

In September 2015, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved regulation 603 7.14(5) to issue an Autism Endorsement. This endorsement was a requirement of Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014. There is no deadline or state requirement for a teacher to hold the Autism Endorsement. A detailed explanation and required forms can be found at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Educator Licensure website at www.mass.gov/ese/licensure.

Eligible Educators

Individuals who hold any of the following teacher licenses: Moderate Disabilities, Severe Disabilities, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or Visually Impaired. *Note: DESE is exploring the feasibility of adding additional licenses to this list.*

Employment

- The Autism Endorsement is voluntary. Teachers who are currently employed are not required to obtain the Autism Endorsement, but a district may ask a current employee to obtain the Autism Endorsement. Any request by the district to add the Autism Endorsement as a new requirement is a mandatory subject of bargaining.
- A district may add the Autism Endorsement as a prerequisite for employment in a new position or for a new employee.
- An educator may voluntarily obtain the Autism Endorsement as part of his or her Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), as part of graduate coursework, as a Professional Practice Goal in a local educator evaluation system, or to advance his or her own professional knowledge and skills.

Routes to the Autism Endorsement

Prerequisite License – Moderate Disabilities, Severe Disabilities, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or Visually Impaired

A. General Requirements

1. Subject Matter Knowledge

- Completion of approved program for the Autism Endorsement (no approved programs as of 8/16/16)
OR
- Passing score on the Autism Endorsement MTEL (not available as of 8/16/16)

2. Field Experience Requirements

- One year of teaching experience of students with Autism plus a 75-hour field experience working with students with autism in any type of school setting.
OR
- 150-hour field experience that include 75 hours in an inclusive setting and 75 hours in any type of school setting.

B. Grandfathering

- Ability to document three years of employment primarily serving students with autism.
- Demonstration of the subject matter knowledge and skill requirements for the Autism Endorsement using the *Autism Endorsement Demonstration of Meeting Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills Verification Form*
- Apply for and complete all requirements by **12/31/16**

C. Out-of-State Reciprocity

- Completion of a comparable educator preparation program that is accredited by NCATE, TEAC, CAEP, NASDTEC or other appropriate organization.
OR
- Receipt of a comparable credential/license/endorsement from another state (subject to review).

Please refer to the DESE Licensure Requirements Tool for the most current guidance.

Application and Renewal

- Teachers can apply for the Autism Endorsement using the DESE ELAR system.
- There is a \$25 fee to apply for the Autism Endorsement.
- The Autism Endorsement must be renewed every five years and requires demonstration of 30 PDPs.

Contact us at licensure@massteacher.org if you have questions about your own license, your teaching assignment or district requirements related to the Autism Endorsement. CEPP reminds readers to contact their local association president if there are questions about the Autism Endorsement as a requirement in a school or district.