



PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:
August 24, 2021

NUMBER:
21-09

SUBJECT: AB 130: CLARIFICATION ON EXEMPTION FROM THE BASIC SKILLS PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

Summary:

This Program Sponsor Alert (PSA) provides clarification on the implementation of the provisions of AB 130 (Chap. 44, Statutes 2021) relating to the demonstration of basic skills for the purpose of earning a credential, permit, certificate, or authorization to serve in the public schools in California. This PSA clarifies that candidates should only be required to take the basic skills proficiency examination (CBEST) if they do not meet one of the statutorily specified exemptions, including those added by AB 130.

Key Provisions:

AB 130 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021)

Important Dates:

Effective Date: July 9, 2021

Background:

Assembly Bill (AB) 130 (Chap. 44, Stats. 2021) was signed by the Governor and became effective on July 9, 2021. Provisions of this bill create new options for credential candidates to meet the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR). The Commission subsequently issued [Coded Correspondence 21-05](#) that provided information on the provisions of the bill.

AB 130 established two new options for individuals to meet the basic skills requirement: a coursework pathway and a combination coursework/examination pathway. For more information on the specific requirements related to these new options, please see the Commission's webpage: [Basic Skills Requirement \(CL-667\)](#).

Questions have arisen from the educator preparation community about the implications of the new options on the determination about who must take the basic skills proficiency examination. The two new options for meeting basic skills have been added to the list of options provided in California Education Code Section 44252 (b) that specify when a candidate must be exempted from the CBEST examination. The added language to this section of Education Code (EC) is as follows:

EC § 44252

*(b) The commission shall not issue initially a credential, permit, certificate, or renewal of an emergency credential to a person to serve in the public schools unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the English language as provided in Section 44252.5 or 44252.7. The commission **shall exempt** the following persons from the basic skills proficiency test requirement:*

[...]

(10) (A) An applicant who earns at least a letter grade of B in qualifying coursework determined by a credential preparation program, or determined by the commission for an applicant not enrolled in a California credential preparation program, to sufficiently serve as an indicator of proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the English language. As used in this section, “qualifying coursework” means a course or courses taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education for academic credit that applies toward the requirements for an associate’s degree, baccalaureate degree, or higher degree. Qualifying coursework does not include professional development or continuing education units, inservice training or workshops, or courses where credits do not apply toward the requirements for an associate’s degree, baccalaureate degree, or higher degree.

(11) A credential preparation program may determine that an applicant has demonstrated proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the English language through a combination of qualifying coursework described in paragraph (10), passage of a component or components of the state basic skills proficiency test described in subdivision (d) of Section 44252.5, and scores described in paragraph (8).

Therefore, any candidate who has met the basic skills requirement through coursework or through a combination of coursework and examination as specified above is exempt from taking the basic skills proficiency exam.

Education Code Section 44830(k) reiterates this exemption by noting that “a credential applicant who qualifies for an exemption based on EC 44252 (b) (10) and (11) shall not be required to take the basic skills proficiency exam.”

Commission-approved educator preparation programs must implement these new options for candidates to meet the basic skills requirement while also adhering to long-standing statute (44252(f)) that requires program applicants take the basic skills proficiency examination prior to admission if they have not already demonstrated basic skills through a statutory exemption. Programs need to continue to assess applicants for the demonstration of basic skills before admission and should only require individuals to take the examination if they do not meet basic skills under one of the statutory exemptions.

Flexibilities granted in AB 130 (Chap 44, Statutes of 2021) or by Commission action to address the needs of candidates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in [PSA 21-05](#) and [PSA 21-08](#), remain in place.

Sources:

AB 130 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021)

References:

Education Code 44252 (b)

Education Code 44252 (f)

Education Code 44830 (k)

Contact Information:

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