

Subject Matter Competency for Integrated Teacher Preparation Programs

November 2016

Overview

This item provides information to the COA regarding current requirements related to subject matter competency to help inform the Committee's discussion of what candidates in an Integrated teacher preparation program would need to do to meet the subject matter competency requirement prior to student teaching. In traditional teacher preparation programs, candidates must meet the subject matter competency requirement prior to student teaching. These candidates would typically have completed their undergraduate subject matter preparation prior to enrolling in the graduate level teacher preparation program. However, in an Integrated program, candidates are expected to have early, extensive field experiences while still undergraduates who may not yet have completed all relevant subject matter coursework and preparation. (Note: as these types of programs have developed over time, the term "Integrated" has come to be preferred over the term "Blended" to refer to a program that combines subject matter preparation with pedagogical preparation in a single or unified approach for candidates. The Committee is asked to discuss what Integrated program candidates should be required to do in terms of subject matter preparation and competency in order to be eligible to participate fully in early classroom-based field and clinical experiences.

Staff Recommendation

This item is for information only.

Background

At the direction of the legislature, the Commission established the requirements that a candidate must satisfy prior to being recommended for a Preliminary teaching credential, including demonstrating subject matter competency. In addition, each candidate must verify that he/she has met the basic skills requirement, holds a bachelor's degree, meets the U.S. Constitution requirement, and completes a teacher preparation program including passing a Commission-approved Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA).

The 2016-17 state budget provided \$10 million to the Commission to support the planning of new undergraduate, integrated teacher preparation programs and/or to transition a current five-year integrated teacher preparation program to a four-year program. The funds are being awarded to eligible institutions through a competitive bidding process; each grant may be funded up to \$250,000. For an institution to offer an undergraduate integrated teacher preparation program, the program design must allow the candidate to earn both the degree and the credential in four years, or if there is a second credential or authorization, the first degree and credential must be earned within four years and the second credential or authorization in an additional half-year. As with all teacher preparation programs, regardless of program design, enrolled candidates must complete clinical practice experiences, including student teaching. The Commission requires candidates to be subject matter competent before they begin student teaching, and since candidates in Integrated programs may not have yet fully completed their subject matter preparation, staff asks the Committee to discuss what

might be a reasonable approach to resolve this situation, and to identify what the appropriate subject matter competency requirement should be for candidates so they will be eligible to student teach and conduct other types of instructional activities within fieldwork and clinical practice experiences during the undergraduate integrated teacher preparation program.

Pre-SB 2042 Subject Matter Requirements (up to 2001)

It may be helpful to the Committee's discussion to look at the history of the subject matter competency requirement for candidates. In the immediate prior program standards, candidates were required to have passed the subject matter examination or to have completed 4/5 of the subject matter preparation program. The language from the prior standards is provided below:

Program Standard 8 Advancement to Daily Student Teaching Responsibilities

In each program, advancement to daily student teaching responsibilities is limited to candidates who are ready for such responsibilities, have demonstrated proficiency at basic academic skills, and have either (a) attained the Commission's standard for advancement on the relevant subject matter examination approved by the Commission, or (b) completed at least four-fifths of a program of subject matter preparation that waives this examination.

SB 2042 Subject Matter Requirements (2001-2016)

Currently, Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject program-specific preconditions require that candidates satisfy the subject matter competency requirement prior to beginning student teaching:

Preliminary MS/SS Program Precondition 10: Subject Matter Proficiency

The approved preliminary teacher preparation program sponsor determines that each candidate meets the subject matter requirement prior to student teaching, or, for intern candidates, before being given daily whole class instructional responsibilities in a K-12 school or before becoming the teacher of record in a K-12 school.

- For Multiple Subject programs (traditional, intern, and/or integrated), the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s). When the regulatory process has been completed, Commission-approved subject matter preparation programs will also be able to verify subject matter.
- For Single Subject programs (traditional, intern, and/or integrated), the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s) or having completed the appropriate Commission-approved subject matter preparation program, or a course of study deemed equivalent by the program sponsor.
- For Single Subject integrated programs, the candidate provides evidence of having passed the appropriate subject matter examination(s), or having completed at least four-fifths (4/5) of the appropriate Commission-approved

subject matter preparation program, or a course of study deemed equivalent by the program sponsor.

Early Fieldwork Experiences

An additional factor to consider is that beginning September 2017, Preliminary MS/SS program standards will require that clinical practice consist of 600 hours of clinical practice across the arc of the program. This requirement has been defined as K-12 student contact hours where the focus is on instruction:

Program Standard 3A Organization of Clinical Practice

The range of Clinical Practice experiences provided by the program includes supervised early field experiences, initial student teaching...and final student teaching. Student Teaching includes a minimum of four weeks of solo or co-teaching or its equivalent.

The program standards adopted in December 2015 do not contain language regarding candidates demonstrating subject matter competency prior to beginning student teaching or how much of the subject matter requirement candidates in integrated programs need to have met to be ready for fieldwork and student teaching. The Preconditions as provided on page 2 of this agenda item do not address integrated programs for Multiple Subject candidates or the option that prospective multiple subject teachers may satisfy subject matter by completion of a Commission-approved subject matter program once the Title 5 regulations are operational. Once a decision has been made, the Preconditions will need to be amended and approved by the Commission.

Discussion Questions

1. What should the appropriate subject matter competency requirement for candidates enrolled in integrated programs be so that they would be eligible to participate in student teaching and other field-based instructional activities while still undergraduates who may not yet have completed subject matter coursework or examination?
2. How should candidates in an integrated program demonstrate subject matter competency to begin student teaching through the exam option? Should candidates have to pass all the subtests for the content area before student teaching or should candidates be allowed to begin student teaching after passing 1 or 2 of the subtests? If this latter approach is taken, how would this work with examinations that have fewer than two subtests, and examinations that may have three or more?
3. How should candidates in an integrated program demonstrate subject matter competency to begin student teaching though the Commission-approved subject matter program option? Should candidates be allowed to start student teaching before completing all the courses in the Commission-approved subject matter program?

Next Steps

The Committee's discussion will inform the development of an agenda item on this topic for the Commission.