



EDUCATOR LICENSURE POLICY

On July 25, 2014, the Tennessee State Board of Education approved a new policy regarding educator licensure. Educators affected by this policy include: Teachers, School Services Personnel, and Occupational Teachers. **Any license issued prior to September 1, 2015 will be valid until the date of expiration.** After August 31, 2015, all licensure transactions will be processed in accordance with the new policy.

The purpose of educator licensure is to ensure that individuals who serve in Tennessee classrooms and schools meet minimum standards. In order to earn, advance or renew a license to teach in the State of Tennessee, an individual must meet stated expectations. This document serves as an overview of the key components of the new policy. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) will develop and communicate additional guidance regarding the transition to the new policy. The following link provides additional information and access to the full policy: [Licensure Policy](#).

Overview of New Licensure Policy

New License Types

- **Practitioner Licenses (3-year validity period, renewable -once)** – The practitioner license is the initial license issued to educators entering Tennessee public schools.
- **Professional Licenses (6-year validity period, renewable)** – The professional license is issued to educators who have met requirements for advancement from the practitioner license.

Initial Issuance of the Practitioner License

There are three types of practitioner licenses: Practitioner Teacher, Practitioner School Services Personnel, and Practitioner Occupational Teacher.

Individuals applying for the practitioner license must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- be enrolled in or have completed a state-approved educator preparation program ;
- be recommended by the state-approved educator preparation program; **AND**
- have submitted qualifying scores on required assessments

– OR –

have content knowledge verified by a program in which a candidate is enrolled or has completed, based on content major.

To renew or advance the practitioner license, all educators must complete an approved education preparation program and pass all required assessments.



Advancing to a Professional License

In addition to completing an educator preparation program and submitting qualifying scores on all required assessments, an educator must provide evidence of the following to advance to the professional license:

- o three years of experience, **AND**
 - o the recommendation of the Director of Schools,
- OR-**
- documentation of 30 professional development points (PDPs).

If an educator has successfully completed an approved preparation program and submitted qualifying scores on all required assessments but has not met the remaining requirements for advancement, the practitioner license may be renewed once. If an educator does not meet advancement requirements at the end of the second validity period of the practitioner license, the license will become inactive.

Renewing a Professional License

To renew the professional license, an educator must have documentation of 60 professional development points. At the date of expiration, if an educator does not have documentation of 60 professional development points, the license will become inactive.

Reactivating an Inactive License

To reactivate an inactive license, an educator must ensure that the Office of Educator Licensing (OEL) has received qualifying scores (not more than 5 years old) on all required content assessments for each endorsement an educator is seeking to reactivate). If the OEL has valid assessment scores (not more than 5 years old) on file, the educator does not need to submit new scores.

Occupational License – Additional Requirements

In most cases, proof of current industry certification is an additional requirement for the Occupational License. See [Licensure Policy](#) for more specific information. Educators seeking an occupational license must adhere to the following:

- Prior to enrollment in a preparation program, qualifications, such as industry certification, shall be reviewed by the TDOE staff.
- The teacher may advance to the professional occupational education license provided that he/she has completed the following requirements:
 - o Attendance during the first year of teaching for a total of five (5) days at new teacher training sponsored by Career & Technical Education Division, Department of Education.
 - o Four (4) days release time to observe three (3) experienced teachers within their endorsed teaching area and one (1) experienced teacher outside of their teaching area.
 - o Assigned teacher mentor during the first three (3) years of teaching.



Professional Development Points

Educators earn professional development points (PDPs) to advance (a total of 30) or renew (a total of 60) a license. The following table provides information about how PDPs may be earned.

Option	PDPs Awarded	Required Documentation
Training (Academy/Institute/ Seminar/Conference)	1 clock hour = 1 PDP 1 continuing education credit ¹ = 5PDPs	Certificate of completion, Transcript OR Verification form signed by the Director of Schools (or designee)
College/University Coursework	1 semester hour credit = 10 PDPs	Transcript
Overall Evaluation Score from TN- approved evaluation model	Overall Score of 5 = 20 PDPs Overall Score of 4 = 15 PDPs Overall Score of 3 = 10 PDPs	This information is maintained by TDOE. Educators are not required to submit any documentation. PDPs based on overall evaluation scores may be accrued on an annual basis.
National Board Certification	30 PDPs	Official documentation from NBPTS

- All educators must earn professional development points to advance or renew a teacher license, including teacher licenses, occupational licenses, and professional school services personnel licenses. If an educator chooses to advance from the practitioner to the professional license using PDPs, the educator must accrue 30 PDPs. To renew the professional license, an educator must accrue 60 PDPs.
- Activities cannot be part of the state funded in-service days and cannot be conducted during days and/or hours for which educators are already being paid by local education agencies. Activities cannot be completed during school hours.
- Activities must be completed within the validity period of the license being advanced or renewed.
- Activities must be related to the development of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge; activities designed to enhance educator effectiveness (e.g., world language courses for educators who work with students for whom English is a second language, coursework designed to support educator's understanding and use of student data) or other activities designed to improve instructional practice qualify for PDPs. Activities that are not related to the development of educator effectiveness do not qualify for PDPs. Examples of activities not accepted, include: athletic coaching or clinics, bus driver competitions, club sponsors, choral/band presentations, camp director or Christian education.
- College/University coursework must be completed at regionally accredited institutions.
- At the time of advancement or renewal, if the educator is employed in a Tennessee public school, the local education agency must retain documentation for each completed activity for which the educator is awarded PDPs. The local education agency will be required to verify that educators accrued sufficient PDPs to qualify for advancement or renewal.
- At the time of advancement or renewal, if the educator is NOT employed in Tennessee public school, the educator must submit documentation of all activities for which the educator requests PDPs. Each activity must be listed on the appropriate form and include appropriate documentation. The form must be signed by the person responsible for conducting the local evaluation.

¹ Continuing education includes activities that result in credits that may be similar to academic coursework in organization and delivery, but are not eligible for academic credit leading to a degree.



Information Resources

- **OEL Website:** Overview of license types and requirements, licensing forms, educator look-up, and links to licensure policies
<http://www.tn.gov/education/licensing/index.shtml>
- **New Licensure Policy:** Information about changes to licensure approved by the State Board of Education in July 2014:
http://www.tn.gov/education/licensing/policy_changes.shtml.
- **Correlation of Course Codes and Endorsement Codes:** Identifies the endorsements that make an educator qualified to teach a course:
http://www.tn.gov/education/districts/docs/2014-15_correlation_of_course_codes.pdf.
- **Director Update/ HR Update/ Team Update:** Department newsletters that provide districts with updates on policies, implementation, and state initiatives
- **Teachers-Teachers.com:** Online tool for educator recruitment. Currently 640,000+ jobseekers are registered. www.teachers-teachers.com

Our team of licensing specialists is committed to serving you. For questions or assistance regarding specific licensure transactions or an individual license, please call the Office of Educator Licensing at (615) 532-4885 or email education.licensing@tn.gov. For questions regarding the new licensure policy please email redesign.questions@tn.gov.