



How to Become a Teacher as a Career Changer or Recent College Graduate

Deciding to become a teacher and choosing the best certification pathway can be a daunting task. This document is a guide through the process; read it carefully as you consider a career in teaching.

It is important to note that this document only applies to those who have at least a bachelor's degree. If you do not, there are many education options in Maryland from which to choose, including a traditional four- year college or university program. You will find a list of those programs on our [Maryland Approved Programs web page](#).

In addition, there are Associates of Arts in Teaching degree programs at Maryland's two-year community colleges designed to link up with four-year programs to provide opportunities to achieve teacher certification. For assistance in locating the right one for you, call the Maryland Association of Community Colleges at 410-974-8117.

If you already have a bachelor's degree, there are five ways to proceed, but #1-3 may be of particular interest to career changers who live in Maryland and will be discussed here. If you are interested in more information about either 4 or 5 below, please visit the Certification website at www.mdcert.org and choose "How to Apply for Maryland Certification" or call the Certification Assistance Line at 1-866-772-8922. The pathways pertaining to a career changer or individual who has recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in a field outside of education are:

- 1. Maryland Approved Programs (traditional college/university-based programs)**
- 2. Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs**
- 3. Transcript Analysis**
4. Out-of-state preparation programs
5. Out-of-state or out-of-country experienced professional

Maryland Approved Program - Traditional College/ University-based Teacher Education Programs

In Maryland, one way to acquire certification if you already have an undergraduate degree is to obtain a master's degree, but be sure you select one that offers certification, such as a Master's of Arts in Teaching (MAT) or a Master's Certification program. You might start your search for the perfect fit by reviewing the list of Maryland Approved Programs (MAP) at the following link: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Program-Approval/Maryland-ApprovedPrograms.aspx>. You will note that this is the same list as provided earlier for those seeking their initial bachelor's degree in an educator preparation program. You are looking for graduate programs.

There will be telephone numbers and links for you to access the point of contact of the program to see if a particular program interests you. These programs are considered traditional routes to teacher education, may be full time, or may be offered on a part-time basis, and are available all over the state. It is also quite possible to enroll in a post-baccalaureate program that will result in certification but that does not require that you complete the master's degree. The directory will list each of these.

To enroll in a post-baccalaureate program that leads to certification with or without a master's degree, (not a MAAPP but option #1), you will need to have a bachelor's degree and meet the college or university entrance requirements in terms of content and grade point average, and complete any required testing. If you are at the point of considering such a move, you will want to contact the institution directly and discuss your various options. Remember, the MAP link is available in two places in this document. Once you complete such a program, you are "certification eligible" and may search for your own employment as a teacher anywhere in the state and, in fact, beyond Maryland.

Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs

However, if a candidate wishes to be a classroom teacher while earning certification through a program, then the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) option may be of interest. A listing of all MAAPPs can be found in the MAAPP Directory at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Program-Approval/MAAPP.aspx>

When you open the MAAPP Directory, you will find a listing of all of the MAAPPs currently implemented across the state. Some of these programs will encourage you to complete a master's degree as a part of the course of study. You will receive what is called the Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) once you have completed training and an internship, and then will be entitled to teach in your own classroom (with a mentor) as a certified teacher. You will be teaching – and getting paid as a teacher with full benefits – while you are completing the program. For the most part, the programs in partnership with a four-year college or university fall into this category with optional degree. Often the local school system (LSS) which sponsors your MAAPP covers much of the cost of the MAAPP itself, but you can expect to expend your own funds if you choose to continue with the master's degree. Programs that offer the master's degree as an option are always partnered with a four-year college or university.

You will see several programs in partnership with a four-year institution, a community college or a private provider such as Urban Teachers or Teach for America, or programs offered by school systems themselves. In all cases, the applicant – you – will receive the RTC, and will be eligible to teach within a

few months of being accepted into the program in schools in the local school system that is shown as the partner on the listing of programs.

A very important thing to note is that MAAPPs are very specific to LSSs. That is why the Directory is arranged by the names of the counties in which the school systems are operated. When you choose a program as appearing to suit your talents and needs, please understand that you are choosing to become a teacher in that school system for the entire duration of the residency. For example, you could not decide that you would like to work with The New Teacher Project in acquiring your certification unless you enroll in the one specific program offered in the state in Baltimore City Public School System. You could not be associated with The New Teacher Project in Montgomery County Public Schools because there is no partnering relationship between Montgomery County and The New Teacher Project.

Obtaining the Standard Professional Certificate (SPC) at the end of the period of the RTC (two years at most) means your certificate is almost always recognized in other states and certainly other LSSs in Maryland. The RTC is not portable among Maryland LSS nor does it transfer to other states. Once you embark on a MAAPP, you will have to complete the program and earn the SPC in order to continue teaching as a certificated professional.

Transcript Analysis

If your degree(s) are in the content area or a closely-related field to the area for which you are seeking certification, you may want to send your transcripts into MSDE and have the certification specialists review those transcripts. The following information concerning transcript analysis may also be found on the MSDE website at

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/apply/Career-Changer.aspx>.

To request a transcript analysis, please submit the following:

- Qualifying scores on the [Basic Skills](#) and [Praxis Subject Assessment](#) (content only) or [ACTFL](#) assessments. Additional tests may be required for full professional certification but are not needed for an initial evaluation. **Note: you must submit test scores in order to qualify for transcript analysis. Individuals applying for an evaluation in the area of Elementary Education do NOT need to present the Praxis content assessment to request a transcript analysis.**
- Official transcript(s), which must show the degree and date of conferral, if applicable. Student copies in an unopened mailer are also acceptable.
- An [initial application](#) for certification
- A cover letter with your name, mailing address, last 4 digits of your social security number, date of birth, personal email address, and the area of certification you are seeking.

Mail your complete packet to the following address:

Maryland State Department of Education
Certification Branch
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Documents may also be sent electronically to certdocuments.msde@maryland.gov.

Transcripts must come to this address directly from the Institute of Higher Education from which you received your degree(s) or an e-transcript service. Unofficial transcripts will not be accepted.

The Certification Branch will determine your eligibility and notify you via email.

More about Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs

If you are more inclined toward the MAAPP (alternative route), there are three ways to qualify for entry. First, you might begin by looking at your own undergraduate transcript because these programs require a bachelor's degree, as you now know. In May 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education voted to accept a "test-in only" process for candidates seeking to enter a MAAPP. That means that, if you have at least a bachelor's degree with an overall GPA of 2.75, and meet qualifying scores on both a Basic Skills test such as Praxis Core (see below) and a state-approved content test such as Praxis II Content or ACTFL (for foreign languages), you qualify to apply for a MAAPP regardless of your undergraduate major course of study. It should be noted that not all MAAPPs take advantage of the test-in route, and many still require a major or credit hours approaching 30 in a content area for consideration.

Perhaps you can't quite get the 2.75 GPA from the overall transcript, but if you look at your transcript for the **major that is clearly imprinted on your transcript**, and that major is in the subject area for which you would like to be certified to teach, you have the second means of entry into a program. Finally, although the subject area in which you wish to be certified to teach is NOT the imprinted declared major, but you discern 30 hours or so in that area of study or areas related to that area, AND you do have a 2.75 in that concentration by itself, you may also be eligible once you pass the basic skills and content tests. Regulations allow some flexibility here, but ultimately, it is the purview of the individual MAAPPs to determine who will be admitted to programs.

To reiterate, there are three options for meeting the requirements for entry into a MAAPP:

Option 1: The candidate meets the qualifying scores on a state-approved basic skills test AND a content test as a legitimate means of establishing content competency. If a program chooses to use the "test-in" option for a candidate(s) admission, evidence of a major or core area of study is no longer required for admission, although an overall GPA of 2.75 is still required.

Option 2: The candidate provides a transcript on which a clear, printed, declaration of a major matching the area for which the individual seeks certification is found, along with a GPA of 2.75 in that identified major area of coursework.

Option 3: The candidate's transcript demonstrates a 30-hour core area of study matching the area for which the individual seeks certification regardless of the stated major, again with a 2.75 GPA in that content area required.

If the MAAPP continues to look like your best approach, your best next step is to contact the program director of the partnership in which you are interested. The names and contact information for program directors is found at the bottom of the pages of the program descriptions found in the Directory. **While MSDE staff is always happy to talk with prospective teachers, the most definitive information about what subject areas are being recruited or about approaching deadlines will come directly from those directors at the local level.** Both the MAP and the MAAPP require internships – supervised experiences in the classrooms with kids – prior to entering the profession. All programs will offer mentoring and support.

Maybe analyzing your own transcript is not your strong suit. That is okay, too, because a potential program provider will most certainly assist you in this. The “do-it-yourself” approach just gives you a chance to make an educated guess as to where you may stand when you meet with your program provider.

Basic Skills Testing

One thing is certain for all programs – MAP or MAAPP - **as stated above, you will need to demonstrate basic skills competencies through the Praxis Core, SAT, GRE, or ACT.** These tests measure competency in mathematics, reading and writing. There are no exceptions. If you are serious about teaching, begin by meeting Maryland’s basic skills requirement. No matter what route you take, this testing is required.

Basic skills testing information can be found at:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/testing_info/praxis1.aspx

Content Testing

You will also need to achieve a qualifying score on a state-identified content test in the content area for which you are seeking certification. You will need to successfully complete a content test prior to entering a MAAPP program, in most cases. The regulation supporting this program insists on completion of the content test prior to employment as a Resident Teacher following the training and internship; however, most programs require that it be completed prior to entry since, in many cases, programs are subsidized and the managers want to be sure their recruits will be eligible to move into the residency. Again, read carefully. There are both Praxis tests and ACTFL tests listed. ACTFL supplies content testing for foreign language certification.

Subject matter testing information can be found at:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/testing_info/praxis2.aspx

and at:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/testing_info/actfl.aspx

Conclusion

For any questions, contact Pamela L. Darien, Administrative Specialist, Maryland State Department of Education Division of Educator Certification and Program Approval at 410-767-0388 or Pamela.Darien@maryland.gov. She will connect you with the proper person to assist you.