

About this Doc

This document was created by the CSinPA team at PaTTAN¹ to communicate information regarding the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) 7-12 computer science (CS) certification and exam and Certification Staffing Policy Guidelines (CSPG 71) for Computer Science.²

The certification and exam was announced December 8, 2020.³

CSPG 71 was released December 18, 2020.

- The CSPG 71 webpage was updated April 1, 2022. Information about the STEM and Computer Science FAQ was added under “Certification Assignment.”

The CSinPA team updates this Doc with the input of PDE, adding new information and revising content for clarity. Significant additions and changes are indicated with parenthetical commentary with highlighted text.

Recent revisions and additions:

06/18/25:

- Question added: “What about out-of-state educators?” (#10)
- List of PDE-approved instructional certification programs updated (#12)

Quick Links in this Doc:

- [Certification for In-service Teachers](#)
 - [Elementary CS](#)
- [Certification for New Teachers](#)
- [7-12 CS Certification Exam \(Praxis\)](#)
- [7-12 CS Certification and Exam - Temporary Reimbursement Program](#)
- [7-12 CS Certification and Exam -Temporary Stipend Program](#)

¹ [CS Initiative \(PaTTAN\)](#)

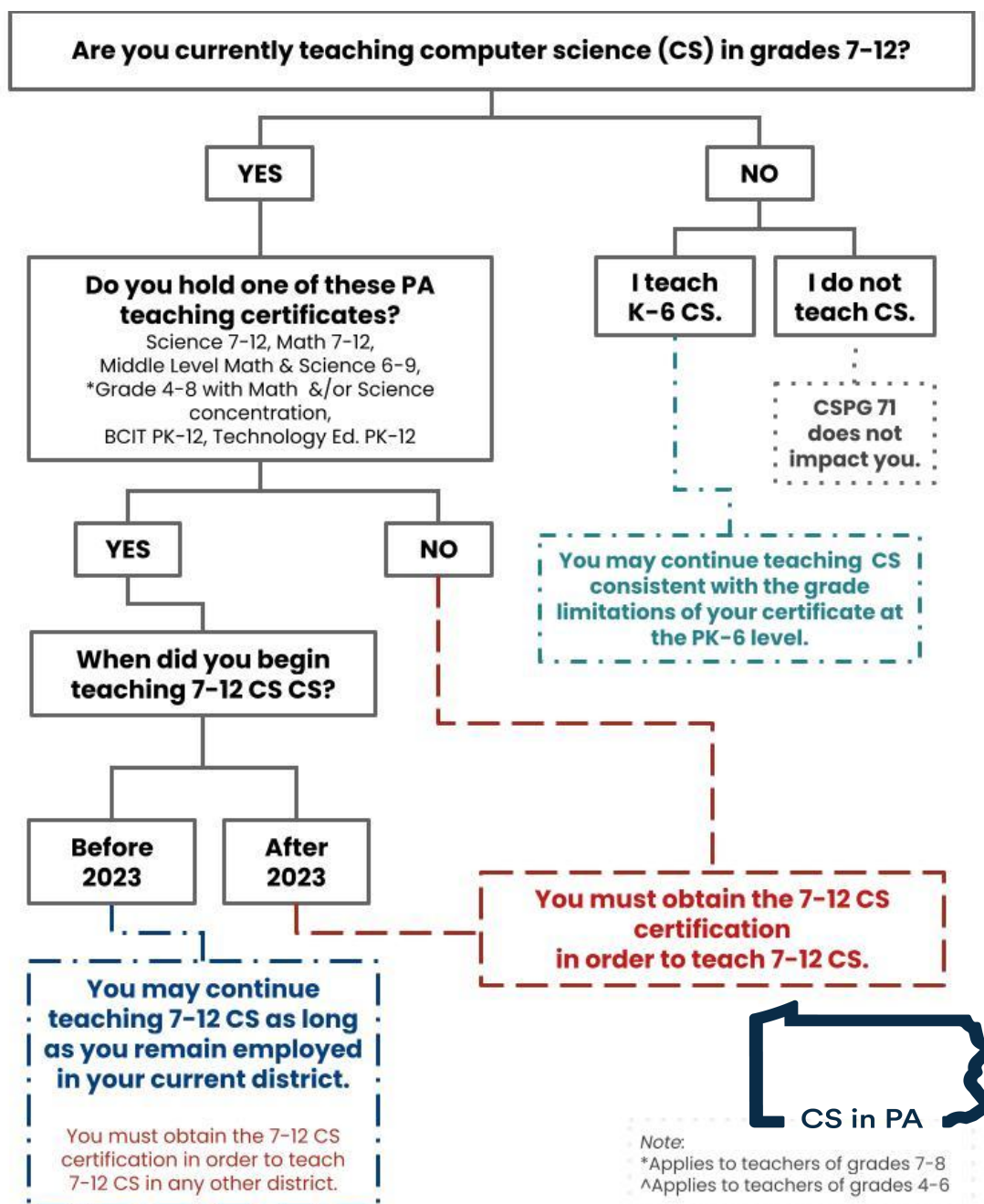
² [Certification Staffing Policy Guidelines \(PDE\)](#)

³ [Education Department to begin issuing computer science certification \(PDE\)](#)

1. Who can get the certification? Who should get it?

(Information about preparation programs added 06/18/25; Visualization revised 09/22/23;
Reformatted without changes to content 12/18/20; Visualization added 04/21/22)

The 7-12 CS certification is available through a preparation program (see [Certification for New Teachers](#)) or as an instructional add-on certificate.⁴



Note:

*Applies to teachers of grades 7-8

^Applies to teachers of grades 4-6

[PDF of visualization](#)

⁴ [Instructional add-ons \(PDE\)](#)

2. What does the certification allow a person to teach?

(Added 12/18/20)

With this certificate, a person is qualified to teach computer science (CS) courses in grades 7-12⁵, as well as grade 6.⁶

3. How do you get the certification?

(Reformatted to include new educators, previous content moved to “How do I add CS to my current certification?” 04/03/24)

There are two general options for someone seeking to become certified in computer science.

- A. If you hold a PA Instructional I certification, you can apply to add computer science to your current certification. See ["How do I add CS to my current certification?"](#)
- B. If you do not have a PA teaching certificate, you must complete a preparation program that results in a recommendation for certification. See ["Certification for New Teachers."](#)

Certification for In-service Teachers

4. How do I add CS to my current certification?

(Retitled from “How do you get the certification” 04/03/24, Reformatted without changes to content 12/18/20, Information about the reimbursement program added 06/29/21).

To receive the certification, educators must:

1. Achieve a passing score on the exam and confirm that the PDE has received the score⁷
2. Submit an application for the certification⁸.

[How-to guide for applying for the certification in TIMS.](#)

Pennsylvania 7-12 teachers who are currently or will soon teach CS courses may be eligible for reimbursement for the TIMs application fee for the 7-12 CS add-on certificate (\$200), through PaTTAN's [temporary reimbursement program](#).

5. Can an in-service teacher teach 7-12 CS without getting the 7-12 CS certificate?

(Retitled to include “in-service” 03/03/24; Revised 10/03/23 to update verb tenses regarding employment as of 12/31/22; Revised 04/08/22 for consistency with language in CSPG 71)

⁵ [CSPG 71 - Computer Science 7-12 \(PDE\)](#)

⁶ [CSPG 104 - Limitation of Assignment of Middle and Secondary Teachers to Instruction at the Elementary Level \(PDE\)](#)

⁷ [Certification testing requirements \(PDE\)](#)

⁸ [TIMS information for personal users \(PDE\)](#)

The question is a matter of what certificate(s) the teacher holds, and when they began teaching CS.

In 2016, Act 86 expanded the pool of educators eligible to teach CS, approving the certificates listed here for teaching 7-12 CS. With CSPG 71,⁹ educators holding any of the certificates listed here who were employed to teach 7-12 CS on December 31, 2022 may continue teaching their current courses under a temporary license, as long as they remain in the same LEA:

- Science 7-12 Certificates
- Mathematics 7-12 Certificate
- Middle Level Math and Science Certificates 6-9
- Grades 4-8 certificates *with Math and/or Science concentrations* (applies to teachers of 7th and 8th grades)
- Business Computer Information Technology PK-12
- Technology Education PK-12

6. What are the implications for teachers that hold one of the approved certificates for temporary licensure?

(Revised 10/03/23 to update verb tenses regarding employment as of 12/31/22; Added 04/08/22)

Questions 5.a - 4.c apply to the certificates approved for temporary licensure.

- a. Does “employed to teach” refer to the hiring date, staff assignment date, or course start date?

A teacher is considered “employed” if they were assigned to teach CS course(s) prior to December 31, 2022.

- b. What if the teacher was “employed to teach” CS before 2022, but not during 2022-23?

If the teacher was assigned to teach CS courses for the first time prior to December 31, 2022, they may continue teaching the courses under the temporary licensure.

If the teacher is assigned to teach CS courses for the first time *after* December 31, 2022, they must obtain the 7-12 CS certificate.

- c. What if the teacher moves to another LEA?

If the teacher moved to another LEA before January 1, 2023, they are able to continue teaching the CS courses they are assigned to teach.

If the teacher moves to another LEA after December 31, 2022, they must obtain the 7-12 CS certificate.

⁹ [CSPG 71 - Computer Science 7-12 \(PDE\)](#)

7. Are CTC teachers “covered” under the temporary licensure criteria in CSPG 71?

(Added 04/08/22)

Career & Technical teachers must be certified in the specific area associated with computer courses taught in a career & technical entity.

8. What are the implications for teachers that do not hold one of the approved certificates?

(Added 04/08/22)

Teachers who do not hold any of the above certificates and have not obtained the 7-12 CS certificate are not in compliance and should not be teaching CS courses. Only the specific certifications outlined in CSPG 71¹⁰ can teach these courses.

Anyone employed to teach computer science in grades 7-12 for the first time in a Commonwealth LEA after December 31, 2022 or who holds one of the certificates listed above and accepts employment to teach computer science in grades 7-12 in a new Commonwealth LEA after December 31, 2022 must hold the PDE issued computer science certificate.

9. Can an emergency permit be issued to teach 7-12 CS?

(Added 09/22/23)

Yes, a district may emergency permit someone to teach 7-12 CS. The individual at a minimum must hold a bachelor's degree. Guidelines for issuance and re-issuance of emergency permits are found under CSPG #13¹¹. Additional information is available in the Emergency Permit FAQ.¹²

10. What about out of state educators?

(Added 06/18/25)

If a teacher obtained certification to teach CS in another state, they may apply for the 7-12 CS certification following PDE's instructions for [Out of State Educators](#).

Pathway 1: “I have an active/valid professional level out-of-state certificate....” potentially allows the applicant to waive (skip) the PA 7-12 CS certification exam (Praxis).

¹⁰ [CSPG 71 - Computer Science 7-12 \(PDE\)](#)

¹¹ [CSPG 13 - Emergency Permits \(PDE\)](#)

¹² [Emergency Permit FAQ \(PDE\)](#)

11. What about elementary teachers?

(Added 12/18/21; Reformatted without changes to content 04/08/22)

a. Is there an elementary CS certification?

(Reformatted without changes to content 12/18/20)

No. There are no immediate plans to launch an elementary CS certification.

b. Are there certification staffing policy guidelines (CSPGs) for elementary CS teachers?

(Added 12/18/20)

No, but CSPG 71 addresses elementary CS teachers:

“PK-6 educators who hold the following certificates can teach computer science consistent with the grade level limitations of their certificate with recommended training:¹³

- Elementary K-6
- Grades PK-4
- Grades 4-8 (applies to teachers of grades 4-6)”

c. What is the “recommended training” for PK-6 teachers?

(Added 04/08/22)

Training should focus on CS. PDE works through and funds the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance (PaTTAN) and the 29 Intermediate Units to provide training and technical assistance in CS. Additional examples of CS trainings are listed on the PDE STEM and CS FAQ page.¹⁴

Certification for New Teachers

(Revised to include current approved certification programs 06/18/25; Section added 04/03/24)

Individuals who are not PA-certified must complete a preparation program that results in a recommendation for certification. The [New Educators](#) section of the PDE website has more information on becoming certified. The [Certification Pathways Chart](#) lists the steps for each program, including traditional certification, the intern certification, and the master’s degree or post-baccalaureate program.

12. What is the traditional process for the CS certification?

Contact an [approved program provider](#) for your [area of certification](#).

- a. As of June 19, 2025, the following institutions have instructional certification programs for CS [PDE-approved certification programs for CS](#):

- i. DeSales University
- ii. Kutztown University of PA
- iii. Messiah University

¹³ [CSPG 71 - Computer Science 7-12 \(PDE\)](#)

¹⁴ [STEM and CS FAQ \(PDE\)](#)

- iv. Misericordia University
 - v. Point Park University
 - vi. Seton Hill University
 - vii. Swarthmore College
 - viii. Wilkes University
- b. If you choose an institution that is not an approved program provider, the general criteria are that it must be a regionally or nationally accredited university with a state-approved preparation program that includes student teaching/practicum. You should confirm with the institution that it meets these criteria.

The provider can review your transcripts to determine what you need to complete a certification program.

Once you complete a program you will take the [certification exam](#) and then apply in [TIMS](#) for your certificate.

13. What is the intern certification process for the CS certification?

The [intern certification route](#) is the alternative pathway for CS certification.

Select an approved provider for your area of certification.

- a. Messiah University has a [PDE-approved teacher intern certification program for CS](#).

Follow the steps to complete the intern certification program and work with the preparation program of your choice to identify possible positions/placements. The preparation program determines costs and other specific details.

Once you complete a program you will take the [certification exam](#) and then apply in [TIMS](#) for your certificate.

14. What is the master's degree or post-baccalaureate pathway for the CS certification?

The master's degree or post-baccalaureate pathway allows you to complete your preparation program while employed on a [Type 01 emergency permit](#). (See also: "Can an emergency permit be issued to teach 7-12 CS?")

Contact an [approved program provider](#) for your [area of certification](#).

- a. Clarion University, DeSales University, Kutztown University, Messiah University, Misericordia University, Point Park University, and Swarthmore College have [PDE-approved certification programs for CS](#).

Follow the steps to complete the intern certification program and work with the preparation program of your choice to identify possible positions/placements. The preparation program determines costs and other specific details.

Once you complete a program you will take the [certification exam](#) and then apply in [TIMS](#) for your certificate.

7-12 CS Certification Exam

15. Who can take the exam?

Any educator in Pennsylvania that has a Pennsylvania teaching certification may take the exam.

16. How/where can I take the exam?

(Revised 04/08/22 to remove obsolete information; "Tips for viewing PA CS Praxis test centers and dates" resource added 12/20/22)

The exam is administered by Praxis; see the Praxis website¹⁵ for information on exam registration and testing centers.

- The CSinPA team created a [how-to guide for registering for the Praxis exam](#) and a [slide deck featuring tips](#) for accessing the most accurate information about PA test centers and dates.

17. What score do I need?

The passing score is 149.¹⁶

18. What can I do to prepare for the exam?

(Added 06/29/21; CSinPA Virtual Community and 2023 Praxis Prep Workshop information added 12/20/22)

Study aides, practice questions, and other materials are available in the ["7-12 CS Certification and Praxis Exam" folder](#).

There is a sub-group ("Circle") dedicated to the 7-12 certification and exam in the [CSinPA virtual community](#) where teachers can discuss the exam, share study tips, and ask questions about the exam experience.

Pennsylvania 7-12 educators who are currently or will soon teach CS courses are eligible for PaTTAN's Praxis Prep professional learning opportunities. including:

- ["Praxis Prep" pathway](#): Enrollment in the self-paced, virtual program is on-going. Act 48 credit is available.
- [2024 "Praxis Prep" workshop series](#): A series of four (4) one-day workshops covering topics covered in the exam. Participants may attend

¹⁵ [Teaching and leading in Pennsylvania \(Praxis\)](#)

¹⁶ [Certification Testing](#) (PDE) The score is listed in the downloadable Excel file linked in #3, "Certification Test and Score Requirements"

in-person or virtually. Each workshop offers Act 48 credit, financial assistance for sub-coverage, and additional support for teachers attending in-person.

- [CSinPA 7-12 Peer Tutoring program](#): Individualized support (virtual meeting) from certified PA 7-12 CS teachers is available by appointment.

19. What is the cost of the exam?

(Added 06/29/21, updated 06/13/22)

The cost to register for and take the Praxis exam is **\$130**.

Pennsylvania 7-12 teachers who are currently or will soon teach CS courses may be eligible for reimbursement for the exam registration through PaTTAN's [temporary reimbursement program](#).

Reimbursement Program

Made possible by the PAsmart initiative, the PaTTAN 7-12 CS certification exam reimbursement program is open to any Pennsylvania educator who uses personal funds for the Pennsylvania 7-12 computer science (CS) Praxis exam and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) CS add-on teaching certificate. This temporary program is intended solely for educators “paying out of pocket.” Educators that receive reimbursement from their local education agency or through other means are ineligible.

Reimbursement is available for the following expenses:

- \$130*: 7-12 CS Praxis exam registration fee
- \$200: 7-12 CS PDE add-on certificate

*A passing score (149 or higher) is required to receive exam registration reimbursement.

To request reimbursement, educators must submit the following documentation using [the CSinPA 7-12 certification & exam questionnaire](#):

- Praxis exam registration receipt
- Praxis exam score report
- TIMs add-on certification application receipt

20. Can I get reimbursed if I fail the exam?

(Added 01/22/24)

Teachers may receive reimbursement for failed exam attempts upon passing the exam. Teachers must retain documentation from all attempts and submit it as one reimbursement request.

We understand that failing an exam can be discouraging, and we're here to help! We offer free, personalized 1:1 virtual consultations for teachers who need extra support reviewing their results, discussing preparation strategies, and making the most of our exam preparation resources (including practice exams, study materials, and peer tutoring) to boost your confidence for the next attempt.

Stipend Program

(Added 07/11/24)

Along with the reimbursement program, PaTTAN offers a one-time **stipend of \$400.00 to qualifying educators who achieve the 7-12 CS certification.**

Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, this temporary program

acknowledges the effort required to obtain this certification and honors your role in expanding CSinPA.

To apply for the stipend, submit the required documentation using the [CSinPA 7-12 CS certification and exam survey](#). Select “I took the exam & completed this form already. I am re-submitting it because of the reimbursement and stipend programs” on the first page to navigate directly to Section 5.

Please share about your exam preparation and experience.

(Added 01/12/21; revised 06/29/21)

Teachers, we are very interested in learning about your plans to take the PA 7-12 certification exam.

Your responses to [the CSinPA 7-12 certification & exam questionnaire](#) will help us be thoughtful about support for preparing for the exam and ways to acknowledge the accomplishment of passing it. This form is also used for the temporary certification and exam reimbursement program. The form allows for multiple submissions allowing you to provide updated information should your exam and certification status change.