

Alternative Routes to Michigan Certification or Endorsement

In Michigan, teacher preparation is guided by law, state administrative rules, and teacher preparation program standards. Michigan law and rules require that all individuals complete an [approved preparation program](#) (e.g., math, elementary, English) to obtain initial certification or add endorsements to a certificate.

The alternative route to teacher certification is a non-traditional preparation program designed for individuals who hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and are seeking to complete an expedited teacher preparation program while employed as a teacher under an Interim Teaching Certificate (ITC). Accordingly, employment in teaching the content area is a pre-requisite to issuing additional certification or endorsement. Individuals may complete this pathway regardless of whether they are seeking initial certification in Michigan or are already certificated and wish to add an additional endorsement. Please note that under law, career and technical education Classifications of Instructional Programs (CIPs), early childhood, and special education endorsements in autism spectrum disorder, visual impairments, or deaf and hard of hearing are not available through this pathway.

Program Description and Candidate Eligibility

As specified in law ([MCL: 380.1531i](#)), alternative route programs approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must include the equivalent of at least 12 semester credit hours and training in the following areas:

- child development or child psychology
- family and community relationships
- diverse learners
- instructional strategies
- a form of field-based experience in a classroom setting.

Candidates are eligible for enrollment in an alternative route program if they meet the following legislated selectivity criteria:

- minimum of bachelor's degree
- a cohort grade point average of 3.0 on 4.0 scale
- passage of the appropriate endorsement area Michigan Test(s) for Teacher Certification ([MTTC](#))
- CPR/First Aid certification (MCL 380.1531d)

- Criminal Background Check (R 390.1201)

All state-approved alternative route programs can be found using the MDE approved program [database](#) as well as on this [contact list](#). Please contact providers directly for additional information about program coursework, requirements and application procedures.

Interim Teaching Certificate (ITC)

The ITC is a Michigan-issued teaching certificate that entitles the holder to teach full-time in a Michigan school as the teacher of record. The ITC is a 5-year certificate; validity begins the month of issuance and expires on June 30 of the expiration year. This certificate can only be issued once, and under no circumstances be renewed. Additionally, once the certificate is issued no additional endorsements may be added to it.

In order to maintain the ITC, an individual must continue to be enrolled in the alternative route preparation program. If an individual withdraws from an alternative route, an alternative route preparation program must notify the MDE. In addition, the alternative route preparation program must notify the K-12 school in which the individual is teaching to inform them that the individual may no longer be placed in a K-12 teaching assignment under the ITC. Should the K-12 school wish to retain the individual as a teacher, the school administrator must apply to the MDE for a substitute [permit](#).

To progress the ITC to a Standard Teaching Certificate or to add the endorsements from an ITC to an existing certificate, an individual must:

1. have successfully completed the entire alternative route program, successfully completing all key assessments
2. have taught successfully for three years, within the validity of their endorsement areas (a minimum of 12 weeks per endorsement area)
3. make application for certification within the Michigan Online Educator Certification System ([MOECS](#))
4. be recommended by the alternative route provider.

Additional Information

Ideally, an alternative route to teacher certification is a collaborative effort between the teacher candidate, preparation provider, and K-12 school district. All three should work together to support the candidate in learning to teach, while ensuring K-12 learners' growth and development.

There are two paths that may lead an individual to the alternative route program and ITC:

- the individual has a job opportunity and is seeking certification/endorsement in a endorsement area; or
- the individual seeks certification or an additional endorsement to increase employment opportunities.

An individual who does not hold appropriate certification or endorsement for an assignment for which they would like to be employed should work with the employer to fully understand the options for obtaining certification/endorsement.

Individuals without an employment opportunity should work with an approved alternative route program provider to investigate regional job markets and needed content areas and to secure employment.

In either case, a school can employ a non-certified/endorsed individual under our current [substitute permits](#) while the long-term solutions and options are reviewed. The following actions are key to successful completion of an alternative route program:

- The individual should seek out a program that meets their own specific needs and the needs of the school choosing to employ them.
- The employing school should communicate the school's specific needs to the alternative route program provider.
- Once enrolled in the selected program, AND employed by a school, the alternative route program provider will provide guidance on the steps for applying for the ITC.
- Placement in the assigned area can ONLY occur if the individual is working under a substitute permit OR the ITC with appropriate endorsement(s).
- The employing school should continue to coordinate with the alternative route program provider throughout the individual's program.
- Once the program has been completed, the program provider makes the recommendation for the Michigan Standard Teaching Certificate OR additional endorsement(s) onto an existing Michigan certificate.
- The program provider is responsible for notifying MDE and the employer immediately if the individual drops from the program.

Interim Teaching Certificate for Special Education

[MCL 380.1531i](#) of the Revised School Code establishes a process for an individual to earn a general education interim teaching certificate (ITC). 1531i was amended and signed into law as public act (PA) 316, December 29, 2020, by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The amendment, which is effective July 21, 2021, and valid for three years, establishes a process for an individual to earn an interim teaching certificate with a special education endorsement that qualifies that individual to teach in a special education program that matches the endorsement.

Special education endorsements must be paired with a general education endorsement. Special education ITC candidates who do not hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate must first do the following to earn an ITC with a general education endorsement:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree or higher and pass the appropriate endorsement area examination for each general education subject to be listed on the ITC.
2. Complete the general education alternative route coursework that consists of an intensive training program of at least 12 college credit hours.

Special Education ITC candidates then begin completing the following requirements to add the special education endorsement to the ITC:

1. Complete a special education alternative route training program that consists of the equivalent of 32 college credit hours or equivalent clock hours that are equal to 7 hours of instruction per credit hour, including the completion of an 8-week student teaching field experience in the area of endorsement.
2. Pass an examination that matches the special education endorsement being sought.

All special education program requirements, including student teaching, must be fulfilled before the special education endorsement can be added to an ITC.

Special education ITC candidates who hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate, must complete an accelerated training program and pass an examination that matches the endorsement being sought to earn an ITC with a special education endorsement.

Special education ITC endorsements are limited to the following:

- Cognitive Impairments
- Emotional Impairments
- Learning Disabilities
- Physical or Other Health Impaired