

# Becoming a Classroom Teacher in Texas



For information and the steps to becoming a classroom teacher in Texas, visit the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website at

[https://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Educators/Certification/Initial\\_Certification/Becoming\\_a\\_Classroom\\_Teacher\\_in\\_Texas](https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Initial_Certification/Becoming_a_Classroom_Teacher_in_Texas).

In general, there are five basic requirements for someone new to the field of education to become a certified teacher. These requirements are not necessarily completed in sequence and it is recommended that you discuss your plans to become a teacher with an accredited Educator Preparation Program early in the process. The University of Houston-Clear Lake is an accredited Educator Preparation Program through TEA and thus can recommend an individual for a Texas educator certificate.

## The five basic requirements are:

1. Obtain a Bachelor's Degree
2. Complete an accredited Educator Preparation Program
3. Pass the appropriate state Certification Exam(s)
4. Submit a State Application
5. Complete Fingerprinting

## Further details on each requirement:

1. **Bachelor's Degree** - You must earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. The only exemption from the degree requirement is for individuals seeking Career and Technical Education certification to teach certain courses.
  - a. The Texas Administrative Code requires that candidates for an undergraduate university program, alternative program, or post baccalaureate program have a degree from a university that is accredited by a regional accrediting agency, as recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Please review the information on the THECB website for current recognized accrediting agencies at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/ProgramInventory/ProgSearchForm.cfm>
  - b. See the U.S. Department of Education Database for Accredited Colleges and Universities at [https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg4.html](https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg4.html).
2. **Educator Preparation Program** - You must complete educator preparation through an Approved Educator Preparation Program. These programs are offered through colleges, universities, school districts, regional service centers, community colleges, and other entities. Undergraduates typically enroll in an approved program at the college or university they are

attending. Postbaccalaureate and Alternative Certification Programs, which may or may not be associated with a university or college, have been established and approved for those who already hold a bachelor's degree.

3. **Certification Exam(s)** - You must pass the appropriate TEA-developed teacher certification exam(s) for the subject and grade level you wish to teach. Your Educator Preparation Program will help you determine the appropriate certification exam(s). You will need authorization from your program prior to test registration.
4. **State Application** – To obtain a standard certificate after passing the appropriate exam(s) and completing all program requirements, you must complete the online application process at the TEA website. You will receive instructions from your Educator Preparation Program on how to complete this process. Important items in the application process include fingerprinting and a background investigation. Applying for the certificate costs \$78.00.
5. **Fingerprinting** – All first-time applicants for an initial credential must be fingerprinted as part of a national criminal background check. A \$40.25 background check fee will be charged by TEA and a \$49.95 fingerprinting fee will be charged by Identigo/MorphoTrust.

For information about becoming a certified Texas Educator through the University of Houston-Clear Lake's university-based program or alternative certification program, please visit the College of Education website at <https://www.uhcl.edu/education/> and the UHCL undergraduate and graduate catalogs at <https://www.uhcl.edu/academics/resources/catalog/>. You will find a wealth of information concerning the various programs, options and certifications offered by UHCL. You will also want to schedule an appointment with a College of Education academic advisor by calling 281-283-3600.

## Additional Questions?

Contact a certification specialist at the TEA website: <https://helpdesk.tea.texas.gov/hc/en-us>

