



CODED CORRESPONDENCE

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TO:

All Individuals and Groups Interested in the Activities
of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

FROM:

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Executive Director
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

SUBJECT: United States Constitution Requirement

Summary:

A course or examination covering the provisions and principles of the United States (US) Constitution is required for many teaching and services credentials. The California Education Code states this requirement may be met by satisfactory completion of coursework or a college-level examination completed at a regionally-accredited community college or four-year college or university.

Currently, school districts, county offices of education, and professional program sponsors offer the US Constitution examination that is accepted for credentialing purposes. This correspondence outlines the Commission's intent to phase out the acceptance of examinations from any entity other than those specified in statute and clarifies the appropriate grade level for the US Constitution coursework.

Key Provisions:

Education Code section 44335 and Title 5 section 80415 provide that the US Constitution requirement may be met by coursework or a college-level examination completed at a regionally-accredited community college or four-year college or university. Most California-prepared candidates complete a US Constitution course or examination while earning their bachelor's degree. Completion of this course satisfies the US Constitution requirement for a teaching credential. Out-of-state prepared teachers are not held to the US Constitution requirement.

The other two groups that need to meet the US Constitution requirement are individuals:

- 1) prepared outside the United States seeking a Multiple Subject, Single Subject, or Education Specialist Credential, and
- 2) earning a Designated Subjects Credentials for Adult, Career Technical, Vocational Education and Special Subjects.

Examination

Several school districts, county offices of education, and professional program sponsors including non-university based programs such as district intern programs, and Commission-approved Designated Subjects Credential programs currently offer the US Constitution examination for designated subjects and other teaching credentials. Many of these examinations do not meet the requirements of the Education Code.

Other than those entities specified in statute, the Commission has established a sunset date of January 1, 2013 for all other entities to discontinue their current US Constitution examination for credentialing purposes. The Commission may accept examinations passed by January 1, 2013 towards certification, if the application is received at the Commission no later than July 1, 2013. If the Commission has accepted such a US Constitution examination towards certification that was passed prior to January 1, 2013, it may also be used to satisfy future certification that requires passage of the US Constitution requirement.

The Commission does not review nor approve US Constitution examinations. A regionally-accredited college or university has the responsibility to ensure that its US Constitution examination is a college-level exam.

A regionally-accredited college or university with a college-level US Constitution examination may enter into an agreement with a school district, county office of education, or professional program sponsor. The US Constitution examination may then be offered by a school district, county office, district intern program, Designated Subjects Credential program, or other entity. A transcript, certificate, or verification of passage must be issued by the regionally-accredited college or university.

If a Designated Subjects Credential program is offered through a four-year college or university, the US Constitution examination administered by that college or university is acceptable.

Coursework

The Education Code states that the US Constitution requirement may also be met by satisfactory completion of coursework covering the principles of the US Constitution. The Commission has deemed that coursework for this requirement must be met by the grade of “C” or better or a pass, credit, or satisfactory grade. The coursework for the US Constitution requirement may be an online course taken at a regionally accredited two or four-year college or university.

Important Dates:

January 1, 2013 – Last date a US Constitution examination taken at entities other than those specified in statute may be used for credentialing purposes

July 1, 2013 – Last date an application may be submitted with a US Constitution examination score to use for credentialing purposes taken at entities other than those specified in statute provided the examination was passed on or before January 1, 2013

Background:

A course or examination covering the provisions and principles of the US Constitution is required for many teaching and services credentials. The Education Code and California Title 5 Regulations state the options for meeting this requirement.

Education Code section 44335. U. S. Constitution.

The issuance of any teaching credential requires (1) the passing of a satisfactory examination on the provisions and principles of the Constitution of the United States in a community college, college, or university of recognized merit or (2) the satisfactory completion of two semester units of work on the provisions and principles of the Constitution of the United States in any university or college from which undergraduate credits earned are accepted by the commission as meeting undergraduate credit requirements for credentials issued by the commission or in any publicly supported community college in the state. Public and private institutions in California may be authorized to attest to the individual's satisfaction of this requirement.

The requirements of this section do not apply to the designated subjects teaching credential authorizing part-time employment only.

Title 5 section 80415. Course in the United States Constitution.

(a) Each applicant for a teaching credential, except the designated subjects teaching credential authorizing part-time employment only, shall provide to the Commission evidence that the applicant has, pursuant to Education Code Section 44335, successfully fulfilled one of the following requirements:

- (1) An examination on the provisions and principles of the of the United States completed in a regionally accredited community college, college or university;*
or
- (2) Two semester units of work on the provisions and principles of the Constitution of the United States.*

(b) A second credential of the same kind shall not be granted to a person until the above requirement has been met.

Source:

Education Code section 44335 and Title 5 section 80415

Contact Information:

Commission's Information Services Unit by telephone at 1-888-921-2682, Monday through Friday between 12:00 pm and 4:45 pm or by email at credentials@ctc.ca.gov.