

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction & Educations Standards and Practices Board

Frequently Asked Questions

School Counseling Credential

1. *Do I need to have a teaching license to be a school counselor?*

Yes. A school counselor credential is **valid only** while the individual holds a North Dakota Educator's Professional License. Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) is responsible for issuing the license. For questions on how to obtain a teaching license in North Dakota, please contact ESPB at 328-9641.

2. *What is a school counseling credential?*

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) issues the school counselor credential (SCO3), which is the outcome of verifying that the counselor has met all the education and licensure requirements in Chapter 67-11-05. The credential is required to be employed as a school counselor in North Dakota. An SC03 credential allows a school counselor to serve prekindergarten through grade twelve.

3. *How to I obtain a school counselor credential in North Dakota?*

The standards for a school counseling credential or SC03 are as follows:

The counselor must have a master's degree in counseling, education, or a related human service field **and** the following graduate core counseling coursework content (listed below) from a state-approved school counseling program:

- Elementary school counseling
- Secondary school counseling
- Supervised school counseling internship consisting of a minimum of four hundred fifty contact hours of which at least one hundred fifty contact hours are at both the elementary and secondary level
- Counseling program management
- Counseling theories
- Assessment techniques
- Group counseling
- Career counseling and assessment
- Social and multicultural counseling
- Ethics and law
- Counseling techniques

4. *What if a school is unable to employ a credentialed counselor?*

If a school is unable to employ a credentialed counselor, the school may employ a licensed teacher to serve as the counselor on a plan of study approved by the NDDPI. **Prior to being considered for approval**, a licensed teacher must have completed a minimum of three graduate classes that are a part of the required curriculum for a master's degree in school counseling or its equivalent from a state-approved counseling program addressing the following content areas: ethics and law, counseling theory, counseling methods or techniques and program management.

5. ***Are the additional courses/tests required by ESPB for a school counselor?***

Yes. If you do not have teaching degree, ESPB will require the following coursework:

- Educational psychology
- Instructional planning, methods, and assessment
- Classroom management
- Multicultural/Native American Studies

ESPB also requires a student must pass the Praxis I and Praxis II tests.

- Praxis I covers reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Praxis II is the Professional School Counselor Test

Information about these tests and North Dakota score requirements can be found at

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/nd/requirements/>

6. ***What is a plan of study?***

A plan of study is an outline of the required courses and the sequence in which they will be taken. The plan is created between you and the respective university or college. You will then enter the courses on ND Teach where you will provide an outline of the courses you will take to become a credentialed school counselor. The outline includes: course names, course numbers, credit hours and the date when you will complete them. They must be from a state approved school counseling program.

7. ***What course work do I need to have in order for my initial plan of study to be approved?***

Prior to being considered for approval, a licensed teacher must have completed a minimum of three graduate classes that are a part of the required curriculum for a master's degree in school counseling or its equivalent from a state-approved counseling program addressing the following content areas: ethics and law, counseling theory, counseling methods or techniques and program management.

8. ***Can I change my plan of study?***

Upon written request, the department may authorize a change of the courses selected for a particular year in the written plan of study if the change will not result in fewer than five semester hours per year of core counseling coursework.

9. ***How often are plans of study reviewed?***

Plans of study are reviewed yearly for approval until they are completed. You are required to submit copies of official transcripts documenting the completion of a minimum of five semester hours, per year of graduate core counseling coursework until the credential is obtained.

10. ***How do I apply for a plan of study?***

You apply for your plan of study on ND Teach. If you do not have an account with ND Teach, you must first create one.

Login to ND Teach

- select begin application
- select plan of study for school counselor
- create application and complete all the information required

11. How do I renew my plan of study?

You will access your ND Teach account and select “Renew Plan of Study”. You will need to provide us with official transcripts documenting the completion of a minimum of five semester hours, per year of graduate core counseling coursework until the credential is obtained.

12. How long is my school counselor credential valid?

Your counselor credential should expire when your teaching license expires.

13. How do I renew my school counselor credential?

To renew your school counselor credential, you will go to NDTeach and apply for credential renewal.

14. What are the requirements to renew my credential?

Your teaching license and counselor credential are renewed at the same time. You will need a total of six credits to renew your five-year license with two of the six being in the area of counseling.

**For NDDPI, the two semester hours of required counseling coursework may be replaced by thirty clock-hours of continuing education hours in counseling with a signed verification of attendance or participation by the conference or workshop sponsor, the employer, or a school district business manager. Please Note that these will not count towards renewing your teacher license.*

15. I have a lifetime teaching license, do I still need to renew my counselor credential?

Yes. An individual who holds a lifetime North Dakota educator’s professional license must renew the school counselor credential every five years. You must submit copies of transcripts documenting the completion of a minimum of four semester hours with two in the area of counseling. Two semester hours of required counseling coursework may be replaced by thirty clock-hours of continuing education hours in counseling with a signed verification of attendance or participation by the conference or workshop sponsor, the employer, or a school district business manager.

16. What if I have a two-year teaching license and a counseling credential?

They should expire and need to be renewed at the same time. The number of semester hours for renewal will be calculated on a one semester per year basis. A two year renewal would require two semester hours with one in the area of counseling.

**For NDDPI, one semester hour of required counseling coursework may be replaced by fifteen clock-hours of Continuing Education Hours (CEU’s) in counseling with a signed verification of attendance or participation by the conference or workshop sponsor, the employer, or a school district business manager. Please Note that ESPB does not require any credits to renew your two year license.*

17. Are official transcripts required?

Administrative Rules state transcripts are needed to renew your school counselor credential. However, if it is your initial ND license and/or your initial school counseling credential, official copies are required. For all renewals, unofficial transcripts are acceptable.

18. What is a state-approved program?

The North Dakota Century Code 67-11-05-03, requires that the Education Standards and Practices Board in concert with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, shall supervise a system of program approval at those colleges within the state of North Dakota. The three state approved school counseling programs are: North Dakota State University, University of Mary, and University of North Dakota.

19. How will I receive my school counseling credential?

Credentials will no longer be printed and mailed out to you. Once you apply and are approved for a credential, you will receive an email with a letter of congratulations and a PDF of the certificate. The letter will announce the specific credential approved with the expiration date and directions and requirements to renew the credential.

You can always print your credential from your account on NDTEACH following these simple steps:

- Login to ND Teach
- Select “View All Applications” located under Active Qualifications
- Select the current credential you would like to print
- Download and print the PDF of your credential

Cooperating Agencies

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