Southern State Requirements for CTAE Teacher Licensure

Executive Summary

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education – often referred to as CTE or CTAE – programs assist students in developing technical, academic, and workforce skills that can be applied to employment or additional postsecondary education. As workforce demands shift toward employees with practical knowledge and skills, state policies in this area must provide high school students with pathways that lead to both employment and education. While states vary on which combinations of the below are required, common requirements have been categorized into the following:

- Education: This can include a high school diploma or equivalent, a postsecondary degree, or completion of postsecondary-level CTE coursework.
- Work Experience: This can include a specified number of hours or years of work or apprenticeship experience in the occupational area.
- Certification: This can include possession of an industry-recognized license or certification.
- Assessments: This can include the successful completion of teacher certification exams, testing in CTE subject matter, content area expertise, or other relevant knowledge.
- Teacher or CTAE Training: This may include completion of professional development or training required for teachers generally; professional development or training in the CTE field or in a specific occupational area; mentorship experience or other pedagogical training. This includes the requirement that CTE teachers hold a standard K-12 teaching license or credential.

This ***CSG South Research Memo*** compares Southern state requirements for CTAE licensure. All 15 member states require some combination of education requirements for licensure, but

Findings and Analysis

Table 1. *Comparison of the Requirement(s) Necessary for Pathways to CTAE Teacher Licensure in the South*

State	Education	Work Experience	Certification	Assessments	Teacher/CTAE Training
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Florida	✓	-	-	-	-
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Kentucky	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Louisiana	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Mississippi	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Missouri	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
North Carolina	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Oklahoma	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
South Carolina	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Texas	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	-	✓

Source: *Education Commission of the States.*

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Senator **Ghazala Hashmi**, VA | *Chair, Education Committee*
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Alabama

Individuals may seek a Degree Equivalent Technical Education Certificate for Grades 6-12 in selected technical education program areas. The specific technical education program areas are identified by the Department's Office of Career and Technical Education. These certificates are Career and Technical Certificates. There are three levels of Technical Education Certification for CTAE educators in Alabama, with the following requirements for entry-level CTAE licensure.[1]

Technical Education 1 Certificate (Entry-Level):

- Current, valid passing score on the state-approved occupational proficiency assessment for the CTAE subject;
- Combination of one or more of the following:
  - Current, valid passing score on the state-approved basic skills assessment;
  - Completed bachelor's degree; and/or
  - Existing, valid teaching certificate.
- A combination of education and work experience demonstrated by at least one of the following:
  - High school diploma or equivalent or associate's degree, and at least three years of relevant part-time or full-time work experience.
  - Bachelor's degree or higher, and at least two years of relevant part-time or full-time work experience; or
  - At least 10 years of relevant part-time or full-time work experience.

Arkansas

The State Administrative Code requires all applicants for educator licensure to complete an approved educator preparation program or an approved pathway for the desired licensure level and/or content area.[2] For CTAE instructors, the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Career and Technical Education requires the following for a technical permit – the license level to teach CTAE courses in the Natural State:

- High school diploma or equivalent, or college degree;
- Combination of the following education and experience:
  - Associate's degree or higher, and two years of related work experience; or
  - Four years of relevant work experience.
- Completion of the two-day New CTE Educator training provided by the division; and
- Completion of at least 13.5 hours of pre-licensure professional development in some combination of courses covering child maltreatment, bullying, suicide prevention, dyslexia, family and community engagement, and/or Arkansas history.[3]

Florida

The Florida Administrative Code provides two pathways for Career and Technical Education Licensure Class. The first, Plan One, requires only a completed bachelor's degree or higher in the relevant subject area. Plan Two, designed for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree and some focus – at least 30 semester hours – in the relevant teaching field.[4]

Georgia

Career and Technical Specializations certification is based on a combination of occupational experience, industry licensing, and assessments, and formal study. Upon receipt of a Provisional certificate, the individual must affiliate with and complete a Georgia Professional Standards Commission-approved program, either the New Teacher Institute or the Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy, to convert to the Induction or Professional certificate.

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[1] *Ala. Admin. Code r. 290-3-2-.18.*
[2] *Ark. Admin. Code 005.28.3-4-1.0.*
[3] *"Technical Permits and Endorsements," Division of Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Education.*
[4] *Fla. Admin. Code 6A-4.054, et seq.*

Initial applicants aiming for the provisional CTAE licensure must meet the following criteria:

- Passing score on the Georgia Ethics for Teachers Assessment;
- At least two years of occupational work experience in the area of specialization; and
- High school diploma, or higher, depending upon the specialization – some require an associate or bachelor's degree.

This provisional CTAE teaching license is valid for one year, pending approval for enrollment in an educator preparation program. After that, the provisional license may be extended for an additional year, for a total of two years.[5]

Kentucky

The Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) is responsible for issuing and reissuing certificates for occupation-based career and technical education teachers employed by public schools, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, or the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (KDE). Initial issuance is a one-year provisional license certificate.[6]

Licensees must demonstrate they have at least an associate's degree, or higher, in a subject relevant to the CTAE teaching program. If the individual does not have a postsecondary degree, they must meet or exceed the following criteria:

- High school diploma or equivalent;
- At least four years of relevant occupational experience in the subject area they are seeking to teach in, plus:
    - At least two years of relevant occupational experience coming in the past five years, with a maximum of one year of the requirement able to be satisfied via completion of an EPSB-approved occupation-based educator preparation program; and
    - Proof from the KDE that the applicant's experience is relevant and meets all requirements.
- Completion of a subject-matter competency examination in the relevant occupational field (i.e., a licensure examination), completion with a passing score on the ACT, SAT, and Kentucky On-Line Testing (KYOTE), or the GED, or an EPSE-approved occupational competency examination.[7]

Louisiana

State administrative code requires initial Career and Technical Trade and Industrial Education Certificates (CTTIEC) to be provisional by nature, with the following eligibility requirements:

- High school diploma or equivalency;
- Minimum of four years of full-time work experience (7,680 hours) aligned to the career area or technical fields, with at least one year (1,920 hours) of full-time work experience in the five years immediately preceding the application for CTTIEC.

Additionally, based upon the table below, applicants may use a combination of academic degree(s) and industry certification or credentials to receive credit hours, which may be subtracted from the aforementioned full-time work experience requirements.

Table 2. *Education/Experience Requirements for CTAE Occupational Credit Hours*

Degree/Education Level*	Work/Industry Level*	Credit Hours
Technical Diploma, associate's degree, or a completed registered apprenticeship	-	2 years (3,840 hours)
Bachelor's degree	-	2 years (3,840 hours)
Graduate degree	-	3 years

[5] Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 505-2-.90.
[6] 16 KAR 2:020.
[7] 16 KAR 6:020.

Degree/Education Level*	Work/Industry Level*	Credit Hours
		(5,760 hours)
Technical degree and bachelor's degree	-	3 years (5,760 hours)
Bachelor's degree	Industry-Based Certification	3 years (5,760 hours)
-	Industry-Based Certification	2 years (3,840 hours)

**Must be in a field related to the CTAE course of study that the applicant will be teaching*

Applicants with any of the above combinations of qualifications may use any years of teaching experience in the industry field or at an educational institution to qualify for a portion of the required four years of work experience. Additionally, for any industry that requires a state or national license for that work, the CTTIEC applicant must maintain an active industry-based license or certification in good standing.[8]

Mississippi

The Magnolia State provides for three levels of Career Technical Educator Licenses: Career Technical Non-Education Degree (Associate's Degree), which is valid for three years; Career Technical Non-Education Degree (Bachelor's Degree), which is also valid for three years; and the Career Technical Educator License Non-Degree or Non-Education Degree, which is a license valid for five years. For the three-year Career Technical Non-Education Degree Class A license, individuals must have completed an associate's degree, demonstrate two years of relevant occupational experience within the past 10 years, and enroll in a Career Technical Instructor Preparation program. For the same Class A license, an applicant with a completed bachelor's degree in a relevant field is only required to demonstrate one year of appropriate work experience. However, the four-year degree must be in a career technical agriculture-related program, a career technical agriculture occupational program, a lodging and hospitality program, and/or a career technical family and consumer sciences program.[9]

Missouri

The State Board of Education is authorized to grant certificates of license to teach in any public school in the state and to establish requirements and qualifications for those certificates. This rule outlines the requirements for applying to each certification area within the Career Education (Secondary) Certificates. Applicants must have:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in a relevant subject area and at least 4,000 hours of total relevant experience in the past 10 years that comprises work or CTAE teaching experience;
- Associate's degree in a relevant subject area and at least 5,000 hours of total relevant experience in the past 10 years that comprises work or CTAE teaching experience in a similar field of study; or
- At least 6,000 hours of total relevant experience in the past 10 years, comprising occupational work experience or CTAE teaching experience in a relevant area.

Applicants must also complete 18 credit hours of education coursework in the subjects of curriculum, methods, assessments, child psychology, cooperative education coordination, and/or foundations and implementation. Other subjects may entail additional specific educational, licensure, or occupational requirements to obtain licensure.[10]

North Carolina

In North Carolina, initial professional licenses obtained through the CTAE Restricted License route result in a restricted Continuing Professional License. These educators are restricted from adding non-CTAE areas to their licenses. Still, CTAE

[8] *28 La. Admin. Code Pt CXXXI, 1107.*
[9] *7 Miss. Admin. Code T. 7, Pt. 4.*
[10] *Mo. 5 CSR 20-400.660.*

areas may be added to a traditional education license, provided the educator holds the minimum degree level for the additional area. Specific licensure requirements vary by subject matter, as illustrated in the table below.[11]

Table 3. *Eligibility Criteria for Initial CTAE Teaching License*

Subject Area(s)	Minimum Education	Years of Work Experience	Credential(s) Required	Other Requirement(s)
Agriculture	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• 3-hour post-secondary course on Supervising Agricultural Experiences; or • 40-hour Agricultural Education Induction Program
Aviation	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years *or* • 250 flight hours	• Certified Flight Instructor *or* • Remote Pilot Certificate	-
Business, Finance, and Information Technology	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• State-approved specialty area exam
Computer Science and Information Technology	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• Industry-approved certification or license
Family and Consumer Sciences	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• State-approved specialty area exam
Health Sciences	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree • Diploma	• 2 years • 4 years	• Registered Nurse • Certified Athletic Trainer • Medical-occupation state-level license	-
Marketing	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• State-approved specialty area exam
Technology Engineering and Design	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree	• 2 years • 4 years	-	• State-approved specialty area exam
Trade and Industrial	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree • High School Diploma or GED	• 2 years • 4 years • 6 years	• OSHA 10-hour Safety	• Industry-approved certification or license

[11] *"Career and Technical Education (CTE) Licensure Policies and Procedures Manual," North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, July 1, 2025.*

Subject Area(s)	Minimum Education	Years of Work Experience	Credential(s) Required	Other Requirement(s)
CTAE Local Course Option	• Bachelor's degree • Associate's degree • High School Diploma or GED	• 2 years	• School district-approved credential	• School district-approved coursework

Oklahoma

Educators seeking to teach career, technical, vocational, and/or agricultural education in high schools must have an appropriate teaching license on file with the Oklahoma Department of Education. The Oklahoma Department of CareerTech establishes specific licensure requirements for each occupational division and subject area, and local school district administrators review and confirm that instructors meet these field-specific standards. Somewhat uniquely, the Sooner State does provide an option for an "adjunct" CTAE position. To qualify, adjuncts must be at least 21 years old and have at least two years of work experience in the industry or occupational area most relevant to the CTAE subject they are seeking to teach. Individuals must also pass the standard state background check.[12]

South Carolina

The Palmetto State establishes a separate work-based certification process for career and technology educators. Teacher certification is issued based on the level of educational and occupational experience for the specific certificate requested. Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- At least 18 years of age;
- Completed application to the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Teacher Certification;
- Notarized verification of relevant necessary work experience;
- Two technical references from local area employers in a relevant industry;
- Notarized copy of high school diploma or GED certificate;
- Official transcripts from any post-secondary institution attended – regardless of graduation status;
- Certified copies of any industry-specific certification or licensure obtained; and
- Successful completion of the state-approved competency and basic skills examination.

If applicants have not completed the relevant occupation licensure or certification program, they must obtain a national or industry-recognized credential within 2 years of applying for the CTAE educator license.[13]

Tennessee

The Tennessee administrative code provides three distinct pathways for prospective CTAE educators to obtain the practitioner occupational teaching license:

- Pathway 1:
  - Holds a high school diploma or higher;
  - Currently enrolled in a state-approved educator prep program with job-embedded clinical practice;
  - Recommended by the state-approved educator prep program;
  - At least 5 years of relevant work experience in the last 10 years, or at least 3 years within the last 5 years; and
  - Holds an active industry certification or credential, if applicable.
- Pathway 2:
  - Holds an active state practitioner or professional teacher license for Grades 6-12;
  - Completed a state-approved educator prep program; and

[12] *Okla. Admin. Code 780:20-3-4.*
[13] *S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-63*.

- Either holds an active industry certification or credential, if applicable, or has at least 5 years of relevant work experience in the last 10 years or 3 years of experience within the past 5 years.

- Pathway 3:
  - Has at least 5 years of relevant work experience within the past 10 years, or 3 years of experience within the last 5 years;
  - Holds an active industry certification or credential, if applicable;
  - Provides proof of pairing with a designated highly effective teacher mentor; and
  - Completed coursework in classroom management, pedagogy, serving students with disabilities and English language learners, and the teacher code of ethics from a state-approved educator prep provider.[14]

Texas

In Texas, Career and Technical Education Certificates are separated into administrative requirements for those whose subject matter requires specific experience and preparation in the subject area and those that do not.

Table 4. *Education and Experience Requirements for Career and Technical Education Licensure*

Subject Area(s)	Educational Requirements	Work Experience Requirements	Miscellaneous Requirements
Marketing	Bachelor's degree	2 years full-time	-
Health Sciences	Associate's degree or higher	2 years full-time	Current licensure, certification, or registration by a nationally recognized accrediting agency
Trade and Industrial	• Associate's degree or higher • High School Diploma or GED	• 2 years full-time • 5 years full-time	Current licensure, certification, or registration by a nationally recognized accrediting agency
Trade and Industrial Workforce	Associate's degree or higher	7 years full-time	Current licensure, certification, or registration by a nationally recognized accrediting agency

Prospective career and technical education licensees must submit a statement of qualifications to the state-approved agency detailing prior experience and preparation in the skill area for the career and technical education certificate sought. Additionally, twelve months of wage-earning experience consisting of at least 40 hours per week shall equal one year of full-time experience. Wage-earning experience consisting of less than 40 hours, but at least 20 hours per week, shall be calculated at a 50 percent rate in determining years of full-time experience; and wage-earning experience consisting of less than 20 hours per week shall not be considered acceptable in determining full-time experience. Alternatively, postsecondary school teaching experience in the specific occupational area for which the candidate is seeking certification may be counted on a year-for-year basis in lieu of on-the-job experience.[15]

Virginia

Individuals seeking licensure with preK-12, special education, secondary grades 6-12, or adult education endorsements may meet the requirements by completing an approved program or, if employed by a Virginia public or accredited nonpublic school, through the alternate route to licensure. Components of the licensure program include a degree from an accredited institution in the liberal arts or sciences, or equivalent; professional teacher assessment requirements prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education; specific endorsement requirements; and professional studies requirements.[16]

[14] *Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0520-02-03-.04.*
[15] *19 Tex. Admin. Code § 233.14.*
[16] *8 Va. Admin. Code 20-23-220, et seq.*

Table 5. *Career and Technical Education License Endorsement Requirements*

Subject Area(s)	Educational Requirement(s)	Work Experience Requirement(s)	Miscellaneous Requirement(s)
Agriculture	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program • Bachelor's degree and 39 hours of agriculture coursework	• 1 year of full-time (2,000 hours) relevant occupational experience	• Industry credential (if applicable)
Business and Information Technology	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program • Bachelor's degree and 39 hours of business or IT coursework	• 1 year of full-time (2,000 hours) relevant occupational experience	• Industry credential (if applicable)
Family and Consumer Sciences	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program • Bachelor's degree and 39 hours of relevant coursework	• 1 year of full-time (2,000 hours) relevant occupational experience	• Industry credential (if applicable)
Health and Medical Sciences	• Bachelor's degree	• 2 years of full-time relevant occupational experience within the last 5 years	• Current professional practitioner license
Marketing	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program • Bachelor's degree and 39 hours of marketing coursework	• 1 year of full-time (2,000 hours) relevant occupational experience	• Industry credential (if applicable)
Technology	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program • Bachelor's degree and 33 hours of relevant coursework • Bachelor's degree majoring in a relevant field and 3 hours of technology coursework	-	• Industry credential (if applicable)
Trade and Industrial	• Bachelor's degree and completion of an educator prep program	• 2 years of full-time relevant occupational experience within the last 5 years	• Industry credential (if applicable)

West Virginia

West Virginia administrative regulations provide for temporary, initial, and permanent Career and Technical Education Certificates. Temporary CTAE licensure – which lasts for one year - is nonrenewable and requires at least 5 years of teaching experience and/or a relevant, industry-recognized credential and/or a passing score on a state board of education-approved exam. For the initial CTAE license, applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent or higher and complete a combination of relevant work experience, industry certification, and/or a passing score on a state-approved examination. Individuals who hold a valid West Virginia educator's licensure, but do not yet have a CTAE endorsement, may qualify by completing 6 hours of appropriate college coursework in a related field and/or obtaining a valid industry-recognized credential. For all CTAE licensure types, individuals must also be recommended by a local school district to receive a credential.[17]

[17] *W. Va. Code R. 126-136-10.4.*