

The Enrolled Educational Assistant

Work Experience and Educational Requirements for the Enrolled Educational Assistant

The process of enrollment as **Enrolled Educational Assistant** is designed to recognize the role and status of the educator without formal academic training. This person may have no college training or may have received an Associate degree. The Council recognizes that many of those who are doing education in churches and Presbyteries have responded to a need and/or a call, even though they felt ill prepared to do the job. Throughout the years, many of these persons have attended or even led a variety of related workshops. The goal of the process of enrollment is to recognize and affirm these accomplishments, introduce the educator to some important writers in related fields and hopefully to whet their appetites so that they will want to pursue further course work and move toward certification.

Persons seeking enrollment as Educational Assistant must complete the following requirements:

° Two years full-time experience or its equivalent as a professional Christian Educator in a PC(USA) church, governing body or agency. (At least one year will be full time and one year may be verified volunteer Christian Education Service).**

° Twenty (20) contact hours, accumulated within the past ten years, in each of the following areas: ***

- **Biblical and Theological Foundations**
 - Included are the following areas: Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, History of the Presbyterian Church, Christology, Creeds, and/or Theology.
- **Religious Education Theory and Practice/Human Development, and age-group skills**
 - Included are the following areas: age group characteristics (specify the age levels), faith development, curriculum evaluation and interpretation, educational theory, theories of learning, human development, and lesson planning and course design.
- **Administration and Leader Development**
 - Included are the following areas: budgeting, group dynamics and interaction, knowledge of and sensitivity to structure of decision-making in the church and the denomination, delegation of responsibilities, teacher training, and church officer development.

The key element of the process is to use it as a means of identifying areas in which the educator himself or herself recognizes a need to strengthen his or her knowledge or skills. A good plan will address the gaps. The contact hours may be accumulated through academic courses, continuing education events, workshops, or colleague groups. Be sure to have CEUs/contact hours recorded by the sponsoring institution (colleges and seminaries sometimes charge a small fee for this service, but its helpful to the educator when he/she is trying to provide documentation of his/her background).

° Reading of six selected books and responding to questions.

The Enrolled Educational Assistant Reading List is mailed to each educator who completes the application for Enrolled Educational Assistant. It is also available as a part of this handbook under "forms." The reading list contains titles including some "classics" and some contemporary titles. The books are available at most university or seminary libraries and through religious bookstores. Ordinarily, only minor changes are made in the list from time to time, so if funds are available, a presbytery might be encouraged to purchase copies for its resource center. Of course, wherever possible, the educator would do well to purchase a copy of the book for his or her own library.

The Reading List for the Enrolled Educational Assistant consists of two parts. The first part lists eight "foundational" books. Five of these must be selected as **required reading**. The second part lists recommended readings from which to select books to further educational development. A sixth book is selected by the educator from the second list to complete the reading requirement. The reading lists provide the basic content outline for one's study at this level.

** NOTE: In computing a year of experience, the following equivalents apply:

1 year of full-time employment (at least 25 hours per week); OR,
2 years of half-time employment (16-24 hours per week); OR,
3 years of third-time (10-15 hours per week).

*** NOTE: a "contact hour" is an hour actually spent in a continuing education event, workshop, seminar, or class.

Steps in the Enrolled Educational Assistant Process

The process leading to Enrollment varies according to one's educational background and previous experience. Getting as much information as one can as early in the process as possible will greatly simplify the process and reduce frustrations with the experience.

Step One — Application

A. The Educator writes to the Associate for Certification (AC) at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offices in Louisville for general information and application form. This can be done electronically through www.pcusa.org/christianeducators.

B. The AC sends the Application packet to the educator, which includes:
Letter with name(s) of Presbytery approved Certification Advisor(s)
Packet entitled *Certification for Christian Educators*
Overview of the Certification process
Application Form
Educational Requirements Worksheet
Checklist for Educator's use
APCE Membership information

C. The Educator contacts a Presbytery-approved Educator Certification Advisor who will work with him/her throughout the process. The educator and the advisor prepare the application form.

D. The Advisor and Educator analyze the educator's background and experience. They develop a plan for continuing education.

E. The Educator sends to the AC:
Application form
Educational Requirements Worksheet
Three letters of reference.

F. The AC acknowledges receipt of the application and sends the Educator the reading list and questions for response along with instructions for submission following completion of educational requirements.

G. The AC writes to the Session or employing body informing it of the status of the application and enlisting their support.

Step Two — Readings and Responses

A. The Educator and Advisor decide which books from the approved list will be most helpful for the educator's professional growth. The advisor assists the educator in locating the books.

B. The Educator reads the selected books and responds to questions.

C. The Advisor and educator may meet to review responses.

D. When all educational requirements have been met, the Educator sends three (3) copies of responses to questions to the AC.

E. The AC acknowledges receipt and advises the Educator and Advisor of dates of the next Council meeting and sends *Verification of Employment Form* to the Advisor.

F. The Advisor returns completed *Verification of Employment Form* to the AC.

G. The AC sends responses to two Council members for evaluation.

Step Three — Enrollment

A. The Educator Certification Council reviews the reader's evaluations and makes its recommendations:

1. The Council enrolls the Educator.
2. The Council does not enroll the Educator due to specific deficiencies in the submitted materials.

B. If enrollment is not recommended, the AC will write to the educator with a copy to the Advisor, outlining additional work to be completed. The letter will specify how that work is to be submitted for review and subsequent action on enrollment.

C. If enrollment is recommended, the AC sends an official letter to the Educator. Letters are also sent to the Advisor, Clerk of Session or appropriate officer in the employing agency. A letter and certificate is sent to the Executive Presbyter of the Educator's Presbytery.

The EEA Examination

The examination phase for the **Enrolled Educational Assistant** is quite different from either of the others. Please be certain the educator follows these instructions in completing the requirements for enrollment.

1. Reads five books from the “Required Reading List” on the *Enrolled Educational Assistant Reading List*.
2. Based on conversations with the Certification Advisor, the Educator’s particular area of interest or work, and the perceived need for additional learning, the Educator selects and reads *one additional book* from the “Additional Reading Suggestions” list.
3. The Educator writes the following for all **six** books (minimum one page per book)
 - a. Summarize what is considered to be the basic theme(s) of the book.
 - b. Identify new insights gained from the book.
 - c. Suggest ways to apply learnings from the book to his/her work in Christian education.
4. The educator also writes a response to the following:
 - a. List three concepts from the Educator’s readings that either affirm or challenge previous learnings or understandings.
 - b. In light of the Educator’s readings and being enrolled as an Educational Assistant, what are the Educator’s future plans for continued professional development?
5. Please type your responses and mail three copies to:
Educator Certification Council
Presbyterian Church (USA)
100 Witherspoon Street,
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Two members of the Educator Certification Council read the examinations. Their recommendations become the basis for the Council’s decision concerning enrollment.

Educator Certification Council Reading and Evaluation

Examinations at all levels must be returned to the Associate for Certification at least six (6) weeks prior to the next meeting of the Educator Certification Council in order to be considered at that meeting. (These deadlines are usually early March and mid September. Examinations returned later than that may have to wait for the following meeting of the council.)

When the Associate for Certification has received all papers, they are submitted to the Council at its next meeting. After carefully reviewing all evaluations from the exam readers, the Council will make a decision as to whether:

- the papers are complete and the educator has satisfactorily met the requirements for enrollment; or
- the papers are complete, but additional attention needs to be given to certain parts of the process. The Council may recommend enrollment, but suggest that the advisor and educator review its comments in the interest of the continuing and professional development of the educator. In such cases, no further work is required; or
- the papers are complete with relatively minor problems. In these cases, the council will require that certain portions of the readings be rewritten. The details are spelled out in a

letter and can usually be addressed with a minimal amount of work.

When Enrollment Is Not Granted

For many Educators the enrollment process will conclude with positive evaluations of most, but not all parts of the responses to readings. In those cases enrollment will not be granted without some additional work. The educator and the advisor will receive a copy of a letter outlining the Certification Council's decision and remaining requirements.

Possible Outcomes

1. The ECC may require the educator to rewrite his or her responses to the assigned questions.
2. The ECC may require the educator to read an additional book in a specific area and respond to questions regarding that book.
3. The ECC may require the educator to answer additional questions about a specific book.

The examination and reading processes are designed to be learning/growing experiences as well as evaluative experiences. It is the hope of the ECC that each educator will indeed see rewriting and additional continuing education as opportunities to develop professionally.

The Educator Certification Advisor, in working with an educator who is not granted enrollment is asked to:

1. Interpret to the educator and, as necessary, the Session and presbytery, the comments, concerns and requirements of the readers, and/or the Educator Certification Council. The Advisor may need to confer with a Session or presbytery committee that is concerned about the qualifications of an educator who did not "pass." If appropriate, the interpretation should help them see the value of an educator who seeks to be professionally accredited, to do whatever is required to aid professional growth and development, and to round out his/her abilities as an educator.
2. Encourage the educator to pursue whatever additional requirements have been outlined.

If at any time, the requirements are unclear, or if the Advisor and the Educator have questions about interpreting the action of the Educator Certification Council, the Associate for Certification should be contacted.