

Occupational Educator Licensure

About Occupational Licensure & Endorsements

Tennessee issues two types of licenses for teachers: academic teacher and occupational teacher. Academic licensure includes endorsements in academic content areas and special education (Mathematics 6-8, English 6-12, Business Education 6-12, Special Education Interventionist K-8, etc.), and occupational licensure includes endorsements in occupational content areas that are focused on preparing students in career and technical content areas (Health Science 6-12, Cosmetology 6-12, Distribution & Logistics 6-12, etc.).

There are two levels of teacher licensure, Practitioner 3-Year (initial-level) and Professional 6-Year. The requirements for occupational licensure, which are listed below, are outlined in the state board of education [Educator Licensure Rule 0520-02-03-.04](#).

A current list of active endorsements, delineated by academic and occupational licensure, is available [here](#). Please note that occupational endorsements may only be issued on an occupational license, and academic endorsements may only be issued on an academic license. Additionally, Career and Technical Education Academic endorsements (Agricultural Education 6-12, Business Education 6-12, Computer Science K-12, Family and Consumer Sciences 6-12, Marketing 6-12, etc.) are issued on an academic teaching license.

Occupational Licensure Pathways

Initial In-State Practitioner Occupational Teacher 3-Year License

- (1) Prospective educators seeking a **practitioner occupational teacher** license shall meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Hold a high school diploma or higher;
 - (b) Be enrolled in a State Board-approved educator preparation program with a job-embedded clinical practice;
 - (c) Be recommended by the approved educator preparation provider;
 - (d) Have a minimum of five (5) years of relevant work experience, completed within the last ten (10) years, in the area of endorsement or equivalent education attainment as defined by the Department; **and**
 - (e) Hold an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable.

Candidates will submit a CTE Request in [TNCompass](#), along with a completed [Occupational Experience and Qualification Form](#) and documentation of industry certification, for review and approval by the department prior to being recommended for licensure by the educator preparation provider where the candidate will be enrolled in an occupational preparation program.

Initial Out-of-State Practitioner Occupational Teacher 3-Year License

- (2) Prospective educators from a state other than Tennessee that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement and who are seeking a **practitioner occupational teacher** license shall meet requirements of one (1) of the following pathways:
- (a) Out-of-State Pathway 1. The out-of-state prospective educator:
1. Holds a high school diploma or higher;
 2. Has completed an educator preparation program approved by a state other than Tennessee;
 3. Is recommended by the approved educator preparation provider;
 4. Holds an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable; **and**
 5. Submits qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the [Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educators Policy](#).
- (b) Out-of-State Pathway 2. The out-of-state prospective educator:
1. Holds a high school diploma or higher;
 2. Has completed an educator preparation program approved by a state other than Tennessee;
 3. Holds a full and valid initial-level license from a state other than Tennessee that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement;
 4. Is recommended by the approved educator preparation provider; **and**
 5. Holds an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable.

Candidates will submit an Out-of-State Practitioner Teacher transaction in [TNCompass](#), along with a completed [Out-of-State Educator Preparation Verification Form](#), [Occupational Experience and Qualification Form](#), a copy of the initial-level out-of-state license (if applicable), and documentation of industry certification for review by the department. Official transcripts are also required. Those applying on the basis of program completion only (no initial-level license in another state) must provide qualifying assessment scores prior to initial licensure. Those applying with an initial-level license must provide qualifying assessment scores prior to renewal of the Practitioner 1st issuance license.

Professional 6-Year Out-of-State Occupational Teacher License

- (3) Prospective educators from a state other than Tennessee seeking a **professional occupational teacher** license shall meet the following requirements:
- (a) Out-of-State Pathway 3. The out-of-state prospective educator:
1. Hold a high school diploma or higher;
 2. Holds a full and valid professional-level occupational license from a state other than Tennessee that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement; **and**
 3. Holds an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable.

Candidates will submit an Out-of-State Professional Occupational Teacher transaction in [TNCompass](#), along with a copy of the professional-level out-of-state license (if applicable) and documentation of industry certification for review by the department. Official transcripts are also required.

Practitioner Occupational Teacher 1st Issuance Renewal

- (4) A practitioner occupational teacher license may be renewed once upon completion of an approved educator preparation program and submission of qualifying scores on all State Board-required assessments as defined in the [Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educators Policy](#) prior to the end of the validity period of the first (1st) issuance of the practitioner license.
- (5) If the requirements for practitioner license renewal are not met prior to the end of the validity period of the first (1st) issuance of the practitioner license, the license shall become inactive.

Practitioner Occupational Teacher 1st & 2nd Issuance Advancement

- (6) In order to advance from a practitioner occupational teacher license to a professional occupational teacher license, an educator shall meet one of the following sets of requirements:
 - (a) Option 1:
 - a. Complete three (3) years of [qualifying experience](#) as an educator as defined by the Department;
 - b. Complete a State Board-approved educator preparation program;
 - c. Earn thirty (30) [professional development points](#), a minimum of twenty (20) which shall come from new teacher training provided by the Department as indicated by SBE [Educator Licensure Policy 5.502](#);
 - d. Hold an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable; and
 - e. For educators that received the practitioner occupational teacher license on or after July 1, 2018, submit qualifying scores on all required assessments as defined in the [Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educators Policy](#).
 - (b) Option 2:
 1. Holds a full and valid professional-level occupational license from a state other than Tennessee that is a partner in the NASDTEC interstate agreement; and
 2. Holds an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable
- (7) If the requirements for licensure advancement are not met prior to the end of the validity period of the second (2nd) issuance of the practitioner occupational teacher license, the license shall become inactive.

Professional Occupational Teacher License Renewal

- (8) In order to renew the professional occupational teacher license educators must meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Earn sixty (60) [professional development points](#) as indicated by SBE [Educator Licensure Policy 5.502](#);
and
 - (b) Provide verification of an active industry certification for the area of endorsement as defined by the Department, if applicable.
- (9) If the educator has not met the requirements for renewal at the end of the validity period of the professional license, then the license shall become inactive.

Additional Occupational Endorsements

- (10) Teachers who hold an active professional occupational teacher license may add additional occupational endorsements through one (1) of the following pathways:
- (a) Hold an active industry certification, as determined by the Department, for the area of endorsement, if applicable; or
 - (b) If the endorsement area does not require a certification, then have a minimum of five (5) years of relevant work experience, completed within the last ten (10) years, in the area of endorsement or equivalent education attainment as defined by the Department.

Educators who hold an academic teaching license and are pursuing occupational licensure must meet the industry certification and work experience requirements of the area of endorsement sought, and must enroll in an occupational preparation program in order to be issued the occupational license (regardless of completion of an academic educator preparation program).

Occupational Endorsement Area Requirements

The following table outlines the requirements for approval to enroll in an occupational educator preparation program for initial licensure, as well as the industry certification requirements for those pursuing licensure through an out-of-state pathway. Please note that, at this time, Tennessee occupational licensed educators may submit the industry certifications used for initial licensure (provided they are valid and have not expired), for the purposes of satisfying the industry certification requirement for licensure renewal and advancement, even if the current certification requirements have changed.

Occupational Endorsement Area Requirements

Automotive 6-12 (770)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; b. 1 year of work experience, completed within the last 10 years and Associate degree in automotive technology; or c. Bachelor's degree in automotive technology. <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Auto body technician, automotive technician, mechanic, service technician.</p>
Industry Certification	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) A-4, A-5, A-6, and A-8; or G-1.
Aviation Ground School 6-12 (774)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in aviation/commercial or private pilot; or c. Bachelor's degree in aviation/commercial or private pilot . <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Aircraft flight instructor, pilot.</p>
Industry Certification	Federal Aviation Administration Ground Instructor Certificate or Private Pilot License.
Barbering 6-12 (780)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma and completion of a barbering instructor curriculum
Experience	5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years. Example Qualifying Experience: barber, cosmetologist.
Industry Certification	State Barbering Instructor License (from TN or another state)
Broadcasting 6-12 (710)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; b. 3 years of relevant work experience, completed in the last 10 years and an Associate degree in broadcasting/digital media; c. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed in the last 10 years and a Bachelor's degree in broadcasting/digital media; or d. Master's degree in broadcasting/digital media. <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Audio/video technology, audio/video/DVD networking, broadcaster with production experience, camera operators, electronic concept design and creation, electronic engineering, electronic recording, film and video editors, sound board networking, sound board operations, studio production manager.</p>
Industry Certification	N/A

Carpentry 6-12 (706)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an associate degree in building construction; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in building construction.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Carpenter, construction project manager, construction superintendent, foreman, general contractor, home repair technician, journeyman, mechanical maintenance technician.</p>
Industry Certification	U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, NOCTI assessment (Carpentry 5265), or state contractor license (from TN or another state).
Collision Repair 6-12 (771)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years, an Associate degree in collision repair/refinishing; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in collision repair/refinishing.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Auto body painter, auto body technician, automotive technician, mechanic.</p>
Industry Certification	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) B-2, B-3, and B-4; or any Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair (I-CAR).
Concrete/Masonry 6-12 (702)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years, and an Associate degree in building construction; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in building construction.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Cement masons, concrete finishers, concrete operations manager, concrete paving foreman.</p>
Industry Certification	U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, NOCTI assessment (Masonry 5933), or state contractor license (from TN or another state).
Cosmetology 6-12 (781)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma and completion of a cosmetology instructor curriculum
Experience	5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years. Example Qualifying Experience: Cosmetologist, barber.
Industry Certification	State Cosmetology Instructor license (from TN or another state)

Culinary Arts 6-12 (730)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 3 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years, and an Associate degree in culinary arts; or</p> <p>c. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and a Bachelor's degree in culinary arts.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Caterer, executive chef, head chef, pastry chef, personal chef, restaurant manager.</p>
Industry Certification	Certified Culinary Educator (CCE) Certification, National Registry of Food Safety Professionals , or Serve-Safe .
Digital Arts & Design 6-12 (711)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years, and an Associate degree in graphic design; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in graphic design.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Commercial artist, desktop publisher, digital imaging, digital printing, electronic publishing, graphic design, image conversion, page composition, photographer, press operations and finishing.</p>
Industry Certification	Adobe Certified Expert Certification , ADDA Certified Digital Designer , or NOCTI assessment (Advertising & Design 5261).
Drafting/CAD 6-12 (700)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in drafting; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in drafting.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Architect; individuals with experience in the following areas: manual drafting and computer aided design skills, orthographic projection, scale drawings, technical drawings, two- and three-dimensional drawings.</p>
Industry Certification	ADDA Certified Drafter or Autodesk .
Electrical 6-12 (701)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in building construction; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in building construction and industry certification.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Electrical engineering technicians, electrical engineers, electricians.</p>
Industry Certification	U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, NOCTI assessment (Electrical 5271), or state contractor license (from TN or another state).

Fire Safety 6-12 (751)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in fire science; or c. Bachelor's degree in fire science.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Firefighter</p>
Industry Certification	Fire Fighter Instructor 1
Health Informatics 6-12 (721)	
Minimum Education	Associate degree or above in endorsement area
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; or b. Bachelor's degree in health informatics.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Clinical analyst, data analyst, informatics specialist, medical and health services manager, medical biller, medical coder, pharmacy technician.</p>
Industry Certification	CPC-Certified Professional Coder , CCA-Certified Coding Associate , CCS- Certified Coding Specialist , RHIT- Registered Health Information Technician , RHIA-Registered Health Information Administrator , or MCT-Medical Coding Technician .
Health Science 6-12 (720)	
Minimum Education	Associate degree that is related to/led to the candidate's health care license, registration, or certification.
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and a Bachelor's degree that is related to/led to the candidate's health care license; or c. A master's degree that is related to/led to the candidate's health care license.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Athletic trainer, audiologist, chiropractor, clinical exercise physiologist*, clinical perfusionist, dental hygienist, dentist, diagnostic medical sonographer**, dietitian, EMT Paramedic***, medical laboratory technician, nuclear medicine technologist**, occupational therapist, occupational therapy assistant, optometrist, paramedic, pharmacist, physical therapist, physical therapist assistant, physician, physician's assistant, podiatrist, radiology technician, registered nurse, respiratory therapist, speech therapist, veterinarian.</p> <p>Example Non-Qualifying Experience: Certified dental assistant, medical assistant, nursing assistant, ophthalmic, technician, or personal trainer; advanced emergency medical technician, emergency medical responder, emergency medical technician***, licensed practical nurse, massage therapist, or phlebotomist.</p> <p>*<u>Clinical exercise physiologists</u> are not required to be licensed to practice in TN, so only those who have chosen to become certified are eligible for a Health Science endorsement. <i>American College of Sports Medicine, Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist credential</i> is required.</p> <p>**<u>Radiologic technologists</u>, <u>nuclear medicine technologists</u>, and <u>diagnostic medical sonographers</u> are not required to be licensed to practice in TN, but must have a degree in <i>radiologic technology</i> AND a national certification from the <i>American Registry of Radiologic Technologists</i> to practice and be eligible for a Health Science endorsement. Radiology and sonography certificates that are "add-ons" for other allied health professionals are not equivalent.</p> <p>***EMT/Advanced EMT experience does not qualify; however, EMT Paramedic (EMT-P) experience is eligible.</p>
Industry Certification	State board of health issued license/certification (from TN or another state); or a license, registration, or certification verified by a national license accreditation agency.

HVAC 6-12 (707)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>d. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>e. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in building construction; or</p> <p>f. Bachelor's degree in building construction.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: First-line supervisors of mechanics, HVAC technicians, installers, repairers.</p>
Industry Certification	U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, ESCO Group HVAC Excellence Certification (EPA, Employment Ready, Specialty, Professional Technician, Master Specialist, Certified Subject matter Expert, or Certified Master HVAC Educator), or any Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES) Certification.
Information Technology 6-12 (740)	
Minimum Education	Associate degree or above in endorsement area
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years; or</p> <p>b. Bachelor's degree in endorsement area.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Business analyst, business intelligence developer, cable technician, computer engineer, computer maintenance, computer networking, computer programmer, computer support specialist, computer system analysis, host web manager, information technology systems manager, IT project manager, network designer, quality assurance software developer, software architect, software developer, technology business analyst, telecommunication technician, web master, web page designer.</p>
Industry Certification	A+ , CISCO , CIW , or Network+ .
Legal and Protective Services 6-12 (750)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 3 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in criminal justice;</p> <p>c. 1 year or relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice; or</p> <p>d. Master's degree in criminal justice or juris doctorate.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Correctional officer, crime scene investigator, judge, lawyer, military police, police officer, parole officer, probation officer, sheriff, sheriff's deputy, state or federal bureau of investigation officer, wildlife officer.</p>
Industry Certification	NOCTI assessment (Criminal Justice 5269, or Protective Services 5916) or Peace Officer Standards & Training (POST) Commission.

Manufacturing 6-12 (760)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in manufacturing operations/technology; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in manufacturing operations/technology.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Computer aided drafting (CAD), electronic engineer, electronic semi-conductor processor, electronic technician, engineer, industrial maintenance, industrial production manager, machinist, numerical control machine tool programmer, plant manager.</p>
Industry Certification	National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) Certification or Siemens Mechatronic Systems Certification Program (SMSCP) Instructor Certification – Level 1
Plumbing 6-12 (703)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in building construction; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in building construction.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Pipefitter, plumber, steamfitter.</p>
Industry Certification	NOCTI assessment (Plumbing 5175), Tennessee Contractor's License , or U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship .
Programming 6-12 (742)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last ten 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in endorsement area; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in endorsement area.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Business analyst, business intelligence developer, computer programmer, IT project manager, quality assurance software developer, software architect, software developer, technology business analyst.</p>
Industry Certification	A+ , Network+ , CIW , or CISCO
Public Health 6-12 (722)	
Minimum Education	Bachelor's degree in Public Health or Public Health Administration
Experience	<p>5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Environmental engineer, environmental scientist, epidemiologist, health care administrator, health educator, health services manager, HIV/AIDS educator, midwife, public health nurse, quality investigator, refugee coordinator.</p>
Industry Certification	N/A

Supply Chain Management 6-12 (776)	
Minimum Education	High School Diploma
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 3 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in distribution and logistics; or</p> <p>c. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years, Bachelor's degree in distribution and logistics.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Buyer/inventory control specialist, distribution manager, engineer, fulfillment manager, logistician, logistics manager, operations analyst, supply chain analyst, transportation coordinator, warehouse manager.</p>
Industry Certification	N/A
Welding 6-12 (705)	
Minimum Education	High School diploma or above
Experience	<p>a. 5 years of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years;</p> <p>b. 1 year of relevant work experience, completed within the last 10 years and an Associate degree in welding/fabrication; or</p> <p>c. Bachelor's degree in welding/fabrication.</p> <p>Example Qualifying Experience: Welders; individuals with experience in blueprint reading, layout, and fabrication using oxy-fuel cutting SMAW, FCAW, GMAW, GTAW processes on various metals.</p>
Industry Certification	AWS Certification , U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, Certified Welding Educator Certification, or NOCTI assessment (Welding 5279).