Out-of-Country Applicants

General Procedures

To obtain an educator license in Tennessee, out-of-country candidates must create an account through TNCompass.org. Self-registration requires a social security number (SSN), but those who do not yet have an SSN can avoid this requirement by contacting educator.licensure@tn.gov and requesting that an account be created on their behalf. Prior to beginning work, the employing LEA must verify work authorization.

Candidates must have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited postsecondary institution to be able to serve as teacher of record, and all out-of-country degrees must be evaluated by an approved evaluation service. The service must email the report to educator.licensure@tn.gov (preferred) or mail it to the address at the bottom of this document. Tennessee recognizes evaluation services approved by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services or Association of International Credential Evaluators.

Option 1: Licensure Based on Completion of Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

If the report shows that the candidate completed an educator preparation program that qualified them to teach in the country where the degree was obtained, they can become licensed in Tennessee by passing the necessary assessments. For processing purposes, it is helpful if the evaluation agency includes comments in the report directly stating that the completed program qualified the educator to teach in a K-12 academic setting. Once EPP completion has been verified, the candidate can obtain a Practitioner license in Tennessee by passing either the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching or Pearson edTPA, as well as the Praxis content assessment(s) that align with the endorsement area of the completed program. Certain endorsement areas also require completion of TN Literacy Success Act requirements, which involves completing a free online training or assessment.

Option 2: Job-Embedded Licensure

If the report does not show completion of a qualifying EPP, the candidate has the option of enrolling in a job-embedded educator preparation program, which allows them to obtain a practitioner license and start teaching while completing program requirements. A list of Tennessee State Board of Education-approved EPPs can be found here. The EPP will apply for the job-embedded practitioner license once initial licensure requirements are met, including passing scores on relevant content assessments or a qualifying degree in the desired endorsement area.

Option 3: Academic Permit

Out-of-country educators with a minimum of a bachelor's degree can also receive academic permits. These are one-year emergency credentials that allow an unlicensed individual to teach for the remainder of the school year in non-special education settings. To receive an academic permit, the individual must receive a job offer from a TN school district, and then the district will apply for the academic permit on the candidate's behalf in TNCompass.