

GUIDE

# Teacher Certification



A guide to becoming a certified teacher in Connecticut

**TEACH**  
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# How to Become a Teacher

The very short version is this: You'll need a bachelor's degree and professional teaching license—also called a certification. You can earn your certification at the same time as your bachelor's degree, after you graduate, or even decades later. It's never too late to teach!

There's a bit more to it than that, but don't panic! This guide walks you through the steps you'll need to take to get certified to teach in Connecticut. You can start by getting clear on your direction. This will help you choose the path that's best for you

## Determine what you want to teach

If you already know what you'd like to teach—the grade level and subject matter—you can move on to the next section.

If you're not sure yet or you're open to teaching different subject areas and grade levels, get a feel for what certification areas are available by browsing the following tips and the full list on page 8 at the end of this guide.

**Pro Tip:** Consider choosing a state-designated shortage subject, or a school that serves students in underserved areas, where the need for teachers is greatest. Your employment prospects will be strong, since there's extra demand for these subjects, and you'll know you're making a difference.

**For example, if you want to teach young children, consider choosing a high-demand specialty area:**

- Comprehensive Special Education
- Bilingual Education
- Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education,
- World Language Instructor

**Or, to broaden your options, you could consider a subject area that allows you to teach at all grade levels** (for a complete list, see "What endorsements can I earn?" on page 8):

- Comprehensive Special Education
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- Physical Education & Health
- Music & Art

**Pro Tip:** When selecting ages or grade levels to teach, you may have more job options at the middle and high school levels than at the elementary level. Earning a secondary level certification endorsement can also allow you to teach down to grades 4-6, depending on your subject area.

### There are perks for teaching in a state-designated shortage area:

- You may be eligible to teach full-time (and get paid!) while you complete your teaching program. Read more about the [Durational Shortage Area Permit](#).
- Many school districts offer additional pay or signing bonuses to teachers working in these subjects.
- The Connecticut Teachers Mortgage Assistance Program offers lower interest rate loans to help teachers in subject shortage areas become homeowners.
- If you're willing to commit to teaching for several years in high-need areas, you may be eligible to have some of your school loans canceled, thanks to the federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program.

## Choose the right certification area

Once you know your grade and subject preferences, you can select a certification endorsement area.

In some cases, you may have multiple certification endorsement options to choose from. For example, if you want to teach fourth, fifth or sixth grade, you could get an elementary endorsement for grades 1-6 or an endorsement for grades 4-8 in a particular subject area.

For a complete list, see "What endorsements can I earn?" on page 8 of this guide.

**Pro Tip:** You can add cross-endorsements in different grade levels and subject areas throughout your teaching career. You don't have to get all your endorsements at once.



# Choose a Pathway to Teaching

Once you know what you want to teach, you're ready to start your journey to becoming a certified teacher! In Connecticut, there are three tiers of teacher certification—and a few ways to get you there.

You'll typically start with an "initial" certification, then you'll earn a "provisional" and "professional" certificate as you gain additional years of experience and meet other criteria, such as advanced coursework.

To get started, choose a path that works for you based on your current education level and experience.

## If you already have teaching experience

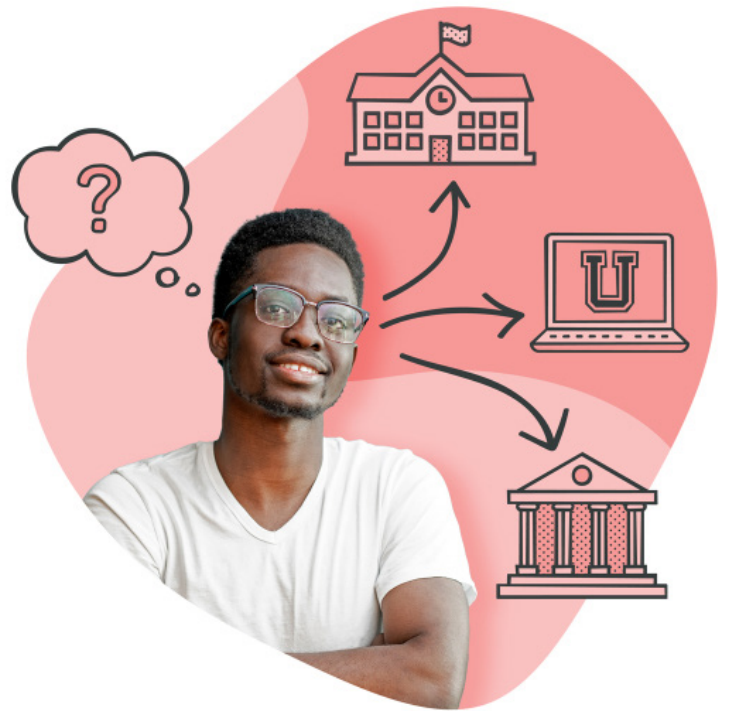
If you have at least two years of teaching experience, you may be eligible to start teaching without attending a teaching program. This includes teaching experience in another state, another country, a private school, or a college or university.

[Get the details](#) on the CSDE Talent Office's website.

**Student teacher waiver:** If you've had 10 months of teaching experience in the past 10 years, you might also be able to waive your program's student teaching requirement. Check with your program staff to find out if this option is available to you.

**Enhanced reciprocity:** If you have a teaching certificate from a Northeastern Region state or territory, you may qualify for "enhanced reciprocity." Basically, this means you can fast-track your CT teaching certificate.

This option is available for certified teachers in Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico,



Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia. [Learn more about Enhanced Reciprocity.](#)

## If you're a first-time teacher—choose a teaching program

### Programs for undergraduates

If you don't already have a degree, you may be able to earn your degree and your certification together.

Many colleges and universities offer teaching programs that go along with a degree in education or a teaching subject, like math, history or art. So you might major in English or biology, minor in education and earn your teaching certificate all at the same time.

**To get started:** Head over to [connecticut.teach.org/programs-search](https://connecticut.teach.org/programs-search) to search for undergraduate teaching programs.

## Programs for college graduates

If you already have a bachelor's degree in any subject, you can check out local programs that help you get certified. Some even allow you to work in education or start teaching (and earning a salary) while you complete your program. You have two basic choices:

- Master's degree programs
- Post-baccalaureate programs

In Connecticut, all teachers must earn a master's degree eventually. If you earn a master's degree now, you can start teaching with a higher salary and meet the state requirement. This can be a great option if you have less experience working with students, as traditional degree programs offer extra time and practice.

If you don't want a master's degree right away, a post-baccalaureate (or post-bac) program lets you earn your certification in as little as one year.

Some post-bac programs are offered by universities and let you earn college credit at the same time. Others are certification-only programs offered by non-profit organizations, which can be more cost-effective and take less time to complete.

**To get started:** Head over to [connecticut.teach.org/programs-search](https://connecticut.teach.org/programs-search) to search for teaching programs.

## If teaching is your second career

**As a second-career teacher, you may be eligible for other perks & certification pathways:**

- If you have a bachelor's degree that isn't in education, alternate preparation programs can get you certified to teach without earning an additional degree.
- If you're a school employee, you may be able to get certified without having to leave your current school job through a residency preparation program.
- If you're a tradesperson with three years of on-the-job experience, you can get certified to teach as a high school trade instructor without completing a teacher prep program. This applies to fields such as automotive, manufacturing, cosmetology, and hospitality.
- If you're bilingual, you may be uniquely qualified to teach full time in a high-demand subject area such as Bilingual Education or World Languages while getting certified.
- If you're a military connected person, check out Veterans Teach CT for resources and opportunities available for service members and veterans interested in teaching.

# Pass Connecticut certification exams

Most teacher candidates, regardless of their path, have to pass specific tests that evaluate your knowledge of teaching and the subject areas you wish to teach. Your EPP will determine the timing of when you will take these assessments.

**Pro Tip:** Review the CSDE's [Guide to Assessments for Educator Certification in Connecticut](#) to get a leg up on which assessments are required for the endorsement you want to earn.

**For more information:** Check out the testing guide at [connecticut.teach.org/services/guides](https://connecticut.teach.org/services/guides).



## QUICK VIEW

# How to Become a Teacher

To help you get started, here's a crash course on the steps you'll need to take to earn your certification.



1

### Choose the subject area you want to teach.

Explore your options and consider high needs subjects and specialties, like math, science, bilingual education and special education.

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2

### Earn a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited university.

The bachelor's degree you earn should be in a field closely related to what you want to teach (though there are some exceptions to this rule).

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3

### Complete an approved Connecticut educator preparation program.

Check out programs for undergraduates, graduates, and career changers. Browse programs now with the [Connecticut Program Explorer](#).

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4

### Pass Connecticut certification exams.

You'll have to pass one or more tests designed to show you know your subject well enough to teach it. Depending on your teaching program, you might take a test before you enroll, during or after you finish.

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### Submit a state application.

After you meet all your requirements, it's time to formally apply for your teaching certificate. First, confirm with your educator preparation program that you are eligible to apply. Then you'll apply directly to the Connecticut State Bureau of Certification.

**Pro tip:** After you've taught for three years, think about getting your National Board Certification—the most advanced certification that a teacher can receive. It's a prestigious accomplishment and could lead to a higher salary, more professional opportunities and easier transfer between states.

# What endorsements can I earn?

**Pro Tip:** You can get certified in different subjects throughout your teaching career. You don't have to get all your certifications at once. **Note:** Bilingual education requires you to first get certified in another area, like elementary education or a specific secondary subject.

Elementary & Early Childhood	
Elementary	Grades 1-6
Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education	Birth-K or Nursery-Grade 3 (Shortage Area)
Montessori, Elementary	Grades 1-6
Montessori, Primary	Birth-K
English & History	
English	Grades 7-12
English, Middle School	Grades 4-8
History & Social Studies	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
History & Social Studies, Middle School	Grades 4-8
World Languages	
French	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
German	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Italian	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Latin	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Mandarin Chinese	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Portuguese	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Russian	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Spanish	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Other World Language	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Humanities & Arts	
Art	Grades PK-12
Dance	Grades PK-12
Music	Grades PK-12
Theatre and Drama	Grades PK-12
School Library Media Specialist	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)	
Agriculture	Grades PK-12
Biology	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Biology, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
Chemistry	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Chemistry, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)



**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) continued...**

Computer Science	Grades K-6 or 7-12
Earth Science	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Earth Science, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
General Science	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
General Science, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
Integrated Science, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
Mathematics	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Mathematics, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
Physics	Grades 7-12 (Shortage Area)
Physics, Middle School	Grades 4-8 (Shortage Area)
Technology Education	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)

**Physical Education & Health**

Health	Grades PK-12
Physical Education	Grades PK-12

**Exceptional Children**

Blind	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)
Comprehensive Special Education	Grades K-12 (Shortage Area)
Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education	Birth-K or Nursery-Grade 3 (Shortage Area)
Hard of Hearing	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)
Partially Sighted	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)

**Career and Technical Education**

Business	Grades 7-12
Health Occupations, Comprehensive High School	Grades 9-12
Health Occupations, Vocational Technical Schools	Grades 9-12
Home Economics	Grades PK-12
Marketing	Grades 7-12
Occupational Subject, Vocational Technical Schools	Grades 9-12
Practical Nurse Education Instruction	Grades 9-12
Trade & Industrial Occupations, Comprehensive High School	Grades 9-12
Vocational Agriculture	Grades 7-12

**Academic Speciality**

Bilingual Education	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)
Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts	Grades 1-12
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	Grades PK-12 (Shortage Area)
World Language Instructor, Elementary	Grades 1-6