

Teacher Certification Laws for Trades Workers in Other States

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February 25, 2021 | 2021-R-0073

Issue

Describe state laws on teacher certification for trades workers who wish to teach in technical or comprehensive high schools and community colleges in Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

Summary

OLR examined the teacher certification laws of the above four states. Like Connecticut, all require a teaching certificate for entry-level positions teaching in a trade subject area; however, Michigan waives this requirement when a school district cannot find a suitable certified candidate for a vocational position. (Connecticut has shortage area permits for subjects with State Board of Education approval.)

These states require varying amounts of work experience in the subject area being taught. Additionally, they vary in their requirements about (1) completing postsecondary degrees and additional teacher training and (2) allowing work experience as a postsecondary education substitute.

These four states do not create separate certification categories for teaching career and technical education courses in technical high schools versus comprehensive high schools like Connecticut does. Similar to Connecticut, these states have not established certificates specifically for community college instructors teaching in the trades.

Entry-Level Technical High School Teacher Certification

Overview

Table 1 below compares certain aspects of Connecticut’s entry-level certification requirements with four other states. Links to each state’s teacher certification websites are provided. Controlling statutes and regulations are described in detail for each state following the table.

Table 1: Entry-Level Technical High School Teacher Certification Requirements by State

<i>State</i>	<i>Requires certification or license</i>	<i>Requires assessment or testing</i>	<i>Requires work experience</i>	<i>Requires college coursework in the desired certificate subject area</i>	<i>Allows training or work experience as a degree substitute</i>	<i>Requires teacher training coursework</i>
<u>Connecticut</u>	X		X	X (certain subjects)		X
<u>Massachusetts</u>	X	X	X	X (certain subjects)	X (partial substitute)	
<u>Michigan</u>	X (with exceptions)	X (with exceptions)	X	X (with exceptions)		X
<u>North Carolina</u>	X	X (certain licenses)	X (certain licenses)	X (certain subjects)		
<u>Pennsylvania</u>	X	X (with exceptions)	X			X

Massachusetts

Massachusetts' entry-level career and technical education teaching license is the Preliminary license. State law delegates the authority to establish trade and vocational licensing requirements to the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 71, § 38G).

Assessment. For the Preliminary license, candidates must achieve passing scores on (1) the written and performance tests in the subject matter and skills he or she will teach and (2) either the Vocational Technical Literacy Skills Test or the Communication and Literacy Skills Test (603 Mass. Code Regs. § 4.07(d)-(e)).

Postsecondary Education. For the Preliminary license, candidates must possess at least an associate degree when teaching one of 14 specified subject areas (e.g., dental assisting, drafting, electronics, medical laboratory technology). For 10 other specified subject areas, at least a bachelor's degree is required (e.g., animal science, engineering technology, marketing, practical nursing). All other candidates must hold at least a high school diploma or GED (603 Mass. Code Regs. § 4.07(2)(b)).

Work Experience. Candidates for the Preliminary license must document a certain minimum years of employment experience directly related to the subject and skills they will teach. The minimums are based upon the education requirements associated with the subject area, as follows:

1. Licenses requiring a bachelor's degree: at least three years of full-time work experience; however, a master's degree related to the subject or skills may substitute for one of the three years;
2. Licenses requiring an associate degree: at least four years of full-time work experience; however, a bachelor's or master's degree related to the subject or skills may substitute for one of the four years; and
3. Licenses requiring a high school diploma: at least five years of full-time work experience; however, an associate degree related to the subject or skills may substitute for one of the five years, or a bachelor's degree may substitute for two of the five years.

Additionally, a graduate of a vocational educational program may count actual time spent on cooperative education employment toward the work experience licensing requirement (603 Mass. Code Regs. § 4.07(f)).

Michigan

Michigan law does not require all vocational teachers to be certified. State statute allows school districts to employ non-certified teachers to teach full- or part-time in a career or technical

education program when a certified teacher cannot be found for the position. Non-certified candidates must hold a high school diploma or GED and meet certain professional trade licensure and work experience requirements (Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1233b(2)(b), (4) & (6)). Otherwise, vocational teachers must be properly certified (Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1233). Michigan's initial, entry-level career and technical education certificate is the Standard CTE Certificate, whose requirements are established in state regulation and described further below.

Assessment. Candidates for a Standard CTE Certificate must have passed examinations required under state statute (Mich. Admin. Code r. 390.1163(1)(d)). For a high school teaching certificate, candidates must pass the appropriate available subject area examination for their certification (Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1531(2)(a)).

Postsecondary Education. Candidates must possess at least a bachelor's degree. The candidate must hold a major or minor in the field of specialization requested for certification (Mich. Admin. Code r. 390.1163(1)(a)-(b)).

Work Experience. Candidates must have at least 2 years of recent and relevant experience in the occupational area (Mich. Admin. Code r. 390.1163(1)(c)).

Teacher Training. Candidates must have successfully completed at least six satisfactory college semester credit hours of professional or CTE education credit (Mich. Admin. Code r. 390.1163(1)(e)).

North Carolina

State law authorizes North Carolina's State Board of Education to (1) establish minimum standards for career and technical education personnel employed at the state and local levels (N.C. Stat. Ann. § 115C-154(7)) and (2) develop minimum hiring criteria for adjunct instructors in each career and technical education career cluster (N.C. Stat. Ann. § 115C-157.1(a)). The Board's most recent standards are published in the "[Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Licensure Policies and Procedures Manual](#)," approved by the board on May 7, 2020.

In North Carolina, the entry-level license is known as the Initial Professional License based on the CTE Restricted route (i.e., the license is restricted from adding additional non-CTE areas). The manual lists 23 different CTE Teaching Licenses, which each have specific requirements for the initial license, whose requirements we describe broadly below.

Assessment. Teachers who hold only a high school diploma must demonstrate academic competence through various assessment options listed in the policy manual ([Manual](#), pages 5 & 63).

Postsecondary Education. Candidates must hold a related degree from a regionally accredited college or university. High school diploma level licenses do not require a degree. An associate degree or high school diploma is the minimum education requirement in some CTE licensure areas as long as the candidate meets the required work experience for the CTE restricted route. If the candidate does not have a bachelor's degree, pay is held in escrow ([Manual](#), page 5).

Work Experience. Candidates must have related work or military experience for the CTE program area ([Manual](#), page 5).

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania offers two types of initial or entry-level career and technical education teaching certificates: (1) Career and Technical Intern Certificate and (2) Vocational Instructional I. Requirements are set out in both state law and regulations.

Assessment. State regulation requires applicants for entry-level certification (Vocational Instruction I) to either (1) pass the occupational competency examination or evaluation of credentials for occupations where examinations do not exist or (2) present evidence of satisfactory achievement on a subject matter assessment (22 Pa. Code §§ 49.142(a)(2)). There are no assessment requirements for the Career and Technical Intern Certificate.

Postsecondary Education. For the Intern Certificate, state law and regulation require enrollment in, but not completion of, a teacher preparation program (22 Pa. Code §§ 49.151(a)(3)). Under the state law for the entry-level teaching certificate, the State Board of Education cannot require more than 18 teacher preparation program credit hours (24 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 12-1204.2(b)-(c)).

Work Experience. State law requires work experience for the intern and entry-level certifications. Applicants for a Career and Technical Intern Certificate must have at least four years of wage-earning experience in the occupation he or she will teach; applicants for Vocational Instruction I must have two years of experience (24 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 12-1204.2(b); 22 Pa. Code §§ 49.142(a)(1)).

Teacher Training. For the entry- and upper-level certificates (Vocational Instructional I and II), state regulation requires that the applicant take a certain number of credit hours dedicated to a specific

instructional area. For Vocational Instructional I, 3 credits or 90 hours must be dedicated to accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an inclusive setting (22 Pa. Code §§ 49.142(a)(3)).

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