



State of California  
Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
1900 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95811-4213  
Email: [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov)  
Website: [www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov)

## EDUCATION SPECIALIST INSTRUCTION CREDENTIAL Requirements for Individuals Prepared Out-of-State

California has a two-tier credential structure. A five-year Level I credential is the first document issued after an individual meets basic credential requirements. The Level II or Clear credential is issued once all credential requirements have been completed.

The Education Specialist Instruction Credential authorizes the holder to teach in the area of specialization listed on the credential in the following settings:

- Resource rooms or services
- Special education settings
- General education settings
- Special schools
- Home/hospital settings
- State hospitals
- Development centers
- Correctional facilities
- Non-public, non-sectarian schools and agencies
- Alternative and non-traditional instructional public school settings other than classroom

### Areas of Specialization

- *Mild/Moderate Disabilities (M/M)*  
Includes specific learning disabilities; mild to moderate intellectual disabilities; attention deficit and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders; serious emotional disturbance; and authorizes service in grades K-12 and in classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- *Moderate/Severe Disabilities (M/S)*  
Includes autism; deaf-blindness; moderate to severe intellectual disabilities; multiple disabilities; serious emotional disturbance; and authorizes service in grades K-12 and in classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- *Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)*  
Includes deafness; hearing impairment; deaf-blindness; and authorizes service to individuals ages birth through 22.
- *Visual Impairments (VI)*  
Includes blindness; visual impairment; deaf-blindness; and authorizes service to individuals ages birth through 22.
- *Physical and Health Impairments (PHI)*  
Includes orthopedic impairment; other health impairment; multiple disabilities; traumatic brain injury, and authorizes service to individuals ages birth through 22.
- *Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)*  
Includes the mild/moderate and moderate/severe disabilities listed above, and authorizes service to children ages birth to prekindergarten only.

An added authorization in Early Childhood Special Education is also available to individuals who hold a preliminary, Level I, clear, Level II, or life special education teaching credential, and who complete a program through a Commission-approved program sponsor. The ECSE Added Authorization authorizes the holder to provide special education services in the area of mild/moderate or moderate/severe disabilities for students age birth to pre-K as determined by the local level special education assessment.

The credentialing process in California includes a sequence of requirements that allows teachers up to **five years** to complete the requirements for the Level II or Clear credential. Teachers receiving the Level I credential are making a commitment to complete the process and obtain the Level II or Clear credential. The Level I credential is issued for a maximum of five years. If requirements for the Level II or Clear credential are not completed before the expiration of the Level I, the holder will be unable to teach in California's public schools with that credential until those requirements are met and the document renewed.

### **Individuals Prepared Outside of the United States**

Individuals who completed their teacher preparation programs outside of the United States and do not hold a comparable teaching credential issued by a US state other than California should refer to Commission leaflet [CL-872](#), entitled *Education Specialist Instruction Credential – Requirements for Individuals Prepared Outside of the United States*.

### **Your Application Packet**

To qualify for the Education Specialist Instruction Credential, individuals may determine from the routes listed which one best applies to their circumstances. Individuals who completed their professional preparation programs outside of California may apply directly to the Commission for their initial credential by submitting an application packet by mail consisting of **all** of the following:

1. Completed application ([form 41-4](#)), and, if not previously submitted to the Commission, a completed Live Scan receipt ([form 41-LS](#)). Out-of-state residents must submit two fingerprint cards (FD-258) in lieu of a Live Scan receipt. If submitting fingerprint cards, current fingerprint processing fees must accompany the application packet in addition to the application processing fee. Fingerprint cards may be ordered by sending an email to the Commission at [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov).
2. Application [processing fee](#)
3. Official transcripts, letters of experience, verification of completion of the [basic skills requirement](#) (if applicable), photocopies of out-of-state credentials, and performance evaluations as required by the route used to earn the credential.

### **ROUTE 1 - Less than Two Years of Out-of-State Teaching Experience Requirements for the Five-Year Level I Education Specialist Instruction Credential**

Individuals prepared outside of California who have less than two years of out-of-state full-time teaching experience (see Terms and Definitions) may qualify for a California teaching credential by documenting **all** of the following:

1. Baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally-accredited college or university
2. [Basic Skills Requirement](#). Individuals may be issued a Level I credential prior to satisfying the basic skills requirement but must meet the requirement within one year of their credential issue date. See Commission leaflet [CL-667](#), entitled *Basic Skills Requirement* for additional information.
3. Comparable professional-level teaching credential earned in a state or U.S. territory other than California based upon completion of a professional preparation program (or alternative program) in special education, including student teaching, taken at a regionally-accredited institution. The program must align with a specialty area authorized on a California credential (see *Areas of Specialization* list).

The credential does not have to be valid at the time of application. A photocopy of the out-of-state credential (front and back, as applicable) is acceptable verification.

If the out-of-state credential was issued in only “Special Education,” or in a specialty area that does not align with a California specialty area, the Commission may issue a Level I credential to an individual based on completion of an out-of-state generic program in one of these specialty areas: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, or Early Childhood Special Education. However, the individual will need to complete any coursework required to reach equivalency with a Commission-approved Preliminary Education Specialist program in the specialty area in addition to all other renewal requirements listed on the document to earn a Level II or Clear credential (see Terms and Definitions).

### **Requirements for the Level II or Clear Education Specialist Instruction Credential for Route 1**

Individuals will need to document **all** of the following to qualify for the Level II or Clear credential:

1. A Commission-approved Level II Education Specialist Program, or a Clear Education Specialist Induction Program, including an individualized induction plan designed in collaboration with your employer and program sponsor in the specialty area listed on the individual’s Level I credential and a formal recommendation for the credential by the program sponsor
2. An authorization to teach English learners by one of the following methods:
  - a. Possess an English learner authorization issued by the Commission authorizing service in English language development (ELD) and Specially Designed Academic Instruction delivered in English (SDAIE). See [Credential Leaflet CL-628C](#) for more information.
  - b. Submit a copy of an out-of-state credential verifying a full English learner authorization.
3. Completion of the equivalent of a Commission-approved Preliminary program in the specialty area (if necessary)

**Note:** Dates were established in regulations to move to the new preliminary and clear teaching credential programs and to allow candidates to finish their current programs. The last date to enroll a candidate in a Level II program was December 31, 2014. Candidates must finish the Level II program by January 31, 2019.

### **ROUTE 2 - Two or More Years of Out-of-State Teaching Experience**

#### **Requirements for the Five-Year Level I Education Specialist Instruction Credential**

Individuals prepared outside of California who verify two or more years of out-of-state full-time special education teaching experience (see Terms and Definitions) may qualify for a California teaching credential by documenting **all** of the following:

1. Baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally-accredited college or university
2. [Basic Skills Requirement](#). Individuals may be issued a Level I credential prior to satisfying the basic skills requirement but must meet the requirement within one year of their credential issue date. See Commission leaflet [CL-667](#), entitled *Basic Skills Requirement* for additional information.
3. Comparable professional-level teaching credential earned in a state or U.S. territory other than California based upon completion of a professional preparation program (or alternative program) in special education, including student teaching, taken at a regionally-accredited institution. The program must align with a specialty area authorized on a California credential (see *Areas of Specialization* list).

The credential does not have to be valid at the time of application. A photocopy of the out-of-state credential (front and back, as applicable) is acceptable verification.

4. Letter from the out-of-state employer verifying two years or more of out-of-state full-time special education teaching experience accompanied by two satisfactory performance evaluations (see Terms and Definitions)

If the out-of-state credential was issued in only “Special Education,” or in a specialty area that does not align with a California specialty area, the Commission may issue a Level I credential to an individual based on completion of an out-of-state generic program in one of these specialty areas: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, or Early Childhood Special Education. However, the individual will need to complete any coursework required to reach equivalency with a Commission-approved Preliminary Education Specialist program in the specialty area in addition to all other renewal requirements listed on the document to earn a Clear credential (see Terms and Definitions).

### **Requirements for the Clear Education Specialist Instruction Credential for Route 2**

Individuals may apply directly to the Commission for the Clear credential by submitting an application packet by mail ([form 41-4](#)) and processing fee with documentation of **all** of the following:

1. Complete the professional-level requirement by **one** of the following methods:
  - a. 150 clock hours of professional activities, documented on *Verification of Completion Form CL-820A*
  - b. A master’s or higher degree or an equivalent number of units in a field related to the credential from a regionally-accredited university
  - c. A bachelor’s degree that consisted of a minimum of 150 semester units (or 225 quarter units). The course work must have been completed prior to receiving the bachelor’s degree. See [Coded Correspondence 11-09](#) for additional information.
2. Earn an authorization to teach English learners by **one** of the following methods:
  - a. Possess an English learner authorization issued by the Commission authorizing service in English language development (ELD) and specially designed academic instruction delivered in English (SDAIE). See [Credential Leaflet CL-628C](#) for more information.
  - b. Submit a copy of an out-of-state credential verifying a full English learner authorization.
3. Completion of the equivalent of a Commission-approved Preliminary program in the specialty area (if necessary)

*If all requirements for the Level I credential and Clear credentials are met with the initial application, the individual will be issued the Clear credential and not the Level I.*

### **ROUTE 3 - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification**

Individuals certified by the [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards \(NBPTS\)](#) in *Exceptional Needs/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood* will be issued a Clear Education Specialist Instruction Credential. This includes those individuals who obtained National Board Certification after their Level I credential was issued. Individuals qualifying under this route are exempt from the basic skills requirement and all other credential requirements except fingerprint clearance.

Individuals applying under this option may apply directly to the Commission for the Clear credential by submitting an application by mail consisting of all of the following:

1. Photocopy of National Board Certification
2. Completed application ([form 41-4](#)), and, if not previously submitted to the Commission, a completed

Live Scan receipt ([form 41-LS](#)). Out-of-state residents must submit two fingerprint cards (FD-258) in lieu of a Live Scan receipt. If submitting fingerprint cards, current fingerprint [processing fee](#) must accompany the application packet. Fingerprint cards may be ordered by sending an email to the Commission at [Fingerprints@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:Fingerprints@ctc.ca.gov).

3. Copy of a professional level credential from a state other than California
4. Submit one of the following:
  - a) A copy of the individual's NBPTS "My Profile" status page report which indicates the specific special education certificate specialty area completed
  - b) Official transcripts verifying the content of the special education program completed
  - c) Photocopy of out-of-state credential with a corresponding specific special education specialty area

(For Option 4c): If the out-of-state credential was issued in only "Special Education," or in a specialty area that does not align with a California specialty area, the Commission may issue a Level I credential in one of these specialty areas: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, or Early Childhood Special Education to an individual based on completion of an out-of-state generic program. However, the individual will need to complete any coursework required to reach equivalency with a Commission-approved Preliminary Education Specialist program in the specialty area (see Terms and Definitions).

5. Application [processing fee](#)

### **Transition Renewal Options for Out-of-State Prepared Teachers Issued an Education Specialist Instruction Teaching Credential Prior to January 1, 2007**

Individuals issued a Level I Education Specialist Instruction Teaching Credential prior to January 1, 2007 on the basis of completing an out-of-state teacher preparation program may transition to the new requirements under Senate Bill 1209 or complete the renewal requirements listed on their document. Additional information can be found in [Coded Correspondence 06-0027](#).

### **Terms and Definitions**

#### *Level I Credential Issued Based on Completion of a Generic Program*

The Level I and Preliminary Education Specialist Programs include concentration on the specific specialty area in which special education services will be provided. Individuals who complete generic special education programs outside of California may choose one of the following specialty areas in which to apply for the five-year Level I credential: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, or Early Childhood Special Education. These individuals need to contact a Commission-approved Education Specialist program for an evaluation to determine if the out-of-state program is equivalent to the Preliminary Education Specialist program content (Level I programs have ended), or if any additional categorical (specialty area) course work is required before qualifying for issuance of the clear credential. [Click here for a listing of Commission-approved programs.](#)

Upon satisfying all equivalency requirements, the program sponsor must provide the teachers with letters verifying Preliminary program equivalency. The Preliminary program equivalency letters must be submitted to the Commission at the time the teachers apply for their clear credentials via the experience route or to the Level II/special education induction program sponsors that will recommend the teachers for their Level II or clear credentials. See [Coded Correspondence 13-07](#) for more information.

If the out-of-state credential was issued in only "Special Education," or in a specialty area that does not align with a California specialty area, the following criteria apply:

- The Commission may deem the program comparable if student teaching was completed in the requested specialty area. Candidates must submit a letter on letterhead from the institution where the program was completed verifying the student teaching area.
- The Commission may deem the program comparable if two years of out-of-state teaching experience was completed in the requested specialty area. Candidates must submit a letter on letterhead from the employing agency verifying the area of assignment.

*Full-time Teaching Experience:* Teaching experience must be verified by an original letter on official letterhead of the district or districts where the teacher was employed, signed by the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or director of personnel or human resources. The letter must explicitly state the service performed was on a full-time basis and indicate all of the following:

- Experience must be full-time teaching; no part-time or a combination of teaching and other school employment will be accepted. Full-time teaching is defined as a minimum of 4 hours per day for at least 75% of a school year. Beginning and ending dates of service should be clearly indicated.
- All experience must be gained in regionally-accredited schools outside California. Teaching experience gained in California is not acceptable.
- Only special education teaching experience is acceptable toward the issuance of a Level I or Clear Education Specialist Instruction Credential via the experience route
- Day-to-day substitute, Adult education, and Vocational/Career Technical education experience is not acceptable

*Satisfactory Performance Evaluations*

Originals or photocopies of the teacher’s performance evaluations for at least two years of teaching on which ratings of ‘satisfactory’ or better were received must be submitted by individuals applying via Route 2. The evaluations must be from the period of full-time service verified by the out-of-state employer. Applicants must submit summative teacher evaluations for continued employment. Classroom visits/observations or pre-observations, plans for professional growth, self-assessments, self-reflections, or personal reviews do not meet the criteria for performance evaluations and will not be accepted.

Individuals who were not evaluated or who cannot obtain photocopies of their evaluations may provide a supplemental evaluation letter(s) signed by their out-of-state principal or superintendent in lieu of actual performance evaluations. The supplemental letter must cover two separate years of full-time teaching and verify that the individual’s performance in at least the four following areas was “satisfactory” or better:

1. The use of teaching strategies that motivates all students to engage in the learning process
2. The ability to establish and maintain high standards for student behavior
3. A demonstration of deep knowledge of the subject being taught and the use of appropriate instructional strategies that promote student understanding
4. An ability to plan and implement a sequence of appropriate instructional activities

Each evaluation or performance letter must be completed, dated and signed by the appropriate school or school district administrator.

California participates in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement. Visit the NASDTEC website for more information. <http://www.nasdtec.org/agreement.tpl>

*Reference: California Education Code, Sections 44227, 44274, 44274.1, 44275.3, 44275.4, 44398 and Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 80048.3.1— 80048.6*