



National College of Education

TFA Alternative Licensure Program

Content Exam Applicant Guide

CONTENT EXAM REQUIREMENTS

In order to earn a Professional Educator License (PEL) in the state of Illinois, teacher candidates must take and pass all relevant content exams required for their licensure areas. These content exams are required for all teacher candidates in MAT programs in Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, Secondary, and Special Education seeking initial licensure and/ or subsequent teaching endorsements. Passage of content exams prior to the start of the Alternative Licensure Program and earning the ELS (APE) is a National Louis University requirement with guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education.

REGISTERING FOR THE CONTENT EXAM

Licensure exams are administered by the Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS), which is overseen by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Step 1: Identify the exam(s) you need to take.

All teacher candidates seeking licensure must pass the content exam(s) associated with their subject area. Please use the table below to determine which exam(s) to take.

Step 2: Open the hyperlink associated with the desired exam(s) and begin the registration process.

Teacher candidates are responsible for paying for the test fees at the time of registration.

Step 3: Locate ILTS study materials for the exam(s) to be taken.

Please note that there are both free sample questions and for-purchase study materials available for each Content Exam listed on the ILTS site. Choose your content exam from the list provided in the following chart:

| Content Area | Required Exam | Code |
|--|---------------------------------------|------|
| Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2) | Early Childhood 206 | 206 |
| Elementary Education (1-6) | Elementary 305 | 305 |
| Middle Grades Mathematics (5-8) | Middle Grade Math 202 | 202 |



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| Middle Grades Science (5-8) | Middle Grade Science 203 | 203 |
| Middle Grades Language Arts (5-8) | Middle Grades ELA 201 | 201 |
| Middle Grades Social Science (5-8) | Middle Grade Social Science 204 | 204 |
| Secondary Mathematics (9-12) | Secondary Math 208 | 208 |
| Secondary Science - Biology (9-12) | Secondary Science- Bio 105 | 105 |
| Secondary Science - Chemistry (9-12) | Secondary Science- Chem 106 | 106 |
| Secondary Social Science - History (9-12) | Secondary Social Science- History 246 | 246 |
| Secondary English/Language Arts (9-12) | Secondary ELA 207 | 207 |
| Special Education (K - Age 22) | Special Education 290 | 290 |

Step 4: Report Exam Scores to NLU

During the registration process, please select National Louis University as the Educator Preparation Program to receive your exam scores. Upon the completion of your exam, you will receive a printout with either a pass or fail result. Your score report, with the final score and the subarea scores, will be emailed to you two weeks from your exam date. NLU will receive your scores at the same time.

Content Exam Testing Schedule

It can take multiple attempts to pass a content exam. ILTS requires candidates to wait 14 days between exams. The table below is the content exam testing schedule that can lead you to successfully pass your exam. Once you earn a 240 on your exam, you have passed, and you do not need to retake it. You may pass on the first try, or it might take several. Please don't feel discouraged; we are here to support your success. Please plan on taking the exam according to the dates listed in the table.



Alternative Pathway Program Candidates

Please note that Alternative Pathway Candidates must pass the content exam by June 30, 2025, to begin the Alternative Licensure Program in the summer of 2025.

| Dates | Deadline |
|---------------------------|--|
| Sunday, January 5, 2025 | First attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, January 26, 2025 | Second attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, February 16, 2025 | Third attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, March 9, 2025 | Fourth attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, March 30, 2025 | Fifth attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, April 20, 2025 | Sixth attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, May 11, 2025 | Seventh attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, June 1, 2025 | Eighth attempt should be completed by this date |
| Monday, June 30, 2025 | Ninth attempt should be completed by this date |
| Sunday, July 13, 2025 | Content Exams Must be Passed by This Date to Begin the Alternative Licensure Program in the Summer of 2025 |



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Content Exam Study Materials and Supports

NLU provides a variety of exam materials and supports to ensure that applicants can pass their exams and begin the Alternative Licensure Program.

Step 1: Utilize Exam Preparation Materials

Free Exam Preparation Materials:

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|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| All Content Exams | ILTS Study Guides | ILTS provides a free study guide for each content test. This provides an overview of the standards the exam tests on and includes sample questions. Candidates may need study materials beyond these resources. NOTE: ILTS also offers for-purchase practice tests for most test content areas. |
| All Content Exams | Khan Academy | Khan Academy provides content-specific information and is helpful for specific topics within the content exams (for example, "branches of the government"). |
| All Content Exams | Quizlet | Quizlet is a digital flashcard website with resources for ILTS tests, including 206 ECE, 305 ELE, and 290 LBSI. |
| ECE, ELE Content Exams | D2L (NLU platform) | For students who have been admitted to NLU, a self-paced content prep course can be provided. Reach out for more information. |

For Purchase Exam Preparation Materials:



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|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| All Content Exams | ILTS | ILTS offers for-purchase study guides and practice exams for each of the Content Tests required for Illinois Professional Educator Licenses and Subsequent Endorsements. |
| All Content Exams | Study.com | Study.com offers online study materials and practice tests available for a fee (after a 30 day free trial). |
| All Content Exams | Mometrix | Mometrix provides study books, practice questions, and flashcards for the ILTS tests related to licensure areas. |
| All Content Exams | Exam Edge | ILTS practice tests for purchase at this site. Search in the Teaching section for your content test – e.g. ILTS Middle Grades Science 203. |

Step 2: Attend Content Exam Sessions

Content Exam Sessions are designed to provide candidates with an introduction to the exam(s), identify important content knowledge that will appear on the exam(s), provide and practice proven strategies for successfully completing the exam(s). Please see the schedule below for Content Exam Sessions.

| Date | Time | Exam and Zoom Link |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Wednesday, January 8, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Early Childhood 206 https://nl.zoom.us/j/5965773756?omn=98028156106 |
| Wednesday, January 29, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Elementary Education 305 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/AwhTHjV8RWKM5fnaLpvZZq |
| Wednesday, February 12, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:00 pm | LBS1 290 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/wABzu02WTK-QYobo6H1dCA |
| Thursday, February 27, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:00 pm | Early Childhood 206 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/814gl-DIS9me4YxbKgflrQ |



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| Thursday, March 13, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Elementary Education 305 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/001JsGDqSU03cuZ0vI6GqQ |
| Thursday, April 3, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | LBS1 290 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/UkubdWMfRfqRtcsGdaah_A |
| Wednesday, April 16, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Early Childhood 206 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/BMvP5SyNSdmh4ofz_WSNGQ |
| Thursday, May 8, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Elementary Education 305 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/0flbH7BrRhaU70BvwYKchw |
| Monday, May 19, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | LBS1 290 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/qzv8u494TPezaVdQAdCJkQw |
| Tuesday, June 10, 2025 | 5:00- 6:00 pm | Early Childhood 206 https://nl.zoom.us/meeting/register/s9hOK94QQa2akvUzKEaUkg |

Step 3: Reach Out for Additional Support

Please reach out to Nicole Trackman (ntrackman@nl.edu) if you would like additional content exam sessions, if you don't see a content exam session for your area, if you would like additional materials, and/or if you have any questions.

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