Alternate Routes to licensure can be found in [Section 8VAC20-23-90](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter23/section90/) of the Administrative Code.

In brief, the five alternate routes to licensure are below:

1. Career switcher alternate route to licensure for career professionals - Provisional (Career Switcher) License.
2. An alternate route is available to individuals employed by a Virginia educational agency who seek teaching endorsements preK through grade 12.
3. Alternate route in special education.
4. Alternate programs at institutions of higher education or Virginia school divisions.
5. Experiential learning.

During the 2019 General Assembly Session, [HB 2486](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=191&typ=bil&val=hb2486) required an amendment to the *Code*, which provided a new alternate route to licensure, which has not yet been added to the regulation section listed above:

*M. The Board shall develop guidelines that establish a process to permit a school board or any organization sponsored by a school board to petition the Board for approval of an alternate route to licensure that may be used to meet the requirements for a provisional or renewable license or any endorsement. Any such alternate route may include alternatives to the regulatory requirements for teacher preparation, including alternative professional assessments and coursework. The petitioner may proffer or the Board may impose conditions in conjunction with the approval of such petition.*

Below is a summary of actions the Office of Licensure and School Leadership takes to process and review these alternate routes to licensure.

1. Career Switchers. There are currently five certified Career Switcher programs in Virginia (Shenandoah University, Regent University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Old Dominion University, and EducateVA). These programs were certified by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the recommendation of the Office of Licensure. The Office of Licensure determines the recommendation after a thorough review process:
   1. Application submitted by program. Application includes a narrative that covers process for recruitment and selection of individuals for the program and program design and capacity, which includes the application process for individuals, administration and management of the program, purpose and description of program design, collaboration and partnership details, information on faculty and instructors, maintenance of data and annual reporting to VDOE, and their program evaluation. In addition, they must submit a matrix that crosswalks their professional studies courses to the competencies in the Approved Program Regulations. All competencies of the Approved Program Regulations must be satisfied. (Note that content competencies are satisfied with passing scores on a professional assessment, which is a pre-req for acceptance into the Career Switcher program.)
   2. First review by staff to determine that minimum application requirements are submitted and all components sufficiently addressed. Staff typically have to meet with the program team to request additional information to clarify and strengthen the application.
   3. Panel is convened by VDOE staff for review of the program. This panel includes at least one division superintendent, one division curriculum director, one teacher education preparation program dean or director, one agency virtual learning specialist, and one literacy specialist. Panel has a kick off meeting to confirm expectations and then the panel has at least two weeks to review the program application. A collaborative meeting is scheduled to discuss strengths and weaknesses and determine if the application meets or does not meet requirements. Any additional information can be requested from the program to determine if requirements have been met. The panel is not required to recommend approval of the program.
   4. If the panel recommends to approve the program, the Office of Licensure prepares the determination letter for the State Superintendent’s approval and signature.
   5. VDOE receives an annual report from every program.
   6. Programs complete this process every five years to be recertified.
2. An alternate route is available to individuals employed by a Virginia educational agency who seek teaching endorsements preK through grade 12.
   1. **Most frequent request**: An individual seeking a license through an alt route must be recommended by an employing Virginia educational agency, earned a bachelor’s degree, met requirements for endorsement area, and allowable portion of professional studies and licensure requirements. A provisional license is issued after a licensure specialist has evaluated the submitted transcripts.
   2. A Virginia educational agency may submit to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for approval an alternate program to meet the professional studies requirements. We have several divisions who have opted for this route: Montgomery County, Hanover County, Goochland County (TP licenses only), and one more in the works (Roanoke City for TP licenses). A provisional license is already held by these teachers and the division is targeting completion of professional studies requirements. **These proposals go through the same process for application and approval as the Career Switcher programs.**
3. Alternate route in special education. A provisional special education (general curriculum K-12) license is issued when an individual is recommended by an employing Virginia educational agency, earned a bachelor’s degree, and has completed one pre-req course that includes foundations for educating students with disabilities and have an understanding and application of the legal aspects and regulatory requirements associated with identification, education, and evaluation of students with disabilities. Again, **most frequent request** from divisions. A provisional license is issued after a licensure specialist has evaluated the submitted transcripts.
4. Alternate programs at institutions of higher education or Virginia school divisions.
   1. Currently, there are not any approved alternate programs at IHE’s, however, one community college has expressed interest.
5. Experiential learning. An individual seeking a license through this alt route must be recommended by an employing Virginia educational agency, earned a bachelor’s degree, have three-years of work experience, and passed the Praxis content tests.

We have received several requests to approve a program under [HB 2486](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=191&typ=bil&val=hb2486). Only one has been reviewed and recommended by a panel for approval by the Board.

The Office of Licensure determined the recommendation after a thorough review process:

* 1. Application submitted by program. Application included a narrative that covers process for recruitment and selection of individuals for the program and program design and capacity, administration and management of the program, purpose and description of program design, delivery model and sustainability of the program, information on faculty and instructors, how the program is aligned and addresses [Approved Program Regulations](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter543/), description of field and clinical experiences, and their program evaluation. In addition, they must submit a matrix that crosswalks their program competencies to the competencies in the Approved Program Regulations. All competencies of the Approved Program Regulations must be satisfied for both content and professional studies requirements.
  2. First review by staff to determine that minimum application requirements are submitted and all components sufficiently addressed. Staff typically have to meet with the program team to request additional information to clarify and strengthen the application.
  3. Panel is convened by VDOE staff for review of the program. This panel includes at least one division superintendent, one division curriculum director, one teacher education preparation program dean or director, one agency virtual learning specialist, and one literacy specialist. Panel has a kick off meeting to confirm expectations and then the panel has at least two weeks to review the program application. A collaborative meeting is scheduled to discuss strengths and weaknesses and determine if the application meets or does not meet requirements. Any additional information can be requested from the program to determine if requirements have been met. The panel is not required to recommend approval of the program. The panel may add additional criteria and conditions to the program to strengthen the program and ensure that individuals completing the division alternate route are just as prepared as the individuals completing a different alternate route.
  4. If the panel recommends to approve the program, the Office of Licensure prepares the Board of Education board meeting item and shepherds it through the process and acts as the point of contact for any questions related to the program.
  5. VDOE receives an annual report from every program.

**Alternate Routes at a Glance**:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Route** | **Timeline for review** | **Facilitators** | **Approval** |
| Career Switchers | 4-6 months depending on facilitator capacity | Career Switcher Coordinator, Director, panel of 5-7 volunteers | Supt of Public Instruction |
| Alt Route (provisional for individuals) | daily and process license requests in the order they are received | Licensure Specialists and Director of Licensure | Licensure Specialists |
| Alt Route (divisions to complete prof studies) | 2-4 months depending on facilitator capacity | Career Switcher Coordinator, Director, panel of 5-7 volunteers | Supt of Public Instruction |
| Alt Route (Gen. Ed.SpEd) | daily and process license requests in the order they are received | Licensure Specialists and Director of Licensure | Licensure Specialists |
| Alt Route (IHE) | daily and process license requests in the order they are received | Licensure Specialists and Director of Licensure | Licensure Specialists |
| Experiential Learning | daily and process license requests in the order they are received | Licensure Specialists and Director of Licensure | Licensure Specialists |
| HB2486 | 6-8 months depending on facilitator capacity and Board approval process | Career Switcher Coordinator, Director, panel of 5-7 volunteers | Board of Education |