



Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
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May 4, 2020

MEMO: COVID-19 TEMPORARY INITIAL CERTIFICATE GUIDANCE

Rhode Island Educator Preparation Providers,

As stated in the [April 24, 2020 Memo to Educator Preparation Providers \(EPPs\)](#), candidates who will be program completers of Rhode Island (RI) state-approved programs in Spring-Summer 2020 and have not yet taken or passed the necessary tests for RI certification due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible for a one (1)-year Temporary Initial certificate. This certificate will allow program completers additional time (until July 31, 2021) to pass the appropriate tests needed for full Initial certification.

As stated in the Rhode Island certification regulations:

“Temporary initial educator certificate’ means a Preliminary Certificate issued for a limited duration to applicants who seek certification through reciprocity and who meet all requirements for the Initial Educator Certificate except for the testing requirement, including the English Language Competency Test when applicable. This certificate allows the applicant time to take the test that may not have been available in their state. The educator does not have a Rhode Island Stage 3 National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) ‘full certificate’ until the testing requirement is met and an Initial Educator Certificate is issued.”

Though the Temporary Initial certificate is typically used for educators seeking reciprocity, its language is sufficient to include the current COVID-19 situation where an educator may complete a state-approved EPP, but still need to take and pass the required RI tests for eligibility for a full Initial certificate.

Process for EPPs and Candidates to Apply for the COVID-19 Temporary Initial Certificate

EPP deans or directors will follow the existing steps to endorse or promote candidates for RI certification eligibility. If endorsing or promoting candidates online, the eRIDE system is used. If endorsing or promoting candidates via paper, a transcript indicating program completion or a program completion verification form will still be submitted to the RIDE certification office. Neither online nor paper processes require EPP deans or directors to confirm that required tests have been taken and passed to be eligible for certification.

Following existing procedures, program completers will receive e-mail notification that they have been endorsed or promoted online by their EPP and can now submit their certification application and fee. Once

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EPPs endorse or promote program completers online, those individuals have ninety (90) days to complete and submit their online application. If the 90 days pass, additional verification of program completion will be required. Those program completers submitting their application in paper will again follow the usual procedure. All candidates, even those who have not yet passed their tests, will apply for a full Initial certificate in their respective area.

When the RIDE certification team receives completed online or paper applications, they will check to see if tests with passing scores are included. If tests with passing scores are included, a full Initial certificate will be issued. If no tests or tests without passing scores are included, the RIDE certification team will manually change the certificate type to a Temporary Initial certificate. The fee for a Temporary Initial certificate and full Initial certificate is the same (\$100.00), so no additional fee will be required for the Temporary Initial.

When the Temporary Initial certificate is issued, the status form will include language signifying that the educator was issued a Temporary Initial certificate due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has until July 31, 2021 (the duration of the Temporary Initial certificate) to take and pass the required tests in their respective area. The status form will also state that educators, upon passing their required tests, must e-mail Michael O'Connor at michael.oconnor@ride.ri.gov to notify RIDE that the educator has taken and passed their tests and that their score report is available for RIDE's review. Upon confirmation of an educator's passing score, RIDE will then update the educator's file to a full Initial certificate at no cost to the educator. Please allow for two to three (2-3) weeks for RIDE to update the educator's file once test scores are available and received by RIDE for review.

You are welcome to share this guidance with your EPP program completers seeking RI certification. The guidance will also be posted on RIDE's [COVID-19 webpage](#) for public viewing and reference. If you have questions regarding this COVID-19 EPP guidance, please contact michael.oconnor@ride.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Foehr, Chief
Division of Teaching and Learning

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