

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

Northeastern Illinois University Short-Term Endorsement Project (STEP) - Summer 2017

[Revised August 24, 2017]

[Overview](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Tuition Reimbursement](#)

[Cohort/Non-Cohort Structure](#)

[Locations and Completion Timeline](#)

[How to Apply for STEP Project](#)

[STEP Project Course Offerings](#)

[ISBE Endorsement Requirements](#)

[Difference between ESL Endorsement and ESL SPED Approval](#)

[Difference between BIL Endorsement and BIL SPED Approval](#)

[Apply for Endorsement or Approval Upon Course Completion](#)

[Prior Coursework Review by ISBE](#)

[Contacting ISBE and Regional Offices of Education](#)

[Benefits to BIL/ESL Endorsement or Approval](#)

[Courses Applied Towards Master's Degree](#)

[Dual Credit Qualifications](#)

[STEP Project Contact Information](#)

[Important Links](#)

WHAT IS PROJECT STEP?

Project STEP is a short-term opportunity in Summer 2017, to increase the qualification of Illinois teachers. Cohorts for special education teachers and school support personnel to complete requirements Bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) Special Education Approval will take place between May 19 and August 30 at NEIU and in the Cicero/Berwyn area. Teachers already in process of completing BIL/ESL endorsement requirements and high school teachers already in process of completing Dual Credit Qualifications can also participate. Qualifying candidates will receive tuition benefits as well as book and fee reimbursements, after a required \$50 STEP registration fee and corresponding university application or enrollment fees (\$30 at NEIU).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT STEP?

1. Special education teachers (PK-12)
2. School support personnel (formerly Type 73), including school counselors, social workers, school psychologist and speech pathologists
3. PK-12 teachers who have already completed 3 or more classes towards Bilingual, ESL and/or ENL endorsement, and are able to complete all course requirements before August 30, 2017.
4. High school teachers able to complete Dual Credit Qualification requirements (18 hours in a content area) before August 30, 2017.

WHAT UNIVERSITY COSTS ARE COVERED BY PROJECT STEP?

Eligible teachers and school support personnel must complete an application demonstrating their educational plan and commitment to meeting endorsement or qualification requirements. Once accepted, candidates will be required to provide a non-refundable \$50 fee to secure their Project STEP participation and, for those requiring admission to NEIU, a \$30 Admission application fee. Subsequently, Project STEP participants will receive tuition and fee benefits as follows:

- Cost of tuition and fees at NEIU up to \$1265 per course
 - -or- equivalent up to \$1265 per course if currently enrolled at another institution,
- Book reimbursement of up to \$100 per class
- ISBE Bilingual/ESL Endorsement and/or Approval application fee reimbursement (\$50)
- Illinois Licensure Target Language Proficiency Test fee reimbursement (\$122)

HOW WILL COHORTS BE CONDUCTED? ARE THERE NON-COHORT OPTIONS?

Special education teachers and school support personnel will participate in cohorts with classes offered in various formats: online, face-to-face, and hybrid (both online and face-to-face), including some intensive classroom summer sessions at NEIU. Out-of-cohort candidates will also be recruited who can benefit from assistance to accelerate completion of requirements for Bilingual/ESL endorsements or dual credit qualifications (for high school teachers). Teachers who need 9 credit hours or less to finish their ESL and/or Bilingual endorsement or Dual Credit Qualification may take eligible classes at NEIU or at any university and be reimbursed at the current NEIU tuition rate.

WHERE WILL CLASSES BE HELD AND WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING COURSEWORK?

Two (2) NEIU Summer 2017 cohorts will be organized for **special education teachers**, one at a Cicero-Berwyn site, and the other at NEIU campus sites at 5500 N St. Louis Ave, Chicago 60625 or El Centro campus at 3390 N Avondale, Chicago 60618

Most classes will be hybrid, meeting from May 22 – August 10, 2017. The Chicago cohort will also meet for one class in a daily AM intensive session at NEIU from July 6- July 25, 2017.

Two (2) NEIU cohorts will be organized for **school support personnel** to complete one course required for BIL/ESL SPED Approval. One cohort will convene in Cicero-Berwyn and the other in Chicago from July 1-August 10, 2017. These classes will be delivered in a hybrid format with online and in-class meetings.

Non-cohort classes for teachers needing up to 9 hours of coursework to complete ESL/Bilingual Endorsements must be completed at NEIU or another university by August 30, 2017.

Non-cohort classes for teachers completing up to 9 hours of coursework to complete Dual Credit Qualifications must be completed at NEIU or another university by August 30, 2017.

HOW CAN I APPLY TO THE Project STEP AND REGISTER FOR CLASSES AT NEIU?

Teachers should first fill out a General Interest in Bilingual/ESL Endorsement at NEIU form, which will be reviewed. Eligible teachers will then fill out an application to Project STEP. Once you have received notice that you are accepted into the program, you will be instructed to apply as a Graduate Student-at-Large at NEIU. Select [here](#) for the paper format of the NEIU admission application - or - create an online account to apply: [here](#).

1. BIL/ESL Endorsement & Dual Credit Inquiry Form - Visit the link below
Step.c4cas.org
2. STEP Application
3. NEIU Graduate Student-At-Large Admission
4. Course Enrollment for Summer 2017

All students should apply to NEIU as Graduate Students-at-Large by May 15 (or June 15 for courses beginning July 1). Please go to admissions.neiu.edu and select "Graduate Student-At-Large" in order to fill out the online form and pay the \$30 application fee. You will need to confirm your Illinois residency. You will need to submit transcripts indicating a Bachelor or Master's degree from prior universities (other than NEIU). Send notification that you have applied to us at: endorsements@neiu.edu.

If you are a current, eligible NEIU student, you can log-in to your Neiuport account and register online as a Graduate Student-at-Large. If you prefer to apply in person, you may go to the NEIU Admissions Office at 5500 N. Bryn Mawr Avenue to apply with a paper format application ([here](#)), and pay the required \$30 fee. The Admissions Office is open Tuesday-Thursday, 8:30-6:00 pm, and Monday and Friday, 8:30-4:30 pm. If you wish to call the Graduate Admissions Office you may call 773-442-6000. Please stay abreast of your email to verify acceptance to the University and login information; most communications will be sent electronically.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED COURSES FOR EACH CATEGORY OF TEACHER OR SCHOOL SUPPORT PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN Project STEP?

1. Special Education teachers

Teachers who have a Professional Educator License (PEL) in a special education teaching field or a license with a special education approval - LBS I or LBS II - must complete three (3) classes (9 credit hours) to meet designated requirements in order to qualify for the ISBE Bilingual or Special Education ESL Approval. Candidates interested in both Bilingual and ESL Approval will need to complete four (4) courses (both ESL and Bilingual Methods are required). The STEP Project will offer two cohort programs, one in Cicero/Berwyn and the other in Chicago/NEIU. The required courses to meet ISBE BIL/ESL SPED Approval are:

- Theoretical foundations of Bilingual/ESL Education (BLBC 438 or TESL 414)
- Bilingual Methods (for Bilingual Approval: BLBC 441) - **or** -
ESL Methods (for ESL Approval: BLBC 440 or TESL 410)
- Assessment of Bilingual Students (BLBC 442 or TESL 468)

Additionally, those interested in a Bilingual Special Education Approval, must take and pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test. Check here for updated information regarding these test dates: [Illinois Licensure Testing System](#).

2. School Support Personnel

Teachers in this category must hold a Professional Educator License (PEL) endorsed in School Support Personnel for school counselor, school social worker, school psychology, or speech language pathologist. Through the STEP Project cohorts, these educators will complete one (1) graduate class of 3 credit hours, in order to qualify for the ISBE Bilingual or ESL Special Education Approval. The STEP Project will offer two cohort programs, one in Cicero/Berwyn and the other in Chicago/NEIU. The required courses to meet ISBE BIL/ESL SPED Approval for School Support Personnel is:

- Assessment of Bilingual Students (BLBC 442 or TESL 468)

Additionally, those interested in a Bilingual Special Education Approval must take and pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test. Check here for updated information regarding these test dates: [Illinois Licensure Testing System](#).

3. Bilingual/ESL Endorsement Acceleration for teachers in need of 9 credit hours (3 classes) or less to complete ISBE endorsement requirements.

Teachers who have taken 3 or more courses leading to the ISBE ESL or Bilingual Endorsement, and who need 3 or fewer additional courses (up to 9 hours) may participate in Project STEP. Candidates who complete an application demonstrating their educational plan and commitment to meeting endorsement requirements upon acceptance to the program will be eligible for NEIU tuition waivers to complete the 1-3 courses required for ESL/Bilingual endorsement. Additionally, teachers in process at other IHEs may apply and receive up to \$1265 per course in tuition reimbursement toward 1-3 courses required for the Bilingual/ESL Endorsement. Those applying for the Bilingual endorsement must also pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test.

4. Dual Credit Qualification for High School Teachers

To support increasing the numbers of Illinois high school teachers with dual credit qualifications (see below) to be able to teach courses for dual credit through agreements with two and four-year post-secondary institutions, Project STEP will identify and recruit candidates best able to complete dual credit qualifications by September 30, 2017. Candidates will complete an application demonstrating their education plan and commitment to meeting dual credit qualification requirements, and upon acceptance will be eligible for NEIU tuition waivers towards dual credit qualification. Additionally, teachers in process at other IHEs may apply and receive up to \$1265 per course in tuition reimbursements towards 1-3 courses required for dual credit qualification.

Dual credit qualifications, according to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, are as follows:

For transfer courses, the [dual credit] qualifications include a minimum of a Master's degree with 18 graduate hours appropriate to the academic field or discipline in which they are teaching. For Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, these qualifications include 2,000 hours of work experience and the appropriate recognizable credential depending on the specific field.

Please see this Compliance Form (Faculty section) from the Illinois Board of Higher Education:

<http://www.ibhe.org/DualCredit/pdf/ComplianceForm.pdf>

WHAT ARE ISBE REQUIREMENTS FOR ESL/BILINGUAL ENDORSEMENT AND EQUIVALENT COURSES AT NEIU?

ISBE ESL Endorsement Course Requirement	ISBE Bilingual Endorsement Course Requirement	NEIU Course Equivalents
Linguistics	Elective	TESL 402 Principles of Linguistics for Teachers
Theoretical Foundations of ESL	Theoretical Foundations of Bilingual Education	BLBC 438 Foundations of Bilingual Education - -or- TESL 414 Theories of Teaching ESL
Assessment of the Bilingual Student	Assessment of the Bilingual Student	BLBC 442 Assessment Tools for Bilingual Students -or- TESL 468 Assessment of the LEP Student
Methods and Materials of Teaching ESL	Methods and Materials of Teaching ESL	BLBC 440 Methods For Teaching English Learners In Diverse Classrooms -or- TESL 410 Techniques of Teaching ESL
Cross Cultural Studies	Cross Cultural Studies	BLBC 439 Ethnic Diversity in our Schools -or- TESL 445 Language Variation
Elective	Methods and Materials for Teaching LEP Students	BLBC 441 Materials, Methods & Techniques for Teaching LEP Students

Completion of the 6 classes in the NEIU sequence (or equivalent) enables teachers to complete the ISBE requirements for an ESL and/or Bilingual Endorsement. Teachers must show proof of 100 hours (3 months) of work with English Learners (a letter from the Principal is accepted.) To receive the Bilingual Endorsement, teachers must also pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test. Where applicable, NEIU courses in either TESL or BLBC are accepted.

*Further information about ISBE requirements available on their website:

https://www.isbe.net/Documents/endsmt_struct.pdf#search=endorsement

page 16 = Bilingual and ESL Endorsement requirements

page 28 & 29 = Bilingual and ESL SPED Approval requirements

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESL ENDORSEMENT AND ESL SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL?

The ISBE ESL Endorsement can be obtained by PreK-12 teachers who complete 18 graduate hours in 6 required course areas (see chart above) and demonstrate proof of 100 teaching hours with English Learners. Then, teachers must apply to ISBE through their ELIS account, submit transcripts for review, and pay a \$50 application fee for each grade span to which the endorsement will be applied (i.e., K to grade 4, grades 5 to 8, and/or grades 9 to 12; these grade spans will vary depending on the PEL). Teachers may elect to be endorsed for one or more grade range based on the PEL that they hold (paying \$50 each).

The ISBE ESL Special Education Approval can be obtained by Special Education teachers and School Support Personnel (counselors, social workers, speech language pathologists, and psychologists). **Special Education teachers must take 3 required courses:** Theories of Bilingual/ESL Education, ESL Methods and Materials, and Assessment of Bilingual Students. Then, they must apply for the Approval through their ELIS account, submit transcripts for review, and pay a \$50 application fee. **School Support Personnel must complete one course:** Assessment of Bilingual Students, and then apply for the Approval through their ELIS account, submit transcripts for review, and pay the \$50 application fee.

Through Project STEP, the fees paid for the endorsement or approval application to ISBE are eligible for reimbursement (before September 30, 2017).

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BILINGUAL ENDORSEMENT AND THE BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL?

The ISBE Bilingual Endorsement can be obtained by teachers who complete 18 graduate hours in 6 required courses, pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test, demonstrate proof of 100 hours (3 months) working with English Learners, and pay the \$50 fee to ISBE through their ISBE ELIS account. The \$50 fee is paid for each grade span (for example, K to grade 4, grades 5 to 8, and/or grades 9 to 12 - but these grade spans will vary depending on the PEL).

The Bilingual Special Education Approval can be obtained by Special Education teachers and School Support Personnel (counselors, social workers, speech pathologists, and psychologists). **Special Education teachers must take 3 required courses:** Theories of Bilingual/ESL Education, Bilingual Methods and Materials, and Assessment of Bilingual Students and pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test. Then they must apply for the Approval through their ELIS account, submit transcripts for review, and pay the \$50 fee. **School Support Personnel must complete one course:** Assessment of Bilingual Students and pass the ILTS Target Language Proficiency Test. Then they must apply for the Approval through their ELIS account, submit transcripts for review, and pay the \$50 fee.

Through Project STEP, the fees paid for the endorsement or approval application to ISBE are eligible for reimbursement.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR MY ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL AFTER I HAVE COMPLETED THE REQUIRED COURSES THROUGH Project STEP?

After you complete your course(s) for your Approval or Endorsement through Project STEP Project, you may apply online for the BIL or ESL endorsement or approval through your ISBE ELIS (Educator Licensure Information System) account. You can find a link, "Apply for Endorsement" on your home page in the upper right section of the page. You can also find this link and "Apply for Approval" on the lower right of your "My Credentials" page. You can follow the online educator application wizard instructions to complete your application. You must submit your NEIU transcript to ISBE electronically through your ELIS page, or you may send your transcript through the link, neiu.edu/transcripts. You are required to pay a \$50 fee for an Approval or Endorsement for each grade range as indicated if you are a teacher. Project STEP will provide reimbursement for this fee payment (through September 30, 2017).

See the ISBE website for more details on this process:
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Application.aspx>

HOW CAN I HAVE MY PRIOR COURSEWORK REVIEWED FOR CREDIT?

Prior coursework may meet course equivalency for one or more of the 6 required BIL/ESL endorsement courses. The best way to determine this is to request an evaluation through ISBE. The typical process is to submit transcripts of all applicable coursework with an application for the endorsement, which generates a "letter of deficiency," indicating what courses are approved and which requirements are still needed. Upon completing the remaining requirements within a designated timeframe, you submit updated transcripts and do not need to re-apply. In some cases, the process may be expedited by school administrator requests.

- You can also check on your ELIS to see if there is additional info or instructions: [Educator-Licensure-Information-System](#)
- ISBE Licensure Division contact recommendation:

INQUIRIES REGARDING EDUCATOR CREDENTIALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO YOUR [REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION](#)

They can provide the most prompt response.

The [ISBE Licensure Division](#) responds only to phone calls.
Please call #217-557-6763 between 7:30 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION/ISBE?

The recommendation for contacting ISBE with questions on credentials is to contact the ROE (Regional Office of Education) or ISC (Intermediate Service Center) that serves the school district in which you work. They will provide the most prompt response. See Directory: [here](#)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A BILINGUAL OR ESL ENDORSEMENT OR APPROVAL?

The number of English Learners and students who speak another language at home has dramatically increased in our schools. There are 118 different languages spoken by children in the state of Illinois, and the English Learner population accounts for 10% of all Illinois public school students. 16% of all CPS students are English Learners, accounting for 70,400 students in 2015. More than 80% of the English Learners in Illinois are Spanish-speakers.

Teachers and school personnel can work much more effectively with English Learners if they understand the cultural context of bilingualism and multiculturalism, theories of language structure and language learning, effective practices in teaching and assessing English Learners, and specific approaches, methods, and techniques in teaching English Learners. Many schools are actively seeking teachers and personnel with ESL and Bilingual qualifications.

CAN COURSES TAKEN IN THE Project STEP BE APPLIED TOWARDS A MASTER'S DEGREE?

The six courses in the Bilingual/TESL endorsement sequence may apply in part or in whole towards Master's degree programs at NEIU. Students however, may only transfer in a maximum of nine credit hours earned before being accepted into a Master's program. Therefore, students-at-large must apply and be accepted for admission to the department/program **before** taking a fourth class. All requests for course transfer credit are subject to review and approval by the graduate degree program. Once accepted into a Master's program, credits earned for courses taken towards the BIL/TESL endorsement courses may then be considered as part of the Master's program, provided they are requirements for the specific degree a student has chosen. The master's programs with requirements most aligned with the endorsement courses are:

- I. [Master's of Arts in Teaching ESL, College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- II. [Master's of Science in Teaching & Inquiry, College of Education](#)

Completion of an entire Master's degree is not directly supported by Project STEP, but more details regarding this process, for those who are interested, is available online:

[NEIU Application for Admission to Graduate Program](#)

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE DUAL CREDIT QUALIFICATIONS?

Illinois high school teachers with dual credit qualifications are able to teach courses for dual credit through agreements between high schools and two and four-year post-secondary institutions. If you, as a high school teacher, are interested in this option, it is important to check with your school district to determine whether or not courses are/will be taught in your school for students to receive dual credit (as not all school districts offer this option).

Generally, the content of each dual credit course is the same as courses offered on a college or university campus and at other off-campus sites and contains the same content as the master course that has been articulated with coursework at Illinois institutions.

Also, the instructors for these courses are selected, assigned and evaluated by the college or university. The instructors are selected from individuals with appropriate credentials and demonstrated teaching competencies at the college level. For transfer courses, these qualifications include a minimum of a Master's degree with 18 graduate hours appropriate to the academic field or discipline in which they are teaching. For Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, these qualifications include 2,000 hours of work experience and the appropriate recognizable credential depending on the specific field.

Please see the following document for further information on Dual Credit Qualifications:
<http://www.ibhe.org/DualCredit/pdf/ComplianceForm.pdf>

Project STEP CONTACT INFORMATION AND IMPORTANT LINKS

Email: bilendorsements@neiu.edu

Website: step.c4cas.org

Phone: 312-563-7236

Part I - Inquiry Form: [link](#)

Part II - STEP Project Application: [link](#)

NEIU Graduate Student-At-Large Application: [online](#) - or - [paper-format](#)

ISBE Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers - Directory: [here](#)

ISBE Endorsement and Approval Requirements: [here](#)

[Illinois Licensure Testing System](#)

[ISBE Licensure Division](#)