

Last updated 04/07/11. The information in this guide is subject to change. For more details about the process of becoming a teacher, see a counselor in the Teacher Academy in Bertolini Student Center, third floor, or visit the Teach California website at www.teachcalifornia.org.

Q: What do you need to do to become a teacher in California?

A: This depends on the level of education at which you would like to teach. California public school teaching in Kindergarten through high school (K – 12) requires credentialing through California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). The requirements to obtain a credential are reviewed below. Qualifications for teaching in California’s public colleges and universities are based on the attainment of the appropriate degree in the subject you wish to teach (also reviewed below). Teaching in private schools is not governed by the state and each school has its own requirements.

Q: What are the requirements to become a credentialed K – 12 public school teacher in California?

A: To obtain a **preliminary** credential, which is valid for 5 years, you must satisfy all the following requirements:

- Complete a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
- Demonstrate that you have mastered basic skills in English and mathematics.
- Demonstrate that you know the subject (s) you intend to teach (called “subject matter competence”).
- Complete a professional [teacher preparation program](#) (a “credential program”), including student teaching, and obtain a formal recommendation for the credential by the California college or university where the program was completed.

Note: There are other subject and competence requirements for K – 12 teachers that are incorporated into either the bachelor’s degree or credential program. For more information, see a counselor in the Teacher Academy in Bertolini Student Center, third floor, or visit “Understand the Requirements” at www.teachcalifornia.org.

Q: What are the types of K – 12 public school teaching credentials?

A: The basic credentials are the Multiple Subject, the Single Subject, and the Special Education Credential.

- **The Multiple Subject Credential** is primarily for those who intend to teach all subjects in a self-contained classroom, usually in elementary schools (grades K - 6).
- **The Single Subject Credential** is for those who plan to teach a particular subject in a departmentalized class, usually in middle school and high school (grades 7 - 12).
- **The Education Specialist Instruction Credential** is for those who intend to teach students with moderate and severe disabilities.

Note: If you are proficient at the intermediate level or higher in a language other than English that is in demand in the geographic area where you earn your credential, you can obtain an additional BCLAD – Bilingual, Cross Cultural, Language and Academic Development – Certificate.

More information about all of these credentials is available in “Understand the Requirements” at www.teachcalifornia.org.

Q: What is subject matter competence and how does it differ from a teacher preparation program?

A: *Whereas teacher preparation programs provide knowledge of HOW to teach, subject matter competence is knowledge of WHAT is taught.* Subject matter competence is a requirement for all multiple subject and single subject credentials, as well as for teaching at a college or university. For K-12 teacher candidates it is required that subject matter competency is assessed by either passing specific examinations or by completing a degree program which is approved for that subject by the CTC. However, in California, approved Multiple Subject programs (usually Liberal Studies) are no longer available; all candidates for elementary teaching must pass an exam in order to demonstrate subject matter competency. Only a few approved Single Subject degree programs remain; they can be found at www.teachcalifornia.org by selecting “Understand the Requirements”, then “Secondary (Single Subject)”, then “approved single subject program”.

Q: What is a teacher preparation program?

A: Teacher preparation is a professional program which includes student teaching and develops the skills needed for serving in the classroom. It includes coursework in areas such as teaching methodologies, curriculum development, and classroom management. Approved teacher preparation programs are programs that have been approved by the CTC. To find the nearest program for the type of credential you want, visit “Find the Right Preparation Program” at www.teachcalifornia.org.

Q: Is there a specific undergraduate major for admission to the Multiple Subject Credential Program?

A: There is no specific undergraduate major that leads directly to a teacher preparation program. However, most universities offer subject matter preparation programs for the Multiple Subject credential. (Examples at Sonoma State University are American Multicultural Studies, Chicano and Latino Studies, Environmental Studies and Planning, and the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies.) Each university requires very specific courses for their diversified, Multiple Subject preparation majors, and the preparation coursework sequence is aligned with California’s Student Academic Content Standards and the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET). Most of these courses can be completed at SRJC prior to transfer.

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Q: Are there other requirements to enter a teacher prep program that I can meet at a community college?

- A:** Most credential programs require, or rely heavily for admissions decisions, on two other factors:
- Documentation of at least 45 hours of classroom experience, evaluated by the teacher of that class.
 - A portfolio containing evidence of having met all academic, testing, and experience requirements. It should include syllabi for all subject-matter courses, college transcripts, test results, classroom evaluations, etc. This portfolio is also valuable in the teacher hiring process.

Colleges and universities offer courses that assist you with placement in a classroom, evaluation of classroom experience, and/or instruction on the creation of a portfolio.

Q: What schools in California offer Teacher Credential Programs?

A: Most CSU, UC, and private universities in California offer credential programs.

Q: What are the requirements to teach in a community college or university?

- A:** For academic teaching in a public college or university, the earning of a degree in a particular subject meets the minimum qualification to teach that subject.
- Qualification to teach academic coursework in a California Community College (CCC) requires a Master's degree in the subject you wish to teach. Those who are interested in teaching in CCC Career Technical Education can qualify based on a combination of education and experience.
 - Qualification to become a professor at a university requires a Doctorate (PhD). Some universities employ "lecturers" based on attainment of a Master's degree.

Q: How do I qualify to teach in a pre-school?

A: Qualification for teaching in a pre-school is based upon acquiring a Child Development Permit. There are several levels of such permits: Assistant, Associate Teacher, Teacher, Master Teacher, Site Supervisor, and Program Director. Only the last requires a baccalaureate degree. The SRJC Child Development Department offers certificates, associate degree programs, and other coursework through which students can qualify for the remaining permits. For more information, see an SRJC counselor in the Counseling Department on the second floor of Bertolini Student Center.

K – 12 Teaching Summary

To Teach:	Preparation	Required Tests	Credential needed
Elementary School (K-6)	BA degree, completion of approved program, including student teaching	CBEST, RICA, & CSET	Multiple Subject Credential
Middle School (7-8)	BA degree, completion of approved program, including student teaching	CBEST, RICA, & CSET	Multiple Subject or Single Subject - varies per school system
High School or Secondary School (9-12)	BA degree, completion of approved program, including student teaching	CBEST & CSET	Single Subject Credential
Special Education Specializations: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Visual Impairments, Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing, Physical & Health Impairments, and Early Childhood Special Education	BA degree, completion of approved program, including student teaching	CBEST, RICA, & CSET	Educational Specialist Instruction Credential in area of specialization
Bilingual (ESL - K-12)	BA degree, completion of approved program, including student teaching	CBEST, RICA, & CSET	BCLAD Certificate - Multiple Subject or Single Subject

Examination Information

CBEST is the California Basic Educational Skills Test that assesses reading, writing, and mathematics skills. This examination is required before applying for most California teaching and services credentials. It is highly recommended that teacher candidates take the CBEST as soon as possible after completing their first transfer-level math course. For more information about the CBEST, including test preparation, test dates, and registration deadlines, go to www.cbest.nesinc.com.

RICA (the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment) is an examination designed to ensure that prospective teachers have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective reading instruction for K-8 students. Passage of RICA is required of all applicants for a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, and preparation is usually a part of the credential program coursework. For more information about the RICA, go to www.rica.nesinc.com.

CSET is the California Subject Examination for Teachers required for all teachers "new to the profession" who receive a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential or for those secondary teachers who have not completed a Certified Subject Matter Preparation Program. For more information, see www.cset.nesinc.com.