



Pearson

Educator Licensure Assessments Supported by Pearson:

FAQs

Illustration by Tang Yau Hoong
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Why do states license teachers?

Educators are vital to helping students make progress in their lives through learning. Teachers, similar to other professionals like lawyers or doctors, are licensed by states in the U.S. to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills.



How are educators licensed/certified to teach?

Every state sets its own requirements for acquiring and renewing teaching licenses or certifications. States may use assessments as one of the criteria for issuing educator licenses. Many states use an operational partner, such as Pearson, for developing, administering, and scoring assessments. The state agency responsible for licensure establishes the fees for these assessments.

Pearson's Role in Supporting State Educator Licensure Assessments

As the state's assessment contractor, Pearson works with the state to prepare and offer assessments that measure basic skills, subject matter expertise, or the practice of teaching, depending on and aligned to the state's needs.

Pearson offers expertise and experience in designing educator licensure assessments, bringing deep organizational knowledge, custom-built technology resources, and measurement experts to support states in achieving their goals for educators and their learning goals for students. The content and level of performance required to meet the standards for the assessments are set by the state. Pearson delivers customized assessment and support services based on the policies, statutes, goals, and requirements of the state.

Pearson works quickly, effectively, and collaboratively to act on the state's guidance and propose recommendations regarding program and assessment updates to align with the state's vision for education. Pearson's dedicated program team works to meet the diverse needs of states, educator preparation programs, and prospective educators. Pearson enables the rapid implementation of new state policies and corresponding innovations in a highly integrated, fast-paced environment, using a nimble technology infrastructure.



How are the passing scores set?

A panel of educators recommends passing scores for the assessment, which are then reviewed and decided by the state agency responsible for licensure. Standard setting activities to set the passing score solidify the final link in the chain of validity evidence that has involved educators from the beginning of the development process. The state-established passing score demonstrates the level of performance of individuals who meet the minimum competency required for entry-level teaching in the state's P-12 schools.



How are licensure assessments developed? Are educators involved in the process?

Pearson follows an industry-accepted process to develop assessments that are valid, reliable, fair, and administered in a standardized way. The multifaceted, systematic process begins by assembling the standards identified in state educator licensure regulations and other policy materials, such as curriculum frameworks, student learning standards, and professional learning and content standards. Assessment objectives describing the knowledge and skills a teacher candidate must demonstrate for each content standard are developed and then reviewed by educators and teacher educators. An assessment design is set and assessment items are drafted to correspond to the assessment's objectives. The final task is establishing the scoring criteria, which are aligned to the objectives and items, to evaluate the performance of teacher candidates.

Throughout the development process, Pearson works side-by-side with preschool to high school teachers and teacher educators to develop research-based assessments in accordance with nationally recognized Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.¹ Knowledgeable educators who represent the diversity of the teaching population in a state review the materials and job analysis studies, which document and link the tasks teachers perform with the assessment content to strengthen validity evidence. Teachers and higher education professionals also conduct assessment framework and item reviews (for both content and bias prevention), and review the state-specific standards for passing.

¹ American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, & Joint Committee on Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (U.S.). (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*.

Please refer to the table at the end of this document for more detailed information on the test development process.

How can states update assessments to address current needs and maintain standards for teacher competency?

Pearson provides assessment and support services based on the policies, statutes, goals, and requirements of the state. In its work, Pearson provides support options to help states as the education needs and goals of the state change and emerge.

For example, in states' efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, address teacher shortages, or focus on different educational skills for teachers, a number of policies can be readily introduced around the requirements for teacher licensure—without reducing standards for teacher competency. Pearson supports multiple, new approaches for states to facilitate candidate success in completing licensure assessment requirements. These approaches address the need to license more teachers to avert shortages and to maintain state standards for teacher competency.



Test development process at a glance:

Component	Task
I. Engage State Educators to Create and Align Assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conduct initial assessment planning with state agency responsible for licensure.2. Establish state educator content advisory and bias review committees to review assessment materials.3. Assemble and review relevant standards for assessment alignment.
II. Define and Validate Assessment Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Conduct job analysis study with state educators.5. Draft assessment frameworks and conduct reviews with state educators.6. Conduct content validation surveys with state educators.
III. Develop and Validate Assessment Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Prepare assessment development specifications and item prototypes; conduct reviews.8. Draft assessment items and conduct reviews with state educators.9. Conduct field test, analyze field test results, and work with state educators to establish marker responses.
IV. Administer Assessments, Set Passing Score, and Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. Prepare and administer first operational assessment forms.11. Conduct scoring.12. Obtain passing score recommendation from state educator passing score panel; state establishes passing score.13. Prepare technical report.



Illustration by Lucy Vigrass

For more information about educator licensure assessments supported by Pearson, visit <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/teacherlicensure.html>.

For more information about edTPA, review the publicly available FAQ document at edtpa.aacte.org.