



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Teacher Education Office
1175 Maple Street, Room 104
Indiana, PA 15705
724-357-2485 Fax: 724-357-3294

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Pennsylvania Certification Changes

Q. I thought the catalog I entered under was the official guide to my program. Why can't I graduate with just those requirements?

A. While the catalog is your guide from the university, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania controls certification guidelines for all teacher education programs within the state. We are making necessary curriculum changes to allow current and future students to be appropriately qualified for certification in the areas in which they have prepared. Students completing degrees prior to December 31, 2012, will be qualified for the certificates issued prior to that date. However, the new certification guidelines will go into effect on that date, and we do not want any students to be without the appropriate credentials to be qualified for the new Pennsylvania certification.

Q. I really don't want to be a regular classroom teacher. I want to just teach Special education. Can't I do that under the new regulations?

A. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in compliance with the federal mandate of No Child Left Behind wants to assure that every teacher prepared in Pennsylvania is best prepared to meet the needs of all learners they will encounter in the classroom. Every teacher education program will now have increased attention to preparing to teach learners with special needs as well as learners for whom English is not the first language. In our Pre-K to Grade 4 program with certification in Special Education candidates will earn both certification and will be highly marketable. In all of our other teacher education programs, candidates may elect to add on the Special Education certification, allowing them to be well prepared for addressing the needs of all learners.

Q. I want to be a Middle School Language Arts teacher, but I'm confused about whether it would be better to major in; the 4-8 program or the Secondary English program. Which would be more marketable?

A. The English Education program prepares Candidates to be certified from Grades 7-12. Our understanding of Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines is that in some situations, teachers who hold that certification may be allowed to teach grade 6. However, this is dependent upon whether a district has a true middle school configuration.

Q. I want to study abroad and may not be able to finish my program in the four years that are allowed to finish by December of 2012. What should I do?

A. Start by talking with your academic advisor as far in advance as you can. You may need to consider summer school or additional credit hours during the Fall and Spring Semester in order to complete your requirements in a timely fashion. After talking with your advisor, you will want to talk to the coordinator for your major's teacher education program to make sure that they also feel that your plan is workable within the state's guidelines.

Q. I'm a member of the National Guard. If I'm called to active military service and cannot complete my degree requirements under the old guidelines, will I have to start all over again?

A. You will not have to start over again if you are pursuing any K-12 certification or 7-12 certification. In these cases you may simply need to take the additional coursework to satisfy the additional Special Education and English Language Learner requirements. However, if you are an ELED major, you need to be particularly concerned about this as the ELED (K-6) certification is being phased out. If you are pursuing certification as an ELED (K-6) teacher and you apply for certification by December 31, 2012, then you will not have to start over. However, if you plan to apply for certification to teach these grades after January 1, 2013, then the new P-4/Special Education and 4-8 certifications are to be pursued.

(Please note that IUP has applied for an extension to allow the old certification to be pursued until August 31, 2013).

Q. I'm a transfer student from the University of Virginia. How can I be sure that my course transfers will allow me to be on track for completing my program under the certification guidelines?

A. Prior to making any transfer from another institution, students should visit the on-line credit transfer link at the IUP Admissions website. This link can assist you in understanding which credits will come with you to IUP. It will also be advisable for you to meet as soon as possible with the program coordinator for your chosen program so that he/she can evaluate your credits and assist you in making a plan for your remaining semesters at IUP.

Q. I just want to major in Early Childhood Education. Do I have to do a dual major?

A. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will no longer issue a specific Early Childhood certification after December 31, 2012. IUP has elected to design a program that combines the Pre-K to Grade 4 certification with an additional certification in Special Education K-8. We believe that will make our candidates highly competitive in the job market, and highly skilled to meet the challenges presented in a variety of classroom settings. You will still have the opportunity to work with younger children in field experience and will have many opportunities to observe and/or volunteer in settings where the youngest children are learning.

Q. I'm an Art Major so my certificate is K-12. These new Pre-K to Grade 4 guidelines don't apply to me so my certification guidelines don't change, right?

A. All K-12 certification programs are being called upon to incorporate increased contact hours and content materials in addressing the needs of learners with Special Needs and learners for whom English is not the first language. While the grade levels for your certification are not changing, there are

changes in course content and field experience requirements to which you must attend. This is why it is important for you to stay on track and address program requirements in a timely manner.

Q. What happens if I don't pass my Praxis II in time to student teach in Fall 2012?

A. This will be a critical issue for all students to consider. We advise taking the Praxis test well in advance, so that at least two test dates are available prior to the deadline for Praxis scores. Students who do not have passing Praxis II scores prior to the deadline for Fall 2012, will not be eligible to student teach, graduate, or be certified. This will require the student to take additional coursework. PLEASE PLAN FOR YOUR PRAXIS II CAREFULLY AND PREPARE THOROUGHLY!