Career Switcher Program
Frequently Asked Questions

What endorsements do you offer?
- Mathematics – Algebra I (add-on endorsement)
- Health and Physical Education PreK-12
- Foreign Languages PreK-12 (French, German, Spanish)
- English as a Second Language PreK-12
- Career and Technical Education – Business and Information Technology*
- Career and Technical Education – Marketing Education*
- Career and Technical Education – Technology Education*
- Career and Technical Education – Family and Consumer Sciences*
- Science – Biology
- Science – Chemistry
- Science – Earth Science
- Science – Physics
- History and Social Studies
- English
- Mathematics
- Computer Science

All endorsements are for grades 6-12 unless otherwise indicated.
*Industry certification required to be completed prior to recommendation for Level II.

Do you offer endorsements in elementary education or special education?
Endorsements in elementary education PK-6 or special education are not offered at this time, with the exception of those subjects listed above as PK-12.

What tests do I need for program admission?
You will need to pass the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) and the PRAXIS subject assessment for the endorsement area you would like to teach. Click here to access more information about testing requirements. The entry assessment demonstrates your content knowledge aligned with your teaching endorsement area. The Pathways program curriculum is not based on content, but pedagogy supporting the method and art of teaching the content.
**How much does the program cost?**
The program cost is $5,500 ($5,000 for Level I and $500 for Level II). Click [here](#) for details and payment options. Fees do not include the cost of textbooks, entry assessment, Virginia Department of Education licensure application fees, first aid, CPR/AED training, or fingerprinting/criminal background check.

**What is the format of the classes?**
During the first year of the program (Level I) classes meet face-to-face every other weekend from August to June. Classes are held on Fridays from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (except holidays). During the second year of the program (Level II) seminars will be held monthly.

**Is there an option to complete the program online?**
No. The program is not available online.

**How long will it take to complete the program?**
There are two required levels to program completion.
- **Level I:** Year 1 - Face-to-face course modules and field experiences *(two academic semesters)*
- **Level II:** Year 2 - One year full-time employment, monthly seminars, and mentors
- **Level III:** Year 3 - Optional access to professional development and additional mentor support year three (VCU program completer additional benefit)

**What are the steps to obtaining full licensure as a Career Switcher?**
*Please refer to the levels in the previous question.*
1. Candidates will apply for the Provisional Career Switcher License after completing Level I. The provisional license is good for one year.
2. After completing Level II, candidates will be evaluated and recommended to apply for a ten-year renewable license. Alternatively, a one-year extension of the Provisional Career Switcher License may be requested.

**Is there a student teaching requirement?**
Student teaching is not required; however, there is a requirement for 30 hours of clinical experience in the area of endorsement in a school setting during Level I.

**If I enroll in the program, when can I start teaching?**
Participants who successfully complete Level I requirements (course modules and field experiences) can be issued a Provisional Career Switcher license and are eligible for employment provisionally. For those who begin Level I in August 2020, this means you could start teaching with a provisional license in August 2021. Provisional Career Switcher licenses are good for one year; therefore, Level II is required in order to meet eligibility requirements to apply for the regular renewable licensure.

**Will I be able to teach outside of Virginia?**
No, the VA provisional license that you are eligible to receive upon completion of Level I is only a license for teaching in Virginia. The goal of the Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program is to provide an accelerated path for career professionals to enter Virginia’s classrooms. The VCU Career Switcher Program requires the participant to accept a position in a Virginia public or accredited private school upon receiving a Provisional Career Switcher License. If you are considering out-of-state or online alternative programs, it’s important to know that the majority of states require prospective teachers to attend a program that has been approved by that state’s teacher licensing or certification board, or by the licensing or certification board in the state where the program is located.

**Does my three years of work experience need to relate to the area that I want to teach?** No. Your work experience does not have to relate to the area that you plan to teach. A unique feature of the Career Switcher Program is that it recognizes the value and life experiences of adults. You should select a content area that you are passionate about and have some experience whether academic or professional. The Praxis subject test will assess your general knowledge of the subject area.

**Is it possible to get endorsed in more than one subject area?** Yes. It is possible to get endorsed in more than one subject area. You would need to take the Praxis subject test in each area in which you are seeking an endorsement. Additional clinical experience hours will also be required. It is best to speak with an advisor if you are considering more than one endorsement area so that you are fully aware of your options.

**Will my attendance be required for every class meeting?** Yes. Attendance is required at all class meetings given the accelerated format of the program. Extenuating circumstances that would prevent you from attending a class will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

**Will I receive a degree or university college credit for program completion?** The face-to-face course modules do not award academic credits, nor will the program lead to a university degree.