

Teacher Certification Course Frequently Asked Questions

Lake-Sumter Community College Educator Preparation Institute – Teacher Certification Courses

1. Do I need to have a degree to enroll in the courses?

Yes, you must have a Bachelor's Degree from a regionally accredited college.

2. What if I have a degree in a field other than education?

In order to qualify for these courses your degree must be in a field other than education because if you have an education degree then you have had courses similar to what we offer.

3. Will course credits be counted as Master's or Bachelor's level work?

The credits earned in these courses are institutional and will not count towards a degree.

4. Since the credits do not count towards a degree, why should I enroll in these courses?

Our courses are designed to prepare teachers (who are eligible for temporary certification) for their professional education certification to teach in Florida public schools. If your goal is to earn your professional education certification in a fast track program geared for career changers and pay Community College rates, this is the program for you.

5. I can be hired with a Bachelor's Degree. Why do I need a certificate?

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) will provide a three-year non-renewable temporary certificate to individuals hired into the system with a Bachelor's Degree related to their field of study. Individuals hired under a temporary must earn his/her Professional Education certification in those three years to be re-hired.

6. I am already working as a teacher in the school district. Do I qualify for these courses?

Yes, providing you don't work for Lake County Public Schools (LCS). LCS requires teachers to enroll in an in-house teacher certification program. If you hold a position other than teaching, then you would qualify. Additionally, if you begin the Teacher Certification Courses (TC) at LSCC first and then get a job in Lake County Public Schools as a teacher, then you may complete the TC while employed as a teacher for LCS.

7. What is a Statement of Status of Eligibility (SSE)?

This is the document issued by the DOE that identifies your eligibility for certification at both the temporary and professional level. It will identify both the exams and courses you are required to satisfy for certification. The TC will satisfy all of the coursework listed on the SSE for the Professional Educator's Certification and it will prepare you for the Professional Education exam.

8. How do I get the Statement of Status of Eligibility?

Visit the DOE website at www.fldoe.org/edcert/step1.asp and apply for certification. Once you submit your online application for teacher certification, the DOE will review your official college transcripts for courses related to the area of certification you applied for. The outcome of that review is the Statement of Status of Eligibility or SSE, which is mailed to you about 30 days after you apply for certification and your official transcripts have been received.

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9. I do not have a computer? How will I complete the online requirements?

Our courses require high speed internet access and computer proficiency; all TC courses include an online teaching and learning component.

10. When do I go to class?

You will be enrolled in a cohort of students who are going through the courses with you. Classes are designed around the schedule of the working adult student. Class meetings are Saturdays from 8am-4pm.

11. Can I attend class online in place of attending class face to face?

Attendance in class is mandatory. About 60% of the program is face to face and the rest is online, the face-to-face/online ratio varies by course.

12. When will I complete student teaching?

The Field Experience is offered for one to two weeks in the spring and fall semester and is determined based on the county's public school schedule.

13. How many classes do I have to take to complete the TC courses? And what are the classes?

The program consists of 7 theory based courses, 2 field experiences and an e-portfolio. The courses include: Technology, Classroom Management, Instructional Strategies, Diversity, Professional Foundations, Teaching and Learning, and Reading.

14. How long will the courses take to complete?

Courses are scheduled based on the academic calendar. Depending on when you start, the program may take as little as 7 - 8 months if courses are taken consecutively as scheduled.

15. How do I apply for the courses?

You must submit an application for LSCC admission, an EPI/Teacher Certification application, official sealed transcripts from your undergraduate institution, FLDOE Statement of Status of Eligibility, and passing scores on the Florida Teacher Certification Examination in Subject Area and General Knowledge. (If you passed the CLAST before June 2002, you are exempt from the General Knowledge exam.)

16. Am I able to start the courses if I don't have all the documents listed above?

Yes, applicants who are in the process of completing their paperwork may be conditionally accepted for up to 60 days.

17. What is the deadline for application?

You should not wait to apply even though admission is ongoing. The turn-around time for receiving documents from the FLDOE can take 30 days or more.

18. Where are classes held?

The Teacher Certification courses are offered periodically on the Leesburg campus at various times. The online schedule will identify the campus offering the program in any given semester.

19. What is the academic rigor of the courses?

TC courses are equivalent to a graduate-level curriculum. Each 3 credit course is approximately 1 month, requiring excellent reading, writing, comprehension, and time management skills.

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20. Why do I have to be fingerprinted?

The Jessica Lunsford Act requires criminal background checks on any and all individuals working in public schools. You will be required to pass a Level II background check prior to beginning the Field Experience component. (NOTE: Field Experience is subject to EPI Manager approval.)

21. What is an e-portfolio?

The e-portfolio is an electronic compilation of your best coursework, demonstrating mastery of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPS). Your e-portfolio will be built throughout the courses, and can be used to demonstrate your skills in an interview with a principal. The e-portfolio is housed in FACTS.org and is a course requirement.

22. Do I have to pay all at once?

You pay for tuition and fees based on the number of courses you are registered for during a given semester.

23. Do I have to buy my books?

We have purchased all the books for you. Books can be borrowed from the library.

24. Do I have to be a resident of Florida to qualify for the in-state tuition?

You must be residing in the state for 12 consecutive months to qualify for the in-state tuition. You will also qualify for in-state tuition if you or your spouse is employed as a paraprofessional or teacher in the public school system. Otherwise, you will have to pay out-of-state tuition.

25. What does it cost for DOE to review my transcripts?

The fee for FLDOE certification is \$75.00 (subject to change) per area of certification. Each area of certification you apply for will result in a separate Statement of Status of Eligibility.

26. What exams do I need to pass for state certification?

The three Florida Teacher Certification Exams include general knowledge, subject area and professional education.

27. Which of these exams do these courses prepare me for?

The TC prepares you for the professional education exam. TC admission requirements include a passing score on your subject area and general knowledge exams or evidence that you have the skills to be successful in these areas.

28. How do I prepare for passing the general knowledge and subject area exam?

LSCC offers support in English, math and science to community members at no charge in the Learning Centers. Anyone with a 4-year degree should be able to pass the general knowledge exam with a review of basic math and English skills. The Learning Centers offer a diagnostic exam in both English and math which helps students focus their test preparation. A student's 4-year degree should prepare him/her for passing their respective subject area. Additional test preparation materials are suggested on the LSCC TC resource webpage.

29. What are the high-needs areas?

There are currently high needs in: math/science (middle and high), exceptional student education, ESOL, reading and foreign languages. These are subject to change.

Note: Reading specialization requires a Masters Degree.

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30. What happens if my temporary certificate expires?

Once the temporary certificate expires, you cannot teach until you either have your professional education certification or you reapply for another temporary after sitting out for 1 year.

31. On what criteria does the DOE determine a teacher's certification qualifications?

Certification is based on your academic credentials and FTCE test scores.

32. Do I need certification to substitute teach?

Certification is not required to substitute, however, district training is and training requirements vary by county.

33. If I want to teach in elementary school, what is my subject area exam?

K-6 elementary education

34. How do I learn more about the Florida Teacher Certification Exams?

Visit www.fl.nesinc.com for test information.

35. What is the general knowledge exam?

The general knowledge exam consists of multiple sections that will evaluate your reading, writing, English language, and math skills.

36. Is the Florida certification applicable in other states?

Certification is generally not reciprocal because standards vary from state to state.

37. What is the total cost for the courses?

Subject to change but the total cost for the Teacher Certification courses are the cost of tuition per credit (\$77.52 FL resident) plus technology fees x 21 (in 2008-09 about \$1,700 and may spread out over 2-3 semesters depending on when classes are scheduled).

38. Can I apply for federal financial aid?

You may apply for financial aid through the Office of Financial Aid at LSCC.

39. What is a teacher's starting salary?

Beginning teacher salaries start in the mid-upper 30's, varying by county. For additional information on teacher salaries, visit the following district websites:

www.lake.k12.fl.us

www.orange.k12.fl.us

www.sumter.k12.fl.us

40. How may I obtain additional information?

Dr. Glenn Ricci is the EPI Manager. His office is in the Leesburg Campus, Student Services Building 1st Floor. You may email Dr. Ricci at riccig@lsc.edu. Or, you may phone directly at (352) 365-3537, or see the LSCC Teacher Certification website at:

<http://www.lsc.edu/EPIInstitute/>