

# Subject Matter Authorization Guideline Book



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California Commission on Teacher  
Credentialing  
Certification Division  
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*The purpose of this Guideline book is to provide information regarding the requirements for adding a subject matter authorization*

## I. Introduction

Effective January 1, 2005, additions to Title 5 Sections 80089.3 and 80089.4 allows the Commission to issue Introductory and Specific Subject Matter Authorizations, which were introduced to allow educators to earn an authorization to teach a class in a subject outside the content area of their basic credential that would be compliant under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the rules that existed under NCLB are no longer applicable. However, subject matter authorizations may still be obtained to demonstrate completion of an added level of preparation when compared with supplementary authorizations in the same content areas.

There are two types of subject matter authorizations; introductory and specific. Subject matter authorizations are limited only to the following core academic subject areas: English, mathematics, science, languages other than English, civics/government, economics, arts, history, and geography. One major difference between supplementary authorizations and subject matter authorizations is the option of adding the specific subject authorizations to both Single and Multiple Subject Credentials whereas specific supplementary authorizations may only be added to Single Subject Credentials.

## II. Subject Matter Authorizations

On both elementary and secondary credentials, the subjects are identified as *introductory* subjects. For the specific subject matter authorizations, only the specific subject area will be listed on the document.

### Subject Matter Authorizations *May Be Added To*:

- Single Subject Credentials
- Multiple Subject Credentials
- Standard Elementary and Secondary Credentials
- University Internship Credentials (*Multiple and Single Subject*)
- Special Secondary Credentials in *Academic* Subjects
  - Art, Business Education, Homemaking, Industrial Arts, Music, Physical Education, Speech Arts, and Vocational Agriculture

### Subject Matter Authorizations *May Not Be Added To*

- General Kindergarten-Primary, Elementary, Junior High, or Secondary Credentials
- District Intern Credentials
- Special Secondary Credentials in *Non-Academic* Subjects
  - Aviation, Blind, Deaf, Lip Reading, Nursing Education, Partially Sighted Child, Public Safety and Accident Prevention Including Driver Education and Driver Training, Sciences Basic to Medicine, Correction of Speech Defects, and Mentally Retarded
- Special Education Credentials (current or previous)
- Adult or Vocational Credentials
- Career Technical Education Credentials

The holder of a Life Multiple or Single Subject, or Clear or Life Standard Elementary, Standard Secondary or Special Secondary Teaching Credential, may apply at any time and once qualifications are verified will be issued the subject matter authorization on a separate document designed especially for that purpose.

A subject area subsumed under the major listed on the applicant's basic teaching credential cannot be added as a subject matter authorization. This includes adding the following:

- 1) Dance to a single subject credential in a physical education,
- 2) Drama, journalism, speech, or literature to a single subject credential in English,
- 3) Photography to a single subject credential in art.

Economics may be added to a business credential as the subject matter authorization in economics is considered to be a social science. Subject matter authorizations, even those that fall within the major or minor may be added to a Standard Secondary Teaching Credential. The Standard Secondary Teaching Credential authorizes services in grades 7-12. The introductory subject matter authorization authorizes service in grades 9 and below and a specific subject matter authorization authorizes service in grades K-12. Obtaining a subject matter authorization for these individuals will expand the grade level authorization in the subject area.

*Acceptable course work must be:*

- a. completed with a grade of "C" or better ("credit," "passing," or "satisfactory" is acceptable)
- b. applicable toward (elective or non-elective) a bachelor's or higher degree (nonremedial),
- c. taken at a regionally accredited institution,
- d. granted regular quarter or semester unit credit, and
- e. from the subject department of the subject matter authorization being sought.

*The following course work may be used as long as it meets the criteria listed above:*

- a. community college, correspondence, online, or extension course work, and
- b. advanced placement units (requires an official transcript of the course and written verification from the college or university admission or registrar's office that the units are applicable towards a bachelor's degree and are in the subject category of the requested subject matter authorization).

*Unacceptable course work:*

- a. course work not applicable toward a bachelor's or higher degree (remedial),
- b. professional development or continuing education units,
- c. in-service training or workshops,

- d. education and education methodology course work unless, a letter is provided from the chair of the subject area department stating that the course is equivalent to one offered by that department
- e. course work from a department other than that of the subject matter authorization being sought unless a letter is provided from the chair of the subject area department stating that the course is equivalent to one offered by that department.

### III. Qualifying for a Subject Matter Authorization

An applicant will qualify for a subject matter authorization upon the completion of either option a or b below:

- a. thirty-two semester or forty-eight quarter units of non-remedial collegiate coursework in the subject area requested. For *introductory* subject matter authorizations, included within the thirty-two semester or forty-eight quarter units is a minimum of three semester or four quarter units in each of the specific content areas listed under that subject, except for Introductory Science which requires a minimum of six semester or eight quarter units in each of the specific content areas listed. The balance of the units may be in any area within the subject category.

For *specific* subject matter authorizations, the same unit total is required except for History which requires a minimum of sixteen semester units in both world history and US history.

- b. A collegiate major from a regionally accredited college or university in a subject directly related to the subject to be listed on the credential.

### IV. Evaluation for the Subject Matter Authorizations

Evaluations for subject matter authorizations are the responsibility of the staff in the Commission's Certification Branch. The Commission does not evaluate for subject matter authorizations without the submission of an application, appropriate processing fee, and supporting materials. Each request is evaluated on an individual basis. Evaluations are based on the information submitted in the application packet, which may include official transcripts, catalog course descriptions, and other supporting materials.

Commission staff cannot approve courses for subject matter authorizations by telephone or email. If the Commission does not accept a course, the applicant may need to obtain a letter verifying that the content of the course in question meets the requirement, as noted in items (d) and (e) under *Unacceptable Course Work* on page 3 of this guideline book. Ultimately, the burden of proof rests with the applicant.

## V. Converting a Supplementary Authorization to a Subject Matter Authorization

Anyone holding a supplementary authorization issued prior to January 1, 2005 may apply to convert it into a subject matter authorization in the same subject area, if available. The Commission will start the evaluation on the basis that the individual has completed the equivalent of twenty semester units in the subject area regardless of the method the individual initially used to qualify for the supplementary authorization. For individuals issued supplementary authorizations based on ten upper division units, this conversion process will apply only to supplementary authorizations issued prior to January 1, 2005. Individuals issued supplementary authorizations based on ten upper division units after January 1, 2005, will need an additional twenty-two semester units to earn a subject matter authorization.

For both specific and introductory subject matter authorizations, official transcripts verifying completion of an additional twelve semester or eighteen quarter units will need to be submitted, or in the case of supplementary authorizations based on ten upper division units issued after January 1, 2005, an additional twenty-two semester units or thirty-three quarter units. Individuals issued a supplementary authorization on the basis of completing a degree in a subject area that may be converted to a subject matter authorization may submit an application, appropriate fee, and verification of the degree. This may be either on an official transcript or, if submitting the application through an employing district or county or a college or university, a verified true copy of their California or out-of-state diploma showing conferral of the appropriate degree.

Official transcripts of course work completed since the issuance of the supplementary authorization will be required along with an application and appropriate fee. It is recommended that the applicant submit official transcripts of all course work that will be used for the subject matter authorization, including the course work used to earn the supplementary authorization. This especially applies to those applicants who may have completed more than twenty semester units to earn their supplementary authorization.

Note that the specific supplementary authorization of US Government and US Civics has been renamed Civics/Government, and the supplementary authorization US History and California History has been renamed "History".

## VI. Applying for a Subject Matter Authorization

An applicant who holds a preliminary or clear Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credential may request the subject matter authorization at the time of application or may request it at any time during the life of the credential by submitting an application ([Form 41-4](#)), [appropriate fee](#), and official transcripts.

### Dating of Document

When a subject matter authorization is added to a credential (*preliminary* or *clear*), the expiration date of the credential remains unchanged as statute requires that basic credentials be issued for five years.

## A. Introductory Subject Matter Authorizations

*Introductory* subject matter authorizations may be added to a Single Subject, Multiple Subject, Standard Elementary, Standard Secondary, and Special Secondary (in academic subjects only) Teaching Credential. Introductory subjects authorize the holder to teach the subject matter content typically included in curriculum guidelines and textbooks approved for study in grades 9 and below. An employer may assign a teacher with an introductory authorization to teach a class in which the curriculum is for grades 9 and below but the students in the class may be in grades 10-12.

The subjects which may be listed as subject matter authorizations on a credential are printed below in ***bold italics***. To assist you in your evaluation, we have listed key words or concepts that may be found in the course description for some subjects. An *introductory* subject matter authorization requires the verification of at least three semester or four quarter units in each content area listed after that subject except Introductory Science which requires six semester or eight quarter units in each area.

A guide to course work by subject area that may be used to obtain subject matter authorizations is the *Subjects Within the Single Subject Area* list found in the Appendix of the Administrator's Assignment Manual. Title 5 §80005(a) clarifies the authorization for the subject areas for service in departmentalized classes to allow an individual to be assigned to teach classes that fall within the broad single subject areas. Some subjects are listed under more than one subject, such as photography, which may be found under both art and industrial and technology education, and child development which is listed under both health and home economics.

The list may be accessed from the [Administrator's Assignment Manual](#) found on Commission's website. Note that this is a guide and does not guarantee that the course work will be accepted.

***Introductory Art:*** •art history including aesthetics and appreciation •two-dimensional art including drawing, painting, and printmaking •three-dimensional art including sculpture and ceramics •photography/computer generated imagery

- Course work must include a combination of art history, aesthetics, and art appreciation. A single course may cover those areas but is counted only once towards the total number of units. A course in each is not needed but the subjects must be covered.
- A course in visual arts may be used for the aesthetics content area.
- Course work for two-dimensional art must include a combination of drawing, painting, and printmaking. A single course may cover those areas but is counted only once towards the total number of units. A course in each is not needed but the subjects must be covered.
- Other two-dimensional art courses are silk-screening, lithography, etching, screen printing, and relief.
- Course work for three-dimensional art must include a combination of sculpture and ceramics. A single course may cover both areas but is counted only once towards the total number of units. A course in each is not needed but both subjects must be covered.

- Other three dimensional art courses are metalworking, glass making, papermaking, fiber art, weaving, and stone setting.
- Courses in digital photography, videography, and computer arts are appropriate to the photography/computer generated imagery subject area.

***Introductory English:*** •grammar or language structure •advanced composition •literature •speech •drama or theatre

- An individual with a major in drama, speech, or literature will not be issued a subject matter authorization in Introductory English based solely on the degree.
- Basic English courses required for a bachelor's degree, often numbered 1A and 1B, will not clear the grammar area. Course descriptions are usually needed to verify that a course covers grammar or language structure unless it is clearly mentioned in the course title. Key words or concepts for language structure are sentence structure and functions of the English verb system.
- One advanced composition and either a creative writing or applied composition course may also be used to meet the grammar or language structure and composition areas.
- Course work in foreign language literature is acceptable.
- Speech courses may be found in the English or Communications departments.
- All aspects of drama or theatre are acceptable including courses in costume design, lighting, sound, props, and makeup. Courses may be offered (or found) in the Drama or Theatre Departments.

***Introductory Language Other than English:*** •grammar •composition •conversation •literature •culture

- Verification of oral language proficiency is not required for the Introductory Language Other than English subject matter authorization.
- Key words or concepts for a culture course include cultural practices, rituals, and traditions.

***Introductory Mathematics:*** •algebra •advanced algebra •geometry •probability or statistics •development of the real number system or introduction to mathematics

- Course work must be college level mathematics or higher.
- Algebra courses must be for credit, applicable towards a degree, and, if completed at the community college level, transferable to a four-year institution to be acceptable. Elementary or intermediate algebra courses may not meet these requirements. If trying to use an elementary algebra course, a course description will need to be submitted to verify the acceptability.
- Since both algebra and advanced algebra is required, there are several options available to meet both areas. The requirement is algebra content at two different levels.
  - an individual completes a college algebra course; the "advanced" course may be another level of algebra such as linear algebra. An individual may not use another college algebra course, an elementary algebra course, or the same level algebra course completed at another college or university.
  - an individual completes a college or other level algebra course (other than elementary algebra); the "advanced" course may be a "higher" level math course such as trigonometry or calculus.

- Courses in calculus will clear the specific course requirements (one for each content area being cleared) in algebra, advanced algebra, geometry, and development of the real number system but the applicant must still have the required thirty-two units. Calculus courses will not clear the probability and statistics content area.
- If the applicant has only one or two courses in calculus and no course work in algebra, geometry, or real number systems, the applicant will need to either submit course descriptions so that it can be confirmed whether or not those areas were covered by the calculus course(s) or complete additional course work in the required content areas.
- Personal enrichment-type mathematics courses are not acceptable.
- One mathematics-based computer course is acceptable as additional units toward the required 32 units.

**Introductory Music:** •vocal music including the analysis of repertoire and literature appreciation for developing musicians •instrumental music including the analysis of repertoire and literature appreciation for developing musicians •aural musicianship •keyboard •music history including music appreciation •world music •conducting •music theory

- The analysis of repertoire and literature appreciation for developing musicians required for vocal and instrumental music content areas includes the familiarity with sequential, developmental, and cultural factors in selecting music literature for performance and with historical and contemporary works from various musical traditions in relation to vocal and instrumental music. This is a content based course.
- Only one course in repertoire and literature appreciation for developing musicians is required but it must relate to both vocal and instrumental music. A course description will need to be submitted.
- Key words or concepts for aural musicianship are the use of musical elements in a given work and the description of the form, style, melody, or texture of the piece.
- Conducting includes cuing techniques and conducting patterns.
- Harmony is acceptable for music theory.

**Introductory Science:** •biological sciences •chemistry •geosciences •physics ► a minimum of six semester or eight quarter units is required in each area of science

- A degree directly related to science will qualify an individual for the Introductory Science subject matter authorization. For example, a major in biology, oceanography, physics, chemistry, meteorology or any related science will meet the requirement.
- *Biological sciences:* anatomy; bioethics, biology; botany; DNA and RNA structure; ecology; environmental science; evolution; genetics; marine biology; microbiology; physiology; structure and function of cells; and zoology. Kinesiology is not applicable.
- *Chemistry:* atomic, molecular, and ionic structures; chemical reactions; properties and processes of elements, compounds, mixtures, inorganic and organic substances; properties of molecules; qualitative and quantitative analysis; and state of matter including models of gases, liquids and solids.
- *Geoscience:* astronomy; cosmology; earth science/resources; forestry; fossils; geology; geodynamics; meteorology; mineralogy; oceanography; paleontology; soil science; and weather and climate.



- *Physics*: electromagnetic radiation including spectra, visible light and color; fission; fusion and vaporization; gravitation; light and optics; nuclear and atomic physics; principles of mechanics, heat, electricity and magnetism; principles of momentum and energy; quantum theory; thermodynamics; and wave and particle motion.

**Introductory Social Science:** •United States history •California history •world history •physical geography •United States government •world civilization or world cultures

- The social sciences are unique in that they encompass many different academic disciplines. A subject matter authorization in social science will not be granted unless the degree is in social science or social studies. A degree in a specific social science (psychology, history, sociology, or anthropology) does not qualify an applicant for a subject matter authorization in social science.
- A course covering the overall history of California is required. Courses focusing on one specific geographical area of California such as the History of San Francisco are acceptable as electives only. They will not satisfy the California history requirement.
- World history courses are non-United States or region courses. This includes courses such as the history of Greece, China, England or Russia.
- World civilization or world culture may include courses in ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, Egypt or India.
- A western civilization course may be used either for the world history or world civilization/culture requirement but may not be used for both areas.

## B. Specific Subject Matter Authorizations

*Specific* subject matter authorizations may be added to Single Subject, Multiple Subject, Standard Elementary, Standard Secondary, and Special Secondary (in academic subjects only) Teaching Credentials. These authorize the holder to teach the specific subject in grades preschool, kindergarten-12, and classes organized primarily for adults.

### Art History/Appreciation

- Course work must include a combination of art history and art appreciation. A single course may cover both areas but is counted only once towards the total number of units. A course in each is not needed but both subjects must be covered in the 32 units.

### Biological Sciences

- Courses may include anatomy; bioethics, biology; botany; DNA and RNA structure; ecology; environmental science; evolution; genetics; marine biology; microbiology; physiology; structure and function of cells; and/or zoology. Kinesiology is not applicable.

### Chemistry

- Courses may include atomic, molecular, and ionic structures; chemical reactions; properties and processes of elements, compounds, mixtures, inorganic and organic substances; properties of molecules; qualitative and quantitative analysis; and/or state of matter including models of gases, liquids and solids.

## Civics/Government

- Course work must include a combination of civics and government. A single course may cover both areas but is counted only once towards the total number of units. A course in each is not needed but both subjects must be covered in the thirty-two units.
- Civics is participation in government such as voting.
- Course work may be found in the political science department.

## Dance

- Courses may be offered in departments such as physical education or anthropology.

## Drama/Theatre

- Course work may be found in the English, drama, and theatre departments.
- All aspects of drama or theatre are acceptable including courses in costume design, lighting, sound, props, and makeup.

## Economics (social science)

- This is a social science subject area. If course work is not in the economics department, review the course content and request a letter from the economics department, if necessary.

## English Composition

- A degree in English will qualify for a subject matter authorization in English Composition.

## Geography

- Includes all types of geography: physical, cultural, historical, human, world, and regional.

## Geosciences

- Courses may include astronomy; cosmology; earth science/resources; forestry; fossils; geology; geodynamics; meteorology; mineralogy; oceanography; paleontology; soil science; and/or weather and climate.
- Physical Geography is not acceptable toward the geoscience authorization unless the chair of the earth science/geology department verifies that the course is applicable as a geoscience course required for a degree in geoscience.
- A course in marine science may be counted as an oceanography course but marine biology may not be acceptable. A course description will be needed.

## History

- Must include 16 semester units in US history and 16 semester units in world history.
- World history courses are non-United States or region courses. This would include courses such as the history of Greece, China, England or Russia.
- A western civilization course may be used for the history subject matter authorization.

**Instrumental Music**

- This may include course work in theory and conducting.

**Literature**

- Literature courses may be offered in any language department.
- A degree in English will qualify for a subject matter authorization in literature.

**Photography****Physics**

- Courses may include electromagnetic radiation including spectra, visible light and color; fission; fusion and vaporization; gravitation; light and optics; nuclear and atomic physics; principles of mechanics, heat, electricity and magnetism; principles of momentum and energy; quantum theory; thermodynamics; and/or wave and particle motion.
- Course work may be found in the engineering department.

**Plant Science**

- Plant science is a life science.

**Three-Dimensional Art**

- Three dimensional art courses are ceramics, sculpture, metalworking, glass making, papermaking, fiber art, weaving, and stone setting.

**Two-Dimensional Art**

- Two-dimensional courses art are silk-screening, lithography, etching, screen printing, relief, printmaking, drawing, and painting.

**Vocal Music**

- Course work may include theory and conducting.

## References

*Education Code*

Section 44225

*Title 5 Regulations*

Sections 80089.3 and 80089.4

*Commission Leaflet*

*Subject Matter Authorizations:* [Credential Leaflet CL-852](#)  
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl852.pdf>

[Commission Website](#)

[www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov)

## Questions

If you have additional questions, please contact the Information Services Unit by email at [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov).