



ARKANSAS

CERTIFICATION

The Office of Professional Licensure at the Arkansas Department of Education regulates the licensing of teachers. Beginning January 1, 2002, Arkansas transitioned into a performance-based licensure system. Novice teachers are required to have

- ❖ a bachelor's degree and
- ❖ successfully completed testing (Praxis I—reading, writing, math; Praxis II—content test; and Praxis II—Principles of Learning and Teaching).

Applicants who complete the above requirements are eligible for an initial license. This license is valid for not less than one year and not more than three years. During this time period, novice teachers are considered to be in a time of induction. They will have a site-based, trained mentor who will support and monitor their practice and professional growth. The Praxis III performance assessment will be administered once the teacher and mentor decide that the teacher has met the mentoring requirements. A standard teaching license will be issued after successful completion of the performance assessment.

Teachers can renew their licenses on five-year cycles. During this time all educators are required to accrue 30 professional development hours per year. Teachers can add additional areas of licensure by completing requirements on additional licensure plans. To acquire additional licensure in social studies (7–12) teachers must

- ❖ possess a standard teaching license;
- ❖ seek to add another area of licensure or endorsements; and
- ❖ be assigned to teach in an area other than the one for which they are currently licensed.

According to Arkansas' additional licensure plan, teachers who are assigned to teach in an area that is outside of their original level must complete an approved performance-based program of study and pass the required assessments. They have three years after beginning the additional licensure plan to meet the full licensure requirements. The required assessments in social studies (7–12) include Praxis II: Social Studies: Content Knowledge, test #0081 and Praxis II: Social Studies: Analytical Essays, test #0082. Minimum scores of 155 and 140, respectively, are required. It is recommended that applicants have background in the following content before attempting the Praxis tests:

- ❖ United States history;
- ❖ world history;
- ❖ government, civics, and political science;
- ❖ economics;
- ❖ behavioral science; and
- ❖ Arkansas history (must have a three-credit-hour college-level course).

The state recommends that teachers have the following experience background:

- ❖ study of contemporary and historical issues, with demonstration of the ability to provide full, insightful analysis, with logical, well-supported explanations and conclusions;
- ❖ development of the understanding of interdisciplinary relationships;
- ❖ study and practice of synthesis and integration of information within analytical essay settings;
- ❖ development of the ability to make comparisons and contrasts; and
- ❖ development of the ability to argue one side of an issue.

Nontraditional licensure programs are available in Arkansas. According to the Office of Professional Licensure, in order to be considered for the nontraditional program, applicants must have

- ❖ official transcripts showing a four-year degree has been awarded, and all course work;
- ❖ paper copy of original Praxis I and Praxis II passing test scores (if the applicant has a master's degree the Praxis I tests are waived). Pedagogical tests are to be taken the second year of the program. All test scores must be less than three years old;
- ❖ summary of work history;
- ❖ three letters of reference;
- ❖ an application and writing assignment (completed in longhand);
- ❖ proof that applicant has completed the ADE Arkansas Criminal Background Check; and
- ❖ due at orientation \$500 money order made out to the Arkansas Department of Education program fee (amount subject to change).

Candidates who are admitted into the nontraditional program are issued a

two-year provisional teaching credential. In order to be issued the initial license, the applicant must

- ❖ be fully admitted into a nontraditional teacher licensing program;
- ❖ provide employment verification for the upcoming school year;
- ❖ successfully complete the prescribed summer training session identified during the admissions process;
- ❖ pay the required training fee; and
- ❖ successfully complete a criminal background check as specified by Arkansas law.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

There are five standards for teachers of grades 7–12 in Arkansas. Each standard is divided into three categories: knowledge, dispositions, and performance. Under each of these categories the state provides evidence that teachers are meeting the standard. The standards are the same for all teachers of different content areas, but the ways in which the teachers meet these standards (evidences) are content area specific. Probably given that the standards are designed for all teachers regardless of content area, the evidence supplied under the domains of knowledge, dispositions, and performance are process oriented and not content specific.

Standards for Students

Arkansas revised its Social Studies Standards and Expectations in July 2000. According to the state’s rationale and introduction, the social studies standards “reflect the integrated field of social studies as well as the major concepts and skills of the primary disciplines within the social studies.” The state identifies these disciplines to be history, geography, civics and government, economics, and other social science disciplines (anthropology, sociology, and psychology). In the introduction to the standards it is explained that the authors intended the standards to be “broad and more general than specific so that teachers could easily fit their respective content into the overall strands and concepts.” In pursuing this intent, the standards were organized in five strands that drew upon statements from the National Council for the Social Studies.

❖ Time, Continuity, and Change

1. Content Standard 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the chronology and concepts of history and identify and explain historical relationships.
2. Content Standard 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of how ideas, events, and conditions bring about change.

❖ People, Places, and Environments

1. Content Standard 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding that people, cultures, and systems are connected and that commonalities and diversities exist among them.

2. Content Standard 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the significance of physical and cultural characteristics of places and world regions.
- ❖ Power, Authority, and Governance
 1. Content Standard 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding that different economic systems and limited resources influence cooperation and conflict in decision making.
 - ❖ Production, Distribution, and Consumption
 1. Content Standard 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of participating in a democratic society.
 2. Content Standard 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the commonalities and differences of various systems of government.
 - ❖ Social Sciences Processes and Skills
 1. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through research, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and problem solving.
 2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use the tools of the social sciences.

All of the strands have content standards listed, which subsequently include student learning expectations. The student learning expectations are presented in grade clusters, which are designed to build in complexity throughout the grade level groupings. By the end of the grade cluster, Arkansas students should be able to demonstrate that they know the information and can complete the skills outlined in each cluster. The clusters are organized for grades K–4, 5–8, and 9–12. A section entitled “Scenarios for the Classroom” appears at the end of the standards and contains possible activities in which students at different cluster levels can engage.

A framework has also been established specifically for Arkansas history. Six strands with accompanying content standards have been established for this framework. Student learning expectations are provided under each standard for grade level clusters that include K–3, 4–6, and 7–12. The following are the strands and content standards:

- ❖ Strand 1: Interdependence
 1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how Arkansas people, cultures, and systems are connected.
- ❖ Strand 2: Continuity and Change
 1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how ideas, events, and conditions change over time in Arkansas.
- ❖ Strand 3: Cultural Perspectives
 1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the commonalities and diversities among individuals, groups, and institutions in Arkansas.

❖ Strand 4: Scarcity and Choice

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how Arkansas resources necessitate decision making.

❖ Strand 5: Cooperation and Conflict

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding that different values and opposing goals can result in conflicts within Arkansas, which require cooperation for resolution.

❖ Strand 6: Citizenship

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ideals, rights, and responsibilities of participating in a democratic society within Arkansas.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

Arkansas students must earn 21 units of credit between grades 9 and 12 in order to graduate from high school. Fifteen units must be from the Common Core. Three of these Common Core units must come from social studies, including

- ❖ 1 unit of world history;
- ❖ 1 unit of United States history, emphasizing 20th century America; and
- ❖ ½ unit of civics/government.

Schools in Arkansas also have a Career Focus requirement. This requirement is established through guidance and counseling at the local district level. Local districts may require additional units for graduation beyond the 15 common core and the career focus units. These units may be in academic and/or technical areas. All common core, career focus, and elective units must total 21.

Exit Exam

There does not appear to be a graduation exam in Arkansas. There are end-of-course exams in Algebra I, Geometry, and Literacy.

ASSESSMENT

Arkansas created the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) as a comprehensive system to focus on high academic standards, professional development, student assessment, and accountability for schools and students. The Smart Start Initiative focuses on grades K–4 and the Smart Step Initiative focuses on grades 5–8. Grades 9–12 also receive focus.

Students in Arkansas take criterion-referenced tests that are based on the academic standards in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. These tests are administered at grades 4 (primary benchmark), 6 (intermediate benchmark), and 8 (middle-level benchmark), and end-of-course exams are given in Algebra I, Geometry, and Literacy. Students in Arkansas also take norm-referenced tests. The state administers the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition at grades 5, 7, and 10. No specific references to testing in history or social studies was provided in the assessment pages on the Arkansas Department of Education web site.

