

Private Academic Certification for Licensed Private Academic Schools

1. Is private academic certification required?

Educators in a licensed private academic school are required to be certified in the subject area they are teaching. A private academic certificate is required if they do not hold the appropriate public school certificate.

2. How do I qualify for private academic certification?

- Be of good moral character
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a United States citizen or a legal permanent resident holding a valid green card
- Meet the [educational requirements](#) for the certificate that you are seeking
- Submit an online application through the [Teacher Information Management System \(TIMS\)](#)
- Submit a completed health certificate

3. Is a bachelor's degree required for private academic certification?

A bachelor's degree is required for all subject areas of certification except Assistant Nursery/Kindergarten (N/K). An associate's degree or completion of 60 college credits is required for the Assistant N/K certification.

4. What courses are accepted for private academic certification?

[The General Standards and Subject Specific Guidelines](#) for public certification are used as an example of the acceptable competencies for each comparable subject area. Coursework must cover a variety of competency areas.

5. Can CLEP tests be used toward the content area credits?

A maximum of 3 credits based on CLEP tests can be accepted toward the content credits.

6. If I don't meet the requirements, can I be issued a temporary private academic certificate?

Yes, a one year temporary certificate can be issued if you hold a bachelor's degree and have completed 6 credits in the content area requested.

7. How do I apply for the temporary private academic certificate?

An application must be submitted through [TIMS](#) and include a request from the prospective employer written on school letterhead and signed by the school's PDE approved education director.

8. Can a temporary private academic certificate be re-issued?

A temporary certificate can be reissued if the applicant completes six of the required credits toward full certification. If the temporary certificate expires before the six credits are completed, a new temporary certificate cannot be issued until the credit requirement is met.

9. Do I need to submit separate applications to be certified in more than one subject area?

Yes. A separate TIMS application must be submitted for each subject area that you are requesting.

10. What documents do I need to submit to complete my application?

Always refer to your TIMS application coversheet and only send the required documents listed.

NOTE: If your coversheet only lists "Other", you are not required to submit any documentation. Please do not mail in the coversheet by itself as it is not needed.

11. Do I need to submit clearance documents to PDE?

No. Only submit clearance documents to PDE if you answered "yes" to any of the background questions on your application. Check your TIMS coversheet for a list of required documents.

12. Should my college send transcripts directly to PDE?

No. In order to avoid misrouting transcripts within PDE, you must mail all official college sealed transcripts with your TIMS application coversheet.

13. How do I check the status of my application?

Access your TIMS dashboard and look to the left side of your screen under "Application(s) in Process". Your status will be in the third column. You may also check the status of your application on the public website at www.teachercertification.pa.gov.

14. Once my application has been approved, will PDE mail my certificate?

No. Paper certificates are no longer printed and mailed. You must access your TIMS dashboard to print an unofficial copy. Certification can only be officially verified through TIMS or the public website at www.teachercertification.pa.gov.

15. If I am already certified, is a health certificate required?

If you hold a public certificate issued before 6/2013 or a previous private academic certificate, you have already met this requirement and the health certificate is not required a second time. The approved health certificate that prints out with your TIMS application cover sheet must be completed. Substitute health assessments are not acceptable.

16. If I am not a United States citizen, can I obtain private academic certification?

Yes. You must submit a copy of your valid permanent resident visa (green card) with your TIMS application.

17. If I completed my degree outside of the United States, what do I need to submit?

You must obtain a Foreign Evaluation Report of your foreign transcripts from a private agency listed on the [NACES](#) website. This evaluation must show US equivalent of all foreign degrees plus a course-by-course evaluation showing semester hour college credits. You must submit the original report or a notarized photocopy for the certification application.

18. How long is my private academic certificate valid?

A private academic certificate is valid for 99 years.

19. Is private academic certification required to teach in a non-public/non-licensed private school?

No. However, the nonpublic/non-licensed school may choose to require certification.

20. If I hold private academic certification, am I obligated to meet Act 48 requirements?

The law does not mandate Act 48 requirements be met to maintain an active private academic certificate.

21. If I hold an inactive public school certification, can I teach in a licensed private academic school?

Yes, but only in a licensed private academic school that does not require public certification. Private schools that also have Approved Private School status or Pre-K-Counts approval require an active public certificate.

22. Who should I contact if I have questions regarding this process?

If you have questions regarding the Private Academic certification process, contact the [Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality](#), Division of Certification Services.