



PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:
April 29, 2021

NUMBER:
21-02

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Flexibility Provisions for Educator Preparation Programs: Demonstration of Subject Matter Competency Prior to Student Teaching

Summary:

The Commission took action at the April 13-16, 2021 meeting to extend one of the flexibilities granted in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Provisions:

Pursuant to California Education Code §44259 and §44280, teaching credential candidates in California are required to demonstrate competency in the subject matter for which they will be authorized by their credential to teach. At its April 2021 meeting, the Commission approved waiving Precondition 6 for Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject Programs and Precondition 3 for Preliminary Education Specialist Programs for the 2021-2022 academic year. These preconditions require that preliminary teaching candidates meet the subject matter requirement prior to beginning daily whole class instruction.

The Commission had previously waived these two Preconditions for the 2020-2021 academic year. Extending the waiver of these two Preconditions through the 2021-2022 academic year provides programs and their candidates with flexibility to make progress in completing program and credential requirements as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

Important Note: this flexibility does not waive the subject matter requirement itself – candidates must still meet the statutory subject matter requirement prior to recommendation for the preliminary credential. This extension applies to all preliminary multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist teacher candidates in non-intern program pathways.

Candidates with valid intern credentials issued on or before August 31, 2021, have similar flexibility with respect to demonstration of subject matter as a result of the Governor's Executive Order and SB 820. This flexibility is currently set to expire on August 31, 2021.

Without another legislative or executive action, interns admitted to a teacher preparation program after August 31, 2021, will have to demonstrate subject matter competency prior to obtaining the intern credential.

Candidates must demonstrate subject matter competency through any of the allowable statutory options prior to being recommended for a preliminary credential. The options currently available to candidates to demonstrate subject matter including successful passage of the applicable California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), completing a Commission-approved subject matter preparation program, or completing a course of study deemed equivalent by a Commission-approved subject matter program.

In the coming weeks, it is anticipated that more opportunities will be available for candidates to meet the subject matter requirement via the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET), particularly as more testing centers open and more seats become available, and as online proctoring begins, which will allow candidates to take certain examinations at home. Given these efforts, the currently limited accessibility to test centers may lessen over time, thereby reducing the need for candidates to postpone meeting the subject matter requirement. The Commission encourages educator preparation programs to advise their candidates to seek out opportunities to demonstrate subject matter as early as possible in their program to avoid any potential delay in obtaining their preliminary credential as well as to avoid the challenges associated with having to address multiple culminating assessments all at the end or later in the program due to the postponement of completing these assessments.

Important Dates:

These flexibilities are available to candidates during the 2021-22 academic year.

Background:

On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued the first stay at home order in the nation for the state of California. Pursuant to the Governor's mandate, K-12 schools, colleges and university closed their campuses and moved to online distance learning. Since that time, the Governor, the Legislature, and the Commission have taken numerous actions to provide flexibilities for educator preparation programs and candidates enrolled in or applying to educator preparation programs to continue and complete their credential.

Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, Commission staff developed and posted guidance for Commission approved programs on the various flexibilities. The posted information on the Commission's COVID-19 webpage identifies where programs have the authority to modify their coursework, clinical practice, and program-embedded assessments, and which credential requirements cannot be modified by the program.

Requirements that are in statute cannot be modified by the Commission. Preconditions are program requirements that are based in statute, regulations, or Commission policy and generally are matters of compliance. Requirements or policies that have been put in place by the Commission, such as educator preparation program standards, can be modified through formal action of the Commission. For teacher preparation, the Commission has long had

preconditions intended to ensure that prospective educators have demonstrated subject matter competency prior to “daily whole class instruction.”

The Commission will continue to inform stakeholders regarding any additional updates and/or changes to the information provided in this PSA.

Sources:

Commission agenda item at the April 2021 Meeting:

[4H: COVID Flexibilities: Recommendation to Extend the Waiver of Preconditions Related to Demonstration of Subject Matter Competence and Student Teaching](#)

Contact Information:

Contact Information for the Professional Services Division is available at the [Professional Services Contact webpage](#).