



Noncertified Teacher Pilot Program

Participant Eligibility Guidance

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About the Pilot Program

Pursuant to Act 30 of 2025–26, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has established the Noncertified Teacher Pilot (pilot or NTP), a five-year program allowing a participating school to hire noncertified teachers in a ratio of up to 10% of its entire teaching staff. Detailed information concerning the pilot may be found in the Noncertified Teacher Pilot Program Implementation Guidelines approved by the State Board of Education on October 7, 2025.

The pilot is limited to classroom-based teaching positions in designated certification fields and does not include individuals seeking employment as work-based, career and technical education (CTE) teachers. Additionally, and due to restrictions in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the pilot does not include individuals seeking employment as special education teachers.

Within three years of employment, a pilot participant must demonstrate enrollment in an approved educator preparation program, traditional or alternative route.

Unless extended by the General Assembly, the noncertified teacher pilot program will end June 30, 2030.

About this Guidance Document

This guidance document provides information for districts and pilot candidates concerning participant eligibility, including certification fields included in the pilot.

Eligible Certification Fields

For purposes of the pilot, districts may hire eligible noncertified teachers in the following certification fields:

- Elementary (Grades 2–6)
- Middle Level (Grades 5–8)
 - Middle Level Language Arts
 - Middle Level Mathematics
 - Middle Level Science
 - Middle Level Social Studies
- High School (Grades 9–12)
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
 - Earth and Space Science

- Social Studies
- History
- Economics
- Geography
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Business and Marketing Education
- Family and Consumer Science
- Agriculture
- Industrial Technology (i.e., Technology and Engineering Education)
- Computer Science
- PK-12 Fields
 - Art
 - Music
 - Dance
 - Theatre
 - Physical Education
 - Health
 - World Language (excluding American Sign Language)

Note: Individuals seeking to qualify in the fields of Art, Music, Dance, or Theatre may be eligible for certification through the Advanced Fine Arts pathway. For additional information on Advanced Fine Arts, please consult your district’s primary certification contact.

The following certification fields are NOT included in the pilot:

- Work-based, CTE fields
- Special Education fields
- Driver Education
- Early Childhood Education
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Literacy Fields (Literacy Teacher, Literacy Coach, Literacy Specialist)
- Montessori Education
- Service and Leadership Fields

Participant Eligibility

Work Experience Requirements

To participate in the pilot, an eligible candidate must document five years of post-secondary work experience verified by the district. The district may develop a form for this verification or use a template provided by the SCDE. The district must maintain this documentation for each participant and make it available for review by the SCDE if requested. Work experience that qualifies a candidate for the pilot is distinct from and may not meet requirements for

awarding experience credit on an educator certificate later. Experience earned as a registered noncertified teacher in the pilot will be reviewed if the pilot participant subsequently qualifies for an educator certificate.

Academic Requirements

For participation in the pilot as a noncertified teacher, a candidate must possess a baccalaureate or graduate degree earned from a college or university meeting State Board of Education accreditation requirements with a major or major equivalence in or directly related to the certification field. Qualifying degrees and courses must be completed at a college or university that meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Accreditation for general collegiate purposes by one of the regional (institutional) accreditation associations listed in the section below, or
- Approval by the State Board of Education to offer educator preparation programs, or
- Accreditation by a national association with which the SCDE has a partnership agreement. Since 2015, the SCDE has held a partnership agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

State Board of Education Accreditation Requirements

The South Carolina State Board of Education recognizes and accepts coursework and degrees earned at colleges and universities accredited through one of the following regional/institutional accreditation organizations. Formerly known as regional accreditation agencies, these entities are now able to accredit institutions located outside of their geographic region.

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission of Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- The Higher Learning Commission
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission

Academic Major or Major Equivalence

An eligible candidate must have an academic major or major equivalence in or closely related to the certification field (i.e., subject area) the individual will teach. For the purposes of the pilot, a major equivalence is defined as a minimum of 30 semester hours of academic credit in the certification field, including at least 15 hours at the upper level (i.e., 300 or 400 level courses). Courses within a major equivalence must have been completed with a grade of C or better.

Elementary Education

No other academic major is comparable to a degree in Elementary Education. A candidate seeking to participate in the pilot in this certification field must have a total of five years of post-secondary work experience and have earned at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution that meets State Board accreditation requirements.

Certification Fields and Corresponding Majors

The following table provides a list of certification fields included in the pilot and corresponding or related academic majors. ***This list provides general guidance concerning acceptable academic majors but is not exhaustive. Other academic majors may be acceptable.*** Please communicate with your district contacts in the Office of Educator Services for questions.

Certification Field and Grade Span	Corresponding or Related Academic Major
Agriculture (9–12)	Agriculture Agribusiness Agricultural Education Agricultural Mechanics Animal Sciences (various names) Environmental Science and Natural Resources Forestry Horticulture
Art (PK–12)	Art Art Studio/Design
Biology (9–12)	Biology Bio Engineering Biochemical Engineering Biomechanical Engineering Biomedical Engineering
Business and Marketing Education (9–12)	Business Administration Marketing Accounting Economics Finance Management Sports Management Agribusiness* (must have core business courses)
Chemistry (9–12)	Chemistry Chemical Engineering Biochemical Engineering
Computer Science (9–12)	Computer Science
Dance (PK–12)	Dance

Certification Field and Grade Span	Corresponding or Related Academic Major
Earth and Space Science (9–12)	Earth and Space Science Astronomy Atmospheric Science Environment and Natural Resources Planetary Science Meteorology
Economics (9–12)	Economics Accounting Finance
Elementary Education (2–6)	Baccalaureate or graduate degree from a college or university meeting State Board accreditation requirements.
English (9–12)	English Language Arts Communications* Journalism* Writing* <i>*Must include at least 15 hours of traditional English coursework, including literature courses.</i>
Family and Consumer Science (9–12)	Family and Consumer Science Home Economics
Geography (9–12)	Geography
Health (PK–12)	Health Health Science Physical Education Exercise Science/Kinesiology Nursing
History (9–12)	History
Industrial Technology (9–12)	Industrial Arts Industrial Engineering Design and Production Engineering
Mathematics (9–12)	Mathematics Actuarial Science* Accounting/Economics/Finance* Engineering* <i>*Must include full calculus sequence (Calculus I, II, and III or equivalent sequence)</i>
Middle Level Language Arts (5–8)	English Language Arts Communications* Journalism* Writing*

Certification Field and Grade Span	Corresponding or Related Academic Major
	<i>*Must include at least 15 hours of traditional English coursework including literature courses.</i>
Middle Level Mathematics (5–8)	Mathematics Actuarial Science* Accounting/Economics/Finance* Engineering* *Must include at least 12 hours of mathematics or related courses.
Middle Level Science (5–8)	Biology Chemistry Physics Earth Science Environmental Science Life Science Sustainable Technology Note: The transcript must include courses in each of the following: biology, chemistry, and physics. Courses in additional sciences recommended.
Middle Level Social Studies (5–8)	History Criminal Justice Economics Government Geography Sociology Psychology Political Science Juris Doctorate All majors must include courses in US History, World History, and additional social studies electives.
Music Education (PK–12) Music Education: Choral Music Education: Instrumental Music Education: Piano Music Education: Violin Music Education: Voice	Music* *Concentration will determine the specific certification field.
Physical Education (PK–12)	Physical Education Exercise Science/Kinesiology
Physics (9–12)	Physics Civil Engineering Mechanical Engineering

Certification Field and Grade Span	Corresponding or Related Academic Major
Psychology (9–12)	Psychology
Science (9–12)	<p>Biology* Chemistry* Physics* Other Science Fields*</p> <p>*The transcript must include at least two courses with labs in each of the following: biology, chemistry, and physics. Courses in additional science fields recommended.</p>
Social Studies (9–12)	<p>History Criminal Justice Economics Government Geography Sociology Psychology Political Science Juris Doctorate</p> <p>All majors must include courses in US History, World History, and additional social studies electives.</p>
Sociology (9–12)	Sociology
Theater (PK–12)	Theater Drama
World Language: Chinese (PK–12)	Chinese
World Language: French (PK–12)	French
World Language: German (PK–12)	German
World Language: Greek (PK–12)	<p>Greek Classics*</p> <p><i>*The major must include a concentration in Greek.</i></p>
World Language: Italian (PK–12)	Italian
World Language: Japanese (PK–12)	Japanese
World Language: Latin (PK–12)	<p>Latin Classics*</p> <p><i>*The major must include a concentration in Latin.</i></p>
World Language: Portuguese (PK–12)	Portuguese
World Language: Russian (PK–12)	Russian
World Language: Spanish (PK–12)	Spanish

Candidate Restrictions and Ineligibility

An applicant who meets any of the following conditions is not eligible to participate in the pilot as a noncertified teacher.

- An individual who has completed a teacher preparation program, traditional or alternative route, but has not met requirements for issuance or renewal of a standard South Carolina educator certificate.
- An individual whose educator certificate has been suspended or revoked by the South Carolina State Board of Education shall not be employed as a noncertified teacher during the term of the disciplinary action pursuant to S. C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1115.
- An individual whose educator certificate has been suspended or revoked by the educator licensing authority of another state or jurisdiction is not eligible for registration as a noncertified teacher during the term of the disciplinary action.
- An individual whose application for educator certification has been denied by the State Board of Education is not eligible for participation in the pilot during the term of the denial.
- An individual whose registration application to participate in the pilot as a noncertified teacher is not approved by the State Board of Education.