification. A Confirmation of Employment, a PACE Course Request form, and a transcript indicating successful completion of the approved course must be on file to issue the next certificate.

### Seminar Absences

An absence request must be submitted in writing to the Office of Educator Services no later than the Monday prior to the specific seminar and must include the absence request, supporting documentation, and a letter of support from the employing district's personnel administrator.

In case of an emergency that leads to an absence, the participant must notify the Office of Educator Services and PACE instructor immediately and then submit a written explanation along with documentation and a letter of support from the employing school district's personnel administrator.

A participant who misses a seminar for either a planned or emergency absence must attend a weekday make-up session and must submit a non-refundable fee of \$100.00.

Any participant who misses a seminar and the required make-up session will be dismissed from the program.

A letter of support must be submitted by the employing school district to continue in the PACE training sequence for any absence. Without district support, the participant will be dismissed from PACE.

### *Professional Conduct*

PACE participants are expected to uphold high standards of professional conduct. During all training components, PACE instructors and program staff from the SCDE will provide information regarding expectations related to professionalism and dispositions.

Participants who do not demonstrate these requirements are at risk of being dismissed from PACE. Expectations include, but are not limited to:

Tardiness and Leaving Early. Participants are expected to arrive punctually and to be ready to begin each training session at the time indicated on the schedule. By extension, participants are also expected to remain in the training session until dismissed by the instructional staff. These training segments include the first session of the day, the session after lunch, and any session following a transition between the auditorium and individual classrooms. Participants who are more than five minutes late for any training segment will be considered tardy and lose one professionalism point for each five-minute period they are late.

Participation and Attentiveness. Participants are expected to participate actively in all lessons of the training program. These include, but are not limited to, the class discussions, group activities, and general conversations as well as bringing required materials to class, coming to class with assignments complete, and submitting their own assignments. Participants are expected to be alert, engaged, and contributing to the learning process. They are not to use cell phones or engage in off-task conversations with other participants during the presentations. An individual who is not participating or who is not attentive in a training segment will lose professionalism points for each incident.

Professionalism. Participants are expected to present themselves as teaching professionals. This professionalism should be apparent in their casual business attire and in their positive demeanor. These expectations include, but are not limited to, treating peers as professionals, recognizing the diverse backgrounds of other members in the training program, welcoming the participation of fellow participants, and refraining from the use of profane or inappropriate language. In addition, participants are expected to treat their instructors and staff members from the Office of Educator Services respectfully. Participants who do not present themselves as professionals will lose professionalism points for each incident.

Professionalism Points. During training institutes, if a participant loses five professionalism points, a staff member in the Office of Educator Services will contact the

participant's employing school district to discuss concerns regarding the individual's program participation and standing. Upon losing ten professionalism points, a participant will be dismissed from the training institute and considered to have failed the training.

Certificate Suspensions and Revocations. Any PACE participant whose educator certificate is suspended or revoked by the State Board of Education is ineligible to continue in or be readmitted to the program. This includes certificate suspensions for breaching an educator contract.

#### *PACE Assignments— SCPACE Moodle and Original Work*

The PACE instructional program utilizes the learning management system SCPACE Moodle. PACE participants will access course content, complete coursework, and upload assignments through SCPACE Moodle. Each PACE participant is responsible for maintaining current access to Moodle, ensuring that the email address in Moodle and with the SCDE remains valid, and checking the email address on file on a regular basis. Group announcements and Moodle alerts will be sent using the e-mail address listed in the profile/messaging settings. Many questions participants have during the program may be answered by reviewing materials readily available through Moodle.

PACE participants are expected to complete and present all assignments as directed in the PACE training materials and by their instructors. All work must be original and completed by the individual PACE participant submitting it. To ensure the originality of submitted assignments, PACE utilizes Turnitin software. Per the instructions provided during training sessions and in assignment materials, participants must upload designated assignments to Moodle for review through Turnitin. Submitting quality assignments by communicated deadlines is essential for successful progress in any PACE training component. PACE participants who are suspected of submitting non-original work or sharing their work with other PACE participants are at risk of being dismissed from the program. The Office of Educator Services reserves the right to request additional information regarding an assignment and to conduct an investigation regarding any questionable materials presented by a PACE participant as his or her own original work.

The process for investigation of suspected non-original work will include, but may not be limited to, requesting additional materials and explanations from the PACE participant regarding the work in question. If a PACE participant's work is found to be non-original, the individual may be dismissed from the program. Decisions regarding non-original work can be appealed to the PACE Advisory Committee, and members of that committee will be given the opportunity to review the work in question and to meet with all individuals involved in the investigation. The decision of the PACE Advisory Committee is final.

## Employment and Teaching Assignments for PACE Participants

Teacher of Record. The participant must be hired as the teacher of record in the certification area(s) for which he/she is eligible for PACE. Employment must be as a full- or half-time teacher in a South Carolina public school. The PACE participant must be assigned at least half-time to teach courses that require certification in his/her specific PACE content area.

Newly qualified first-year candidates with employment confirmed by June 20, 2026, will be invited to attend the ten-day PACE I training in July 2026. Newly qualified first-year candidates with employment confirmed between June 19 and October 30, 2026, will be invited to attend the ten-day PACE I training that begins in November 2026. Successful completion of the PACE I is required for issuance of the first teaching alternative route certificate and full participation in PACE. Newly qualified first-year candidates with employment confirmed after October 30, 2026, may be considered for the non-renewable Adjunct certificate for the remainder of the academic year if formally requested by the employing district, a valid Statement of Eligibility is on file, and a current COE is submitted to the Office of Educator Services.

Continuous Employment. PACE participants must maintain successful, continuous employment for three academic years in their original PACE certification area(s). ***If at any point in the program the participant is no longer employed, the individual must inform the Office of Educator Services in writing immediately.*** Failure to notify the Office of Educator Services may result in program dismissal. If an employing school district releases the participant from employment during the school year, the district must immediately notify the Office of Educator Services in writing. Participants who are no longer employed are not eligible to continue in PACE.

Annual Confirmation of Employment. The PACE participant's employment status must be verified each academic year through a PACE Confirmation of Employment (COE) form. This verification must include the signature of the designated school district official and the signature of the PACE educator. Each PACE participant is responsible for ensuring the employing district has submitted the appropriate COE to the Office of Educator Services. The district should submit the COE for the next school year once the participant signs the employment offer. COE forms are available to designate either full- or half-time employment.

Middle Level and High School. PACE participants who are qualified in both grade spans in the same content area at the time of admission are permitted to move between middle level and high school in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. In order for a PACE participant to make such a transition, the employing school district must submit a formal request on district letterhead to move a participant between

middle level and high school. Again, the PACE participant must meet admission criteria in both levels and, upon moving to the other level, must teach in the certification area at that new grade level. Please note that a change in teaching level may not be requested for an extension year.

Middle Level Proviso. For 2026-27, the South Carolina General Assembly has renewed a one- year budget proviso that allows educators certified in a high school content area to teach the same subject in grades seven and eight without adding certification in Middle Level Education. PACE participants holding a high school certificate in English, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies may be placed in a middle level setting for grades seven or eight. Limitations may apply with the subject-specific high school certificates in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or History.

### **The Alternative Route Teaching Certificate**

The SCDE issues a participant's first Alternative Route teaching certificate after the candidate successfully completes PACE I. Alternative Route certificates are issued for one school year and expire on June 30 of that same school year. A PACE participant who successfully completes the Summer PACE I Institute will be issued a certificate with an effective date of July 1 through June 30 of that school year. A participant who successfully completes the Winter PACE I Institute will be issued a certificate with an effective date of January 1 through June 30 of that school year.

The one-year Alternative Route certificate for PACE may be renewed no more than three times for a maximum total of four Alternative Route certificates as established in S.C. Code Ann. § 59- 26-30. Annual renewal is contingent upon continued employment, successful completion of training program requirements, and successful teaching as evidenced by performance on the appropriate ADEPT evaluation process.

Adding or Changing Certification Areas. Some PACE candidates qualify for program admission in more than one subject area. While teaching on a PACE certificate, participants must be employed and teach in a certification field for which they qualified at the time of program admission and must teach in the same certification field for at least two consecutive years.

Except as noted above, PACE participants may not add or change certification fields for which they did not qualify at the time of program admission until they advance to a Professional certificate.

Adding Specialized Certification Endorsements. PACE participants are eligible to add specific specialized certification endorsements to their educator certificates while active program participants. Specialized endorsements recognize additional, focused areas of

professional learning and expertise. In some instances, earning a specialized endorsement may be required to teach a specific course (e.g., Advanced Placement). Requirements to add specialized endorsements are outlined in the SBE-approved Guidelines and Requirements for Adding Certification Fields and Endorsements. With the approval of their employing school districts, PACE participants are eligible to add the following specialized endorsements:

- Advanced Placement
- Gifted and Talented
- Teaching Children of Poverty
- Read to Succeed Literacy Requirement
- Project-based Learning
- STEAM Education

With the exception of courses for Read to Succeed, coursework required to add a specialized endorsement may not be used to fulfill any of the PACE course requirements necessary to advance to a Professional certificate.

Certificate Suspensions and Revocations. Any PACE participant whose educator certificate is suspended or revoked by the State Board of Education is ineligible to continue in or be readmitted to the program.

### **PACE College Courses**

To fulfill PACE requirements and advance to a Professional certificate, participants must successfully complete three college courses from the lists of courses approved by the SCDE. Courses identified for individual teachers should be based on the educator's certification area, experience, knowledge, and skills as well as his or her professional growth and development needs. Participants should complete all courses while an active participant in PACE or within the three years prior to issuance of the first alternative-route certificate. Approved courses taken four or more years prior to issuance of the first alternative-route certificate must be revalidated by the college that issued the course credit for use in PACE.

The PACE Course Book, which is available in the PACE | SCPACE Moodle shell, outlines in detail college course requirements and provides a list of PACE-approved courses by institution. All participants must complete the courses related to their specific certification area as listed below.

The Read to Succeed (R2S) Content Area Reading and Writing course may be taken as a renewal/professional development course or three-semester-hour course. This course is often offered by individual school districts, through VirtualSC Professional Development

(renewal credit only), and at South Carolina colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs (undergraduate and/or graduate credit).

### *Course Requirements by Certification Field*

#### School Librarians

Participants certified in the field of School Librarian must complete the following three courses:

- Required - Information Technologies in the School Library
- Required - Curricular Role of the School Librarian
- Elective - School Library Materials (Select one.)
  - Children's Materials
  - Young Adult Materials
  - R2S: Content Area Reading & Writing for School Librarians or LETRS Volume 2 Professional Development Training

#### All Other Certification Areas

PACE participants in all other certification areas must take the following three courses:

- Required - R2S: Content Area Reading and Writing or LETRS Volume 2 Professional Development Training
- Required - Teaching Methods/Instructional Strategies in the Content Area or General Teaching Methods/Instructional Strategies
- Elective - Professional Growth and Development (Select one.)
  - Classroom Assessment
  - Classroom Management
  - Educational Psychology (human development as related to teaching and learning)
  - Introduction to Exceptional Learners (broad-based; not narrow such as Gifted and Talented or Second Language Learners)
  - Teaching Children of Poverty

#### *Pre-approved Courses*

When taking pre-approved courses from one of the colleges or universities included in the PACE Course Book, available in SCPACE Moodle must

- take each course for three semester hours of college credit,
- earn an assigned grade of B, or better, in each course, and

- submit an official transcript for each course. If multiple courses are taken at one institution you may submit one transcript listing all courses when you finish the final course.

### *Other Institutions and Courses*

Participants who wish to complete the required courses at an institution not listed in the course book may request a review of course syllabi so long as the other institution is a regionally accredited college or university. Please note that any off-list courses must be for three graduate-level semester hours, and approval is not guaranteed. Participants must submit their PACE Course Request, along with a course syllabus, via [My SC Educator Portal](#) prior to completing the course.

Prior Coursework. Participants who have completed one or more of the required courses prior to issuance of the first alternative-route certificate must submit official syllabi, transcripts, and the PACE Course Request via [My SC Educator Portal](#) for additional review and potential revalidation. Any courses not taken prior to entering PACE or denied revalidation must be completed as outlined in this handbook and in the course book.

Professional Development College Courses. Districts frequently offer Professional Development (PD) graduate-level college courses designed to advance the professional knowledge and skills of teachers in order to positively impact student learning. These courses are typically offered at a reduced cost to educators and are aligned with district curricular needs and initiatives. For the purposes of PACE, participants may complete the R2S Content Area Reading and Writing requirement through approved professional development (via Virtual SC or their districts). In addition to R2S, one other professional development graduate course may be used to fulfill a PACE course requirement. For a PD graduate course to be used for PACE, the course must correspond directly to one of the three required PACE course categories, must be approved by the Office of Educator Services | Alternative Certification prior to enrollment, and must be taken for three semester hours of graduate PD credit.

Participants should check with the institution offering a particular course to see if it is designated as a professional development graduate course. Professional development meetings held at your school do not meet PACE standards for the college course requirements.

### Financial Assistance

SC Student Loan Corporation <http://www.scstudentloan.org/>

Active PACE participants may apply for up to \$750 per year, not to exceed a total maximum of \$3,000, after successfully completing the PACE I institute and receiving the official

teaching certificate. Under the PACE Loan Program, loan forgiveness is available for recipients who teach during the same year in which funding is received. Please contact SC Student Loan Corporation directly for all the information about this financial assistance program.

### **Pedagogy Assessment**

Participants must earn a passing score on the appropriate grade/age level pedagogy assessment adopted by the SBE for certification purposes to advance to a Professional certificate. Specifically, PACE participants must earn a qualifying score on the appropriate Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) examination for their certification grade spans. The PLT is required only for educators certified in a classroom teaching field. PACE participants certified in the service field of Library Media are not required to take the PLT.

<b>Certification Field</b>	<b>Examination Code</b>	<b>Required Examination Title</b>	<b>Qualifying Score</b>
Middle Level Certification Fields (Grades 5-8)	5623	PLT: Grades 5-9	160
High School Certification Fields (Grades 9-12)	5624	PLT: Grades 7-12	157
All PK-12 Certification Fields	5625	PLT: PreK-12	157

### **Program Completion**

PACE participants must meet all program requirements within three academic years of receiving their first alternative-route certificate. Participants in Cohort 2026 who enter the PACE I training in July or November 2026 must complete all requirements for the Professional certificate no later than June 30, 2029.

Readmitted participants who have previously held a South Carolina educator certificate will have the number of previous certified years subtracted from their allotted program time.

#### *Request for the Professional Certificate*

Upon completion of all program requirements listed below, the PACE participant must submit a PACE Professional Certificate Request via [My SC Educator Portal](#). To be eligible for a Professional certificate, the participant must have:

- demonstrated three years of successful teaching including completion of the district induction program for beginning teachers and a successful summative

- ADEPT evaluation of teaching effectiveness at the annual contract level;
- completed all PACE Training Program components successfully;
- submitted official transcripts showing completion of three PACE-approved college credit courses earning grades of B or better; and
- earned a qualifying score on the appropriate level of the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) pedagogy exam as documented through the official score report transmitted by ETS. The PLT is not required for School Librarians.

### *Extension Year*

If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent the individual from completing the program requirements within the three-year time limit, the PACE participant, with district support, may submit the Alternative Route Extension Request via the [My SC Educator Portal](#), to request a one- year extension to complete program requirements. If approved, this extension will be for the academic year immediately following the third academic year of program participation. If all program requirements are not completed within this extension year, the individual will no longer be considered a participant in PACE and cannot be given additional opportunities to complete requirements while certified through PACE.

Extensions are only granted at the request of the employing school district. Some districts will not support an extension request, so participants are urged to complete all program requirements within the three-year program.

### **Program Exit and Readmission**

#### *Program Exit During the First Two Years*

A participant who was issued no more than two alternative route certificates and left PACE prior to program completion may submit a written request for readmission to PACE one time. This written request must include the following:

- an explanation why the former participant left the program and did not meet the requirements for professional certification, and
- an explanation why the former participant is now ready for readmission and able to complete all program requirements.

As part of the readmission process, the SCDE Office of Educator Services will require the former participant to contact the personnel administrator in the most recent employing PACE school district for completion of the program readmission form to document the individual left the district in good standing.

If approved, applicants for readmission must meet all PACE admission criteria in place at the time of the request for readmission to the program. These requirements will include an

updated application with fee and new background reports and may include qualifying scores on updated Praxis assessment(s) if the scores on file have expired.

### *Program Exit during the Third Year*

Participants who were issued three educator certificates in PACE but did not complete program requirements prior to leaving the program are not eligible for readmission.

### *Participants Who Did Not Attend the PACE I Institute*

Candidates who received a Statement of Eligibility but who did not attend a PACE I Institute and, therefore, did not earn the first alternative route certificate do not need to seek readmission. These applicants may request an updated Statement of Eligibility by submitting a General Request via [My SC Educator Portal](#). Applicants will be notified whether or not they meet current admission criteria and if they need to submit any updated application materials, fees, and/or exam scores.

Any candidate who did not attend the PACE I Institute due to being released from employment by a hiring public school or school district must follow the readmission procedures indicated above.

### *Reduction in Force*

A participant who is released from employment or not offered a second or third contract because of a district reduction in force (RIF) may be able to continue in PACE while seeking new employment. Each instance will be reviewed individually based on the program year and requirements the participant has completed.

### *Switching to another Alternative Route Program*

A participant who has been issued an Alternative Route teaching certificate for any program cannot switch from one alternative route program to another due to limitations in state statute on the number of conditional teaching certificates that may be issued to an individual seeking certification through an alternative route preparation program.

## **PACE Resources and Contact Information**

[PACE Website](#)

[Contacting Educator Services](#)

E-mail: [altcertification@ed.sc.gov](mailto:altcertification@ed.sc.gov)

For electronic submission of transcripts: [transcripts@ed.sc.gov](mailto:transcripts@ed.sc.gov)

Office of Educator Services | PACE South Carolina Department of Education  
849 Learning Lane  
West Columbia, SC 29172

[Cohort 2026](#)

[My SC Educator Portal](#)

Participants may access a copy of their certificate and correspondence sent by the Office of Educator Services.

[SCPACE Moodle Cohort 2026](#)

ERIC Database for professional journals and articles <http://eric.ed.gov/>