



# NEW MAINERS RESOURCE CENTER



# MAINE TEACHERS LICENSING GUIDE

FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

[nmrcmaine.org](http://nmrcmaine.org)



## WHO WE ARE

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) is a state-wide program serving internationally trained professionals (ITPs). We offer resources to assist New Mainers in overcoming barriers to entering the US workforce. Our services include: career advising, licensing and credential support, job readiness skills, and networking with employers, colleges and universities.

## The Purpose of this Guide

One major challenge faced by skilled professionals, such as teachers, is the successful navigation of the complex re-licensing requirements in Maine. The purpose of this guide is to provide internationally trained teachers with the information they need to make informed decisions about their options to work in the field of K-12 education in Maine.

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For additional information or assistance from the New Mainers Resource Center contact:



[nmrcmaine.org](https://nmrcmaine.org)  
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**DATA CURRENCY DISCLAIMER:** Labor market, wage, and cost information presented in this guide is based on data collected in August 2025. Employment conditions, licensing requirements, wages, and associated costs may change over time and may vary by employer, region, or individual circumstances. This guide is intended as an informational resource and does not guarantee employment, wages, or licensing outcomes.

# CONTENTS

**1** Frequently Asked Questions

**4** Overview of the Profession

**5** Eligibility for Licensing

**6** Steps to Licensure

**11** Other Jobs in Education

# LICENSING PROCESS OVERVIEW FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED TEACHERS IN MAINE



1

## APPLY FOR NACES EVALUATION

You will need your international diploma and university transcripts to submit for evaluation.

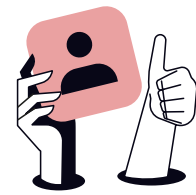
If documents need translation, complete this step first.



2

## CREATE A MAINE DOE ACCOUNT

Create a Maine Department of Education (MDOE) account, known as an MEIS account (Maine Educator Information System).

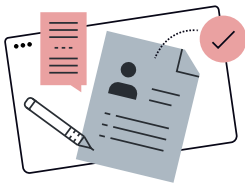


3

## COMPLETE A CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK

A Criminal History Records Check (often referred to as fingerprinting) is required for anyone who works in a public school in Maine. This is completed via a third-party vendor.

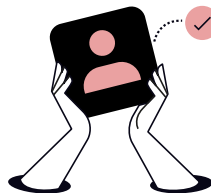
All steps after **Step 1** require a valid Social Security Number



4

## SUBMIT INITIAL APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Submit your original transcripts and your NACES evaluation with an application for teacher certification to the MDOE.



5

## REVIEW & DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY\*

The MDOE will review your transcript and issue a letter indicating whether you are eligible, and what courses / other requirements are needed, to earn your professional certification.



6

## COMPLETE REMAINING REQUIREMENTS

Complete all remaining requirements for your professional certification. Upload proof of completion (transcripts, etc.) to your MEIS account.

\*The timing for requesting issuance of a **Conditional Certification** is a critical consideration.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STEPS TO LICENSURE**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. How long will it take to receive my Maine Department of Education (MDOE) letter that lets me know if I'm eligible for a teaching license/certification?

Once your application is submitted, the MDOE will begin the review process. After the MDOE completes its review, you will receive an Initial Teacher Application letter from the MDOE. The time this takes will vary depending on the volume of applications the MDOE receives. See Application Processing information on the [MDOE website](#) (usual wait times are 3–4 weeks).

If you are eligible for an initial certification, called a Conditional Certification, you can teach for 3 years while completing all remaining requirements for your Professional Certification. You may also be eligible for an Emergency Certification (valid for 1 year, can be renewed twice).

## 2. Will I need to take an English proficiency exam?

There is no requirement for school districts in Maine to test the English proficiency of the teachers they hire. However, earning your certification will require university course work. Completing this coursework successfully will require reading, writing, listening and speaking proficiency. Additionally, schools will expect that all teachers can communicate effectively with their students, families and their colleagues.

## 3. What documents will I need?

You will need educational documents from the university from which you received your degree, including transcripts and a diploma. Your documents must be evaluated by a [NACES](#) member organization using a course-by-course evaluation. You may choose which NACES member organization to use.



#### 4. What is NACES?

**NACES** is the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services.

#### 5. What happens after I receive my NACES evaluation?

If the evaluation confirms that you have earned a bachelor's degree, upload a copy of the course-by-course evaluation along with your original transcripts (and a translation, if you have one) to your MEIS account. Send an email to [cert.doe@maine.gov](mailto:cert.doe@maine.gov) to let the certification office know that you have added the documents to your account.

#### 6. How does the MDOE evaluate my transcript?

The MDOE conducts a transcript analysis using your uploaded documents and looks for equivalent credit hours based on the subject and grade level you wish to teach. See #4 under [Steps for Licensure](#).

#### 7. What is commonly missing from people's certifications?

The evaluation letter you receive from the MDOE will indicate which courses you need to take. Commonly, teachers from other countries are missing 4 courses:

- An approved methods course
- A course on teaching exceptional students
- A course on diversity-centered content in today's classroom
- A course in human development, child development or educational, developmental or adolescent psychology

Additionally, most teachers are missing the student teaching requirement. This can be met by teaching under a Conditional Certification or an Emergency Certification for one year.

#### 8. If I am eligible for a Conditional Certification, should I ask the MDOE to issue it?

A Conditional Certification is valid for three years from the date of issue and it is not renewable. Therefore, it is not recommended to ask the MDOE to issue your Conditional Certification until the following two conditions are met:

- You have a plan that allows you to complete all of the required coursework within the three year timeframe. It's critical to factor in the cost of the classes and what is a reasonable course load for you in any given semester when calculating how long it will take you to complete all the requirements.
- You receive a job offer to teach in your content area. To satisfy the student teaching requirement, you must teach for at least one year while holding a Conditional Certification. If you ask for the Conditional to be issued and do not receive a job offer to teach during the three year period, you will not be able to meet this requirement.

#### 9. Should I enroll in a teacher preparation program?

If you have completed a bachelor's degree in another country and have worked as a teacher, you may pursue the transcript analysis route to teacher certification rather than enrolling in a teacher preparation program. It is likely that you will only need to complete some coursework to be eligible for Conditional or Professional Certification.

#### 10. Is the Praxis exam still required?

Maybe. If your coursework shows that you earned a 3.0 grade point average in the courses needed for certification, the Praxis requirement will be waived.



## 11. Do I need to take courses at the graduate level?

No, you can take courses at either level. Undergraduate courses will fulfill the course requirements you need. If you are looking for certification as an educational specialist, guidance counselor, literacy specialist, etc., you will most likely need graduate-level courses. Taking courses at the undergraduate level is often less expensive than graduate courses. Check with the MDOE prior to registering for a course to make sure it will be accepted towards certification before enrolling in the course.

## 12. What license/endorsement areas have teacher shortages?

The US Department of Education (USED) annually designates teacher shortage areas for the purposes of deferment of loan repayments or reductions of teaching obligation. There are many programs that offer student loan cancellation, deferment, and repayment assistance to teachers providing classroom instruction in teacher shortage areas. The MDOE issues a list of teacher shortage areas annually and posts the information on [this page](#).

## 13. Are there other jobs in education I can consider while I'm going through the licensing process?

See the [Other Jobs in Education](#) section for more information. Consider taking a job or volunteering at a school as a way to get oriented to the industry and build relationships.

# Overview of the Profession

Teaching in Maine is overseen by the Maine Department of Education (MDOE). Certification requirements for teachers are outlined in Maine DOE Rules [Chapter 115, Part II Update](#). Most internationally trained teachers will follow the Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2. (See alternate employment options [here](#) for ways to work in education while earning your teaching credential.)

The following certifications are available:

- **Conditional Certification:** This entry level certification can be issued to an applicant who meets the criteria listed in the MDOE rules under “Conditional Certificate for this Endorsement.” This includes a bachelor’s degree and a certain number of semester credit hours (usually 24) in the applicant’s content area. This certificate is available to those who have not completed the student teaching requirement. Individuals may teach under a Conditional Certificate while working towards their Professional Certification requirements. The Conditional Certification is a three-year, non-renewable license. You will create a plan for completing the requirements for your Professional Certification within the three-year timeframe.
- **Professional Certification:** Upon completion of all the requirements in your MDOE letter, you will upload documents to your MEIS account to confirm completion. The MDOE will issue your Professional Certification (license). The license is valid for five years and can be renewed.
- **NOTE: Emergency Certification** is also available for applicants who hold a bachelor’s degree but do not meet the criteria for a Conditional Certification. Emergency Certification is only available for the [MDOE Teacher Shortage Areas](#) (scroll to the bottom of the landing page to see the link to the annual list of Teacher Shortage Areas). Emergency Certifications are valid for 1 year from the date of issue and can be renewed a maximum of two times (Emergency Certification is not available for Special Education teachers).

Nationally, the demand for teachers is expected to decline slightly in the next 10 years according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Despite limited employment growth, the number of openings projected for each year is significant, largely due to the need to replace workers who leave the occupation permanently due to transfers and retirements. Maine continues to see teacher shortages at many grade levels and in various content areas, and expects modest growth (0.5% to 1.0%) through 2032. This information is up to date as of September 2025; please check the [US Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) and the [Maine Department of Labor Statistics](#) for the most current information. For general information on teacher salary ranges in Maine, please check the US Department of Labor’s [Career OneStop](#) website.

## Occupational Outlook for Teachers in the USA through 2034

SPECIALITY	AVERAGE EXPECTED OPENINGS PER YEAR
PreSchool	65,600
Elementary	103,800
Middle School	40,500
High School	66,200
Special Education	37,800

# Eligibility for Licensing

To be eligible for licensing as a teacher in Maine, you must have completed a bachelor's degree. Maine's Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2 to teacher certification is available to those who have already completed their undergraduate degrees in any major.

This process assumes that you have a bachelor's degree from another country and are pursuing certification in Maine without enrolling in a degree-completion or teacher-training program. If you have not yet completed your bachelor's degree, see information for degree completion under [Other Resources for Jobs in Education](#).



# Steps to Licensure

## 1 REQUEST A NACES EVALUATION

Complete a course-by-course evaluation of your post-secondary transcripts. All transcripts must be evaluated by an approved National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) evaluator. The directory of evaluators can be found [here](#).



If your documents are not in English, they will need to be translated first. Some NACES evaluators provide translation services. Otherwise, a certified translation service can be used prior to submitting documents for an evaluation—check with the NACES evaluator(s) first about whether you need to provide the original documents along with the translation, and if and if there is a required translation company to use.



## How to Navigate the Process:

1. Select a **NACES** organization
2. Create an account
3. Upload your international educational documents (diploma, transcripts, etc)
4. Pay the required fee

**All of the remaining steps require a valid social security number to complete.**

## Key Details:



A NACES course-by-course evaluation ranges from **\$200–\$500** depending on the agency you use and whether you choose expedited service.



If your documents are not in English, there will be additional charges for translation. The cost of translation averages **\$50–\$100** per page. If you are using a certified translation service that is separate from the agency that is completing your evaluation, complete this step first.



Some NACES agencies will accept copies of your educational documents, others will require originals.



Many agencies will email you the evaluation report at no additional cost. The MDOE does not require hard copies of your evaluation. However, if you wish to receive hard copies, an additional fee is charged.

## 2 CREATE A MAINE DOE ACCOUNT

**Create a Maine Department of Education (MDOE) Account.** This is known as a Maine Educator Information System or MEIS account. Instructions are located [here](#).



### Key Details:



There is no cost to create the account.



Fees are due when you submit an application for a certification.

## 3 COMPLETE A CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK (CHRC)

Prior to submitting an application to the MDOE, you must complete a Criminal History Records Check (fingerprinting). Every person employed by a public school in Maine must complete the CHRC process prior to hire. Fingerprints must be taken at Maine's approved fingerprinting vendor, [IdentoGO](#).



### Key Details:



The fee for the criminal background check (fingerprinting) is **\$55**.



IdentoGO will send your results to the Maine DOE within a week.



CHRC is required for every person hired by a public school in Maine.

## How to Navigate the Process:

1. Go to IdentoGO's [website](#)
2. Select Schedule a New Appointment
3. Use the drop down on the next screen to select Department of Education
4. Select "yes" to confirm that the Department of Education is the correct agency
5. Use the drop down on the next page to select New Hire
6. Read the information on the page and select I agree
7. Read the information on the page and select I agree to provide information
8. Enter your zip code to find the nearest fingerprinting location
9. Select a convenient location and use the "schedule" button to find a convenient time for your fingerprinting
10. Complete all of the applicant information
11. Make the required payment

## 4 SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Review the [list of Certificate Endorsement Codes and Levels](#) (under Forms) to identify the grade level(s) and content area(s) that you want to apply for. Use the instructions for completing the Initial Certification application, found [here](#) under How to Apply for a Certificate.



## How to Navigate the Process:

1. Log-in to your MEIS Account and follow the instructions to [Apply for a Certificate](#)
2. Following the instructions, enter your educational and work experience
3. Upload your international transcripts (originals and translated versions, if applicable)
4. Upload your NACES evaluation report
5. Upload test results, if applicable
6. Pay the required fee(s)
7. Once you have submitted the application, send an email to [cert.doe@maine.gov](mailto:cert.doe@maine.gov) requesting to have your documents reviewed under Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2

### Key Details:



Applicants can apply for more than one certification.



The cost of the first application is **\$100**. Each additional application is **\$35**.



Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2 is how most internationally trained teachers will be certified. Based on your NACES evaluation, the MDOE will conduct a transcript analysis and compare the results to Pathway 2 requirements. (You can view the requirements for all subjects and grades [here](#), in Chapter 115 Part II Update.)

## The MDOE Teacher Certification Course and Competency Requirements

The MDOE is looking for the following equivalences based on the subject and grade level you wish to teach.

- At least 24 credit hours in the content area you plan to teach (English, Life Science, Physical Science, Mathematics, Social Studies)  
**NOTE:** Early Elementary Teachers (pre-kindergarten to grade 3) and Elementary Teachers (kindergarten through grade 6) must meet a different set of credit hour requirements based on teaching all content areas (English, Math, Science and Social Studies or Social Sciences) to their students.  
**NOTE:** For World Language Teachers, this requirement can be met via testing (i.e., ACTFL, Avant STAMP) for licensing purposes.
- Three semester hours in a methods course appropriate to the subject and level you plan to teach
- A course entitled Teaching Students with Exceptionalities in the Regular Classroom
- Three semester hours in diversity-centered content related to today's classroom (e.g., culturally responsive teaching, multicultural education, intercultural education, second language acquisition or world language teaching methods)
- Three semester hours in human development, educational psychology, developmental psychology, adolescent psychology, or child development
- Completion of the student teaching requirement

**Note:** This can be met by completing one full year of successful teaching under a Conditional Certificate in the endorsement area at the specified grade level.

Additionally, you must meet one of the three following criteria:

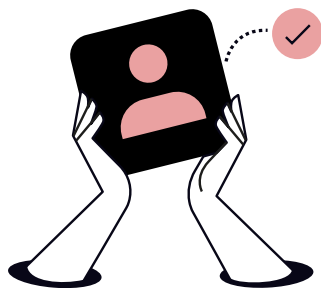
- Earn a 3.0 grade point average in the courses required for certification OR
- Pass the Maine Basic Skills Test (Praxis) OR
- Submit a **portfolio demonstrating competency in Maine's Initial Teacher Standards.**

## 5 REVIEW ELIGIBILITY LETTER FROM THE MDOE

After receiving your application, the MDOE will review your documents and issue a letter showing which requirements you have met and which requirements you still need to meet before you can be certified. The letter will also indicate if you are eligible for a Conditional Certification.

### You can begin working on the certification requirements immediately.

If you are eligible for a Conditional Certification, it is best to wait to request that the MDOE issue it until you have secured a teaching position. You need to complete one year of teaching while you hold the Conditional Certification to fulfil the student teaching requirement. If you have not secured a teaching position and the MDOE issues your Conditional Certification, you run the risk of having the certification expire before you complete your one year of teaching.



### Key Details:



Use the MDOE letter to determine how many courses you need to take, how much time you will need to complete the coursework and the cost of the courses.



Focus on earning a 3.0 grade point average (a grade of “B” or higher) in the courses required for certification. Doing so will waive the alternate requirements of passing the Maine Basic Skills Test (**Praxis**) or having to submit a **portfolio demonstrating competency in Maine’s Initial Teacher Standards.**



Make a plan for completion of requirements—this may take one or more years.



You do not need to have completed all of the requirements to be eligible for Conditional Certification. However, you do need to complete all of them to move to a Professional Certification. This means you will want to think strategically about when to apply for Conditional Certification because it expires after three years and cannot be renewed.

## 6 COMPLETE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Your MEIS account is where all of your educational documents are held. As you complete the requirements (missing courses, Praxis test, if applicable), upload your documentation to your MEIS account as proof of completion.



**Once you believe you have completed all missing requirements, email [cert.doe@maine.gov](mailto:cert.doe@maine.gov) to request a review of your documents.**

Once all requirements are met, the MDOE will issue your professional license. Professional licenses are valid for 5 years. Professional development course hours are required as part of the renewal process.



# Other Jobs in Education

When pursuing teacher certification, it is wise to form a connection with a local school right away through one of the options below. This will familiarize you with the culture of the classroom in the US, as it may be different from your prior teaching experience in another country. It will allow you to form connections and develop relationships with students and staff that will benefit your future teaching opportunities. In some cases, you may also be able to access course reimbursement to pay for courses required for teaching certification. Most of these positions will require a background check of some kind, depending on the position and the school.



## Educational Technician

### Requirements:

- **Ed Tech I** requires the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- **Ed Tech II** requires the equivalent of 60 approved college-level credits; and
- **Ed Tech III** requires the equivalent of 90 approved college-level credits.

Each Ed Tech level has increasing amounts of responsibility and earns a higher wage.

**Scope:** Also called Ed Tech or paraprofessional. Ed Techs provide additional assistance for student needs and general help to the classroom teacher. Depending on the specific needs, Ed Techs may work with small groups of students or 1:1 with a single student. Detailed information can be found in [Chapter 115, Part I Update](#), Section 6, Subsection 5.

**NOTE:** Apply for an Ed Tech authorization using [How to Apply for a Certificate](#) on the MDOE website.



## Substitute Teacher

**Requirements:** Each school district decides what qualifications someone will need to work as a substitute teacher. It's possible to substitute without teacher certification. If you only hold a high school diploma, it may still be possible to work as a substitute.

**Scope:** Fill in for a classroom teacher during their absence; follow the prepared lesson plan and daily schedule; general supervision of students. As a substitute, you may be asked to fill in for additional duties, such as lunch or recess supervision.

**NOTE:** Some school districts may require substitute teacher training (provided by the district directly).





## Paid Non-Certified Positions

**Requirements:** Typically all positions working in a school department will require fingerprinting and a background check. The requirements for each position will vary.

**Scope:** Examples include working in the school department's central office location (payroll, human resources, technology, etc); bus drivers and transportation aides; cafeteria and food service workers; and building custodians.



## Adult Education

**Requirements:** Some adult education positions are available to teachers without certification. Usually specific experience is required.

**Scope:** Workforce training in specific healthcare, education, IT and digital skills, banking and finance, etc. Many Adult Education programs in southern and coastal Maine also offer ESOL classes.

**NOTE:** Most adult education programs also welcome tutors and volunteers.



## Volunteering

This is a great way to get involved with a school if there are no paid positions available. Contact the volunteer coordinator at any school to find out about needs and opportunities.



## Private & Charter Schools

**Requirements:** A private school can review your information and make a hiring decision for any open position at the school.

**Scope:** Teaching, lesson preparation, assessment, and general classroom management, similar to public schools.

**NOTE:** Private schools and charter schools are not required to follow the same teacher certification standards that public schools must use. Each school will make their own decision about hiring qualified teachers.







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