

Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards

January 2025

The Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards are established under section 5(2) of the *Independent School Act*. They set out the training, education, and qualifications an applicant must have to be eligible for an Independent School Teaching Certificate (ISTC). They are used by the Director of Certification to evaluate applications for an ISTC under the *Teachers Act*.

CATEGORIES OF ISTC

System Restricted (SYR) ISTC

1. This certificate restricts the holder to teaching within a B.C. Independent Montessori or Waldorf School. A certificate can be further restricted to kindergarten depending on the program completed. Eligibility criteria include:
 - (a) 120 or more credit/semester hours of relevant post-secondary education from a recognized institution, and
 - (b) Within the above-noted 120 credit/semester hours of post-secondary education, a teaching credential from a recognized institution that provides teacher training solely within the Montessori or Waldorf philosophical, educational, or pedagogical perspective.
2. For certificates restricted to Montessori Education, the Director of Certification will recognize programs that are accredited through the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), American Montessori Society (AMS), or the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). These bodies are recognized in North America as accrediting programs that adhere to the Montessori principles and carry out regular inspections of the programs they accredit. Programs completed internationally will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
3. For certificates restricted to Waldorf Education, the Director of Certification will recognize Waldorf education programs completed in North America that are accredited through the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) or the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). Programs completed internationally will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
4. This certificate also restricts the holder to teaching in schools that operate under l'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger (AEFE). Eligibility criteria include:
 - (a) Any of the following certificates demonstrating successful completion of a competitive examination, which qualify the holder to teach in the French public school system: CRPE, CAPE, CAPES, CAPET, CAFEP, CAPLP, CAPEPS, or the Agrégation; and
 - (b) 120 or more credit/semester hours of relevant post-secondary education.

SYR Validity

5. System Restricted Certificates are non-expiring upon issue.

Subject Restricted (SR) ISTC

6. This certificate restricts the holder to teaching subject(s) within the B.C. Independent School System that are directly related to their post-secondary subject concentrations. These certificates are restricted to teaching in the following subject categories:

Additional Languages	Health Sciences
Applied Skills	Humanities
English Language Arts	Religious Studies
Fine Arts	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
Library	Special Education

7. Eligibility criteria include:
 - (a) A degree and 120 or more credit/semester hours of relevant post-secondary education from a recognized institution, and
 - (b) Within the above-noted 120 credit/semester hours, 18 credit/semester hours of upper level (third and fourth year) academic course work or 30 credit/semester hours of any level academic course work in at least one of the teachable areas identified with the applicable subject category below (certificates can be issued to an applicant under multiple subject categories if the applicant demonstrates these academic qualifications under each category):

Subject Category (SR Restriction)	Teachable Area/Academic Qualifications	
Additional Languages	Arabic Croatian English as a Second Language (ESL) Farsi French German Hebrew	Italian Japanese Korean Mandarin Punjabi Russian Spanish
Applied Skills	Accounting Automotives Business Education Career Education Computer Science/Programming ø Counselling Culinary Arts E-Commerce ø Qualifications could also fall under STEM subject area	Entrepreneurship and Marketing Equestrian Studies Food Studies Home Economics Planning Technology Education ø Textiles

Subject Category (SR Restriction)	Teachable Area/Academic Qualifications	
English Language Arts	Communications Composition Creative Writing English Journalism	Literary Studies New Media Spoken Language (Focus on verbal communications and oral traditions)
Fine Arts	Art Art Studio Dance Directing and Scriptwriting Drama Drawing and Painting	Film and Television Graphic Arts Music Photography Sculpture Theatre Production At least six credits in a fine and performing arts teachable area must be studies in theory (i.e., non-studio).
Health Sciences	Active Living Fitness and Conditioning Health Education Kinesiology	Outdoor Education Physical Education Physical Therapy
Humanities	Anthropology Asian Studies B.C. First Peoples + Canadian Studies Classical Civilization Comparative Cultures Comparative World Religions Contemporary Indigenous Studies + Economics Geography History	Human Geography International Relations Journalism Law Studies Philosophy Political Science Psychology Religious Studies Social Studies ** Sociology Women's Studies + Qualifications could also fall under Indigenous Education subject area ** Social Studies should include courses from a combination of the following disciplines: History, Geography, Canadian Studies, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, and Economics.
Indigenous Education	B.C. First Peoples + Contemporary Indigenous Studies + + Qualifications could also fall under Humanities subject area	
Library	Library	
Religious Studies	Christian Studies Islamic Studies Judaic Studies Sikh Studies	

Subject Category (SR Restriction)	Teachable Area/Academic Qualifications
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	Anatomy Astronomy Biology Calculus Chemistry Computer Science/Programming ø Engineering Environmental Science General Science *** Geography Geometry Life Sciences Mathematics Ocean Science Physical Geography Physics Robotics Statistics Technology Education ø ø Qualifications could also fall under Applied Skills *** General Science should include courses from a combination of the following disciplines: Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Physical Geography, Geology/Earth Science, Ocean Science, Environmental Science and Astronomy.
Special Education	

8. For the subject category of Additional Languages, in the absence of 30 credit/semester hours (18 upper-level credits) of course work in a teaching area, applicants whose first language is other than English will be awarded the equivalence of 30 credits of academic course work in the language upon:
 - (a) completion of high-school and a post-secondary degree in a country where that language is the primary language of instruction; and
 - (b) completion of 6 credit/semester hours of literature and composition at the post-secondary level in the language to be taught.
9. Under section 8(b), for the teachable area French, a DELF exam may be taken and a Common European Framework of Reference level B2 must be attained in the instance that 6 credit/semester hours of literature and composition have not been completed.
10. SR Certificates are not issued to elementary generalists.
11. The above list of Teachable Area/Academic Qualifications is not exhaustive. The Director of Certification may add a Teachable Area/Academic Qualification to one of the established Subject Categories. Only the ISTCSC may add additional Subject Categories to the list.

SR Validity

12. Subject Restricted Certificates are interim certificates, initially valid for up to 60 months. To upgrade to a non-expiring certificate, the certificate holder must demonstrate successful teaching in a school authorized by the Ministry of Education and Child Care to teach the B.C. curriculum for at least 1.5 years full time (or equivalent part time). Teacher-on-call experience (substitute teaching) is not accepted to upgrade to a non-expiring certificate.

School and Subject Restricted (SSR) ISTC

13. This certificate restricts the holder to teaching only at the sponsoring authority seeking to employ the applicant, and in one or more subjects related to the holder's specialized post-secondary training, unique life skills or practical experience.
14. SSR certificates may also be grade-restricted, depending on the applicant's credentials, training and experience.
 - (a) An SSR-1 designation normally requires post-secondary training in a teachable subject area, and is typically limited to grades K-9;
 - (b) An SSR-2 designation normally requires post-secondary training and credential completion (certificate, diploma, etc.) and is typically needed for instruction of electives at the Graduation Program level.
15. All SSR applications that are approved by the Director of Certification must be done in consultation with the Inspector of Independent Schools.
16. SSR certificates are not normally issued for core provincially regulated subjects commonly taught in the B.C. school system such as Drama, English, Fine Art, French, Math, Music, Science (including Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Social Studies (including History and Geography), Physical Education, and Technology Education.
17. Applications for SSR Certificates in Special Education will not be considered.
18. Applications for SSR Certificates in the areas of Drama, Fine Art, and Music may be considered depending on a School Authority's specific school or community identity.
19. SSR applications in teaching areas that are difficult to fill (e.g., Foreign Languages, Industrial or Technology Education) will also be considered.
20. Applications for the SSR in Religious Studies/Education or in Board Authority Approved (BAA) authorized courses are well suited.
21. Because areas such as Drama, Fine Art, French (as well as other languages), Music, Industrial or Technology Education are considered core provincially regulated subjects, these applications may be denied depending on particular circumstances. If this is the case, the Director of Certification may suggest that an application for a Letter of Permission (LOP) be made jointly by the individual and the School Authority.
22. If an employer has an individual teaching on an LOP (who has been denied the SSR), the employer will be required to post and advertise the position again in the following school year. If the employer is still unable to fill this position with a certified teacher, the Director of Certification, in consultation with the Inspector of Independent Schools, will consider the issuance of an SSR to the individual. This ensures that the School Authority continues to advertise the job in an attempt to find a certified individual to fill the position.

SSR Validity

23. School and Subject Restricted Certificates are interim certificates, initially valid for up to 60 months. To upgrade to a non-expiring certificate, the certificate holder must demonstrate successful teaching in an acceptable B.C. Independent School for at least 1.5 years full time (or equivalent part time). Teacher-on-call experience (substitute teaching) is not accepted to upgrade to a non-expiring certificate.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

24. To be considered eligible for an ISTC, an applicant must demonstrate language proficiency in either English or French, in accordance with sections 25 to 31.

English Language Proficiency

25. An applicant may demonstrate language proficiency in English by one of the following:
 - (a) completion of secondary school education, including grade 12, in English, in Canada,
 - (b) completion of a British Columbia Teachers' Council approved teacher education program in English, and recommendation for a Certificate of Qualification from that program,
 - (c) completion of a recognized teacher training program in English under section 1(b), in Canada,
 - (d) completion of a minimum of four years of post-secondary education in English, including the completion of a recognized teacher training program under section 1(b),
 - (e) completion of a minimum of four years of post-secondary education in English, including a recognized degree under section 7(a),
 - (f) verified K-12 teaching experience in Canada, in English, of at least three years fulltime (or part-time equivalent) within the five-year period immediately preceding application, and a successful teaching report, or
 - (g) verified K-12 teaching experience in English, in a school where the primary language of instruction is English, of at least three years full-time (or part-time equivalent) within the five-year period immediately preceding application, and a successful teaching report.
26. An applicant must provide evidence of an acceptable score on an English language proficiency test if they do not provide satisfactory evidence of English language proficiency as required in section 25.
27. For the purpose of section 26, acceptable language proficiency test scores for a SYR ISTC or a SR ISTC are:
 - (a) a total score of 95 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-based test (TOEFL-iBT), with the following minimum subtest scores: 23 on reading, listening, and writing; and 25 on speaking; or
 - (b) an overall band score of 6.5 on the Academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with a minimum score of 6.5 on Speaking band, and a minimum score of 6 on all other bands; or

- (c) an overall passing score on the Language Competency Assessment for the Teaching Profession (LCATP).
28. For the purpose of section 26, acceptable language proficiency test score for a SSR ISTC is:
- (a) a total score of 85 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-based test (TOEFL-iBT), with the following minimum subtest scores: 20 on reading, listening, and writing; and 25 on speaking; or
 - (b) an overall band score of 6.0 on the Academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with a minimum score of 6.0 on Speaking band, and a minimum score of 5 on all other bands; or
 - (c) an overall passing score on the Language Competency Assessment for the Teaching Profession (LCATP).

French Language Proficiency

29. An applicant may demonstrate language proficiency in French by one of the following:
- (a) completion of secondary school education in French, including grade 12, in Canada,
 - (b) completion of a British Columbia Teachers' Council approved teacher education program in French, and recommendation for a Certificate of Qualification from that program,
 - (c) completion of a recognized teacher training program in French, under section 1(b) in Canada,
 - (d) completion of a minimum of four years of post-secondary education in French, including the completion of a recognized teacher training program under section 1(b),
 - (e) completion of a minimum of four years of post-secondary education in French, including a recognized degree under section 7(a),
 - (f) a satisfactory assessment from an administrator at a B.C. school that operates under l'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger (AEFE) verifying the applicant's fluency and proficiency in French,
 - (g) verified K-12 teaching experience in Canada, in French, of at least three years fulltime (or part-time equivalent) within the five-year period preceding application, and a successful teaching report,
 - (h) verified K-12 teaching experience in French, in a school where the primary language of instruction is French, of at least three years full-time (or part-time equivalent) within the five-year period preceding application, and a successful teaching report.
30. An applicant must provide evidence of an acceptable score on a French language proficiency test if they do not provide satisfactory evidence of French language proficiency as set out in section 29.
31. For the purposes section 30, acceptable language proficiency test scores are:
- (a) a minimum score of B1 on the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELFI), or
 - (b) a minimum score of C1 on the Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF), or
 - (c) an overall passing score on l'Évaluation des compétences linguistiques pour la profession enseignante (ECLPE).