

Alternate Routes to Licensure

An individual may be eligible for an educator license even if an approved traditional educator preparation program was not completed. An alternate route to licensure is any route to licensure that is not an approved teacher preparation program or via reciprocity. There are multiple alternate routes to licensure in Virginia. An individual may have allowable deficiencies and must be employed in a public school division or accredited nonpublic school to be issued a provisional license through an alternate route. See the VDOE guidance [here](#).

Thinking of a career in education? The Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program provides an option for career professionals to transition into teaching. The program recognizes the life experiences of qualified individuals and provides participants with skills needed to pursue a teaching career in Virginia.

Individuals interested in enrolling must apply for admission directly to a certified [program provider](#), listed below. Applicants must make sure they have met the [prerequisites](#) and have submitted their applications and all required documents directly to a career switcher program provider.

Prerequisite Requirements

An individual seeking a provisional license through the career switcher program must meet the following prerequisite requirements:

- Complete the application process to one of the career switcher certified program providers listed below
- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university
- The completion of requirements for an endorsement in a teaching area or the equivalent through verifiable experience or academic study

- At least three years of full-time work experience or its equivalent
- Qualifying scores on the professional teacher's assessments prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education (see [Professional Teacher's Assessment Requirements](#))

Career Switcher Program Overview

Each program's course of study differs from one to another depending on the institution, but each career switcher must complete a level I, II, and III (if required). Below is an overview of the general Career Switcher Program. More detailed information can be found on the program providers' pages.

Level I

Intensive Level I preparation includes a minimum of 180 clock hours of instruction, including field experience. This phase includes, but is not limited to:

- Curriculum and instruction (including instructional technology)
- Reading in the content area
- Language acquisition
- Differentiation of instruction
- Classroom/behavior management
- Instructional design based on assessment data, human growth and development, and other specific course work related to the Virginia Standards of Learning

Level I requirements must be completed during a single year and may be offered through a variety of delivery systems, including distance learning programs. After completing Level I preparation, candidates may be awarded a one-year Provisional Career Switcher License (July 1 to June 30 of given year). The Provisional Career Switcher License is active for the first year after the completion of the program requirements. During this time, candidates are expected to seek and obtain employment in a Virginia public school division or accredited nonpublic school in Virginia. If a candidate is unsuccessful in finding employment during the first year of the life of the Provisional Career

Switcher License, the license may be extended annually for up to two additional years upon the recommendation of an employing school division or accredited nonpublic school. A Provisional Career Switcher license is limited to a total of three years.

Level II

Level II preparation begins during the first year of employment. During this year, a minimum of five seminars will be provided by the career switcher program provider to expand the intensive preparation requirements associated with instructional categories and topics. Seminars include a minimum of 20 instructional hours. A variety of instructional delivery techniques will be utilized to implement the seminars.

During Level II, a trained mentor must be assigned to assist the candidate during the first year of employment.

Level III (if required)

An additional year of preparation, if required, will be conducted by the Virginia employing educational agency to address needed areas of improvement identified in the candidate's professional improvement plan. During Level III, the employing educational agency may request a one-year extension of the Provisional Career Switcher License.

Recommendation for a Ten-Year Renewable License

The holder of a Provisional Career Switcher License will be eligible to apply for a ten-year renewable license after the completion of the following:

- Successful completion of Levels I, II, and III (if required) of the Career Switcher Alternative Route To Licensure Program;
- Submission of a recommendation from the Virginia employing educational agency; and

- Recommendation of the administrator of the career switcher program.

Program Providers

Career switcher program providers are responsible for recruiting, screening, and selecting applicants. Providers must document that those who are accepted into their career switcher programs meet all Board of Education requirements.

The following are certified career switcher program providers in Virginia. Contact a program provider directly to inquire about the application process.

- [Old Dominion University](#)
 - Offers endorsements in preK-12, secondary, middle, and elementary education
 - Locations: Norfolk, Virtual
 - Phone: 757-683-5692
- [Regent University](#)
 - Offers endorsements in preK-12, secondary, middle, and elementary education
 - Location: Virginia Beach, Online Program with optional M.Ed.
 - Phone: 757-352-4479
- [Shenandoah University](#)
 - Offers endorsements in preK-12, secondary, and middle education
 - Locations: Winchester, Leesburg, Fredericksburg
 - Phone: 540-535-3552
- [Virginia Commonwealth University \(Pathways to Teaching\)](#)
 - Primarily offers endorsements in secondary education, with three endorsements in preK-12 education
 - Location: Richmond, Virtual
 - Phone: 804-828-7793
- [Virginia Community College System \(Educate Virginia\)](#)
 - Offers endorsements in preK-12, secondary, and middle education
 - Locations:

- Blue Ridge Community College
- Central Virginia Community College
- J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
- John Tyler Community College
- Northern Virginia Community College
- Southwest Virginia Community College
- Tidewater Community College
- Virginia Western Community College
- Phone: 804-523-5671

Programs are reviewed by the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Licensure and School Leadership and certified by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure programs align with the [Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia](#). Programs are reviewed and recertified every seven years in accordance with the [Recertification Guidance Document for Virginia Career Switcher Programs](#).

For more information about career switcher programs or becoming licensed to teach in Virginia, please contact licensure@doe.virginia.gov.

JMU & Laurel Ridge CC Cohort

The ELED BIS program addresses teacher shortage in the Commonwealth by supporting a teacher licensure pathway for current Instructional Assistants (IA's) working in K-6 schools.

Phase 1: support IA's who already have an AA degree in the completion of their BIS (Bachelor of Individualized Studies) with a concentration in Elementary Education.

Phase 2: support IA's in earning their Associate's at LFCC and later transferring to JMU to complete their BIS (Bachelor of Individualized Studies) with a concentration in Elementary Education.