

Alternative Pathway to Eligibility Application

Frequently Asked Questions

1. General
2. Educational Requirements
3. Filling out the Alternative Pathway Application
4. Submitting the Alternative Pathway Application
5. Alternative Pathway Eligibility Results

GENERAL

Q: Why must I have a minimum of an associate's degree to take the NIC, SC:L, or OTC Interview/Performance Exams after June 30, 2009?

A: The RID Membership took a huge stride in elevating the profession of sign language interpreting when they passed motion C 2003.05 at the 2003 RID National Conference in Chicago. This motion mandated that after June 30, 2008, all hearing interpreters must hold a minimum of an associate's degree, in any field, to take the NIC, SC:L, and OTC Interview/Performance Exams. (A degree is not required for the NIC, SC:L, and OTC Written/Knowledge Exams.)

It was recognized that some system of “equivalent alternative criteria allowable in lieu of the educational requirements” was needed for interpreters who had many years of experience and expertise, yet who did not have a degree in higher education. Upon nearing the requirements deadline, it was realized that more time was needed in developing the requirements for the Alternative Pathway, so the deadline was reset to June 30, 2009.

Q: I'm an EIPA interpreter. Do the new educational requirements apply to me?

A: Yes, EIPA interpreters who hold the Ed:K-12 credential and would like to become certified members of RID must meet either the educational requirements or the Alternative Pathway requirements.

Q: What is the Alternative Pathway to Eligibility?

A: The Alternative Pathway is a system that measures a combination of qualifications that can be collectively considered an acceptable substitute for the new educational requirements. The Alternative Pathway uses a point system that awards credit for college classes, years of full-time interpreting work, interpreter-related training, professional interpreting certifications, and specific volunteer services to RID (including articles published in *IEWS* or the *Journal of Interpretation*).

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Q: I do have a 2-year degree (associate's degree), but it has nothing to do with sign language or interpreting. Would this satisfy the educational requirements?

A: Yes, if you have a college degree that is an associate's degree or higher, no matter what your major was, it will satisfy the educational requirements.

Q: I completed a certificate program from a business college. Would this satisfy the educational requirements?

A: Not by itself. Only an actual associate's, bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree automatically fulfills the educational requirements. You will need to see if you can gain eligibility through the Alternative Pathway.

Q: I have a 4-year degree (bachelor's degree). Does this satisfy the educational requirements?

A: Yes.

Q: I already passed the NIC Written/Knowledge Exam, but I am not yet eligible to take the interview/performance exam. How long do I have to acquire at least an associate's degree or meet the requirements of the Alternative Pathway to Eligibility?

A: You have 5 years from passing the written/knowledge exam to take the coordinating interview/performance exam. This also applies to the SC:L and OTC exams.

Q: I took my NIC Written/Knowledge Exam last year. I will be graduating from a two (2) year interpreter training program in 6 months. I would like to take the NIC Interview/Performance Exam right now, while everything is fresh in my mind. Can I go ahead and take the exam and then send in a copy of my transcript after graduation?

A: No, you must have officially completed your associate's degree for it to be counted toward the educational requirements. You will need to see if you can gain eligibility through the Alternative Pathway if you want to apply for the performance exam before you graduate.

Q: I currently hold an RID certification, but I don't have a college degree. Does that mean I will lose my certification after June 30, 2009?

A: No, as long as you maintain your RID membership status and continue earning the 8 CEUs appropriate to your certification during each consecutive 4-year cycle, you will continue to hold your current certification. The new educational requirements only apply to: 1) individuals who do not hold an associate's degree or higher and who wish to apply to take the NIC, SC:L, or OTC interview/performance exams, and 2) EIPA interpreters who hold the Ed:K-12 credential and would like to become certified members of RID.

Q: I am already RID certified. I heard there would be grandfathering for the degree requirements, so am I exempt from the requirements?

A: There will be no grandfathering for the educational requirements. If you want to take the NIC, SC:L, or OTC Interview/Performance Exam after June 30, 2009, you will need to have at least an associate's degree or successfully meet the requirements of the Alternative Pathway to Eligibility.

Q: I have NIC Advanced certification and would like to re-test to try for NIC Master certification. Since I already hold an NIC certificate, will I still need an associate's degree to take the NIC Interview/Performance Exam again?

A: Yes, regardless of certifications already held, all applicants for the NIC, SC:L, and OTC Interview/Performance Exams must have at least an associate's degree or meet the requirements of the Alternative Pathway to Eligibility in order to satisfy the educational requirements after June 30, 2009.

Q: Do I need to send in an Alternative Pathway to Eligibility form in order to take the NIC Written/Knowledge Exam?

A: No, anyone may take the NIC Written/Knowledge Exam. There are no changes to the requirements for taking written tests. This also applies to the SC:L and OTC exams.

Q: I am ready to take the CDI Interview/Performance Exam. Do I need to have an associate's degree?

A: No, the new educational requirements that go into effect on June 30, 2009 only apply to the NIC, SC:L, and OTC interview/performance exams. You will need to have an associate's degree to take the CDI Interview/Performance Exam after June 30, 2012.

FILLING OUT THE ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY APPLICATION

Q: I have taken more than 15 hours of ASL classes at a local community college. Does that satisfy the formal education category?

A: No, you must have a minimum of 15 credit hours that include classes from at least three (3) of the six (6) General Education Subject Areas. If you have only taken classes in one (1) subject area, that does not satisfy the formal education category.

Q: What should I do if I run out of room on the form?

A: Simply add the extra information to another sheet of paper and include it with your application.

Q: What are General Education Subject Areas?

A: There are six (6) General Education Subject Areas: English, Math, Social Studies, Biology & Physical Science, Languages, and Arts/Electives. A minimum of 15 credit hours of classes in at least three (3) subject areas shows that an applicant has taken liberal arts classes over a broad range of subjects, which ensures they are widening their general knowledge base and becoming more educationally rounded.

Q: What if I don't have all the documentation asked for on the application?

A: Where documentation is required, RID can only give you credit for documented items.

Q: What qualifies as an interpreter-related educational activity?

A: For the purposes of the Alternative Pathway, any educational activities offered by RID Approved Sponsors qualify to earn you points in the Relevant Training Category.

Q: I took a great interpreting workshop at my local college last year. Would this workshop count in the "Relevant Training" section of the Alternative Pathway application?

A: Only educational activities that are offered by an RID-approved Sponsor can earn eligibility points toward "Relevant Training."

Q: I volunteered at the last RID conference. Can I earn points for that?

A: We greatly appreciate your contribution to the RID conference! However, for the purposes of Alternative Pathway eligibility, only volunteer work as a Chair or Member of the RID Board of Directors or an official RID Committee can earn eligibility points.

SUBMITTING THE ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY APPLICATION

Q: If I send an original certificate or transcript, can RID send them back to me after reviewing my application?

A: Please do not send originals! Send only copies for documentation. RID will not return any part of applications received.

Q: I finished most of my application and am waiting for my college to send me a transcript. Can I send my application to RID now and then send a copy of my transcript after it arrives?

A: No, send only completed applications with full documentation. Incomplete applications will be discarded. And please keep a copy of your application!

Q: Once I have filled out the Eligibility Application, where do I send it?

A: Please send your application to:

RID
Attn: Cert. & Ed. Dept.
Alternative Pathway
333 Commerce Street
Alexandria, VA 22310

Q: Can I send my application by fax or as an e-mail attachment to expedite processing?

A: No, we are only accepting hard-copy applications at this time.

Q: Should I send my application with some form of tracking?

A: Yes, we recommend that you send your application with the capability to track it.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY ELIGIBILITY RESULTS

Q: How long will it take for RID to process my application and how will I find out whether or not I meet the Alternative Pathway requirements?

A: After RID has received your application, it will take approximately 2-4 weeks for processing. You will receive an e-mail from the Certification & Education Department with your eligibility status. Please make sure you have provided a current, valid, and legible e-mail address on the application!

Q: If I am approved, what are the next steps?

A: If you are approved to take an interview/performance exam, please proceed by completing the application and submitting the exam fee as you normally would.

If you are approved to become a certified member of RID who holds the Ed:K-12 credential, we will send you relevant membership and certification maintenance information by postal mail in 2-4 weeks.

Q: If I am disapproved, how soon can I apply for the Alternate Pathway again?

A: You are welcome to apply for the Alternative Pathway as often as you wish.