

Staff Qualifications – Know Your Options

Professional Development Webinar -- September 21st, 2022

Pathways to Meet Job Role Education

Experience

What roles are eligible to meet their Job Role Education through experience?

- Assistant Teachers
- Lead Teachers
- Family Home Licensees

How do I select this option in MERIT?

By selecting this option, you acknowledge the following:

- This will meet my licensing requirement.
- This will not go toward my Early Achievers points for education.
- This does not meet ECEAP staff qualifications.
- This option does not build in future education opportunities.
- You have completed all training requirements over the past seven years.

To update your MERIT Dashboard:

1. Login to MERIT at merit.dcyf.wa.gov.
2. Click on the “Job Role Education” status bar on your MERIT Dashboard.
3. Click the “Click Here” button. A popup box will appear.
4. Use the drop-down menu to select “I want to use my experience and training.”
 - Note: **This option will only appear if you are in a qualifying role and will have the required work experience by Aug. 1, 2026.**
5. Click “Save.”
6. Your Job Role Education status bar will now be green and display your requirement as met.

PACE

What is PACE?

PACE, or Provider Access to a Community Equivalent, is a community-based training pathway to meet the licensed education requirement for those needing an Initial or Short Certificate for their role.

What roles are eligible to complete PACE?

- Assistant Teachers
- Lead Teachers
- Family Home Licensees

How do I complete PACE?

Once an eligible provider has completed Child Care Basics (CCB) and Enhancing Quality of Early Learning (EQEL) training series, they will need to complete PACE Part 1 and PACE Part 2 to complete the equivalent for the Initial Certificate.

PACE is offered through our partners at Child Care Aware of Washington. To register for the training, use the [“Find Training”](#) tool in MERIT. Search “PACE” to find available training.

How is PACE recorded?

PACE completion can be found under the “Annual Continuing Education Training” section of a provider’s professional record in MERIT. There will be an indicator that shows as complete to meet the job role education in the future.

Alternative Credentials

What are alternative credentials?

Alternative credentials are degrees, certificates, and other credentials that meet the “equivalent” of the requirement named in WAC 110-300-0100. This option includes:

- ECE Related Degrees
- Aligned Credits
- DCYF-Recognized Certificates and Credentials

For a full list of equivalent options, review the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) and [Alternative Credentials](#) guides.

Will my alternative credential meet my hiring requirement?

The college and credit-bearing options found on the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) guide will meet the hiring education for one’s early learning role if it is higher or equivalent to the individual’s hiring requirement.

For example, if a center lead teacher has an AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) diploma in primary (ages 3-6), this would also suffice the hiring education requirement (high school diploma).

ECE Education

How do I complete one of the stackable certificates?

DCYF’s [Early Learning Career Planning Portal](#) is a great resource to learn more about the Washington State stackable certificates. There, you can learn about various ECE degree types and find Washington colleges that offer ECE specific programs. You will also be able to find direct contact information for their ECE point of contact.

If I have a degree in ECE, do I need to have the required number of ECE credits required for my role?

If you have an ECE degree (AA or higher), this is an approved equivalent for the Washington State stackable certificates. For additional equivalents for each role, check out the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) guide.

Non-ECE Education

What do I do if I have a degree in something other than ECE?

If you have a recorded degree in MERIT that is in a degree area other than ECE, you do not need to go back to school. DCYF is developing a new pathway for you: the micro-credential.

A micro-credential is an approach for demonstrating knowledge, skills and experience in a competency area. It's comprised of several individual "micro-learning" units that build up to a micro-credential. Micro-learning units include activities, assessments and projects, which happen in "bite-sized" segments that are designed to support busy, working early learning providers.

DCYF is currently conducting a micro-credential pilot, which includes a participant feedback component that will help shape future micro-credential opportunities. More information will be shared in the coming months.

What if I have earned a degree outside of the United States?

DCYF implemented a new process for recording international education on July 1, 2022. If you have international education:

- Submit an education application in MERIT.
- Submit a copy of your certificate, diploma or degree, or other relevant supporting documents for review.

A translation is not needed for supporting document languages based on English characters with Latin origins. If the supporting documents are in languages based on alternate character format, a notarized literal translation will be needed.

For more information, review the "International Education" section on the [MERIT webpage](#).

Hiring Education

When do I need my high school diploma to meet my hiring education?

For most roles, the hiring education requirement is a high school diploma.

- If hired or promoted to a role after August 1, 2019, this should be met at the time of hire.
- If hired to a role before August 1, 2019, the individual would work toward meeting their job role education requirement.
 - **NOTE:** PACE and the experience-competency options do not meet the hiring education requirement and a high school diploma or GED would still be needed.

If I qualify as a center director and need to hire an assistant director, do they have to meet the hiring education right away?

If you meet the hiring education requirement as the center director, you can hire an assistant director that is still working toward meeting their education requirement. Only one person (center director, assistant director, and program supervisor) must meet the hiring education requirement at the time of hire.

The new hire would then continue to work toward their Job Role Education requirement.

Training

Do staff need to complete 10 hours of in-service training annually?

Early learning providers do need to complete 10 hours of in-service training each year. Child Care Basics meets the in-service requirement for the first year of employment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, licensors are not citing for missing hours prior to January 1, 2022. For more information on Training Modifications in Response to COVID-19, check out the recent updates here: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Somali](#)

Who needs to complete EQEL?

| | |
|--|--|
| If hired or promoted after August 1, 2019: | If hired before August 1, 2019: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Teachers • Lead Teachers • Family Home Licensees • Program Supervisors • Assistant Directors • Center Directors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who wants to use PACE to meet their licensing education requirement |

While all roles may complete EQEL, priority is given to those who need it to meet their licensing requirement or to complete PACE.

How do I complete EQEL?

EQEL can be completed through the [DCYF Online Training site](#) or by finding available training through the “[Find Training](#)” tool in MERIT.

MERIT

Who currently has access to a licensing dashboard in MERIT?

The following licensed early learning roles have dashboards in MERIT:

- Aide
- Assistant Teacher
- Lead Teacher
- Program Supervisor
- Assistant Director
- Family Home Licensee
- Center Director

In the future, dashboards will be available for ECEAP and School-Age programs.

How do I view my staff’s dashboards?

You can view a read-only version of your staff’s dashboard through your facility/site tab in MERIT. You will need to use the “Licensed Job Roles” tab.

Watch [this recorded webinar](#) on how to view your staff’s dashboards through your facility/site tab.

How long does it take to process my education application?

Once an education application has been submitted and all supporting documentation has been received, it can take up to 45 business days to process.

If I have to meet an initial and short certificate for my role, how do I know if I am still within my timeline?

Timelines are tracked in MERIT through the dashboard.

- If the status bar or individual requirement is red, this indicates that the requirement is missing or past the allotted timeline.
- If the status bar is yellow, this indicates that the requirement is in progress or within the allotted timeline to complete.
- If the status bar is green, this indicates that the requirement in this section has been met or will be met on time (experience-based competency).
- If the status bar is gray, this indicates that this requirement is not needed for this role.

Contact Us

Have questions about your staff qualifications? Training or education missing from your MERIT account? If you have these or any other questions about how to meet the staff qualifications for your role, reach out to us at merit@dcyf.wa.gov.

Resource Links

- [Alternative Credentials webpage](#)
- [Equivalent Options for Education](#)
- [Experience-Based Competency Option webpage](#)
- [General Staff Qualifications Chart](#)
- [PACE Factsheet](#)
- [PACE Program Overview](#)
- [PACE webpage](#)
- [PD Engagement Resources \[Newsletters\] \[Webinars\]](#)
- [Qualifications & Role Requirements – Child Care Providers webpage](#)
- [Stackable Certificates document](#)
- [Training Requirements & Completion Timeline](#)