



NEW JERSEY CENTER
FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

NJCTL ADD-ON ENDORSEMENT PROGRAMS

Frequently Asked Questions

Are NJCTL teacher-training programs approved by the New Jersey Department of Education?

Yes, NJCTL programs have been approved by the NJ-DOE each year since 2010.

Is NJCTL a duly authorized Institution of Higher Education?

Yes, NJCTL is duly authorized by the NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) as a licensed Institution of Higher Education (IHE) and is approved to offer the following master's degrees:

- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Chemistry
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Mathematics
- Master of Science in Teaching and Learning Physics

Is NJCTL regionally accredited?

The term “regional accreditation” was discontinued by the United States Department of Education more than a year ago. What was formerly known as “national accreditation” and “regional accreditation” are now grouped together under the term “accreditation.”

NJCTL is seeking accreditation and has completed the first step in the process by becoming duly authorized as an IHE in its home state, New Jersey. Its preliminary application to Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) has been accepted and NJCTL is taking the next steps in the process.

NJCTL's accreditation is still pending. Does this affect the NJ DOE's ability to approve its programs?

No. Even though NJCTL's accreditation is still pending, under legislation enacted in 2012, the NJ DOE can approve programs regardless of the accreditation status of the institution. This law was passed to address shortages that were not being met by accredited IHEs. NJCTL programs comply with all legislation and those regulations that are aligned with those laws.

Do all NJ districts accept NJCTL credits and degrees for salary advancement and tuition reimbursement?

The collective bargaining agreements of many NJ districts call for the acceptance of the credits and degrees of duly authorized NJ IHEs for both salary advancement and tuition reimbursement. Other districts require those credits

and degrees be from an accredited IHE. Teachers should check with their district about their requirements.

What do I do if my district requires credits be from an accredited IHE?

NJCTL has partnered with accredited IHEs to allow its students to receive tuition reimbursement and salary advancement from districts that require that providers be accredited and for teachers who use NJCTL courses to earn endorsements outside of NJCTL's DOE-approved programs. Teachers should check with their district about their acceptance of these credits.

What do I do if my district requires degrees be from an accredited IHE?

NJCTL has partnered with accredited IHEs which accept between 12 and 15 NJCTL credits towards their master's degrees. Teachers should check with their district about their acceptance of these degrees. Those partnerships do not relate to NJCTL's DOE-approved endorsement programs, which do not require an accredited partner.

Is NJCTL a teacher certification program?

No, the requirement to earn a certificate and become a certified teacher is to complete a pre-service or alternate route program. NJCTL's DOE-approved Add-On Endorsement Programs allow already certified teachers to earn an add-on endorsement to their current certificate in a shortage subject area.

How does NJCTL differ from other avenues of teacher preparation?

There are three main paths to prepare teachers: Traditional Pre-Service Certification Programs, Alternate Route Programs and Add-On Endorsement Programs. NJCTL operates Add-On Endorsement Programs in high-need subject areas such as physics, chemistry, and mathematics.

Traditional Pre-Service Certification Programs are the source of most teachers. Prospective teachers complete a college major in their area of certification AND earn an education degree. These programs have produced large numbers of teachers in many fields: elementary education, English, social studies, etc. However, they have not met the need in subject areas in which college majors are few and have many other employment options, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computer science.

Alternate Route Programs require candidates to have majored in the subject area and passed the requisite state exam to show mastery of the content. That earns them a Certificate of Eligibility (CE). They learn how to teach through a teacher-education program that overlaps with their first two years in the classroom. While helpful, this adds just a small number of teachers each year since it is still based on a small number of people who have majored in subjects for which there are many alternative employment opportunities.

Add-On Endorsement Programs are fundamentally different than Certification Programs. They begin with teachers who are already certified to teach but lack the content knowledge to enter an area for which there is a shortage of teachers. NJCTL programs fall into this category.

Since NJCTL's courses are primarily based online, how do they support in-person classroom teaching?

NJCTL's programs are deeply rooted in classroom-based instructional approaches. Teachers learn the content necessary to teach in the new subject area, as well as how to teach that content to students. All teachers enrolled in NJCTL endorsement programs are required to take part in two coached field experience courses in which they demonstrate their understanding of the content and pedagogy as they teach in the classroom.

NJCTL programs were taught in a traditional face-to-face classroom-based structure from 2009 through 2016. It transitioned to an online format in 2017. It is documented that the same learning outcomes are achieved and the cost and convenience to teachers is much improved. Online education, especially for graduate education programs, is growing fast for these reasons.

NJCTL was founded by the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA). Does this mean it only assists NJEA members?

Not at all. NJCTL was founded by the NJEA as an independent nonprofit organization. NJCTL works with teachers and students at a wide range of public, private and charter schools from all over the United States and around the world. We also assist parents who are homeschooling. Our mission is to support students everywhere with high-quality STEM education no matter their background.

What is NJCTL's current relationship with NJEA?

NJEA continues to provide funding which allows NJCTL to be the world's largest provider of free, editable teaching materials for science, mathematics, and computer science. NJCTL offers more than 390,000 slides, 15,000 Word documents and 30,000 videos for the free use of all.

Last year, more than 700,000 downloads were made from our site by people around the world. Each year more than a quarter million people visit the NJCTL site and pay nothing for the use of these materials.

As part of an agreement between NJEA and NJCTL, NJEA provides funding which helps keep NJCTL costs low and NJEA members receive a 20% reduction in price for all NJCTL courses and programs.

Since NJCTL was created by NJEA, as an independent nonprofit, our bylaws require that NJEA employees can never represent a majority of the board.

NJCTL's Add-On Endorsement Programs are ¼ the cost of traditional programs. How is it possible to keep tuition so low?

NJCTL prices are about ¼ the price of traditional programs because we operate efficiently and have no physical campus, football teams, etc. The only cost is the cost of education.

Who supports NJCTL Programs?

From its inception, NJCTL has received strong bipartisan support. NJCTL programs were launched under the democratic Corzine administration, became permanent under the republican Christie administration, and continue under the democratic Murphy administration.

In 2009, the Corzine administration passed a law encouraging the development of pilot programs, by both accredited and non-accredited institutions, to address areas with teacher shortages. NJCTL launched a pilot with Kean University in 2009 and received approval from the NJ-DOE, under the Christie administration, for its own pilot in 2010.

Legislation in 2012 was passed unanimously in both houses and signed by Governor Christie to allow successful program, including NJCTL's, to continue beyond the pilot period.

Administrations from both parties have continually defended NJCTL programs because they are so successful at raising student achievement and creating effective teachers, who are racially, ethnically, and gender diverse, to address areas in which there are teacher shortages.

Teachers in your program can start teaching a new subject before they pass the Praxis. How do you ensure they are adequately prepared?

Prior to entering the classroom, NJCTL teachers successfully complete between eight and eleven credits of coursework (360 to 495 hours) comprising the introductory subject-area course(s) and a course in NJCTL teaching methods. They learn from the same free, editable materials that they will use to teach their students, the same materials that are used by thousands of teachers around the world.

After completing the introductory content course(s), and the Teaching Methods course, they are only allowed to teach that content course to their students using those same materials and methods. Those materials include presentations, unit plans, formative assessment questions, homework, classwork, quizzes, labs, and tests. That first year they are not prepared to teach just any course in the

new subject area, just the specific one(s) they have learned how to teach and for which they have been supplied all they need to teach it.

While teaching that course, they receive coaching from NJCTL and study advanced content that prepares them to pass the Praxis exam.

At the end of that year, if they have successfully taught the course, received a B or better in the more advanced courses, and passed the Praxis exam, the DOE provides them an Add-On Endorsement to their initial certificate that allows them to teach any course in their new subject area.

NJCTL courses provide teachers a deep foundation in the content and how to teach the content of the subject area. More than 90% of NJCTL's 390 graduates:

- Completed their program in less than 18 months
- Passed the Praxis exam(s) required by NJ to show mastery of content knowledge
- Would recommend NJCTL programs and courses to other teachers

How has NJCTL impacted teachers and students?

NJCTL is the #1 producer of physics teachers in the U.S. and a major producer of chemistry teachers. NJCTL graduates are more racially, ethnically, and gender diverse than are the graduates of Traditional or Alternate Route Certification Programs.

NJCTL graduates have made, and continue to make, it possible for many more students to take courses in physics, chemistry, mathematics, and computer science. They provide quality instruction that would have been unavailable.

In New Jersey, NJCTL has worked with 87 districts and to create nearly 400 new science or mathematics teachers.

The best measure of the impact of a program is the impact it has on student learning. Since 2010, NJ has had the fastest growth rate in student outcomes in physics and the second highest in chemistry; by 2018 NJ had become #1 in physics and #2 in chemistry, as measured by AP and SAT II results.

Does NJCTL receive any tax dollars?

No.