



Teacher Licensure Frequently Asked Questions

Revised 6/28/13

Audience

Students interested in becoming teachers

Purpose

To help answer and clarify common questions from students interested in becoming teachers.

1. How do I do my student teaching through an Ashford online program?

Because an online degree from Ashford does not lead to teacher licensure in any state, student teaching is not required to receive your degree from Ashford University. However, many states require student teaching experience for teacher certification. Students are encouraged to contact their state education department to determine what student teaching requirements are in their respective states. It is also recommended that you volunteer some time in a student-facing service offered in your community, as this activity can only strengthen your resume*.

***Important Note:** Volunteering or volunteer service will not take the place of a state-required student teaching component.

2. Does my Ashford degree work to teach in my state?

States vary in their requirements to become a licensed teacher. Ashford University's online programs do not lead to teacher licensure in any state.

3. Do I have to take more classes once I am done with the degree here?

Because an online degree from Ashford does not lead to teacher licensure, your state may require additional coursework and/or student teaching experience before you can obtain certification in the state. Please see the certification process handouts.

4. How much longer does it take to get licensed/certified once I get a Bachelor's degree?

That varies from state to state. Because an online degree from Ashford does not lead to teacher licensure, your state may require additional coursework, student teaching experience, testing, and/or other requirements. You will have to contact them for further guidance. You may also want to view our section on alternative certification paths in the handouts/on the website.

5. What should I ask my state to see how my degree from Ashford will help me reach my goal of becoming a teacher?

There are several "big ideas" that you may want to ask about, including:

- What are the requirements for certification from out-of-state universities?
- What coursework, testing, and/or student teaching is required? and
- What alternative routes to certification are available in my state?

6. Are there alternative routes to certification for candidates who do not have traditional education degrees?

Please view our handouts/website section on alternative certification paths.

7. Does it matter that my degree is earned online when looking to get a teacher certification/credential?

A degree from Ashford earned online does not lead to teacher licensure/certification; your state may require additional coursework and/or student teaching experience. See the certification process handouts/or review the website section for further information.

8. Can I become a teacher with a Bachelor's degree from Ashford University?

A degree from Ashford does not lead to teacher licensure, and therefore, your state may require additional coursework, student teaching experience, testing, and/or other requirements. You will have to contact them for further guidance. You may also want to view our certification process handouts/website.

9. Do I need a degree in education to get certified to teach?

As the need for teachers continues to increase, some states have implemented alternative routes to teacher licensure. Thus, you may not necessarily need a Bachelor's degree in education. However, it is strongly suggested that you contact the state in which you wish to teach and inquire about alternative paths to certification they may have in place.

If you are interested in teaching at the secondary level, it is often better to pursue a degree in the content area in which you wish to teach. For example, if you are interested in teaching middle or high school history, it may be beneficial to earn a degree in history. Please note that requirements can vary by state, so please contact your state for additional information.

Please view our "Alternative Routes to Certification" section in *Common Paths to Teacher Certification*, and contact the Department of Education in the state that you wish to teach to get additional details. You may also want to view the certification process handouts/website to prepare for the conversation with your state's Department of Education.

10. What's the difference between a degree and a certification?

A degree is earned from a college or university after a student has successfully completed all of the requirements of the specific program of study they have entered as dictated and approved by that school's governing board.

A teacher's certification is a license to teach in a particular state that is issued by that state and not the college or university that the candidate attended. The certification indicates to all potential public school employers in that state that the candidate has met the requirements set by that state's Department of Education to be qualified to teach in that state's public school system.

11. Is student teaching always required to get certified?

This activity is dependent on the route to certification a candidate is taking and state-specific requirements. Although a traditional student teaching experience is not always required, some form of practicum must be served by all teacher candidates.

12. What does the certification process entail?

A teacher's certification is a license to teach in a particular state that is issued by that state and not the college or university that the candidate attended. The certification indicates to all potential public school employers in that state that the candidate has met the requirements set by that state's Department of Education to be labeled qualified to teach in that state's public school system.

Teacher certification usually entails some combination of formal coursework, standardized teacher exams, and a practicum and/or student teaching.

13. Where can I student teach? Does it have to be an approved location or if I am working at a school district now, can I use the hours from where I work?

Student teaching requirements vary from state to state. Please view our "Alternative Routes to Certification" section in *Common Paths to Teacher Certification*, and contact the Department of Education in the state that you wish to teach to get more details.

Because an Ashford bachelor's degree earned online does not lead to teacher licensure in any state, student teaching is not required to receive your degree from Ashford University. However it is recommended that you volunteer sometime in a student-facing service offered in your community, as this activity can only strengthen your resume. Please note volunteering or volunteer service will not take the place of a state required student teaching component.

14. If I already have a Master's degree in education, do I need to participate in a certification program in the state that I plan to teach?

Because each state has different systems in place, it is strongly advised that you contact the state in which you wish to teach and inquire about alternative paths to certification they may have. As the need for teachers continues to increase, individual states have also implemented alternative routes to teacher licensure.

You may also want to view the certification process handouts/website to prepare for the conversation with your state's Department of Education.