New York State Teacher Certification for International Students

(For information on certification in another state, see Faride Suarez in the Office of Teacher Education, 400 Russell Hall, or www.tc.edu/ote

In New York State, you must have a certificate (either Initial or Professional) to teach in a public school. Certification means that the state has reviewed your credentials and certified you as eligible to teach. Charter schools also require certification. Private schools, however, do not always require a certificate.

**Visa Issues**

Certification makes you eligible to teach, but it does not supersede your visa status. You also need an appropriate work authorization to teach in the schools.

F-1 Students. One option for F-1 students is Optional Practical Training, which provides an employment authorization for a maximum of 12 months. See information about F-1 Optional Practical Training at http://www.tc.edu/international.

H-1 Sponsorship. For information on work authorization (including H-1B) sponsored by the New York Department of Education, contact Mr. Sam Cheung in the International Recruitment Office. Phone: (718) 935-2803; email: scheung@nycboe.net or Janpeg Avignon, Director of International Recruitment, at (718) 935-2805; email: javignon@nycboe.net

**Initial Versus Professional Certification**

There are two types of teaching certificates: Initial Certification and Professional Certification. Initial Certification does not require US citizenship or permanent residence.

You do not have to be a U.S. citizen, nor file a “declaration of intent” to become a citizen, to obtain an initial teaching certificate in New York State. The Initial Certificate is valid for 5 years and is non-renewable. (There is a 2-year extension possible for “just cause”.) However, an individual who is issued an initial certificate without citizenship must obtain U.S. Permanent Residence (“green card”) or U.S. citizenship before the expiration of the Initial Certificate. Failure to do so will exclude the individual from eligibility for professional certification and employment in New York's public schools.

Requirements for both initial and professional certification can be found at: www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert

**Certification through a Teachers College degree program:**

1) Application for Certification (OTAPP-3): available from the Office of Teacher Education/School-Based Support Services (Russell Hall 400) or downloadable from www.tc.edu/ote

2) Completion of a degree program that includes student teaching

3) NY State administered tests (see p. 2, below)

4) Fingerprint clearance from New York State Department of Education (see p. 3, below)

5) Detection of Child Abuse Course and School Violence Prevention Course (see p. 3, below)

6) Application Fee ($50) payable to NYSED
Teacher Certification Programs (e.g., Teaching and Curriculum) at Teachers College meet requirement #2, above.

**Certification Individually (not through Teachers College):**

*If you completed your education in another country (or another U.S. institution), you may be eligible for New York State certification.* New York State accepts certification from other institutions or agencies. However, you must meet the following requirements:

For Elementary Teacher Certification, you need to have an undergraduate liberal arts degree, including 30 credits of pedagogy, 6 of which must be in the teaching of reading, plus student teaching.

For Secondary Teacher Certification, you need to have undergraduate degree in the field you plan to teach (36 credits in the academic subject), and one year of foreign language study, plus 21 credits of pedagogy, plus student teaching.

Certification in special subjects requires 12 credits of pedagogy, 36 credits in the subject, an undergraduate major in that field, plus student teaching.

All applicants must submit:

1) Application for Certification (**OTAPP**): available online at [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/appform.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/appform.htm)
2) Original credentials of formal schooling (and notarized translations where applicable) including official transcripts, copies of diplomas and certificates, etc.
3) NY State administered tests (see below)
4) Fingerprint clearance from New York State Department of Education (see p. 3, below)
5) Detection of Child Abuse Course and School Violence Prevention Course (see p. 3, below)
6) Application Fee ($100) payable to NYSED

**New York State Administered Tests:**

There are three exams required for initial teacher certification, which **all applicants** must take:

1) **LAST** – Liberal Arts and Sciences Test
2) **ATSW** – Assessment of Teaching Skills--Written
   The ATSW is offered for secondary education or elementary education. If the field you are specializing in is not limited to either secondary or elementary, you can take either of the tests, and it will apply to both (special education, for example).
3) **CST** – Content Specialty Test (subject area of certification)

(BEA) - Bilingual Education Assessments – must be taken if you are certifying in bi-lingual education

To add a teaching area (that wasn’t part of your program major) you must have sufficient credits in that area and take the **Content Specialty Test**.
Test booklets (containing sample tests) and information about signing up and taking the tests are available at the Office of Teacher Education/School based Support Services, Russell Hall 400

**Additional requirements for Certification:**

**Fingerprinting:** You must obtain fingerprint clearance from the New York State Department of Education. Fingerprinting packets are available at the Office of Teacher Education/School-Based Support Services, Russell Hall 400

**Two additional courses** (not for credit) for two clock hours each:

a. **Detection of Child Abuse and Maltreatment**
   This course is offered once a year at Teachers College, by the Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation (CEO&I). Cost is $60 and requires advance registration. Registration is available at the CEO&I office in 107 Main Hall, and on their website, [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi), under Courses, then Teaching in Practice. Their phone number is (212) 678-3987. The workshop is also available for academic credit through Department of Counseling & Clinical Psychology, with additional requirements (contact Professor Lapidus @ 212.678.3261).

   *This course is offered on-line by the following organizations:*

   - NY State Nurses Association - Cost is $20.
   - Nursing Spectrum, Division of Continuing Education – Cost is $20
     [http://nsweb.nursingspectrum.com/ce/m12a.htm](http://nsweb.nursingspectrum.com/ce/m12a.htm)

   *For a complete list of providers who offer the course, go to [http://www.op.nysed.gov/caproviders.htm](http://www.op.nysed.gov/caproviders.htm)*

b. **School Violence Prevention**
   This course is offered twice a semester at Teachers College, by the Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation (CEO&I). Cost is $50 and requires advance registration. Registration is available at the CEO&I office in 107 Main Hall, and on their website, [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi). Their phone number is (212) 678-3987. The course can also be taken for credit.

   *For a complete list of course providers, go to [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/save.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/save.htm)*