



# CODED CORRESPONDENCE

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**DATE:**

July 22, 2021

**NUMBER:**

21-05

**TO:**

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

**FROM:**

Mary Vixie Sandy  
Executive Director  
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

**SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 130: Availability of New Options to Meet the Subject Matter and the  
Basic Skills Requirements \*See updates in [PSA 23-04](#)**

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## Summary

Assembly Bill (AB) 130 (Chap. 44, Stats. 2021) was signed by the Governor and became effective July 9, 2021. Provisions of the bill create new options for credential candidates to meet the Subject Matter and the Basic Skills Requirements (BSR).

## Key Provisions

### ***New Subject Matter Competence Options***

Previously, to meet the Subject Matter Requirement, candidates must have either received a passing score on the applicable CSET examination or completed a Commission-approved subject matter waiver program. AB 130 expands the available options to allow candidates to meet the Subject Matter Requirement through any one of the following methods:

1. Successful completion of coursework, as verified by a Commission-approved program of professional preparation that addresses each of the Commission-adopted domains of the applicable subject matter requirements.
2. Successful completion of an academic major in the subject they will teach.
  - a. For Single Subject credentials, the major must be in one of the subjects named in Education Code section [44257\(a\)](#).
  - b. For Multiple Subject credentials, the major must be in liberal studies or an interdisciplinary major that includes coursework in the content areas identified in subdivision (b) of California Education Code section [44282](#).

- c. For Education Specialist credentials, the major must align with one of the acceptable majors for the Multiple Subject credential or Single Subject credential.
3. A combination of coursework and examination options that meet or exceed the domains of the subject matter requirements. Such mixing of options may only be done by candidates enrolled in a Commission-approved preparation program that allows for this option.

Due to the complexity of these changes and the impact they may have on Commission-approved preparation programs, the Commission will be enacting emergency regulations to clarify the requirements for programs that wish to conduct coursework evaluations for alignment with the subject matter domains and to expand and clarify the degree types that may be used for the major option. In addition to emergency regulations, the Commission is also developing additional guidance for programs related to the complex coursework evaluations and will be providing detailed technical assistance in the near future. Programs should not begin coursework evaluations for meeting the Subject Matter Requirement until this additional guidance can be shared with the field. However, the use of appropriate degree majors to meet the Subject Matter Requirement may begin immediately, as well as the new basic skills options outlined in this Coded Correspondence.

### ***New Basic Skills Requirement Options***

This new option allows the Commission and Commission-approved preparation programs to verify that a candidate or applicant has demonstrated basic skills proficiency by verifying qualifying college-level coursework from a regionally accredited institution of higher education if the following conditions are met:

- The candidate must have earned a grade of "B" or better ("B-" is acceptable) in the qualifying coursework
- The coursework must have been taken at a regionally accredited college or university
- The coursework must provide three semester units (or equivalent quarter units)
- The coursework must have been taken for academic credit (earned units)
- The coursework must be degree applicable (AA degree applicable is acceptable)
  - For **Reading**, applicable coursework must be in the subject of critical thinking, literature, philosophy, reading, rhetoric, or textual analysis
  - For **Writing**, applicable coursework must be the subject of composition, English, rhetoric, written communications, or writing
  - For **Mathematics**, applicable coursework must be in the subject of algebra, geometry, mathematics, quantitative reasoning, or statistics
- If taken at a college or university outside the United States, the courses must be English based courses and must be deemed as equivalent to coursework taken at a regionally-accredited college or university in the United States. Foreign-prepared educators must obtain an evaluation of their transcripts through a Commission-approved Foreign Transcript Evaluating Agency. See [Leaflet CL-635](#) for more information.

The following coursework is NOT acceptable:

- Professional development or continuing education units
- Inservice training or workshops
- Non-credit bearing courses
- Courses where credits do not apply toward the requirements for an Associate degree, Baccalaureate degree, or higher degree

Commission-approved preparation programs may use a combination of coursework and other previously available options to meet the BSR. For example, a candidate who has passed the CBEST examination subtests in reading and writing but not mathematics may use the two passed CBEST subtests and coursework that meets the mathematics criteria as listed above to meet the BSR. Note that the Commission cannot evaluate for this combination of options. Applicants who wish to combine coursework and examination options must contact a Commission-approved preparation program for assistance.

The new law also allows a Commission-approved preparation program to accept other courses not listed in the criteria above if the registrar or relevant academic department chair where the course was completed provides written documentation verifying the course content satisfies the basic skills content of Reading, Writing, and/or Mathematics, as applicable. Note that a single course may satisfy the requirements of both Reading and Writing if the registrar or relevant academic department chair provides written documentation stating that the course includes the study of reading and writing as outlined in the criteria above.

These new options of using coursework or a combination of coursework and examination subtests are available to any applicant or credential candidate and may be used immediately to meet the Basic Skills Requirement. Educators who are applying for a credential or permit directly with the Commission must submit official transcripts and any relevant documents as described above along with their completed application packet to use this option. The required documentation includes an original letter on letterhead from a Commission-approved preparation program if the applicant is using a combination of coursework and another option to meet the BSR. For applicants who have already submitted an application that is pending evaluation, the Commission will review transcripts for the Basic Skills Requirement, as applicable. No new application or fee is required.

For candidates enrolled in and completing a Commission-approved preparation program, the program sponsor may verify completion of basic skills via this combination option. To complete a credential recommendation, each program sponsor will need to indicate how the applicant has fulfilled the Basic Skills Requirement. Programs should attach the new form [41-BSR](#) to any credential recommendation where the candidate has met basic skills by coursework or a combination of coursework and exams. Please see [Leaflet CL-667](#) for more information.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Subject Matter Requirement***

1. What degree majors are acceptable for Single Subject credential candidates who wish to meet the subject matter requirement via degree major?
  - a. At this time, the degree major must correspond to the authorization to be listed on a Single Subject Credential. For example, a degree authorization in English would qualify for a Single Subject credential in English. The law as written requires that the degree major exactly align with the subject area of the credential, meaning that a candidate who is completing a Single Subject credential program in Science: Biological Science would need to have earned a degree in Biology or Biological Science. A degree in Environmental Biology would not be acceptable for this purpose.
2. What if a candidate's degree is in a closely related subject, but is not in the exact subject of the single subject credential they seek?
  - a. The current statutory language does not provide leeway for the acceptance of closely related subjects; the match must be exact. The Commission has begun work on emergency regulations that would expand the degree majors that could meet the Subject Matter Requirement through subsumed subjects or through evaluation of the coursework taken to complete the degree. These regulations would clarify that the subsumed subjects as outlined in Title 5 section 80005 would be acceptable degree majors for meeting subject matter. This flexibility is not available until and unless it is approved by the Office of Administrative Law.
3. For the coursework option in which the preparation program reviews the course content a candidate has taken against the domains of the applicable Subject Matter Requirements, can a Commission-approved preparation program evaluate a candidate's coursework for the subject matter domains now? What grade must the candidate earn in any courses they wish to apply toward this requirement?
  - a. Programs should not begin to evaluate coursework until the Commission has completed the process of promulgating regulations that will clarify and make specific the criteria for evaluation, such as, for example, who should do the evaluation and what the credit and/or letter grade requirements are. At the June 2021 Commission meeting, the Professional Services Division presented proposed emergency regulations to clarify this process in [Agenda Item 4I](#). The Commission is working to finalize those emergency regulations now that the new Subject Matter Requirement provisions are in effect and will provide additional guidance in the coming weeks to programs that wish to compete these coursework evaluations.

**Basic Skills Requirement**

1. Can a candidate use the same course to meet both the Reading and Writing requirements?
  - a. Yes. To qualify, the individual will need to get a letter from the registrar or the relevant department academic chair where the course was completed confirming that the course includes the study of reading and writing as outlined in the criteria. Most likely, the department chair letter would come from the English Department, as that subject generally includes content in both reading and writing.
2. Can a candidate apply directly to the Commission when mixing and matching CBEST subtest results and coursework, or does a Commission-approved preparation program need to submit the application?
  - a. It is not necessary for an application to come from a Commission-approved preparation program. However, the option to mix and match coursework and examination subtests can only be verified by Commission-approved preparation programs so applications submitted directly from the educator will need to include a letter from a Commission-approved preparation program sponsor in order to meet the Basic Skills Requirement through this option.
3. Can an LEA submit an application where the educator is using coursework to meet the Basic Skills Requirement?
  - a. An application where the educator is attempting to meet the BSR by coursework can be submitted by an LEA, Commission-approved preparation program sponsor, or the applicant directly. However, any applications submitted using this option that do not come from a Commission-approved preparation program will be evaluated for BSR by Commission staff.
4. If I already have an application waiting to be reviewed, will the Commission check my transcripts to see if I meet the requirement under this new option?
  - a. Yes, the new option will apply to all applications regardless of when they were received by the Commission. Additionally, individuals who were issued credentials and still must meet the Basic Skills Requirement may submit an application, processing fee, and transcripts if they wish to be evaluated under this new option.
5. Can a candidate who took courses at a college or university outside of the United States use those courses to meet the Basic Skills Requirement?
  - a. Yes, as long as the candidate has obtained an evaluation from a Commission-approved foreign transcript evaluating agency showing that the coursework is equivalent to courses taken at a regionally-accredited college or university in the United States. Additionally, courses covering the reading and writing components must demonstrate proficiency in the English language.
6. Can courses completed with "Pass" or "Credit" be used toward meeting this requirement?
  - a. Yes, courses in which "Pass" or "Credit" was earned in lieu of a letter grade may be used toward meeting the Basic Skills Requirement.

7. If an educator completed a course that is less than three semester units, can they combine two courses to meet the unit requirement? For example, what if they completed a four-quarter unit course, which equates to 2.67 semester units?
  - a. Yes. If a course was less than three semester units then an educator can still meet the requirement by completing a second course to make up for the missing units.
8. Are Community College faculty and Teacher Education Coordinators authorized to sign form [41-BSR](#) – Verification of Basic Skills Requirement?
  - a. Only the authorized submitter(s) for a Commission-approved preparation program are able to sign form 41-BSR to show that the basic skills requirement has been verified by the program. However, the form can be used by other LEAs and be included in an application as a guide for Commission staff to help with the academic evaluation of how the candidate is meeting the BSR. When the form is submitted and signed by an authorized submitter of a Commission-approved preparation program, the Commission will not conduct a review for the BSR and will consider the program to have cleared that requirement. If the form is submitted by another LEA that is not a Commission-approved preparation program or is signed by anyone other than an authorized submitter, the Commission will only use it as a guide and staff will conduct their own coursework review for the BSR. Note that Commission staff cannot review for the BSR if a candidate is mixing and matching BSR options. This review can only be done by a Commission-approved preparation program.
9. An authorized submitter is doing a BSR mix and match evaluation with two CBEST scores. When they are doing this evaluation, is the minimum acceptable score for each subtest 41, or can the score be as low as 37?
  - a. The minimum score for a subtest that will be used to mix and match BSR requirements is 41. The option to satisfy BSR with a subtest score as low as 37 is only available when candidates have taken all three CBEST subtests to meet the BSR and the total CBEST score for all three subtests combined is a minimum of 123.

### **Important Dates**

The legislation became effective July 9, 2021.

### **Sources**

Education Code Sections 44252, 44259, 44280, 44310, and 44830

### **Contact Information**

Questions regarding credential requirements and application submissions may be directed to the Commission's Information Services Unit by email at [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov).