Illinois State Board of Education

# Individualized Pathways to Licensure:

## Resources and Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

October 2021

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## Introduction

To widen the pipeline into the teaching profession in Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) believes it is necessary to examine all possible entry points for prospective educators. The most common path is for college students to enroll in and complete coursework as part of an educator preparation program, but consideration must be given to other acceptable accomplishments and experiences that can be used in place of some required coursework. For that reason, ISBE is promoting the use of individualized pathways to provide prospective Illinois teachers with ways to supplement coursework with credit for prior skills and knowledge.

The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards provide a roadmap for what Illinois teachers need to know to be ready to teach students on Day 1 in the classroom. Coupled with content-specific standards, these standards should be used as a guide to help educator preparation provider (EPP) staff determine what experiences, certifications, or other evidence of knowledge are given consideration along with coursework. Standards can be met in many ways, and ISBE encourages EPPs to adjust coursework requirements on an individualized basis according to prospective educators' knowledge and experiences that provide evidence that specific preparation program standards have been met. Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) are a promising evaluation tool to determine if a prospective educator possesses particular knowledge sets. This document is intended to serve as a resource to assist EPPs in making decisions to implement or expand the use of PLAs in educator preparation programs.

PLAs are evaluations and assessments of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. They are used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. While the concept of credit-for-experience is not new, PLAs have gained recognition in recent years due to the rising costs of higher education and the expansion of non-traditional training programs. Thousands of accredited U.S. colleges, including institutions of higher education in Illinois, now recognize and grant credit for PLAs. Most commonly, PLAs evaluate the knowledge a student has gained in high school, careers, employer training programs, military service, independent study, or community service.

An institution of higher education can shorten the time necessary to license candidates by applying PLAs in an educator preparation program. PLAs can lower the cost of an education for the candidate and even increase persistence in the program since prior learning assessments are generally far less expensive for a student than college tuition. Institutions of higher education can market their individualized pathway approach to attract new candidates and even specifically target prospective educators who have accumulated work experience or content/pedagogical knowledge in areas of educator preparation.

This document outlines multiple types of experience and knowledge that Illinois educator preparation programs may consider evaluating through PLAs. Each section includes examples of competencies that can be, or are already being, measured through PLAs and considerations for both educator preparation programs and ISBE to keep in mind as this work continues. The document concludes with information about filing individualized pathways with ISBE and next steps that should be taken by educator preparation providers. ISBE intends for this resource to be used by School of Education deans, educator preparation program administrators,

and licensure officers to determine what individualized pathways may exist for current and prospective educators (preparation candidates) within their programs.

You may view additional details about current licensure flexibilities here.

## Assessment for Content Knowledge

Perhaps the most valid and reliable ways to measure specific knowledge are through an exam. In Illinois, tests have historically been used to measure preparation candidates' content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Content tests still are used today. The state's prior pedagogical knowledge test, the Assessment of Professional Teaching, has been retired and replaced with the edTPA, which requires prospective teachers to provide evidence of effective teaching through a portfolio assessment.

A number of assessments currently exist to measure competency in specific content areas. These assessments are currently utilized by numerous colleges and universities to award credit in place of coursework.

## Examples of Content Knowledge Assessments

Below are examples of the most common assessments of prior knowledge in higher education.

**College-Level Exam Program**

The College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) has been operating for over 50 years, is accepted by 2,900 colleges and universities, and is administered in more than 2,000 test centers. The program offers 34 examinations to assist students in demonstrating mastery of college-level material and help them earn college credit by meeting a qualifying score. The format of exams is generally multiple choice, but some may include essays or listening sections, such as in world language exams. Exams are offered in a variety of subjects, including composition, literature, world languages, social sciences, science, mathematics, and business.

**Advanced Placement Exams**

Advanced Placement (AP) exams are standardized exams designed to measure how well students have mastered content and skills. High school students who take and pass AP exams can apply those exams to coursework to waive required subject matter courses. Most colleges recognize that AP scores demonstrate content knowledge and could be used in the place of courses required for a major. AP exams are offered in the arts, English, history and social sciences, math and computer science, sciences, and world languages.

**International Baccalaureate Programs**
International Baccalaureate programs are offered to students from ages 3-19 years old. There are four distinct programs: primary years, middle years, diploma, and career related. Over the course of the two-year IB Diploma program, students study six subjects, complete an extended essay, follow a theory of knowledge course, and participate in creativity, activity, and service.

**DANTES Subject Standardized Tests**
DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) are credit-by-examination tests originated by the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) program. The difference between CLEP exams and DSST exams is that CLEP exams take 90 minutes versus DSST exams, which take two hours. Additionally, while CLEP exam creditis accepted at more than 2,900 schools, DSST exams are currently accepted at approximately 1,900 schools. Subjects offered are similar to CLEP subjects, such as business, composition/literature, foreign languages, history/social sciences, science, and mathematics.

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

Institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Illinois offer a variety of acceptability for the CLEP, AP, IB programs, and DSST prior learning assessments, and these assessments could be applicable to content knowledge required for educator preparation. Colleges in Illinois that accept passing scores on these assessments include, but are not limited to, North Central College, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, National Louis University, Illinois State University, Roosevelt University, and Wheaton College. Below are examples of ways these colleges, as well as others, are utilizing these tests to award credit for prior content knowledge.

Colleges and universities currently award up to 28 credit hours for CLEP credit.
Some IHEs award CLEP credit with required scores in a variety of subjects from 3-8semester hours per subject level.

AP credit is granted to the appropriate department for exams passed with a score of 4 or above. The exams must be taken prior to attending college and are worth four credithours unless otherwise noted.

College credit is granted for scores of 5, 6, or 7 in high-level International Baccalaureate subjects. Four hours of college credit is awarded unless otherwise noted.

Some IHEs award college credit for scores of 3 or better in all AP exams, ranging from 3-10 semester hours per subject.

AP credit is granted to the appropriate department for exams passed with a score of 4 or above. The exams must be taken prior to attending college and are worth four credithours unless otherwise noted.

College credit is granted for scores of 5, 6, or 7 in high-level International Baccalaureate subjects. Four hours of college credit is awarded unless otherwise noted.

Some IHEs award college credit for scores of 3 or better in all AP exams, ranging from 3-10 semester hours per subject.

## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

If an institution requires that a certain number of residency hours must be completed atthe institution for degree completion, decisions about acceptance of PLAs in lieu of those hours should be verified in conjunction with IHE administration to be sure that degree requirements are fulfilled as written.

Tests of prior learning may be particularly useful in licensure-only or post-baccalaureate programs that are not tied to a degree, since no credit-hour threshold for a degree will need to be met.

Educator preparation programs may wish to set a credit threshold for acceptance ofcredit through PLAs.

ISBE and EPPs may wish to consider partnering to determine additional PLA tests that could be created through ISBE's testing vendor, Pearson.

## Prior Teaching Experience

Teaching preparation in traditional and alternative programs may be accomplished in a variety of ways, including pre-clinical, student teaching, and residency experiences. Such experiences are a vital component of any educator preparation program. While these experiences occur during a candidate's preparation program, there may be prospective educators who have already had the opportunity to teach in a variety of capacities.

The table below provides references to student teaching from Illinois Administrative Rule 25.25, 25.620, and 25.720.

### *25.25 Requirements for a Professional Educator License*

**(b) Each applicant for a professional educator license endorsed in a teaching field shall have completed student teaching in conformance with the requirements of Section 25.620, except in the following circumstances:**

1. Applicants awarded credit in student teaching on a transcript issued by a regionally accredited institution of higher education need not complete another student teaching experience.
2. One full year's teaching experience on a valid certificate or license in the public schools shall be accepted in lieu of student teaching.
3. Applicants holding a bachelor's degree and a valid, comparable certificate or license from another state or country do not need to provide evidence of student teaching.

**(c) For the purposes of this Part:**

1. a "valid, comparable certificate or license" means a current (not expired) certificate or license endorsed in the specific content area and grade levels for which Illinois licensure is sought that is equivalent to an Illinois professional educator license; and

2. "one full year's teaching experience" means the equivalent of two semesters of scheduled full-time teaching, which may, however, be accumulated in any combination of increments. That is, it need not be accumulated through full-time teaching.

**(d) Evidence of teaching experience, as may be required under this Part, may be satisfied in one of the following ways:**

1. For teachers employed in Illinois public schools, verification of the teacher's experience obtained from ELIS may be used.
2. The chief administrator or other designated official of the employing school district or nonpublic school (or other employing entity, if applicable to the holder of a professional educator license endorsed for early childhood; also see subsection (d)(4)) may submit a letter documenting the nature and duration of the applicant's teaching.
3. A letter signed by an official of the state education agency in another state may be substituted for an employer's letter when the latter cannot be secured.
4. Early childhood teaching experience shall be understood as contributing to the fulfillment of this requirement if gained in a position for which a professional educator license endorsed for early childhood was required pursuant to the rules of the State Board of Education at 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant).
5. Experience gained while teaching in a home school shall not be applicable to the fulfillment of this requirement.

### *25.620 Student Teaching*

**(d)** Student teaching must be done under the active supervision of a cooperating teacher who is licensed and qualified to teach in the area, has three years of teaching experience, has received a proficient or above performance rating in his or her most recent evaluation, and is directly engaged in teaching subject matter or conducting learning activities in the area of student teaching. ***The requirements of this subsection (d) do not apply in cases in which the student teacher:***

1. is serving on an educator license with stipulations endorsed for transitional bilingual educator; or
2. is working in a school that is not legally required to employ teachers with licensure and either has two years of teaching experience at that school or presents to the employer the evidence described in Section 25.25(b) documenting that he or she has two years of teaching experience in one or more other schools in which the chief administrator is required to hold a professional educator license endorsed for either general administrative or principal and the majority of teachers are required to hold a professional educator license endorsed for the grade levels and in the content area in which they are employed; or
3. holds a substitute teaching license and is not subject to the limitations of Section 21B- 20(3) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5].

### *25.720 Applicability of Testing Requirements and Scores*

(c)(2) A person who has successfully completed an evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness, as required under this subsection, at the time of initial certification or licensure in another state or country shall not be required to complete the TPA. (See Section 21B-35 of the School Code.)

Note: The above citations are current as of the time of publication. For the most current version of Illinois Administrative Code, please visit https://www.isbe.net/Documents/25ark.pdf.

## Examples of Teaching Experience

Educator preparation programs can consider the current rules regarding student teaching experiences referenced in the table above to accept a variety of teaching experiences to meet the student teaching requirements for licensure.

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| Substitute Teacher Experience | Educator preparation programs may also allow substitute teachers to meet the student teaching requirement. In these cases, cooperating teacher requirements may be waived. Planning, evaluation, mentorship, and type of experience must be considered before the student teaching requirement can be waived. |
| Short-Term Substitute Teaching Experience | Similar to experience gained while serving as a substitute teacher, special considerations may be given to short-term substitute teachers since they may only teach in place of any one licensed teacher for up to five days. |
| Transitional Bilingual Educator | Student teaching requirements may be met with experience teaching on an Educator License with Stipulations endorsed as a Transitional Bilingual Educator. In these cases, cooperating teacher requirements are waived. |
| Private School, Early Childhood/Day Care, or Community-Based Experience | Educator preparation programs may waive the cooperating teacher requirements and allow student teaching requirement to be met when the candidate has teaching experience from any school that is not legally required to employ teachers with licensure as well as two years of teaching experience as described in 25.620(d)(2). |

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| Student Teaching Course on Transcript | As mentioned in 25.25(b)(1), only one student teaching experience is required. Therefore, educator preparation programsmay accept student teaching coursework from any regionally accredited institution,including out-of-state institutions. |

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

- The State of Delaware offers an option in lieu of student teaching for some positions in Delaware district or charter schools. Evaluated substitute teaching experiences of 91 days or more may be used as an alternative to formal student teaching in specific preparation program areas.
- Missouri State University offers the option of a one block waiver of student teaching for post-baccalaureate students. Students must be substitute teaching in the grade level and content area of the program they are completing. Students must accumulate a minimum of 270-300 hours of substitute teaching experience in the same classroom to be considered for the waiver.
- The State of New York offers an option to allow paid teaching experience to meet the student teaching requirement in some cases. Candidates for certification are required to submit a verification form with confirmation of the experience by the employing superintendent/chief school officer. The candidates must verify 40 days of continuous, full-time, paid experience in the subject area and grade level range of the certificate sought. Some part time paid experience may also be acceptable at 80 days of continuous employment.

## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

- The university/program has the discretion to determine if experience meets requirements for licensure.
- The teacher performance assessment is still a required exam for individuals entitled by Illinois institutions.
- The quality and depth of the prior teaching experience approved by the EPP in place of student teaching should be held to the same standard as a student teaching experience. EPPs may reserve the right to gather letters or verification from former employers and colleagues as references. Portfolio of writing samples that links to standards may also beanother form of verification and accountability.
- IHEs can determine if prior teaching experience accepted should be in the grade range/ content area of the endorsement sought or if other experience could qualify.

## Prior Paraprofessional Experience

Paraprofessionals are employed in school districts under the supervision of a licensed teacher, supporting the teacher and students in many ways. A paraprofessional can tutor students or assist the teacher with classroom management and organizing instructional materials. In order to qualify for a paraprofessional license, an individual must provide proof of one of the following: associate degree or higher, 60 semester hours of coursework, or a high school diploma/GED with a qualifying score on a Parapro or ACT WorkKeys assessment.

## Examples of Paraprofessional Experience

Paraprofessionals may be assigned within a school to perform a variety of tasks to assist teachers and students. Some paraprofessionals are assigned specifically to one student, generally one needing individualized help with educational activities and transitioning from task to task. In other instances, the paraprofessional is responsible for guiding small group lessons under the direct or indirect supervision of the classroom teacher. Paraprofessionals may also be responsible for assisting other teachers and school administrators in the day-to-day functioning of the school. Employment as a paraprofessional in a school is generally a full-time, contractual position, providing diverse andmeaningful experiences with students, which enhance prospective educators.

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

North Park University's Master of Arts in Teaching program allows for candidates to use paraprofessional experience for clinical experience. Additionally, the university awards some credit for those who teach in private schools. These determinations are made on acase-by-case basis.

Roosevelt University's CPS AA to BA Teacher Residency program was designed in collaboration with Chicago Public Schools. It allows candidates to bepaired with a mentor faculty member to assist them through various field experiences before completing a year-long immersive student teaching experience. Coursework is offered at night and online for working candidates.

## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

It is at the discretion of the university/program as to whether experience meetsrequirements for licensure.

## State and Global Seals of Biliteracy

Individuals who hold a State Seal of Biliteracy or who have obtained working fluency or higher on the Global Seal of Biliteracy are exempt from the language proficiency test required for a bilingual education or world language endorsementin the same language. EPPs may also choose to honor the Seals toward specific course requirements.

***State Seal of Biliteracy***

A public school district or nonpublic school may establish the State Seal of Biliteracy program to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in English and in one or more other foreign, or world, languages. Students may qualify for the award at any pointin high school but will not receive formal recognition until high school graduation, at which point the designation is listed on the student's transcript and high school diploma. In order to meet the requirements, the student must demonstrate English language proficiency and world language proficiency. World language proficiency is met with a score of "intermediate high" in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as defined in the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (2012).*

English language proficiency may be demonstrated in any of the following ways:

- Attaining college and career benchmarks on any nationally normed assessment of English language arts (ELA) or equivalent dual credit coursework.
- Attaining a score of "meets" or "exceeds standards" for English language arts on state assessments administered at the secondary level.
- Attaining a proficient score on the English language proficiency assessment.
- Attaining an "intermediate high" composite score on an assessment in English.

***Global Seal of Biliteracy***

- The Global Seal of Biliteracy is a credential that celebrates language skills and expands future opportunities for its recipients. There is no age requirement or limitation for the credential. Proficiency in world languages may be met at three levels: Functional Fluency (FF), WorkingFluency (WF), and Professional Fluency (PF). English language proficiency is awarded by meeting state ELA standards through qualifying testing or fulfilling requirements for academic degrees. Score requirements vary depending on the award.

<u>Example ACT score equivalent:</u>

- FF: 18
- WF: 21
- PF: 26

<u>Example ELA requirements for graduation</u>:

- FF: Met all eighth-grade ELA requirements
- WF: Met all 11th-grade ELA requirements
- PF: Has college/university diploma

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

- Illinois State University accepts the State Seal of Biliteracy as equivalent to LAN 111 in the languages currently offered at the university. If the seal is granted in a language ISU does not offer, four credit hours of lower division foreign language elective will be awarded. Students are required to request course credit for the seal within three academic years after graduating from high school.
- Wheaton College accepts the ACTFL Language Proficiency Exam to meet the language competency or select states' Seal of Biliteracy on a high school diploma to meet competency requirements for foreign languages.
- The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign awards eight semester hours of world language credit to holders of the State Seal of Biliteracy.

## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

- The Seals demonstrate language proficiency but do not demonstrate teaching ability and may not be appropriate to honor in place of any coursework required for the bilingual education endorsement.

## Trainings and Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are career pathways that combine training with classroom instruction to prepare individuals for highly skilled careers. These programs allow individuals to learn from industry experts and obtain on-the-job training, often while simultaneously completing coursework. Although not exclusive to education, apprenticeships and structured trainings completed in high school may be applicable to the teaching profession. Prospective educators benefit from apprenticeships by receiving hands-on classroom and instructional training under the guidance of a mentor. Most apprenticeship opportunities include classroom instruction and often provide college credit student experience. Some experiences are paid. Knowledge gained during such programs may reduce the number of courses an individual is required to complete as part of an educator preparation program, which could enable individuals to qualify for teaching licensure in a shorter amount of time. Partnerships formed between institutions of higher education and districts can help districts recruit, build, and retain a highly skilled teacher workforce.

## Examples of Trainings and Apprenticeships

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded five grants to support the development of high school career and technical education (CTE) teacher pathways. CTE teachers are in high demand in many states, including Illinois. Read about grantees' programs here.

Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Labor identifies opportunities for community colleges, high schools, and middle schools to b ecome involved in apprenticeship programs for educators.

Resources for developing curriculum, delivering instruction, and starting a school-based program to provide pathways into the education profession are provided here.

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

- Regional Office of Education 33 in Monmouth is currently working on a pre-apprenticeship model for a teacher pathway with the Delabar Education for Employment system using an ISBE Education Pathway Grant. The program is funding multiple sites across Illinois to develop these programs at the high school level.
- Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties have partnered with Sauk Valley Community College, Northern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University, respectively, to develop pathways in education, manufacturing, and agriculture. Grants from Ed Systems Centers and CTE Education Pathways support this endeavor. Marketing and training materials are being developed for students, families and teachers, who will serve as effective mentors in a 60-hour supervised experience.
- High school students have several on-site, work-based related experiences in the Educator Prep Career Pathway at Leyden District 212. Students participate in the local preschool classroom, where they work with and teach 3- to 5-year-old students two days per week for 50 minutes. Students also attend the local partner schools (pre-K through Grade 8) and work one on one with a mentor teacher for an entire school year in a variety of settings.
- National Louis University (NLU) has worked with District 214 in Cook County to create a program whereby students can take college and advanced placement courses in high school that will translate into the equivalent of up to one year of college credit at NLU. As a result, District 214 graduating students may obtain an undergraduate degree, including one in Business Administration, at NLU in as little as three years. Such models could be adopted for educator preparation programs.

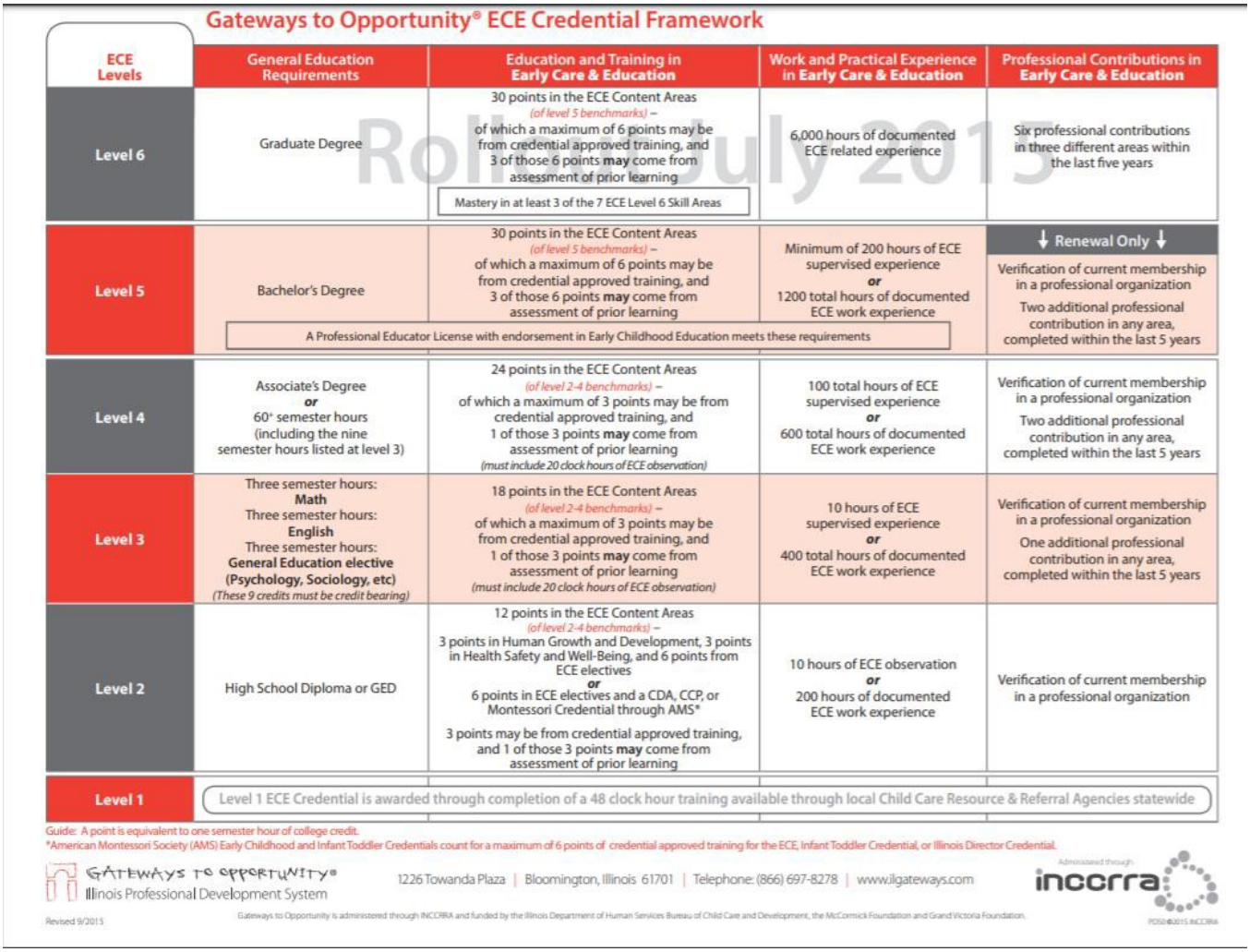
## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

IHEs may develop their own methods for assessing knowledge and skills gained through these programs.

## Gateways to Opportunity Credentials

- Gateways to Opportunity is specifically designed to meet the needs of early care and education, school-age, and youth development professionals in Illinois who work in early care and education, early childhood special education, early intervention, public education, family support, Head Start/Early Head Start, higher education, home visiting, prekindergarten and Preschool for All, child care resource and referral, other early childhood programs and settings, before- and after-school programs, youth programs and services, and other school-age and youth development programs. Gateways Credentials are symbols of professional achievement that validate knowledge, skills, and experience. Credentials are awarded and recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development.
- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credential has six levels and is earned through validation of accomplishments in four competency areas: General Education, Education in Early Care and Education, Work and Practical Experience in Early Care and Education, and Professional Contributions. The ECE Credential Level 1 is based on a defined program and 48-clock hours of training. The ECE Credential Levels 2–4 typically include coursework taken at the community college level. The ECE Credential Level 5 requires higher-level coursework as related to a bachelor or graduate degree. An ECE Credential Level 6 is currently being developed and will require graduate degree coursework. Coursework for the ECE Credential consists of seven content areas that can be obtained through a Gateways-entitled institution or an approved training. Clinical experiences for the ECE Credential require 200 hours of supervised experience or 1,200 hours of documented work experience. Clinical experiences for a Professional Educator License consist of placements in two out of three grade ranges with no specific number of hours.

## Different Levels of Gateways Credentials



**Gateways to Opportunity® ECE Credential Framework**

| ECE Levels | General Education Requirements | Education and Training in Early Care & Education | Work and Practical Experience in Early Care & Education | Professional Contributions in Early Care & Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 6 | Graduate Degree | 30 points in the ECE Content Areas *(of level 5 benchmarks)* – of which a maximum of 6 points may be from credential approved training, and 3 of those 6 points **may** come from assessment of prior learning<br>Mastery in at least 3 of the 7 ECE Level 6 Skill Areas | 6,000 hours of documented ECE related experience | Six professional contributions in three different areas within the last five years |
| Level 5 | Bachelor's Degree<br>A Professional Educator License with endorsement in Early Childhood Education meets these requirements | 30 points in the ECE Content Areas *(of level 5 benchmarks)* – of which a maximum of 6 points may be from credential approved training, and 3 of those 6 points **may** come from assessment of prior learning | Minimum of 200 hours of ECE supervised experience ***or*** 1200 total hours of documented ECE work experience | ↓ Renewal Only ↓<br>Verification of current membership in a professional organization<br>Two additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 years |
| Level 4 | Associate's Degree ***or*** 60+ semester hours (including the nine semester hours listed at level 3) | 24 points in the ECE Content Areas *(of level 2-4 benchmarks)* – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points **may** come from assessment of prior learning *(must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)* | 100 total hours of ECE supervised experience ***or*** 600 total hours of documented ECE work experience | Verification of current membership in a professional organization<br>Two additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 years |
| Level 3 | Three semester hours: **Math**<br>Three semester hours: **English**<br>Three semester hours: **General Education elective (Psychology, Sociology, etc)**<br>*(These 9 credits must be credit bearing)* | 18 points in the ECE Content Areas *(of level 2-4 benchmarks)* – of which a maximum of 3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points **may** come from assessment of prior learning *(must include 20 clock hours of ECE observation)* | 10 hours of ECE supervised experience ***or*** 400 total hours of documented ECE work experience | Verification of current membership in a professional organization<br>One additional professional contribution in any area, completed within the last 5 years |
| Level 2 | High School Diploma or GED | 12 points in the ECE Content Areas *(of level 2-4 benchmarks)* – 3 points in Human Growth and Development, 3 points in Health Safety and Well-Being, and 6 points from ECE electives ***or*** 6 points in ECE electives and a CDA, CCP, or Montessori Credential through AMS*<br>3 points may be from credential approved training, and 1 of those 3 points **may** come from assessment of prior learning | 10 hours of ECE observation ***or*** 200 hours of documented ECE work experience | Verification of current membership in a professional organization |
| Level 1 | Level 1 ECE Credential is awarded through completion of a 48 clock hour training available through local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies statewide | | | |

Guide: A point is equivalent to one semester hour of college credit.
*American Montessori Society (AMS) Early Childhood and Infant Toddler Credentials count for a maximum of 6 points of credential approved training for the ECE, Infant Toddler Credential, or Illinois Director Credential.

Gateways to Opportunity® Illinois Professional Development System | 1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, Illinois 61701 | Telephone: (866) 697-8278 | www.ilgateways.com | Administered through INCCRRA

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Gateways to Opportunity is administered through INCCRRA and funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development, the McCormick Foundation and Grand Victoria Foundation.

## Applicability in Teacher Education Programs

- There are more than 30 Illinois institutions that have Level 5 ECE Gateways approval and have aligned their coursework with credential requirements.
- Completion of program trainings and coursework toward the various Gateways credentials may be considered a creditable experience toward some components of early childhood programs.

## Considerations for Educator Preparation Providers

- IHEs may develop their own methods for assessing knowledge and skills gained through these programs.

## Filing Individual Pathways with ISBE

- EPPs that plan to offer individualized pathways to candidates should complete ISBE form 83-85: Verification of Individualized Pathways to Licensure. The form should be uploaded into the candidate's ELIS account by the licensure officer. The form does not require any approval from ISBE; rather, it will be used during audits as verification that your candidates have met required coursework or fieldwork components through alternative means.
- If your EPP develops an overarching policy that will apply to all candidates in a specific program, form 83-85 is not required for individual candidates. EPPs are free to make programwide policies for honoring prior learning experiences that will still be reflected as credit on individuals' transcripts.