

TESTING FAQ'S

Illinois Certification Testing System
Illinois State Board of Education
Certification Division

Frequently Asked Questions

TEST REQUIREMENTS

Q: What tests do I need to take, and when do I need to take them?

A: Information is provided in the Illinois Certification Testing System Registration Bulletin at www.icts.nesinc.com. This bulletin explains who must be tested, which tests must be taken, and when the tests are administered. The Registration Bulletin also contains information about how to register for tests. Additionally, a college advisor or regional office of education (www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/roedirectory.pdf) can provide assistance in determining testing and certification requirements.

Q: I live out of state. May I take the test out of state?

A: No. The Illinois tests are only administered in Illinois on the dates identified in the Registration Bulletin. However, if you have a valid out-of-state certificate, you may be eligible for a Provisional Certificate. Provisional Certificates allow you to teach for nine months before you must pass the tests. To qualify for a Provisional Certificate you must hold a valid and comparable certificate from another state. More information on Provisional Certificates may be found at http://www.isb.net/certification/pdf/73-63_request_provisional.pdf.

Note: If you hold a Provisional Certificate and fail to successfully complete the required examinations within nine months of the issue date of the certificate, your certificate will be canceled.

- Q: I have taken similar tests for certification in another state. Do I still need to take the Illinois tests?
- A: It depends. Recent legislation allows for some exceptions to the basic skills and content-area testing requirements for individuals who hold valid, comparable certificates from out of state. For information on these exceptions, view http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/out_of_state_exemption.pdf.

TEST REGISTRATION

- Q: Where can I get a Registration Bulletin?
- A: You may view the Registration Bulletin on the Internet at www.icts.nesinc.com. You may also register for testing at that address. The registration form, however, cannot be downloaded, so if you plan to register by mail, you will need to obtain a hard copy of the bulletin.

Single copies of the Illinois Certification Testing System Registration Bulletin are available from regional offices of education (www.isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/roedirectory.pdf), at colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs (www.isbe.net/profprep/PDFs/Directory.pdf), and by calling National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107.

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- Q: Do I need to register in advance to take a test?
- A: Yes. There are three distinct registration deadlines. All registration deadlines are strictly enforced.
- The Regular Registration Deadline, which is a POSTMARK deadline, is generally 6 weeks before the test date.
 - The Late Registration Deadline, which is a RECEIVED-BY deadline, is generally 3 weeks before the test date. Late registration requires a \$30 late fee in addition to the day-of-registration and test fees.

- The Emergency Registration Deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the test date. Emergency registration requires a \$90 emergency registration fee in addition to the day of registration and test fees.

See the Registration Bulletin (www.icts.nesinc.com) for specific test dates, testing fees, registration deadlines, and registration requirements.

Q: I have already registered for the test, but I registered for the wrong test. May I change my registration?

A: Changes to your registration can be made until the Late Registration Deadline for the test date for which you are registered. You may change the test(s) for which you are registered, the date on which you are scheduled to take the test, and the test site you originally requested. See instructions in the Registration Bulletin (www.icts.nesinc.com) that explain how to make these changes.

All changes to a registration must be received by the late registration deadline and accompanied by the appropriate fee. Absolutely no changes can be made after the late registration deadline.

SPECIAL TESTING ARRANGEMENTS

Q: I notice that all test dates are on a Saturday. For religious reasons, I cannot test on Saturdays. What should I do?

A: Alternative test dates are arranged for individuals whose religious convictions prohibit them from testing on Saturday. These alternative dates are scheduled for the Sunday after the regular Saturday test date. Instructions for requesting an alternative test date may be found in the "Alternative Test Dates for Religious Reasons" section of the current Registration Bulletin (www.icts.nesinc.com).

Q: English is not my first language and I am concerned I will need extra time to take the test. May I request extra time?

A: Yes. If you think you will need extra time because English is not your first language, you may request extra time. Follow the instructions for requesting alternative testing arrangements. This information may be found in the Registration Bulletin in the "Alternative Testing Arrangements" section (www.icts.nesinc.com).

Q: I have a learning disability. Are there any special accommodations that can be provided to me when I take the test?

A: Alternative arrangements that do not compromise the integrity or security of the test may be provided to individuals who are unable to take the tests under standard conditions. The specific accommodations provided are determined by the needs of the individual and must be appropriately documented. All information is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the deadline for submission of requests and accompanying documentation is the regular registration deadline.

For information on requesting alternative testing arrangements, see the "Alternative Testing Arrangements" section of the current ICTS Registration Bulletin available at www.icts.nesinc.com, or call National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107.

LOST TICKETS/BAD WEATHER/MISSED TESTS

Q: I never received (or I lost) my admission ticket. What should I do?

A: Call National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107 or 413/256-2870. They can provide you with the address of the test site, directions to the site, your seat assignment, and other necessary information.

Q: I missed the test. What should I do?

A: If you miss a test for any reason, you will simply be counted as absent, and no score will be reported for you.

If you miss a test because of an illness, medical emergency, or death, you may request a rollover of your registration fees. To do so, you must:

- Submit a written request

- Include documentation (for example, a letter from the doctor or verification of attendance at a funeral.)
- Mail to: Illinois Certification Testing System
National Evaluation Systems, Inc.
P. O Box 660
Amherst MA 01004-9000

After National Evaluation Systems receives your request, you will be notified within approximately two weeks that your request was or was not approved.

If your request is approved, you will receive a fee voucher in the amount of the regular registration and test fee for the tests for which you were registered and could not take. You then need to submit that voucher along with a new registration form, in compliance with the registration deadlines for the new test date for which you are registering.

Rollovers are not approved until after a test date is missed. You do not need to submit the rollover request before the missed test date. However, if you wish to register for the next test date and want to avoid a late fee, you must submit your request in sufficient time for us to respond and for you to submit a new registration form by the regular registration deadline.

Rollovers are only approved based upon properly documented absences due to medical emergency or death.

If you missed the test because of any other reason (car trouble, work commitments, or other circumstances) you will have to pay the test and registration fees when you reregister.

Q What if it snows on the test date? Will the test be canceled?

A: A test will be canceled only if absolutely necessary. If it becomes necessary to cancel a test site or sites, the cancellation will be announced on local radio stations beginning at 5:00 a.m. on the day of the test. If a test site is canceled, the test will be rescheduled, and you will receive notification of the change.

If you miss a test that has not been canceled, you will be counted as absent and will have to register and pay the fee to take a future test.

(For further information, see "Cancellation of a Test Administration" in the Registration Bulletin, which is available at www.icts.nesinc.com.)

Q: I have a complaint about the test or testing conditions. Whom may I contact?

A: You may write to the Illinois Certification Testing System, National Evaluation Systems, P. O. Box 660, Amherst, MA 01004-9000, or call them at 800/239-8107. Your letter should be received by NES no later than seven days after your test date. Additional information may be found in the Registration Bulletin in the section entitled "During and After the Test" (www.icts.nesinc.com).

TEST SCORES/SCORE REPORTS

Q: I have a job pending. May I receive my test scores early?

A: Scores are reported as soon as they are available. Scores are posted on the Internet no later than 5:00 p.m. on the score report date. Official score reports are mailed to examinees via U.S. mail on that date as well.

The score report date is generally 4 weeks after the test date (refer to the Registration Bulletin for specific dates.)

If you have a job pending, contact your regional office of education to inquire about placing a "Rush" on your application for certification. (Individuals seeking employment with Chicago Public Schools should contact the CPS Human Resources Office.)

Q: May I call to find out if I passed the test?

A: No. Test scores are never released over the telephone.

Q: All my friends have received their test scores, but I haven't received mine. What can I do?

A: If it is more than one week after the score report date and you have not received your test scores, contact National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107.

Q: May a school district that is interested in hiring me check on my test scores?

A: No. We provide your test scores only to you and the college or university to which you requested we send your scores. We do not provide scores to employers. A school district, however, may check on your certification status.

Q: May I have a copy of my test scores sent to another state or an employer?

A: No. We provide your test scores only to you and the colleges or universities to which you requested we send your scores. We do not provide copies of score reports to other states or employers. The fact that you possess an Illinois certificate originally issued to you after July 1, 1988 serves as evidence that you successfully completed the required Illinois certification tests. (July 1, 1988, is the date that testing became a requirement for certification in Illinois.)

Q: I lost my score report. May I get another copy?

A: You can request a duplicate copy of your test scores from National Evaluation Systems. Scores are available for up to five years from the date you took the test. Information on how to request a duplicate copy may be found at www.icts.nesinc.com/IL11_scorereport_opener.asp.

Q: I received my score report but believe I earned a score different from the one reported to me. May I have my test re-scored?

A: Yes. Information about how to request a re-score is in the ICTS Registration Bulletin at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL11_re_score.asp. Written requests for a test re-score must be postmarked and mailed to NES along with the correct payment within three months of the score report date.

Q: I don't understand how my scores are calculated. Where can I find an explanation of the scoring process?

A: An explanation of how each test is scored is available at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL11_scorereport_opener.asp.

Q: The social security number on my test results is wrong. How can I get it corrected?

A: The social security number on your test results is the one you provided when you registered for the test. To correct this number, send a copy of your social security card—with a request to change the number on your test results—to your regional office of education. In that request, provide both the correct and incorrect numbers. (Individuals residing in the City of Chicago should fax this information to the Illinois State Board of Education, Certification Division, 217-524-1289.)

STUDY MATERIALS

Q: Are there study materials to help in preparing for the tests?

A: The Illinois Certification Testing System study guides provide an excellent source of test preparation material. Study guides may be accessed at www.icts.nesinc.com, or single copies may be obtained by calling National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107. Additional information about test preparation strategies and how to use the study guides is included in "Study Strategies and Test-Taking Suggestions." That document may be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/teachers/ICTS_Info/STUDYSTRATEGIES.pdf

Q: I failed the test and need help preparing to retake it. Where can I go for help?

A: "Study Strategies and Test-Taking Suggestions" is a document designed to help examinees prepare to retake a test and identify additional resources that may help them become successful. You may access this document at <http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/STUDYSTRATEGIES.pdf>.

Additional Information

For additional information on the Illinois Certification Testing System:

- Refer to the current ICTS Registration Bulletin (www.icts.nesinc.com),

- Contact your college advisor or a regional office of education, or
- Contact National Evaluation Systems at 800/239-8107.

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