Pathways to Credentialing

Scan the QR code to check out Pathways to Credentialing, which links to specific detailed pages for each pathway.

Financial Resources for Teacher Candidates

For additional financial resources, scan the QR code.

I decided on a pathway. What's next?

Scan the QR code to find the next resource in our series: Choose Your Program!

Roadmap to Teaching

Identify Your Pathway

To teach in California, you will need to earn a credential by completing a teacher preparation program approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). There are several options to choose from, each with its own strengths and philosophy of how to prepare a successful teacher. Which program pathway will you choose?

- **Residency**
- **Traditional**
- **Integrated Undergraduate**
- **Intern**

You decide which pathway would best suit your schedule and learning style. There are important variables to consider such as duration of program, online / in-person instruction, and financial considerations.

RESIDENCY

As a resident teacher, you receive a stipend and gain experience teaching alongside an experienced mentor teacher for a full year before you become an official teacher of record.

Completion time: 1-2 years
Financial support: Salary or stipend, eligible for Federal Teach Grant and Golden State Teacher Grant.
Reasons to choose: You have a bachelor's degree and are seeking a supportive, hands-on teacher preparation experience that includes early income and immediate employment after completion.
Key considerations: Required service commitment to your residency employer of 3–5 years beyond the program. Also, for residents participating in the California Teacher Residency Grant Program, if you don't earn your credential or complete the period of your placement, you must reimburse the grant funding that was invested in your residency training.

TRADITIONAL

The most common and well-established pathway for earning a credential, in which you begin teaching after completing your program. Your program will include coursework with an academic/theoretical focus and student teaching experience.

Completion time: 1-2 years, or a longer period on a part-time basis.
Financial support: No salary, but flexible option for those with a full-time job while completing program. Eligible for Federal Teach Grant and Golden State Teacher Grant.
Reasons to choose: You have a bachelor's degree and want to prepare to teach with hands-on learning experiences—but may wish to do so less intensively or even part-time. Widest selection of programs throughout California.
Key considerations: This pathway offers less hands-on learning than other pathways, which may not align with all learning styles. The student teaching portion of your program is also unsalaried.

INTEGRATED UNDERGRADUATE

Also called "blended" or "ITEP" program. In an integrated undergraduate program, you earn your bachelor's degree and credential concurrently. This pathway is for those who do not yet have their bachelor's degree.

Completion time: 1-2 years, or a longer period on a part-time basis.
Financial support: No salary, but flexible option for those with a full-time job while completing program. Eligible for Federal Teach Grant and Golden State Teacher Grant.
Reasons to choose: You have a bachelor's degree and want to prepare to teach with hands-on learning experiences—but may wish to do so less intensively or even part-time. Widest selection of programs throughout California.
Key considerations: This pathway offers less hands-on learning than other pathways, which may not align with all learning styles. The student teaching portion of your program is also unsalaried.

INTERN

As an intern teacher, you'll work as a full-time teacher of record and earn a salary while you're completing your credentialing program. There are two types of intern programs: University Intern and District Intern.

Completion time: 2-3 years
Financial support: Salary and eligible for Federal Teach Grant.
Reasons to choose: You have a bachelor's degree and you're eager to get into a classroom as soon as possible. You can commit to a full-time schedule, which requires completing the program while simultaneously getting paid for student teaching. Some intern programs offer an accelerated 'early completion option' resulting in the fastest pathway option available.
Key considerations: It can be challenging to be a student and teacher full-time. For University Intern programs, you will need to make sure prior to enrolling and accepting an offer of employment that the college/university and the employer have an existing Intern Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).