

EVALUATION OF CREDENTIALS FOR INDIVIDUALS PREPARED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

CSPG No. 5 outlines the requirements for candidates who are not United States citizens and/or were educated outside of the United States. This document contains the following sections:

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General Policies

All applicants for Pennsylvania (PA) certification must meet the academic and testing standards for the certificates sought, regardless of where the applicant was born and/or educated. In addition, candidates who are not United States citizens and/or were educated outside of the United States must meet all eligibility requirements in order to qualify for PA certification.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Foreign Credentials

All foreign transcripts must be evaluated by a professional credentials evaluation agency accredited by the National Association of Credentials Evaluation Services (NACES), or a Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) approved provider. The credentialing agency must provide a report that includes:

- An English translation and credit/degree evaluation of all foreign credentials
- The U.S. equivalent of all earned degrees
- An overall Grade Point Average (GPA)
- A course by course evaluation showing the U.S. equivalency in terms of semester hour college credit and the level of the coursework
- Verification that the candidate holds the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree earned at a nationally-accredited college or university

The foreign credential report must be submitted with either the original foreign credentials, or photocopies of the original documents. Other credentials, such as

diplomas and certificates, must also be submitted with an official English translation. Please refer to [Foreign Credentials](#), on the PDE website at for further information.

2. Citizenship

Candidates who are not citizens of the United States, and intend to submit an application for PA certification, must:

- Hold a valid immigrant visa at the time of application
- File a “Declaration of Intent to Become a Citizen of the United States” verifying the candidate intends to become a U.S. citizen

Exception: Candidates who are applying for a foreign language certificate area (i.e. French, Spanish, German, etc.) are not required to hold a valid immigrant visa and are not required to be United States citizens in order to gain or retain certification in those areas.

Therefore, candidates applying for foreign language certification do not need to submit an immigrant visa or a “Declaration of Intent to Become a Citizen of the United States” form. The English certificate area is not a foreign language area.

3. Resident Alien Card

Candidates who are not citizens of the United States must submit a photocopy of the front and back of his or her valid immigrant visa, which grants the holder permission to reside and work permanently in the United States.

4. English Oral Proficiency Test

Candidates whose official/native language is not English, or who were educated solely outside of the United States, must demonstrate proficiency in speaking the English language by obtaining satisfactory scores on the [ACTFL English Oral Proficiency Test](#).

Candidates are exempt from taking the English Oral Proficiency Test in the following circumstances:

- The candidate’s official/native language is English
- The candidate has earned a degree from a United States college or university (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate)

Special Considerations

1. Native Speakers of Foreign Languages

Candidates who are native speakers of foreign language certification areas are not automatically eligible for these areas of certification. These candidates must meet the established [General Standards and Program Guidelines for Foreign Language](#).

2. Emergency Permits for applicants prepared outside the United States

A school district may apply for an Emergency Permit for an individual who was educated outside the United States when no fully qualified and properly certified applicant is available, provided the educator is a graduate of a 4 year college or university and meets the citizenship requirements as set forth above.

A school district may apply for an Emergency Permit on the behalf of a candidate prepared outside the United States who does not hold an immigrant visa or Green Card, if the District is applying on behalf of the educator for a:

- Type 08 (Exchange Teacher, Cultural Exchange, or Visiting Scholar)
- Type 01 or 04 (Foreign Language)

Note: It is the responsibility of the employing public school entity to ensure that educators who are employed on Emergency Permits as Exchange and Foreign Language teachers are legally authorized to work in the United States.

References:

24 P.S. §12-1202; 22 Pa. Code §§49.63, 49.171

THIS REVISION SUPERSEDES ALL EARLIER CSPGS CARRYING THIS NUMBER AND/OR ADDRESSING THIS SUBJECT. PREVIOUS CSPG PRINTING DATES ON THIS SUBJECT: 1/8, 7/04

Summary of Changes

<i>Date of Revisions</i>	<i>Major Changes to CSPG 5</i>
7/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="488 359 1422 457">• Notarization of foreign documents (Declaration of Intent to Become a United States Citizen, Green Cards, I-551 stamps, visas, Certificates of U.S. Naturalization) is no longer required.<li data-bbox="488 464 1360 562">• Candidates whose native language is not English, or who were educated solely outside of the United States, will take the ACTFL English Oral Proficiency Test and not the SPEAK test.<li data-bbox="488 569 1406 667">• Candidates must hold a valid immigrant visa to be issued an Emergency Permit. Employment Authorization Cards are no longer accepted for certification purposes.