

# Academic Pathway to Teaching (APT)

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Commonly used Acronyms

APT: Academic Pathway to Teaching

ARL: Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) program

EYE: Entry Years Enhancements (EYE)

LEA: Local Education Agency (LEA); any Utah school district or charter school

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### **1. What is the Academic Pathway to Teaching (APT)?**

The APT is an alternative pathway to a Utah Educator License approved by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) in June 2016. It is governed by Utah Administrative Rule R277-511. It allows an individual with a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited university to pass the appropriate Board approved content knowledge test to apply for and receive a Level 1 – APT license with an Elementary (K-6) or Secondary (6-12) area of concentration. A Utah public school district or charter school that chooses to hire an individual holding this type of license must assign a teacher leader as the individual's mentor, prepare a mentoring plan for each Level 1 APT license holder, and must prepare the individual to meet the Utah Effective Educator Standards (R277-531). Once hired, the individual must complete the Entry Years Enhancement (EYE; R277-522) program to be eligible for upgrade to a standard Level 2 Utah Educator license. In addition to the EYE requirements, the individual must complete three years of full-time teaching or four years of at least 0.4 Full Time Equivalency (FTE) of teaching under the supervision of the master teacher, any additional requirements of the recommending LEA, and receive the recommendation of the LEA administrator.

### **2. I'd like to become a teacher through the APT program, will a district or charter school hire me?**

It depends on local policy and your individual qualifications. Employment is completely under the control of the LEA. We recommend that you consult with the LEAs in which you are interested in working.

### **3. When can I apply for a Level 1 – APT license?**

You can apply for a Level 1 – APT license at any time once you have met all of the requirements. There is no restriction as to when an individual may apply for or receive a Level 1 – APT license. Due to the way in which license expiration works, if an individual is considering applying for a Level 1 – APT in November or December, we would advise them to wait until after January 1, but there would not be a significant impact on the license one way or the other.

### **4. Does the degree required to be eligible for APT need to be from a regionally accredited institution?**

Yes. Utah Statute 53A-6-108 prohibits the use of a postsecondary degree from a non-accredited institution for the purpose of gaining a license.

### **5. Can a degree issued in a foreign country be used to meet the Level 1 – APT degree requirement?**

Possibly, it depends on the degree. An individual with such a degree would need to get a U.S. degree equivalency review from a service accredited by the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services \(NACES\)](#). If the degree is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution, then it meets the requirement. If the primary language of the country in which the degree was issued is not English, the applicant may be required to complete the English Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) (see question #5).

### **6. I am interested in the APT program. What content knowledge test do I need to pass?**

It depends on your area of licensure. For most elementary and secondary areas, the approved test can be found at the [Licensure Test Requirements document](#)

In addition, the [American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence \(ABCTE\)](#) tests are approved as content knowledge tests in Utah for the following areas: Biology, Chemistry, English, Middle Level Science (General Science test), History, Mathematics, Physics, and Elementary.

For Secondary World Language, an individual must pass both the appropriate Praxis test, if available, see chart link above, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) OPI. If the language does not require a Praxis test, then only the OPI is necessary. For more information on the OPI go to [Language Testing International](#) If the subject you are interested in teaching is not listed on the chart linked above, please contact us at 801-538-7740 to determine if an approved content knowledge test is available in that subject. In the rare case that no such test is approved, the APT program would not be an option in that area.

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## **7. How do I prepare for a Praxis test?**

Go to [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis), and select the “Prepare for a Test” quick link on the left side. Select the appropriate test. This step will take you to a new page. On this page, you will find Education Testing Services (ETS) published study material that can be purchased. Before purchasing any materials from ETS or any other publisher, we recommend that you review the “Study Companion” PDF available on that page. This document contains the test blueprint, topic lists, and sample questions. Reviewing this document should help you judge what level of preparation you should pursue.

## **8. The Praxis test chart indicates that the score status of the test I need to take as “Prelim” or “Review”, what does this status mean? Will it affect a Level 1 – APT license?**

Whenever a content knowledge test is adopted an initial passing score is set. After a few years the score is reviewed based on the performance of people who have taken the test in Utah. This status means that a passing score can change. Licensing policy is that an individual must meet the passing score at the time the individual receives the license. For APT this means at the time the Level 1 – APT license is issued. If a score changes after a license has been issued, that license is unaffected. If a test is marked as “Review” then the effective date of the new score, if it is changed, would be listed in the [Licensure Testing Update document](#)

Testing requirements, like all licensing requirements, are subject to change. Please contact us at (801) 538-7740 if you have any questions.

## **9. What happens if there is no Board-approved content knowledge assessment in the subject?**

In the rare case of no such test being available, a Level 1 – APT license would not be available in that subject. The most common current example of this is Dance.

## **10. I live outside of the state of Utah and do not intend to teach in Utah, can I receive a Utah Level 1 – APT license?**

Yes, though you would only be able to complete the EYE requirements and upgrade to a Level 2 Utah license if you were employed in a Utah LEA. However, before working to meet the eligibility requirements for the APT program we would strongly recommend contacting your state educator licensing entity to determine if such a license could be transferred to your desired state.

## **11. A Math Level 3 endorsement and a Math Level 4 endorsement require the same test. If I want to get a Level 1 – APT license in mathematics and pass that test, which one do I get?**

A Math Level 3 endorsement. Please note that the number of classes that a Math Level 4 can teach and a Math Level 3 cannot, is very small (AP Calculus/Statistics, Sec III Honors).

## **12. A Music/Theater/Visual Arts (K-12) and a Music/Theater/Visual Arts (6-12) endorsement both require the same test. Which would I receive if I apply for a Level 1 – APT and have passed that test?**

You would receive a Music/Theater/Visual Arts (6-12) endorsement. The requirements to earn the K-12 version once the 6-12 has been received are minimal and could be completed once the Level 1-APT license has been upgraded to Level 2.

## **13. I want to become a Special Education teacher. Can I utilize APT?**

No. A Level 1 – APT license is only available with an Elementary (K-6) or a Secondary (6-12) license area. It would not be available for any other license areas, such as Special Education.

## **14. I currently hold a standard Utah Educator License (Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3), can I utilize the APT to earn a new license area of concentration or subject endorsement?**

No. While a Utah Educator License may have multiple license areas of concentration, an individual may only hold one Utah Educator License. This means that an individual that already holds a standard license would not be eligible to receive a Level 1 – APT license and therefore would not be eligible for the APT.

**15. I have previously tried to earn a standard license through USBE ARL and did not meet the requirements. Can I utilize the APT program?**

Yes, as long as you do not hold or have previously held a standard license (Level 1, 2 or 3) and meet the eligibility requirements for the APT program, then you can receive a Level 1 – APT license.

**16. I am currently earning my standard Utah Educator License through the ARL program, can I utilize the APT to earn my license instead?**

Possibly. As you do not yet hold a standard Utah Educator License, you may be able to utilize the APT program. However, as you were hired under the ARL program, your employing LEA may or may not be willing to accept a change in licensure. We would recommend discussing the possibility of changing licensure pathways with your current principal and LEA Human Resource (HR) personnel. Each LEA will have their own policies regarding acceptable licensure and licensure pathways.

**17. I'm currently in ARL. I've talked with my employer and we've decided to switch me to the APT program. What do I need to do?**

If you are currently in ARL, it is likely that you do not need a new background check and we would likely have record of your degree; please call educator licensing to verify both of these facts. If both of those are true and you have passed the appropriate content knowledge test (see question #5) then you simply need to complete the educator ethics review at [Educator Licensing Online](#) and submit the APT application and fee. Once this application packet is submitted, assuming all requirements are met, Licensing will post your Level 1 – APT license and close out your ARL file. No further notification is necessary.

**18. I currently hold a temporary or non-standard Utah Educator License (Authorization, Eminence, LEA-Specific, International Guest Teacher...etc.), can I utilize the APT?**

Possibly. As you do not yet hold a standard Utah Educator License, you may be able to utilize the APT program. However, as you were hired under your current licensure status, your employing LEA may or may not be willing to accept a change in licensure. We would recommend discussing the possibility of changing licensure pathways with your current principal and LEA HR personnel. Each LEA will have their own policies regarding acceptable licensure and licensure pathways within their authority.

**19. I currently hold a temporary or non-standard Utah Educator License (Authorization, Eminence, LEA-specific, International Guest Teacher...etc.), and have checked with my LEA and we have determined that I should move to APT. What do I do?**

Simply submit the APT application, documentation, and fee and licensing will post the APT license after expiring/terminating your non-standard licensure. No additional documentation is needed. In such cases, educator licensing may already have record of your degree, background check, or Praxis II test score. You may wish to call educator licensing at (801) 538-7740 to determine what needs to be submitted and what is already documented by licensing.

**20. I have already completed one or more years of teaching experience in a Utah public school, can those years count towards the three years required for the Level 1 - APT license holder to upgrade to Level 2?**

Possibly. At minimum, at least one of the required years must be completed after the issuance of the Level 1 – APT license. If an individual has prior years of experience in a teaching position in a Utah public school under the supervision of a teacher leader mentor, these years may be counted, at the discretion of the LEA, as part of the years required to upgrade to Level 2 as long as *all three years were in the same LEA* that employed the individual during the one year worked on the Level 1-APT License and that is recommending the individual for upgrade.

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**21. I currently hold a Level 1 – APT license and am looking for employment. An LEA is interested in hiring me but will only do so if I use a different licensure pathway. Can I surrender my Level 1 – APT license so I can pursue licensure through this other pathway (University Program, ARL, LEA Specific...etc.)?**

Yes, you can surrender your Level 1 – APT license by submitting a formal letter to USBE. The Letter must specifically state that you are voluntarily surrendering your Level 1 – APT license and that you know that if you wish to receive such a license in the future you must reapply, pay the appropriate fee, and meet all current requirements for the license. The letter should be addressed or delivered to the Educator Licensing section of USBE.

**22. I currently hold a Level 1 – APT license in subject “x” and I have an LEA that is interested in hiring me in subject “y”, is there a way to make this work?**

The APT program is designed to provide a pathway to standard licensure for an individual in one subject. The rule does not allow an individual to earn a second subject until moving to a Level 2 license. Assuming you meet the APT eligibility requirements in both subjects you could voluntarily surrender your APT license in subject ‘x’ and could then reapply for an APT license in subject ‘y’, see question #19.

**23. I have a Level 1 – APT license area and an LEA wishes to hire me in a non-teacher position, how does that work?**

The APT rule requires a minimum of 3 years of full-time teaching experience or 4 years of 0.4 FTE or greater teaching experience to move to a Level 2 license. As long as at least 0.4 FTE of your assignment (40% if you are full-time) is in a teaching position, then you would be eligible for upgrade after 4 years. If you have been hired in a position requiring a license, but not a teaching position, then the year would not count towards the required years and you would run the risk of having too many years of experience to renew your Level 1 – APT license but too few to upgrade to Level 2.

**24. I have a Level 1 – APT license area and a private school wishes to hire me, will that work?**

The definition of LEA in R277-511 does not include private schools; therefore, such experience could not be counted towards a Level 1 – APT license holder earning a Level 2 license. Due to the way the [EYE](#) requirements work, an individual in such a situation runs the risk of having too many years of experience to renew the Level 1 – APT license but too few to upgrade to Level 2. As such, it is recommended that individuals in this situation voluntarily surrender the Level 1 – APT license (see question #19) and then pursue other licensure options if required by their private school.

**25/39. Is an individual with a Level 1 – APT license eligible for the [Teacher Salary Supplement Program \(TSSP\)](#)?**

A Level 1 – APT license is considered a license and therefore meets the licensure requirements of TSSP. The individual must meet all other requirements of the program in order to receive the money.

**26. Is the APT license holder required to stay within the same LEA for the years of experience required to move to a standard Level 2 license?**

Yes. The rule specifies that the 3 years of full-time teaching experience or 4 years of 0.4 FTE or greater teaching experience to move to a Level 2 license must be within one LEA. The rule gives the LEA the authority to require that the years of experience be consecutive, but this is not necessarily required by the Board. If an individual changes LEAs, the new LEA has the option of requesting up to two, one-year extensions. This may or may not give the individual enough time to meet the upgrade requirements of the rule.

**27. Are Level 1 – APT license holders subject to the same Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)/Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) tracking and ethical rules and regulations as any other licensed teacher, even if they are not employed?**

Yes, as a Level 1 – APT license is a valid license issued by USBE, any individual holding such a license would be subject to all relevant statutes and rules regarding appropriate behavior and possible discipline by the Board. For more information, see Utah Administrative Rule R277-515 and R277-210 through 216.

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**28. If I hold a Level 1 – APT license, can I transfer that license to another state? If I hold a Level 2 license but earned that license through APT, can I transfer that license to another state?**

The answers to these questions will be highly variable from state to state. Most states would likely not allow the transfer of a Level 1 – APT, particularly without teaching experience. An individual with a Level 2 license earned through APT will have at least 3 years of experience and has completed the EYE program; therefore, such a license may be viewed differently than a Level 1 – APT. In either case, it would be wise to contact the state you are interested in prior to starting down this path if at all possible.

**29. Once I complete APT and earn my Level 2 license, can I earn additional license areas/endorsements through APT; i.e. just taking the appropriate content knowledge test?**

No. See question #13. If you hold a Level 2 license you must complete the standard requirements for any new license areas or endorsements you wish to receive.

**30. Does a Level 1 – APT license expire?**

Yes, but the license is renewable as long as the individual does not yet have three years of experience in a Utah public or accredited private school. The Level 1 – APT license is good for three school years and is subject to the same rules for renewal as a standard Level 1 license. An individual must complete at least 100 license renewal points to renew a Level 1 license. See [License Renewals](#) for more information on renewing a Level 1 license.

**31. What resources & support are available for LEA's to prepare Level 1 – APT license holders to meet the Utah Effective Teaching Standards?**

No new resources are being created by the Board. However, LEAs may wish to partner with a university, third-party, or with other LEAs to provide training. At the current time, Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) intends to continue to offer the pedagogy classes typically taken by Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) candidates and these courses may be available for LEAs to utilize, in part or in whole, as long as space is available and the appropriate class fees are paid.

**32. Is there training required to be a teacher leader mentor?**

The rule does not specifically require additional training for an individual to be designated as the teacher leader mentor for a Level 1 – APT license holder. The individual must meet the definition of teacher leader in R277-513. Which is:

An LEA may designate a teacher as a teacher leader if the teacher:

- (1) Is a level 2 or level 3 licensed teacher;
- (2) Has an educator evaluation effectiveness rating of effective or highly effective for at least two years prior to being designated as a teacher leader;
- (3) Demonstrates competence in working with adult learners and peers;
- (4) Demonstrates consistent leadership, focused collaboration, distinguished teaching, and continued professional growth; and
- (5) Is recommended by the building administrator to be designated as a teacher leader.

**33. Is there a limit to the number of APT candidates that can be assigned to a single teacher leader mentor?**

No, the rule does not set any such limit.

**34. If the LEA does not employ an individual that meets the definition of teacher leader can it still use the APT option for candidates?**

The rule requires the LEA to assign a teacher leader as the Level 1 – APT holder's mentor and requires that the Level 1 – APT license holder work under the supervision of the teacher leader mentor. The rule does not currently require that the teacher leader mentor be a teacher for the LEA or even an employee of the LEA.

**35. At what stage does the APT teacher have to pass the Praxis test?**

An individual must pass the content knowledge Praxis II test in the appropriate area prior to the issuance of the Level 1 – APT license. A Level 1 – APT license holder would be required to pass one of the pedagogy Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) tests as part of the EYE requirements before being eligible for upgrade to Level 2.

**36. When does an APT applicant take the ethics test?**

The individual must complete the test before applying for the Level 1 – APT license. The online system should allow most individuals eligible for a Level 1 – APT license to take the review at [Educator Licensing Online](#). If it does not, an override can be entered to allow it by calling Educator Licensing at (801) 538-7740.

**37. If a Level 1 – APT license holder is having trouble meeting the requirements to upgrade to Level 2, can the license be extended?**

Yes. Assuming the Level 1 – APT license cannot be renewed, the rule allows for the license to be extended at the recommendation of the LEA administrator. The license may be given a maximum of two, one-school-year, extensions.

**38. Does an individual with a Level 1 – APT license generate all appropriate funding, such as Legislative Salary Adjustment, Professional Staff Costs, and Supplies and Materials?**

A Level 1 – APT license is considered a license for the purpose of all of these funding formulas. As long as all other requirements are met, an individual with a Level 1 – APT license will generate funding through all appropriate formulas.

**40. How are APT teachers evaluated to determine if they are successful?**

An individual holding a Level 1 – APT license would be evaluated based on the LEA’s evaluation system in the same manner as any other Level 1 teacher. Anything beyond this system would be at the discretion of the LEA.

**41. Can a Letter of Authorization (LoA) be requested for an individual holding a Level 1 – APT license?**

The rule does not prohibit an individual holding a Level 1 – APT license from receiving a LoA in another area. Therefore, such an individual could receive a LoA based on the standard rules and procedures for LoAs.

**42. Can a Level 1 – APT license holder be placed on an SAEP?**

No. The rule specifically prohibits a Level 1 – APT license holder from seeking endorsement in another area until the individual has upgraded to Level 2.

**43. How does APT work with a Dual Immersion position?**

An individual may work as a Dual Immersion Language teacher with either a Secondary or Elementary License area, the license area issued would depend on the test passed by the candidate. Such a position also requires the Dual Immersion and appropriate world language endorsement. As the APT program can only be in one area, the LEA could employ a Level 1 – APT license holder with a Secondary (6-12) license area and a world language endorsement and utilize a LoA for the Dual Immersion endorsement. The individual cannot receive the additional endorsement in Dual Immersion until being upgraded to Level 2, but could work to complete the requirements immediately.

**44. Does experience as a Level 1 – APT license holder in a different LEA count for the purposes of salary schedule?**

This answer would be determined by the LEA. The years as a Level 1 – APT license holder will count for all state funding sources through the Comprehensive Administration of Credentials for Teaching in Utah Schools (CACTUS) system, assuming all other requirements are met. It would be somewhat difficult for an LEA to distinguish such years in CACTUS, but it is possible. The legal questions about whether or not an LEA could deny years of experience for the purpose of salary would have to be determined by the local LEA based on its negotiated agreement.

**45. Will school accreditation or National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) eligibility be affected by the usage of this type of license?**

It is unknown how accrediting or governing bodies will view this type of license. Accreditation looks at the school as a whole and typically views licensure as important, but not a 100% proposition. It is likely that accrediting bodies would view the limited use of this type of license by a school differently than if all teachers in a particular school held this type of license. Ultimately, this question can only be answered by the accrediting or governing body.

**46. Can students earn graduation credit from an APT licensed teacher?**

A Level 1 – APT license is a fully valid licensing credential issued by USBE. As such, students taking courses from a teacher holding such a license would earn credit in the same manner as a student in a course from a teacher licensed through any other valid credential (University Program, ARL, LEA-Specific, Eminence...etc.).