



# **Vermont's Alternative Licensure Program**

## **Peer Review**

### **Program Handbook**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Peer review provides a non-traditional licensure process for candidates who demonstrate proficiency in meeting the standards for Vermont educators. Peer Review guides prospective candidates through this unique and rigorous process of licensure by evaluating and ultimately recommending licensure to qualified candidates. The peer review process recognizes that rich life experiences and diverse backgrounds, gained outside of formal teacher education programs, can be used to demonstrate the requirements for Vermont educators. This process encourages highly qualified and passionate individuals to pursue licensure to benefit all Vermont students.

## INTRODUCTION

Most individuals wishing to become licensed educators or administrators enroll and complete state approved preparation programs. However, there are alternate routes to educator licensure in many states. Vermont's alternate route is License by Evaluation or "Peer Review." Peer Review is for individuals who have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to meet the *Vermont Core Teaching Standards* (VCTS) the requirements and competencies for the endorsement(s) they seek through coursework, workshops, and life experiences, rather than through a preparation program.

The authority for the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) to grant licenses through Peer Review is provided for in Vermont's *Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals*, Section 5330. The Peer Review program is ROPA approved to recommend for licensure. Peer Review is not an accreditation process (academic institution).

### 5330 Alternate Routes to Licensure

5332 Alternative Preparation Process. An individual who holds at least a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited or state-approved institution and who has successfully completed a major, or its equivalent, in the liberal arts and sciences, or in the content area of the endorsement sought, may be licensed by completing an alternate preparation process approved by the Standards Board (except as noted in 5231).

For endorsement areas requiring an advanced degree, the individual must hold the specified advanced degree in order to be deemed eligible to proceed with any other alternate preparation process approved by the Standards Board. (*VSBPE Rules Governing the Licensure of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals*)

## Field Experience (Student Teaching) and Practicum Requirements

5233.1 Student Teaching. Evidence of at least thirteen (13) consecutive weeks of student teaching, or an **equivalent learning experience** as determined by Standards Board policy or the requirements of the endorsement.



For Peer Review initial candidates:

As defined by the VSBPE: “Student Teaching” means a **minimum of thirteen (13)** consecutive weeks of supervised, concentrated field experience required for initial licensure, including an internship, or **other concentrated field experience however named**, in which the candidate shall gradually assume the full professional roles and responsibilities of an educator in the initial endorsement area sought.”

Peer Review requires that you fulfill a 13 - week field (teaching) experience, and the one caveat is that your mentor teacher should be a licensed teacher (preferably in the endorsement you are seeking). The teacher can be licensed in another state, but they must be licensed. If you are working in a private school, which does not require teachers to be licensed, you can use a licensed teacher/administrator, in another endorsement. **Ultimately, you must document your practicum and your panelists will decide if it meets the requirement.**

The 13- week student teaching or “other concentrated field experience” requirement is a rule from the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, which gives Peer Review approval to recommend candidates for licensure. Peer Review candidates must set up their own practicums and no credit is given. Peer Review is a ROPA approved program.

However you set up your practicum, you will have to eventually, take over the course load of your mentor teacher (this includes lesson planning, and assessments, and managing the classroom). The field experience can include: observing the mentor teacher and other teachers in the school, adding classes until you take over the full course load of the mentor teacher. (“the candidate shall gradually assume the full professional roles and responsibilities of an educator in the initial endorsement area being sought.” VSBPE)

Peer Review Teaching Forms are included in candidate’s Peer Review program acceptance packet. Please see evidence for Part II of the VCTS portfolio for required evidence from the teaching experience.

Your 13-week teaching experience must include the following *Note: Some endorsements require splitting the student teaching experience between instructional levels For Example: PE K-12/ ECE Birth-Grade 3*

- Mentorship by a licensed teacher in the endorsement area you are seeking. In the event that you are the only person in that capacity, an administrator can substitute with observations of your work.
- Experience in the capacity of the actual role you are seeking. For example, work as a para-educator would not suffice for experience as a special educator – you must work in the full role of a special educator.
- If your endorsement is as a teacher, you must have significant opportunity to be in charge of the full classroom, including lesson planning, assessment, etc.



## Peer Review and Past Teaching Experience

For those candidates who wish to use teaching experience that is older than the recommended 5 years, please be advised that your panelists will decide whether, or not your experience meets General Requirement #3 Field Experience (Student Teaching), from the documentation you submit. This is the same for all candidates, and the Peer Review Coordinator cannot review or approve student teaching experiences.

*The following situations are examples of acceptable evidence:*

- Working under a provisional license or emergency license to teach in the subject area with an appropriately licensed mentor.
- Teaching in a classroom at a private or independent school with an appropriately licensed mentor.
- A field (teaching) experience arranged by the candidate (or an institution of higher education) with an appropriately licensed mentor.

*The following situations are examples that would **NOT** be considered acceptable evidence:*

- Working as a substitute teacher (unless as a long-term substitute assignment)
- Working as a paraprofessional
- Tutoring or working only with small groups (unless applicable to endorsement, such as English Language Learners educators).

### **Why do we require this?**

- **In peer review, we are not able to observe candidates in their classrooms. This experience and the documentation serves as our evidence that the candidate has experience working with the appropriate age level of children, and provides documentation that they have done so successfully.**

### **Peer Review Field Experience (student teaching) Action Plan Policy.**

Peer Review Panelists may determine the 13- week teaching experience does not meet the requirement due to one or more of the following:

- Low scores (1s) and/or rationales on the candidate's professional attributes forms completed by the mentor teacher.
- Candidate did not cover the full instructional level for the endorsement (i.e. elementary K-2 & 3-6; PE (3) PK to Grade 12).
- Candidate did not fulfill the 13- weeks (520 hours) to meet the student teaching requirement.
- Student teaching was not in the endorsement sought through Peer Review.



- Mentor teacher/administrator was not a licensed U.S. teacher/administrator.
- Other -as determined by the Peer Review Panel.

Peer Review Panelists have the following options:

- Limit instructional level based on student teaching experience and portfolio evidence.
- Plan of Action
  - Require candidate to complete an additional practicum. Length and instructional level determined by the panelists.
  - Additional evidence as determined by the panelists.

Process: Follows the Plan of Action procedure.

The above policy applies to licensed educators adding additional endorsements.

### **Practicum**

For current licensed Vermont educators seeking to add an additional endorsement:

As defined by VSBE “Practicum” means a minimum of sixty (60) clock hours of supervised field experience, which need not be consecutive, but must accumulate to sixty hours.

5233.2 Administrative Internship. Evidence of at least 300 hours of an administrative internship for those seeking an initial (\*) administrator endorsements. Adding a second administrative endorsement, the full 300 hour requirement may not be required.

(\*) Please note that candidates seeking to add an initial Administrative endorsement must have three years teaching as a licensed teacher. Please see endorsement requirements for specifics.

There are practicum forms specific for educators seeking to add an additional endorsement, which will be included in candidate’s Peer review program acceptance packet.

This Handbook is designed to provide the prospective Peer Review candidate with the information needed to:

- Understand the Peer Review process and its expectations and requirements.
- Determine if this route is the most appropriate pathway to licensure.
- Gain a better understanding of how to prepare a professional portfolio that clearly and accurately reflects his or her knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- Understand the criteria the Peer Review Panel uses and the process it undertakes in evaluating the candidate for initial licensure or adding an endorsement.
- Understand how to proceed after the Panel has made its recommendation.

## **PEER PREVIEW PROCESS**



The Peer Review process has six stages: (1) applying for Peer Review, (2) attending a Peer Review Clinic, (3) preparing the portfolio, (4) submitting your portfolio, (5) Panel interview and (6) acting upon the Peer Review Panel’s recommendation. While all candidates must proceed through these stages, the process is somewhat different for individuals seeking *initial licensure* (i.e., those who do not currently hold a Vermont license) and those seeking an *additional endorsement* to add to their current Vermont license. As you read this Handbook, please note which set of procedures pertains to you.

## **STAGE 1: Applying to Peer Review**

In order to be considered for Peer Review, all prospective applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree (BA, BS, BFA).

In some cases, the endorsement area may require a specified advanced degree. Examples: School Counselor, Director of Curriculum, Principal and others as noted in the [Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals](#).

**Entry into the Peer Review program is based on VSBPE rule and our current approval through ROPA.**

If a Peer Review candidate does not hold a baccalaureate degree (BA, BS, BFA) in the endorsement (content/subject) they are seeking, the candidate needs to show evidence of having “the equivalent”. The following experiences toward fulfillment of this requirement:

- Number of credits in the content (endorsement) area (example: mathematics)
- Major (30 credits) or Minor (18 credits) in the content/subject area
- Post Graduate course work in education or endorsement sought. (MA, PhD. Certifications)
- A Master’s degree (if applicable to the endorsement).
- Formal Training without college credit –Education PL workshops
- Years of experience teaching the content area/general education experience, private school, para educator etc.
- Years of experience in the endorsement sought (For example: daycare assistant for ECE, computer programmer for Ed Tech Specialist).
- Passing Praxis Core (or in lieu of test) and Praxis II (if applicable) Tests - Passing scores in the content area sought.

Apply for acceptance in the Peer Review Program in the [Vermont Online Licensing System for Educators \(ALiS\)](#). **To apply potential candidate MUST submit:**



- (1) **A current resume** detailing relevant experience for the endorsement the candidate is seeking, and any teaching or related experience.
- (2) **official transcripts** sent directly from the college/university. Request Official Transcripts be sent directly to the Agency of Education either in the sealed envelope in which they are issued or emailed directly to [aoe.transcripts@vermont.gov](mailto:aoe.transcripts@vermont.gov).
- (3) **AND ALL** (Praxis Core or Equivalent & Praxis II (if applicable) for the endorsement you are seeking must be complete prior to submission (effective July 1, 2017) Official test scores must come from ETS or College Board. For College Board scores over 10 years old, a student copy may be scanned and uploaded to candidate's application checklist. Some candidates have used their high school transcripts which have their SAT and/or ACT scores. Please see "Testing Requirements" information on the Peer Review webpage.

## Educator Testing Requirements

It is a requirement that candidates successfully meet Vermont's passing scores, for each appropriate test, prior to submitting an application. Evidence of passing exam scores should be sent electronically to the Agency of Education AND included in the candidate's portfolio.

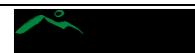
**Praxis CORE:** All candidates seeking *initial licensure* in Vermont must meet the State's passing scores on the Core Academic Skills for Educators Test; in reading (156), mathematics (150) and writing (162) or submit acceptable scores on one of the alternate exams detailed below.

**Praxis II:** All candidates seeking *initial licensure* or an *additional endorsement* in Early Childhood Education (K – Grade 3), Elementary Education (K-6), English (7-12), English Language Learners (PK-12), Science (7-12), Social Studies (7-12), Mathematics (7-12), Art (PK-12), Music (PK-12), Physical Education (PK-12), School Psychologist (PK-12), Modern and Classical Languages (PK-12), Middle Grades (5-9), Reading/English Language Arts Specialist (PK-12), Health Education (PK-12).

For more information on educator testing, including costs, testing dates, and location of test sites, refer to [Vermont's Testing Requirements for Educator Licensure](#).

If you meet these requirements, you should first read this handbook and the requirements and competencies of the license and/or endorsement you seek. If after doing so you are reasonably certain that you meet the requirements and competencies, begin the application process by applying for the Peer Review program in our [Online System \(ALiS\)](#).

- If you are seeking **initial licensure**, you will need to log on and click "apply for new license" from the menu. Select **NO** to all the Preliminary Questions. You will then be prompted to select the Alternate Route you are pursuing. Choose Peer Review and complete the application.
- If you are seeking an **additional endorsement**, you will need to log on and click "add new endorsement" from the menu. Select Peer Review as your route and complete the application.



The requirements for acceptance into the Peer Review program are the same for all individuals, regardless of whether they are seeking *initial licensure* or an *additional endorsement*.

Your application will be reviewed to determine your eligibility for Peer Review. You will receive a letter of eligibility via email informing you of the decision. Attached with the letter, if determined eligible, will be a copy of the:

- Acceptance letter with portfolio due date
- VT Core Teaching Standards Instructions and scoresheets (initial only)
- Endorsement Competencies Scoresheets (add & initial)
- Alis Application Instructions (Portfolio payment)
- Field Experience Teaching Forms/or Practicum Documentation (general requirement #3)

## **STAGE 2: Attending A Peer Review Clinic**

Candidates must attend a Peer Review Clinic conducted by the Peer Review Program Coordinator.

Attendance at a minimum of one Peer Review Clinic is required within 12 months prior to submission of portfolio, unless a portfolio extension is granted. Clinic certificates are valid for up to two years with a portfolio extension. Attendees receive certificates at the clinic to upload to their portfolios (portfolio required).

Clinic attendees will receive an overview of Peer Review process and have an opportunity to ask questions. Individual consultation will be available at the end (time permitting). Clinics are offered once a month from 4PM to 6PM. Clinic dates and online registration is found on the Peer Review webpage. Registered attendees receive a confirmation email with information about the clinic, directions and parking information. There is no charge to attend a clinic.

## **STAGE 3: Preparing the Portfolio**

A portfolio is an edited but significant collection of materials or artifacts that you assemble in order to demonstrate and verify that you possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for meeting the requirements and competencies of the license and/or endorsement area you seek. It is the single most important component of the Peer Review process. It is through the portfolio that the Panel is introduced to you and learns about your experiences, accomplishments, and abilities. It is crucial that you approach creating your portfolio in a thoughtful, purposeful manner and take the time needed to ensure that your portfolio is a complete and accurate reflection of who you are as an educator.

The guidelines for creating your portfolio are presented in the next chapter and are discussed at the Peer Review Clinics. It is strongly recommended that these general guidelines are read, understood and followed. Be certain that you support statements on the quality of your work with documentation and evidence. It is important for you to know that an organized and well-written portfolio will present you in the best possible light. On the other hand, a portfolio that is

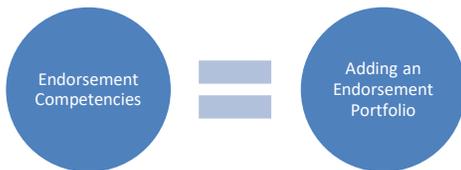


difficult for the Panel to read because it is disorganized and has typographical or grammatical errors will do the opposite; it will adversely impact the Panel's evaluation of your knowledge and abilities.

**If you are seeking Initial licensure, your portfolio will consist of two parts:**



**If you hold a current level 1 or level 2 Vermont license your portfolio will only contain the endorsement competencies.**



### **What Is a Peer Review Portfolio?**

A professional portfolio is a purposeful and reflective collection of documents and artifacts that provide evidence of one's knowledge, skills, accomplishments, and learning. The purpose of a Peer Review Portfolio is to provide evidence of your knowledge and accomplishments as they relate to the Vermont Core Teaching Standards (initial licensure) and/or the endorsement competencies. The portfolio is more than a record of activities and experiences; it indicates specifically **how** you met the competency and what **evidence** exists to verify that you have done so.

Step 1 – Study the Requirements/Competencies/Standards

Before you begin to write, read and study the initial licensure general requirements and basic principles, if applicable, and the endorsement's additional requirements and competencies very carefully in order to fully understand the knowledge and skills each competency addresses. You will see that there is a great deal of overlap, especially between the initial licensure standards and some of the endorsement competencies. Note where the overlap is; you may decide to use the same evidence to address any competencies/standards that are similar.



## Step 2 - Collect Evidence

Using your knowledge of the competencies/standards, you need to address, begin collecting evidence. Collect evidence, artifacts, and documents that you believe can demonstrate that you have met the general requirements, VT Core Teaching Standards (initial only), and/or the additional requirements/competencies for the endorsement. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Transcripts of relevant coursework
- Student work and standards-based lesson plans<sup>1</sup>
- Evaluations or performance reviews of educational work experiences
- Letters of reference (of teaching observations, co-teaching, specific to standards)
- Certificates of participation at related workshops and conferences
- Documentation of teaching experiences
- Documentation of conference or workshop preparation and presentation
- Samples of published or unpublished papers or articles
- Documentation of educational advocacy activities
- Participation in school-community partnership activities
- Participation in school-business/industry partnership activities
- Evidence of your creative work (e.g., pictures of your sculptures or paintings)
- Video of your teaching
- Lesson plans aligned with *Vermont Core Teaching Standards* (required for initial licensure)
- Documentation of integrated standards-based studies/thematic units
- Concrete examples of accommodations made for students with different needs/styles
- Student portfolios
- Documentation of differentiated student learning plans
- Grading/assessment policies and examples
- Evidence of use of computer technology in the learning and teaching process
- Documentation of feedback from colleagues and supervisors
- Documentation of participation on school-community projects
- Bibliography of research articles read, including critical annotations for each article
- Documentation of service on district, state or national educational committees
- Documentation of job-embedded new learning activities

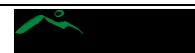
**Note: Please redact all personal information from evidence documentation. When using photographs/video please follow school district's policy.**

## Step 3 – Select Evidence

Of the possible artifacts you have included, select those, which will **best document** how you meet the competencies/standards. It is important to be selective - more is not necessarily better.

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<sup>1</sup> It is a requirement that samples of student work and standards-based lesson plans be included in the portfolio. Ensure student confidentiality by deleting names and other identifying information from student work and assessments. If using photographs and/or videotapes of students, be certain to get the appropriate permission to do so.



Each requirement should be documented by more than one piece of evidence (**a minimum of 2 pieces of evidence for each competency and P.C.**) and each piece of evidence can be used for more than one requirement. Please redact all personal information from evidence documentation. When using photographs/video please follow school district's policy.

When selecting which pieces of evidence to use, ask yourself the following questions:

- Which evidence do I have available? Which do I need to locate? Which do I need to generate?
- Which are the most persuasive and offer clear evidence of my meeting the competency?
- Which can be used to address more than one requirement?
- How current is this, and does it, reflect the latest ideas of best practice?
- Have I used as much evidence of student learning as possible to document teaching competence? (Attestations/letters should be used sparingly.)
- Do I have two pieces of specific evidence to demonstrate this requirement or competency?

**Tip: More is not necessarily better. Be selective and make sure evidence aligns with the competency.**

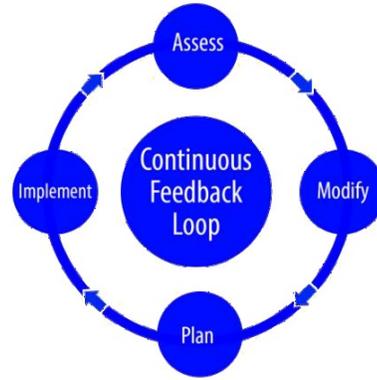
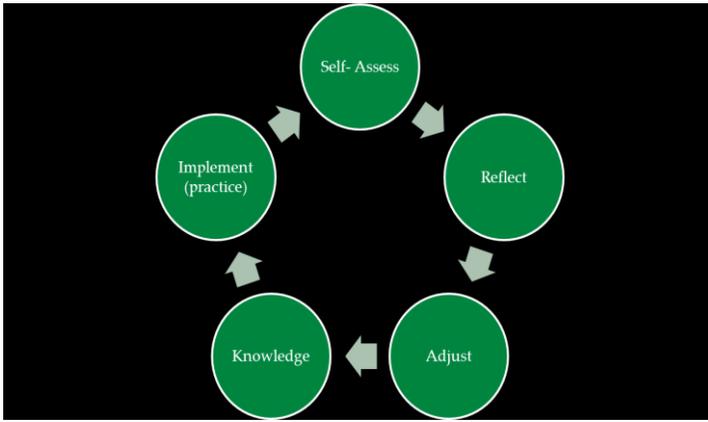
## **Writing to the Competencies/Standards**

Connections and reflections distinguish a portfolio from just a collection of documents and artifacts. It is necessary to articulate the connection between the competencies/standards and your "internal" understanding of these competencies/standards. In the selecting stage, you matched artifacts with specific competencies/standards. This step in the portfolio-building process is where the thinking that led to that linkage becomes clear. In addition to explaining the connections between the evidence and your artifacts and accomplishments, you must reflect on how you have been affected by these experiences. Reflective statements will enhance the meaningfulness of the artifacts included in the portfolio.

## **Self- Assessment and the Portfolio Process**

The Peer Review portfolio process is an exercise in self-reflection of practice. The process begins with a **self -assessment** of practice from feedback data (student, assessments, observations) . **Reflecting** on the feedback will inform **adjustments** of teaching methods and/or materials. Using the new **knowledge** gained from the reflection **implement adjustments** into practice. Self-assessment is a tool that every successful educator has in their teaching tool box. To modify (adjust), plan (knowledge) and implement within their practice. This continuous assessment is called a *feedback loop* (diagram below) and candidates will use this skill throughout the portfolio process.





## Format for Addressing Endorsement (Subject) Competencies Section (Initial and adding endorsement candidates)

The narrative for each has four major components:

- a re-statement of the requirement, standard, or competency being addressed
- the evidence that shows you have met the requirement, standard, or competency
- a detailed description of the activity or event that produced the evidence you have included
- an analysis and/or reflection explaining how what you have done meets the requirement, standard, or competency

Include the artifact (e.g., student assessment) or document (e.g., transcript) you have used to address the requirement or competency. Be sure to label each piece of evidence.

### 1. Re-state the Requirement, Standard, or Competency:

Begin your narrative for addressing each requirement, standard, or competency by writing it verbatim. Be certain to include the number of the requirement, standard, or competency as it appears. Candidates will use their endorsement competency score sheets to build their portfolio. Candidate's portfolio should mirror the endorsement competency score sheets.

*Example - Social Studies (7-12):*

**Knowledge Standards #1:** Methods of historical and social scientific investigation and critical evaluation, including use of evidence, data, and varied perspectives in interpreting historical events and analyzing public issues.

*Example – Early Childhood Education:*

**5440-36-KS&PS/PS1:** Demonstrates respect for children's diverse family structures, values, and traditions.

*Example-Science (7-12)*



**2. Evidence:**

In this section, you need to identify the documentation that verifies the activity you described in the first section. Include the actual evidence uploaded to the portfolio. Evidence can be representational, such as pictures of student projects.

One carefully planned source of evidence may be used to meet more than one competency. However, each competency must include a *separate* analysis/reflection entry. Please do not copy and paste analysis/reflection from another standard or competency. Rewrite the entry to meet standard or competency.

**3. Description of the Activity:**

In this section, you need to describe what you have done to meet this competency. This section includes the details of **what, where, and when**. One activity may be used to address more than one competency, but should not be the only piece used throughout your portfolio.

**4. Analysis/Reflection:**

This section of your narrative includes your thinking or justification as to why the activity (supported by evidence) meets the requirement, standard, or competency. This is where the connections between the competency, the activity, and the evidence that you are presenting are explicitly stated. This is where the self- assessment feedback loop process will be used.

### **Format for addressing Vermont Core Teaching Standards Portfolio Section (Initial Licensure Candidates Only)**

If you are applying to Peer Review to obtain *initial licensure* in Vermont, you must address the following:

- General Requirements for All Initial Licenses
- Vermont Core Teaching Standards or Leadership Core Standards depending on endorsement being sought **AND**
- Endorsement Competencies including: Knowledge and Performance standards and additional requirements

#### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL INITIAL LICENSES**

Requirement #1: Except as otherwise noted, the applicant shall hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited or state-approved institution and shall have successfully completed a major, or its equivalent, in the liberal arts and sciences, or in the content area of the endorsement sought.

Requirement #2: Documentation of the specified content knowledge and performance standards and additional requirements, if any, for the endorsement being sought.



- Requirement #3: “Student Teaching” means a **minimum of thirteen (13)** consecutive weeks of supervised, concentrated field experience required for initial licensure, including an internship, or **other concentrated field experience however named**, in which the candidate shall gradually assume the full professional roles and responsibilities of an educator in the initial endorsement area sought.”
- Requirement #4: Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in speaking, writing, and other forms of creative expression and ability to apply basic mathematical skills, critical thinking skills, and creative thinking skills.
- Requirement #5: Demonstrated competency as specified in the following requirements (also referred to as the Vermont Core Teaching and Leadership Standards).

**Vermont Core Teaching Standards-** the Vermont Licensure Portfolio (VLP) was developed and adopted by Educator Preparation Programs in the state of Vermont. The format consists of three parts that align with the Vermont Core Teaching Standards (VCTS).

Peer Review is implementing the new portfolio format as of 9/1/2017. Any candidates applying after this date will use this format. This section is for initial licensure candidates ONLY. Initial licensure portfolio has the Vermont Core Teaching Standards AND Endorsement Competencies.

**Overview:**

The Vermont Licensure Portfolio (VLP) consists of three parts that align with the Vermont Core Teaching Standards (VCTS), which are based on the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Standards and Learning Progressions 1.0.

**Part One Theme: The Learner and Learning** - Candidates demonstrate their ability to thoughtfully examine, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon their readiness to use an understanding of learning theory, learner development, and learner differences for the design of effective learning experiences in a variety of settings with diverse learners.

**Standard 1: Learner Development** – The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Performance Criterion 1.1: Candidates use an understanding of learning theory (in areas such as cognitive, linguistic, social emotional or physical) to design appropriate learning experiences.

Performance Criterion 1.2: Candidates use an understanding of developmental theory (in areas such as cognitive, linguistic, social emotional or physical) to design appropriate learning experiences.

**Standard 2: Learning Differences** – The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each



learner to meet high standards.

Performance Criterion 2.1: Candidates use an understanding of individual differences to design

Inclusive learning experiences.

Performance Criterion 2.2: Candidates use an understanding of diverse cultures and communities to design inclusive learning experiences.

**Standard 3: Learning Environments** – The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Performance Criterion 3.1: Candidates design learning environments that support individual

Learning marked by active engagement.

Performance Criterion 3.2: Candidates design learning environments that support Collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.

***Part Two Theme: Content Knowledge and Instructional Practice*** - Candidates demonstrate the ability to thoughtfully examine, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon the use of content knowledge and assessment, planning, and instructional strategies to implement creative, rigorous, and engaging learning.

**Standard 4: Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge** – The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) [they] teach and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of content.

Performance Criterion 4.1: Candidates accurately communicate central concepts of the discipline.

Performance Criterion 4.2: Candidates accurately address common misconceptions of the Discipline.

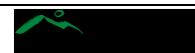
**Standard 5: Application of Content for Transferable Skills** – The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Performance Criterion 5.1: Candidates engage learners in applying perspectives from varied disciplines in authentic contexts (such as local and global issues).

Performance Criterion 5.2: Candidates integrate cross-disciplinary skills (such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving) to help learners demonstrate their learning in unique ways.

**Standard 6: Assessment** – The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learning progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Performance Criterion 6.1: Candidates plan and implement multiple methods of assessment over time and use the results to inform their instructional practice.



Performance Criterion 6.2: Candidates analyze an individual learner’s work products over time using multiple means of assessment, in order to adjust instruction for that student.

**Standard 7: Planning for Instruction** – The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Performance Criterion 7.1: Candidates plan instruction by drawing upon knowledge of content areas to meet rigorous learning goals.

Performance Criterion 7.2: Candidates plan instruction by drawing upon knowledge of learners to meet rigorous learning goals.

**Standard 8: Instructional Strategies** – The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Performance Criterion 8.1: Candidates use a variety of instructional strategies to make the discipline accessible for diverse learners.

Performance Criterion 8.2: Candidates use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

**Part Three Theme: Professional Responsibility** - Candidates demonstrate their ability to thoughtfully examine, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon their readiness for professional responsibility.

**Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice** – The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate [their] practice, particularly the effects of [their] choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Performance Criterion 9.1: Candidates are prepared for self-directed, continuous professional learning.

Performance Criterion 9.2: Candidates are prepared to practice in a legal and ethical manner. **(required evidence for Peer Review)**

**Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration** – The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth and to advance the profession.

Performance Criterion 10.1: Candidates are prepared to collaborate with stakeholders (such as learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, or community members) to ensure student learning.

Performance Criterion 10.2: Candidates are prepared to advance the profession through advocacy, leadership and/or action research.

**Components:**



Each part includes an Evidence Chart and a Narrative. Candidates select one (1) Performance Criteria (PC) per Vermont Core Teaching Standard (VCTS) to analyze.

**Evidence:**

See the Evidence Chart for directions on identifying evidence and connecting this evidence to the Performance Criteria listed above.

Part Two and Part Three Theme's have required evidence. However, the required evidence does not have to be the evidence selected for analysis in the narrative. Each piece of required evidence must be aligned with a Performance Criterion. Peer Review **requires two pieces of evidence per Performance Criteria** for evidence chart, but one P.C. analysis per standard for narrative.

**The required evidence for Part Two Theme includes:**

1. A unit of study that contains at least five lessons and is representative of a candidate's endorsement area(s), with an indication of how instruction will accommodate a range of learners and students with special needs; **At least one lesson plan** demonstrating how the use of technology improved student learning (include assessment) and accessibility for all learners. For example: cameras, video. (Peer Review).
2. **12-15 minutes of video** (continuous or in clips) of the candidate providing instruction during the Student Teaching or Internship phase of the program, with accompanying annotations regarding the candidate's teaching practice. Video formats include iMovie, YouTube, and other digital recording formats. Annotations can be thoughts, self-reflections/critiques of your teaching practice. Link to your video must be on the evidence chart, regardless if you use it as evidence or not. Tip: Video several different teaching moments and select best for portfolio evidence. **For Peer Review candidates using previous teaching experience, in lieu of video please submit two additional supervisor's observations and/or evaluations of your previous teaching experience.**
3. **A supervisor's observation or evaluation** of the candidate's teaching practice;
4. **An analysis of samples of one student's work** over time (multiple samples of one student) or analysis of samples of multiple students' work over time drawn from the unit of study. (Student work means original products instead of teacher-generated tests, worksheets, etc., or standardized assessment tools.) **Please redact all personal information from student work. Refer to student as "Student A".**

**The required evidence for Part Three Theme (specifically addressing P.C. 9.2) includes:**

1. **Read and sign the Vermont Code of Ethics for Vermont Educators** form (at the end of this manual).
2. **Answer the question: What does ethical teaching practice look like in the classroom/school?"** Suggestions: observation of mentor teacher, IEP meetings, curriculum meetings. Discuss what happened, roles of people, what role did you play, what are your legal and ethical responsibility as a teacher.



3. **Answer the question: “How do you model (professional resource), teach, or guide learners to use technology in a safe, legal and ethical way?”** Evidence suggestions: assistive technology, classroom rules &/or school social media policy, classroom/school technology usage rules/policies, citation of sources, lesson plans incorporating age appropriate technology.

## **Narrative:**

For the narrative for each part, you are to demonstrate your ability to use three types of writing: **description, analysis, and reflection** (DAR). In a formally written and structured report, concisely address the three components listed below. Your narrative must adhere to common standards for academic writing including grammar, usage, and mechanics (see the VT State Rubric for Writing Conventions), format (headings, spacing, pagination, etc.), and style (citations, quotes, and references). As a report of your professional performance, it is acceptable to use first person and active voice. When referencing students redact all personal information, including names. Instead, refer to students as Student A, Student B etc. When using evidence that contains confidential information, such as an IEP report.

## **Description**

The purpose of the Description is to establish a meaningful context for your narrative. The description includes two elements, which can be addressed, in either order:

1. Part Theme – Interpret the meaning of the theme (e.g. Part One Theme: The Learner and Learning--?). Address the theme holistically.
2. Evidence – Describe the context (setting and situation) where you collected evidence and explain how the body of evidence helped you make meaning of the theme.

## **Analyze**

The purpose of the Analysis is to demonstrate your ability to critically, evaluate your performance as an emerging professional. To do so, you will construct a critical evaluation of your achievement of one Performance Criterion for each Standard. **You will write 10 analyses in total (3 for Part One Narrative, 5 for Part Two Narrative, and 2 for Part Three Narrative).** Address individually the P.C.s you have selected. **Remember (1) P.C. per standard.** Each analysis should use the following four elements:

1. **Performance Criterion** – Explicitly interpret the features of the Performance Criterion. (State the P.C. verbatim e.g. - *Performance Criterion 9.2: Candidates are prepared to practice in a legal and ethical manner*)



2. **Analysis of Evidence** – Select 1 piece of evidence from the Evidence Chart for the chosen Performance Criterion (P.C.). Articulate how your evidence connects to the Performance Criterion. Throughout your analysis, you should make explicit/direct connections to your evidence.
3. **Self- Assessment** – Use the Performance Criterion (P.C.) evidence to evaluate how well you met the Performance Criterion: In what ways does your performance (based on evidence) demonstrate your attainment of the P.C. and in what ways does it not? Base your self-evaluation on the correspondence between the Performance Criterion (P.C.) and your evidence (see diagram below).

## Reflect

The purpose of the Reflection is to review your learning and identify areas for continued growth. The Reflection is an opportunity to practice reflective writing, in complement to descriptive and analytic writing. The intent of the Reflection is to have candidates employ reflective writing about the Theme of the Part. If a program has candidates construct Part One Theme across separate assignments, then they should refer to the Theme in each Reflection, which would provide more practice with reflective writing.

The Reflection includes two elements:

1. Review of your personal learning – Examine specific incidents and points of learning related to the theme of the Part (e.g. Part I: The Learner and Learning), reconsider long-standing perceptions that were challenged or affirmed.
2. Plan for ongoing learning – Conceptualize ideas for ongoing growth in this area.

## Narrative Prompts

### Description Prompts for Part One, Two & Three Themes Narratives:

(Created by Ellen Baker, Director of EPP, University of Vermont)

- *Unpack the Theme of Part One, Two, or Three*
- *What are the **key concepts** that are being discussed in this part of the portfolio?*
- *Break the description down into subcategories by highlighting the **standards** and what they mean?*
- *What are the contexts in which you collected the evidence?*



### **Analysis Prompts for One, Two & Three Themes Narratives:**

(Created by Ellen Baker, Director of EPP, University of Vermont)

1. **Unpack** the Performance Criterion (PC) - Interpret the main ideas of the PC (*PC 1.1 asks that the candidate..... Or PC 1.2 refers to..... or I interpret PC 2.2 to mean*)
2. **Literature** that supports the main ideas of the PC (be sure to use proper APA format) (*according to..... or as stated by.....or through my research I found that.....*)
3. Select your **evidence** and **directly connect to PC-** (*with the knowledge that I gained through my experience , I have selected.....as my evidence or This evidence documents my understanding of differentiation because.....*)
4. Critically evaluate how well you achieved your goal with the evidence
  - *While this piece of evidence documents my ability to.....in the future I will.....*
  - *Something (s) that I can do to improve the effectiveness of my instruction is (are) to.....*
  - *In the future should I choose to teach this again I would.....*

### **Reflection Prompts for One, Two & Three Themes Narratives:**

(Created by Ellen Baker, Director EPP, University of Vermont)

- *Personal learning- what specific incidents or points of learning most impacted your perceptions*
- *What thoughts or perceptions were changed?*
- *What are new understandings you gained?*
- *What will you do in the future to improve your practice?*
- *What do you still wonder about?*

### **Scoring:**

Each Part will be assessed by your panelists using rubrics and score sheets (found in your acceptance packet). In order to earn a PASS on any Part, the majority of scored items must achieve the targets listed in the third column, none can be scored in the first column.

### **Thoughts from Students and the new VCTS format:**

*"Self-reflection...what I need to work on NOT what I am good at. Portfolio was the capstone of my educational career."*

*"Portfolio forced us to reflect on our practice. Forces you to look in a mirror. The portfolio made me a more confident person and teacher."*

*"Document everything you do! Especially during your student teaching. Don't rely on memory (dates, meetings, and teaching) keep a journal."*

*"If you take it in segments it (portfolio) goes quicker. Be diligent. Set aside time each week to work on."*



*“Start early....use peers, colleagues, mentor teacher as resources.”*

## **STAGE 4: Submitting Your Portfolio**

Before submitting your portfolio, please make sure all evidence links work, and that you have completed all the portfolio checklist items. We recommend that candidates have a second person try their portfolio links to ensure their links work. The Peer Review Program Coordinator will review the portfolio for “completeness”. If any revision or corrections are, needed the Peer Review Program Coordinator will email the candidate to allow them to correct/revise their portfolio.

### Portfolio Checklist

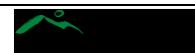
- ✓ Evidence Chart Completed (including required evidence for Parts II & III) (initial applicants only)
- ✓ Vermont Core Teaching Standards Parts I, II & III Narrative (initial applicants only)
- ✓ Endorsement Competencies (both initial and adding an endorsement)
- ✓ Copy of clinic attendance certificate
- ✓ Copy of test score report(s)
- ✓ Copy of transcript(s)
- ✓ Resume
- ✓ Field Experience or Practicum Form completed by mentor teacher/advisor
- ✓ Three letters of support **from professionals** (such as mentor teacher, administrators, colleagues) who can attest to your work and knowledge. (NOTE: Must be on official letterhead and signed.)
- ✓ Student Work, Lesson Plans and Assessments

When ready please submit your Portfolio link to the Peer Review email [AOE.PeerReview@vermont.gov](mailto:AOE.PeerReview@vermont.gov). All portfolio links must be kept active for SEVEN years from time of submission.

### **Instructions for submitting your portfolio and your online application:**

In your online account, go to View Pending Application Details (active link highlighted in blue); Checklist with completion tasks. (*Portfolio's cannot be submitted through Alis.*) Portfolio links are emailed to Peer Review Program Coordinator. This step in the application process is just to let the Peer Review Program Coordinator know Applicant's portfolio is ready to be reviewed.

- Fill in clinic attendance information.
- **“Submit Portfolio to AOE”**
- Email portfolio link to [AOE.PeerReview@vermont.gov](mailto:AOE.PeerReview@vermont.gov)



- Peer Review Coordinator will review and accept your portfolio and then instruct you to pay the portfolio fee through your online account. All payments must be made by credit card unless other arrangements are made with the Peer Review Coordinator's permission.

## **Paying Portfolio Fee**

When the Peer Review Coordinator accepts your portfolio, they will email you requesting payment.

- Email instructs applicant to "View application details";
- Button says "**Pay Portfolio Fee Now**"
- Pay \$1,200.00 fee via credit card and "Submit to AOE".

## **Peer Review Extension**

If you are unable to meet your portfolio deadline, you may request a portfolio extension. Portfolio extensions are limited to one extension per application, and extends your due date for another year. To apply for an extension please mail a check for \$50.00 made out to the VT AOE and mailed to the AOE. Please enclose a note stating that you are requesting a Peer Review Extension. If you do not meet the new extension deadline, you will need to reapply to the Peer Review Program and meet any new testing/competencies/standards.

## **STAGE 5: Peer Review Interview**

After the portfolio fee is paid, the Peer Review Program Coordinator will assemble a panel of two experienced educators licensed in the endorsement area candidate is seeking. The panel receives the candidate's portfolio and reviews it independently using the forms provided with the portfolio.

The Peer Review Coordinator schedules interview and notifies candidate via email. The candidate meets with the Peer Review Panel to answer any questions and provide any supplemental information requested or desired.

After the interview with the candidate, the Panel (privately) discusses the interview and portfolio to determine if the letter of determination will be issued, or if additional information is needed for unmet competencies/standards. The Peer Review Program Coordinator serves as a facilitator to the Panel.

The Peer Review Evaluation is a four-step process: (1) Initial review of the portfolio for "completeness" (2) individual Panel members' assessments of the portfolio, (3) the interview with the candidate, and (4) the Panel's determination. Throughout all phases of the evaluation



process, the members of the Peer Review Panel are responsible for determining whether the candidate meets the general requirements and basic principles for initial licensure (if applicable) and the endorsement specific knowledge and performance standards and additional requirements. The role of the Peer Review Program Coordinator is that of facilitator and resource to the Panel and advisor and resource to the candidate.

## **Organization of the Peer Review Panel**

The Peer Review Program Coordinator schedules interviews based upon availability of panelists. *Regulations*<sup>2</sup> (section 5331) specify that the Panel “shall include individuals who are qualified in the field of practice for the endorsement(s) sought.” Peer Review Panelists are currently licensed and practicing educators. **Note:** The Peer Review Panelist contract year ends June 30<sup>th</sup> of a given year. This may create an interview backlog during the summer months when panelists are renewing their contracts. Interviews are scheduled, when two panelists, in the endorsement sought, are under contract (Mid-August). Candidates who hold provisional licenses are encouraged to submit portfolios in early March (or before) for an interview to be scheduled (if possible) prior their provisional license ends (June 30<sup>th</sup>).

The Peer Review Coordinator seeks to assemble a Panel that includes educators across the instructional levels of the endorsement. For example, if a candidate is seeking an endorsement as a K-12 physical education teacher, the Panel will try to include physical education teachers working at the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, the Peer Review Program Coordinator seeks to maintain the impartiality of the Panel.

## **Peer Review Panel’s Individual Assessments**

Once the members of a Peer Review Panel are identified, the candidate’s portfolio link and scoresheets are emailed the panelists. Panelists review the entire portfolio using the 1-3 point scale rubrics to evaluate and score the endorsement competencies and the VT Core Teaching Standards. Panelists will note any questions regarding a specific competency, or piece of evidence that they wish to ask the candidate at the interview. The portfolio review is completed prior to the interview.

**It is recommended that Peer Review candidates review the scoresheet rubrics prior to submitting their portfolio in order to anticipate any “gaps” or weaknesses in the evidence or narratives.**

## **The Panel Interview**

The Panel interview is an opportunity for candidates to provide additional information, respond to the Panel’s need for clarification, and submit more evidence to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and dispositions. Although each interview is unique and dependent upon the endorsement sought, the portfolio, and the Panel, there are some commonalities across interviews.



1. The interview can last up two hours.
2. The Peer Review Program Coordinator will read the Competencies and Standards and Panel members will ask questions they have regarding the candidate's experiences, education, and/or evidence.
3. Candidates may bring additional materials to the interview such as workshop certificates lesson plans etc.
4. The candidate presents additional evidence or documentation. It is most effective to do so in the context of a response to a question.
3. The candidate will have an opportunity to ask the Panel questions at the end.
4. Candidate is excused.
5. The Panel meets after the interview to discuss whether a letter of recommendation will be issued, or if additional information, is requested for unmet competencies/standards.
6. Peer Review Program Coordinator will notify candidate of the panels' decision via email within 24 hours of the interview.

## **STAGE 6: Peer Review Panel Recommendation**

Informing candidates of the Panel's recommendation-Two Scenarios:

**The candidate is recommended for licensure:** The Peer Review Program Coordinator issue a Recommendation for Licensure letter and upload a copy of the letter into the candidate's Agency file. Information will be included in the recommendation letter on how to apply for Initial Licensure or add an endorsement to the candidates existing license.

### **When the Panel Finds All Requirements and Competencies Have Been Met<sup>3</sup>**

The Peer Review Program Coordinator will inform the candidate, in writing, of the Panel's recommendation and instructions on how to proceed.

### **Follow the steps below to complete your initial licensure Applicant Section- Initial Licensure**

1. View Pending Application Details in ALis.
2. Click "**Complete Application**" button.

Fill out the following sections.

- Personal Information
- CRC
- License Information-Your new Endorsement will appear in this section
- Employment
- Good Standing
- Disclosure
- Attestation-Here you pay for the Level 1 license. Total fee is \$150.00. New checklist appears.

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<sup>3</sup> Peer Review can only *recommend* applicants for licensure. Successful Peer Review candidates must meet all licensure requirements in effect at the time of applying for the license and/or endorsement.



- Please note that all initial license applicants must be fingerprinted. Finger print forms will be issued when you apply.

If the candidate is recommended for an additional endorsement and holds a level 1 license the Peer Review Coordinator will “add” the new endorsement. All new endorsements are added as a level 1 and follow the expiration date of the original endorsement. If the candidate holds a level 2 license then the candidate will have to pay \$150.00 to add the endorsement as a Level 1 license.

**The candidate is not recommended for licensure:** The Peer Review Program Coordinator will write a Summary Evaluation of the interview, including unmet standards/competencies and evidence required by the panelists to recommend for licensure.

Candidates who cannot fulfill the Panel’s request within 30 days or whose additional evidence is not accepted can develop a Plan of Action detailing what activities will be undertaken to meet the areas, which were determined to be “inadequate” in the Evaluation Summary (written by the Peer Review Coordinator). A Plan of Action must be submitted electronically to the Peer Review Program Coordinator within two (2) months of their official written notification. An approved Plan of Action must be completed within eighteen (18) months of approval.

## **When the Panel Finds Not All Requirements and Competencies Are Met**

The Panel Evaluation Summary will:

- Reflect the Panel’s assessment of the candidate’s knowledge, skills and disposition as demonstrated by the portfolio, interview responses, and additional documentation provided
- Be presented in terms of each competency and how the candidate may meet the unmet competency (i.e. coursework, workshop, practicum etc.)
- Include the name of each Panel member and that they have verified the accuracy of the Panel Evaluation Summary.

Peer Review candidates receive a copy of the Panel Evaluation Summary with directions on what the options are for the candidate moving forward.

- **Submission of New Evidence to the Panel to Reconsider its Decision**  
If you believe that you can provide additional documentation or evidence that may change the Panel’s evaluation of any requirement or competency it found to be “inadequate,” it is incumbent upon you to contact the Peer Review Program Coordinator and submit the additional evidence via email within **one month** of your official notification. The Program Coordinator will send the additional evidence to the Panel, collect their feedback, and inform you of the Panel’s response.
- **Develop a Plan of Action**



If you agree with the Panel’s evaluation or your additional evidence is not accepted and are still interested in pursuing licensure, you will be expected to complete a Plan of Action (POA). Using panel recommendations for fulfillment of unmet competencies/standards in your evaluation summary, submit a response by completing a POA template (provided by Peer Review Coordinator. POA’s detail what activities you will undertake to meet the requirements and competencies the Panel found to be “inadequate.” The Peer Review Coordinator is available for assistance to guide you through the process. You have **two months** from the date of your official notification to submit a Plan of Action. Submit a copy of your Plan of Action to the Peer Review Program Coordinator via email.

The Program Coordinator will send the Plan to the Panel, collect their feedback, and inform you of the Panel’s decision as to whether or not the proposed plan would meet the competencies cited. The Peer Review Program Coordinator will notify the candidate when their Plan has been, approved, and issue a Plan deadline. Candidates are required to complete the work in their Plan of Action within (18) eighteen months of receiving approval of their Plan. Candidates may submit their evidence of completion any time during the (18) eighteen months.

When the candidate has completed all of the activities described in their Plan, submission of evidence and documentation of completion must be, emailed to the Peer Review Program Coordinator.

Once it is determined that the candidate has successfully completed their Plan of Action, the Peer Review Program Coordinator will inform you in writing. You will receive the letter of Recommendation and next steps to licensure. The candidate then completes the Application for Initial Vermont Educator License. Candidates adding an endorsement, and who hold a current level 1 license, will have the endorsement added by the Peer Review Program Coordinator. Licensed Level 2 candidates will have to pay an additional fee to add the new endorsement as a Level 1 license.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. *How do I decide if Peer Review is the best option for me?***

Peer Review may be the best option to initial licensure or an additional endorsement **if** you have both some coursework and documented experiences that address the requirements and competencies. A potential candidate should become well informed about the requirements, principles, and competencies you need to meet and what is required to successfully complete a Peer Review portfolio. The Peer Review Handbook is an excellent resource for helping you make the decision to apply to Peer Review program. After reviewing the Peer Review website and Peer Review Handbook, you may send specific questions to the Peer Review Coordinator at [AOE.PeerReview@Vermont.gov](mailto:AOE.PeerReview@Vermont.gov)



If it appears that you are not able to meet several of the competencies, you may be better off enrolling in a post-baccalaureate licensure program at a Vermont college or university.

**2. *Why is it required that the Praxis testing requirements be completed prior to applying to Peer Review?***

Praxis Core and Praxis II tests are required to gain initial licensure or to add an additional endorsement, per the Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators. In order for a portfolio to be complete all testing requirements must be met. Since Peer Review is an investment (in terms of both money and time), passing the testing requirement ensures that candidates will be able to, when ready, to submit their portfolio.

**3. *How long does it take to go through Peer Review?***

The answer to that question depends mainly on how quickly you complete your portfolio and the outcome of the Peer Review Panel's evaluation of your work. It can take several months, from the time we receive your portfolio to the time you are notified as to the outcome of your review. Please keep in mind that March through August is the busiest time for Peer Review and it could take longer for the process if you submit a portfolio during these months.

**4. *Is it necessary that I demonstrate competence in each of the "Additional Requirements" for the endorsement area I am seeking?***

Yes. If you do not meet one or more of the "Additional Requirements" (e.g., if you do not have a major in English which is required for the English endorsement), you must demonstrate that you have coursework and/or experiences that are equivalent to that requirement.

**5. *Can I apply for two endorsements at the same time?***

One endorsement per application. Each endorsement requires convening a Panel of educators who are licensed and have expertise in that endorsement area. One Panel cannot effectively evaluate two portfolios and two sets of endorsement competencies at the same time. It is recommended that you gain licensure in one endorsement and then add the additional through Peer Review or Transcript Review (coursework).

**6. *How long do I have to submit my portfolio once it has been determined that I am accepted into the Peer Review Program?*** You have one year from the date of your eligibility letter to submit a portfolio. If you are unable to submit your portfolio within the year, you may request an extension, which gives you one additional year to submit your portfolio. If you do not meet the extension deadline, then you will have to reapply and meet any new requirements.

**7. *If the panel determines that I do not meet all of the general requirements and basic principles, if applicable, and/or the endorsement's additional requirements and***



*competencies, how long do I have to submit additional evidence for the Panel to reconsider?*

You have one month from the date of your official notification to submit additional evidence for the Panel to reconsider.

**8. *What is my option if I do not have additional evidence to submit?***

Your plan of action for meeting the “unmet” requirements, standards, and competencies needs to be submitted to the Peer Review Program Coordinator within two months of receiving your official notification. You must complete the work within 18 months of receiving your official notification in order to remain in compliance with regulations. There will be no additional fees for this process.

**9. *How do I meet the field experience (student teaching) requirement?***

Regulations state that anyone seeking *initial licensure* must submit “evidence of at least thirteen (13) consecutive weeks of student teaching, *or an equivalent learning experience*” (General Requirement #3). If you have not completed student teaching, but have had a substantial amount of supervised experiences working with students in the endorsement area you seek, your Panel may determine that you have had an “equivalent learning experience.”

**10. *If I decide or my Panel decides that I haven’t met the student teaching (General Requirement #3), who sets up the student teaching internship?***

**Peer Review Student Teaching Action Plan Policy.** (adopted 4/30/2019; PRAC)

Peer Review Panelists have the following options:

- Limit instructional level based on student teaching experience and portfolio evidence.
- Plan of Action
  - Require candidate to complete an additional practicum. Length and instructional level determined by the panelists.
  - Additional evidence as determined by the panelists.

Process: Follows the Plan of Action procedure.

You have the responsibility for setting up the student teaching internship and covering any costs associated with the internship.

**11. *Is there reciprocity for licenses obtained through Vermont’s Peer Review Program with other states?***

That depends upon the state. Some states who participate in the NASDTEC Interstate Reciprocity contract do not recognize licenses obtained through any alternate routes. The best way to find out is to contact the licensing or certification office of the state in which you would like to work.

**12. *Does a Vermont license obtained through Peer Review look any different than one obtained by completing a college/university program?***



There is nothing on the license indicating the person went through Peer Review and not a traditional teacher preparation program. However, a review of your transcripts would show that you did not complete a traditional preparation program.

## **Code of Ethics for Vermont Educators**

### **5500 CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR VERMONT EDUCATORS**

Citation: [Vermont Core Teaching and Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators](#) ("Mountain Book", 2018, 36-45).

#### **5510 Code of Professional Ethics**

The essential qualities of the competent and caring educator include moral integrity, humane attitudes, reflective practice, and a sound understanding of academic content and pedagogy. The public vests educators with trust and responsibility for educating the children of Vermont. We believe that fulfilling this charge requires educators to demonstrate the highest standards of professional conduct.

We, as professional educators, respect the dignity and individuality of every human being. We are committed to, and model for our learners, the lifelong pursuit of learning and academic excellence.

We are dedicated to effective scholarly practice, further enhanced by collaboration with colleagues and with those in the greater educational community. Furthermore, we are dedicated to compassionate service on behalf of our learners and their families, and we advocate for them in the school and community settings. We recognize and accept both the public trust and the magnitude of responsibility inherent in our profession. To this end, we put forth these rules of conduct as the foundation for professional practice for all Vermont educators to honor and follow

#### **5520 Rules of Professional Conduct**

What follows is a statement of fundamental principles, which all Vermont educators should follow, each of which is accompanied by an enumeration of examples of unprofessional conduct, which could subject an educator to licensing action.

#### **Principle I: Responsibility to the Profession**

The professional educator is aware that trust in the profession depends upon a level of professional conduct and responsibility that may be higher than required by law. This entails holding one and other educators to the same ethical standards.

*The professional educator demonstrates responsibility to oneself as an ethical professional by:*

1. Acknowledging that lack of awareness, knowledge, or understanding of the Code is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct;
2. Knowing and upholding the procedures, policies, laws and regulations relevant to professional practice regardless of personal views;
3. Holding oneself responsible for ethical conduct;



4. Monitoring and maintaining sound mental, physical, and emotional health necessary to perform duties and services of any professional assignment; and taking appropriate measures when personal or health-related issues may interfere with work-related duties;
  5. Refraining from professional or personal activity that may lead to reducing one's effectiveness within the school community;
  6. Avoiding the use of one's position for personal gain and avoiding the appearance of impropriety;
  7. Taking responsibility and credit only for work actually performed or produced, and acknowledging the work and contributions made by others.
- B. *The professional educator fulfills the obligation to address and attempt to resolve ethical issues by:*
1. Confronting and taking reasonable steps to resolve conflicts between the Code and the implicit or explicit demands of a person or organization;
  2. Maintaining fidelity to the Code by taking proactive steps when having reason to believe that another educator may be approaching or involved in an ethically compromising situation;
  3. Neither discriminating nor retaliating against a person on the basis of having made an ethical complaint;
  4. Neither filing nor encouraging frivolous ethical complaints solely to harm or retaliate.
  5. Cooperating fully during ethics investigations and proceedings
- C. *The professional educator promotes and advances the profession within and beyond the school community by:*
1. Influencing and supporting decisions and actions that positively impact teaching and learning, educational leadership and student services;
  2. Engaging in respectful discourse regarding issues that impact the profession;
  3. Enhancing one's professional effectiveness by staying current with ethical principles and decisions from relevant sources including professional organizations;
  4. Actively participating in educational and professional organizations and associations; and
  5. Advocating for adequate resources and facilities to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

**Principle II: Responsibility for Professional Competence**

The professional educator is committed to the highest levels of professional and ethical practice, including demonstration of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for professional competence.

- A. *The professional educator demonstrates commitment to high standards of practice through:*
1. Incorporating into one's practice state and national standards, including those specific to one's discipline;



2. Using the *Model Code of Educator Ethics* and other ethics codes unique to one's discipline to guide and frame educational decision-making;
3. Advocating for equitable educational opportunities for all students;
4. Accepting the responsibilities, performing duties and providing services corresponding to the area of certification, licensure, and training of one's position;
5. Reflecting upon and assessing one's professional skills, content knowledge, and competency on an ongoing basis; and
6. Committing to ongoing professional learning.

B. *The professional educator demonstrates responsible use of data, materials, research and assessment by:*

1. Appropriately recognizing others' work by citing data or materials from published, unpublished, or electronic sources when disseminating information;
2. Using developmentally appropriate assessments for the purposes for which they are intended and for which they have been validated to guide educational decisions;
3. Conducting research in an ethical and responsible manner with appropriate permission and supervision;
4. Seeking and using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice;
5. Creating, maintaining, disseminating, storing, retaining and disposing of records and data relating to one's research and practice, in accordance with district policy, state and federal laws; and
6. Using data, data sources, or findings accurately and reliably.

C. *The professional educator acts in the best interest of all students by:*

1. Increasing students' access to the curriculum, activities, and resources in order to provide a quality and equitable educational experience.
2. Working to engage the school community to close achievement, opportunity, and attainment gaps; and
3. Protecting students from any practice that harms or has the potential to harm students.

**Principle III: Responsibility to Students**

The professional educator has a primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect. The professional educator promotes the health, safety and well being of students by establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries.

A. *The professional educator respects the rights and dignity of students by:*

1. Respecting students by taking into account their age, gender, culture, setting and socioeconomic context;
2. Interacting with students with transparency and in appropriate settings;
3. Communicating with students in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner;
4. Taking into account how appearance and dress can affect one's interactions and relationships with students;
5. Considering the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to students;



6. Engaging in physical contact with students only when there is a clearly defined purpose that benefits the student and continually keeps the safety and well-being of the student in mind;
7. Avoiding multiple relationships with students which might impair objectivity and increase the risk of harm to student learning or well-being or decrease educator effectiveness;
8. Acknowledging that there are no circumstances that allow for educators to engage in romantic or sexual relationships with students; and
9. Considering the ramifications of entering into an adult relationship of any kind with a former student, including but not limited to, any potential harm to the former student, public perception, and the possible impact on the educator's career. The professional educator ensures that the adult relationship was not started while the former student was in school.

*B. The professional educator demonstrates an ethic of care through:*

1. Seeking to understand students' educational, academic, personal and social needs as well as students' values, beliefs, and cultural background;
2. Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual student including, but not limited to, actual and perceived gender, gender expression, gender identity, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and culture; and
3. Establishing and maintaining an environment that promotes the emotional, intellectual, physical, and sexual safety of all students.

*C. The professional educator maintains student trust and confidentiality when interacting with students in a developmentally appropriate manner and within appropriate limits by:*

1. Respecting the privacy of students and the need to hold in confidence certain forms of student communication, documents, or information obtained in the course of professional practice;
2. Upholding parents'/guardians' legal rights, as well as any legal requirements to reveal information related to legitimate concerns for the well-being of a student; and
3. Protecting the confidentiality of student records and releasing personal data in accordance with prescribed state and federal laws and local policies.

**Principle IV: Responsibility to the School Community**

The professional educator promotes positive relationships and effective interactions, with members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries.

*A. The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with parents/guardians by:*

1. Communicating with parents/guardians in a timely and respectful manner that represents the students' best interests;



2. Demonstrating a commitment to equality, equity, and inclusion as well as respecting and accommodating diversity among members of the school community;
3. Considering the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to parents/guardians; and
4. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality with respect to student information disclosed by or to parents/guardians unless required by law.

*B. The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with colleagues by:*

1. Respecting colleagues as fellow professionals and maintaining civility when differences arise;
2. Resolving conflicts, whenever possible, privately and respectfully and in accordance with district policy;
3. Keeping student safety, education, and health paramount by maintaining and sharing educational records appropriately and objectively in accordance with local policies and state and federal laws;
4. Collaborating with colleagues in a manner that supports academic achievement and related goals that promote the best interests of students;
5. Enhancing the professional growth and development of new educators by supporting effective field experiences, mentoring or induction activities across the career continuum;
6. Ensuring that educators who are assigned to participate as mentors for new educators, cooperating teachers, or other teacher leadership positions are prepared and supervised to assume these roles;
7. Ensuring that educators are assigned to positions in accordance with their educational credentials, preparation, and experience in order to maximize students' opportunities and achievement; and
8. Working to ensure a workplace environment that is free from harassment.

*C. The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with the community and other stakeholders by:*

1. Advocating for policies and laws that the educator supports as promoting the education and well-being of students and families;
2. Collaborating with community agencies, organizations, and individuals in order to advance students' best interests without regard to personal reward or remuneration; and
3. Maintaining the highest professional standards of accuracy, honesty, and appropriate disclosure of information when representing the school or district within the community and in public communications.

*D. The professional educator promotes effective and appropriate relationships with employers by:*



1. Using property, facilities, materials, and resources in accordance with local policies and state and federal laws;
2. Respecting intellectual property ownership rights (e.g. original lesson plans, district level curricula, syllabi, gradebooks, etc.) when sharing materials;
3. Exhibiting personal and professional conduct that is in the best interest of the organization, learning community, school community, and profession; and
4. Considering the implications of offering or accepting gifts and/or preferential treatment by vendors or an individual in a position of professional influence or power.

E. *The professional educator understands the problematic nature of multiple relationships by:*

1. Considering the risks that multiple relationships might impair objectivity and increase the likelihood of harm to students' learning and well-being or diminish educator effectiveness;
2. Considering the risks and benefits of a professional relationship with someone with whom the educator has had a past personal relationship and vice versa;
3. Considering the implications and possible ramifications of engaging in a personal or professional relationship with parents and guardians, student teachers, colleagues, and supervisors; and
4. Ensuring that professional responsibilities to paraprofessionals, student teachers or interns do not interfere with responsibilities to students, their learning, and well-being.

### **Principle V: Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology**

The professional educator considers the impact of consuming, creating, distributing and communicating information through all technologies. The ethical educator is vigilant to ensure appropriate boundaries of time, place and role are maintained when using electronic communication.

A. *The professional educator uses technology in a responsible manner by:*

1. Using social media responsibly, transparently, and primarily for purposes of teaching and learning per school and district policy. The professional educator considers the ramifications of using social media and direct communication via technology on one's interactions with students, colleagues, and the general public;
2. Staying abreast of current trends and uses of school technology;
3. Promoting the benefits of and clarifying the limitations of various appropriate technological applications with colleagues, appropriate school personnel, parents, and community members;
4. Knowing how to access, document and use proprietary materials and understanding how to recognize and prevent plagiarism by students and educators;
5. Understanding and abiding by the district's policy on the use of technology and communication;



6. Recognizing that some electronic communications are records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and state public access laws and should consider the implications of sharing sensitive information electronically either via professional or personal devices/accounts; and
7. Exercising prudence in maintaining separate and professional virtual profiles, keeping personal and professional lives distinct.

B. *The professional educator ensures students' safety and well-being when using technology by:*

1. Being vigilant in identifying, addressing and reporting (when appropriate and in accordance with local district, state, and federal policy) inappropriate and illegal materials/images in electronic or other forms;
2. Respecting the privacy of students' presence on social media unless given consent to view such information or if there is a possibility of evidence of a risk of harm to the student or others; and
3. Monitoring to the extent practical and appropriately reporting information concerning possible cyber bullying incidents and their potential impact on the student learning environment.

C. *The professional educator maintains confidentiality in the use of technology by:*

1. Taking appropriate and reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of electronic or computer technology;
2. Understanding the intent of Federal Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) and how it applies to sharing electronic student records; and
3. Ensuring that the rights of third parties, including the right of privacy, are not violated via the use of technologies.

D. *The professional educator promotes the appropriate use of technology in educational settings by:*

1. Advocating for equal access to technology for all students, especially those historically underserved;
2. Promoting the benefits of and clarifying the limitations of various appropriate technological applications with colleagues, appropriate school personnel, parents, and community members; and
3. Promoting technological applications (a) that are appropriate for students' individual needs, (b) that students understand how to use and (c) that assist and enhance the teaching and learning process.



Application Notes:

1. The foregoing Model Code of Ethics is adopted in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 1694(5).
2. Nothing in these Rules can, or is intended to, vary the definition of “unprofessional conduct” which is contained in 16 V.S.A. § 1698. Rather, these Rules enumerate a non-exclusive list of conduct which, if proven in a particular case, might constitute unprofessional conduct.

## Glossary

Boundaries: The verbal, physical, emotional and social distances that an educator must maintain in order to ensure structure, security, and predictability in an educational environment. Most often, the boundaries that are transgressed relate to role, time and place. By respecting contracted roles, appropriate working hours, and the location of the learning environment, secure boundaries are in place for all members of the schooling community.

District/school district:

This is often referred to as a “local education agency.” A “district” in this document is defined as a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. This can include charter schools, magnet schools, virtual magnet schools, regional educational school districts, or other entities falling under the definition above.

Culture:

The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group, including the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time<sup>3</sup>.

Educator: Educators are the target audience for the MCEE, and are defined as licensed educators. These include paraprofessionals, teachers, teacher leaders, student support personnel and administrators. However, others who interact with students who are not under the auspices of an education-related licensing organization such as coaches, school secretaries, custodians or other school staff are encouraged to adopt or adapt this *Model Code of Educator Ethics*. See a definition for “professional educator”.

Ethic of care: Responding with compassion to the needs of students.



Ethical Decision-Making Model: A framework utilized by educators to guide decision-making which includes professional dispositions; applicable laws, statutes, and policies; the *Model Code of Educator Ethics*; and other guidelines that have been adopted and endorsed by educational organizations.

Fiduciary relationship: A fiduciary relationship is one in which a person justifiably places confidence in another whose aid, advice, or protection is assumed. Inherent in such fiduciary relationships is an imbalance of power. Educators have a unique responsibility, as the relationship between student and teacher differs from other professional/client relationships (e.g., attorneys, physicians, clergy). Educators are entrusted with the safety and welfare of students during and after school hours

Implicit or Explicit Demands of an Organization: Implicit demands are often subjective or implied and reflect the culture of the schooling environment. Explicit demands are clearly articulated through mandates, policies, or statutes.

Harm: The impairment of learning or any potential action which may lead to physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or intellectual damage to a student or a member of the school community.

Learning Community: A group of educators who work with one another to achieve the shared goals of their school and engage in collaborative professional learning to strengthen practice and increase student results. <sup>2</sup>

Multiple Relationships: Multiple relationships occur when the educator is in a professional role with one or more members of the school community and also has a personal relationship with that person or a member of that person's family. Multiple relationships have the potential to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as an educator.

New Educators: New educators include individuals in an educator preparation program or newly employed in the education profession, including paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and student support personnel.

Professional educator: A licensed educator who demonstrates the highest standards of ethical and professionally competent practice and is committed to advancing the interests, achievement and well-being of students. The professional educator is also committed to supporting the school community and the education profession.

Proprietary materials:

Materials that protected from unauthorized use by copyright or other forms of intellectual property rights.

Safe environments/Safety and well-being: A school setting which promotes the well-being of all members of the school community and is characterized by the absence of physical, psychological, sexual or emotional harm



School Community: This term usually refers to those stakeholders invested in the welfare of a school and its community. A school community includes school administrators, teachers, school staff members, students, their parents and families, school board members and other community members.<sup>5</sup>

Sensitive Information: This includes but is not limited to student information and educational records, including medical or counseling records.

Student: A learner attending a P-12 school.

Technology: Tools, systems, applications and processes that can include, but are not limited to, electronic communications networks such as the internet and electronic devices such as computers, laptops, phones and other hardware/software that deliver text, audio, images, animation, and streaming video.

Transparency: Openness and accountability with respect to one's behaviors, actions and communications as an educator.



# CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR VERMONT EDUCATORS

**Peer Review Portfolio Evidence for Performance Criterion 9.2:** Candidates are prepared to practice in a legal and ethical manner.

**Directions:** After signing, please scan and upload to your evidence chart. Please see VT Code of Ethics in the Peer Review Handbook or

**By signing, I pledge to uphold the Vermont Code of Ethics set forth by the Vermont State Board for Professional Educators.**

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Signature of Student Teacher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the Code of Ethics with my mentee and have observed them practicing Performance Criterion 9.2: Candidates are prepared to practice in a legal and ethical manner.

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Signature of Teaching Mentor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

