

**New York State Education Department  
Office of College and University Evaluation  
Review of Candidate Transcripts for Admission into  
Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs  
Part 52.21(b)(3)(xvii)**

The following Q and A was prepared in response to requests for guidance in evaluating transcripts for admission of candidates into alternative teacher preparation programs. It is recommended that in preparation for accepting candidates into an alternative teacher preparation program, the corresponding regulations be reviewed, rather than relying solely on this Q and A.

**The Transcript Review Process**

**Q: Who should perform the review of candidate transcripts to determine whether required general education core courses and content core courses for initial certification have been met and/or what additional courses must be taken prior to completing the alternative teacher preparation program?**

A: The review of potential candidates' transcripts should be completed by admissions staff and/or faculty who have knowledge of pedagogy and content requirements of the certificate sought. This may require review by admissions staff as well as education and liberal arts and sciences faculty. The reviewers must be able to interpret course descriptions and apply them to general education and content core requirements.

**Q: Who should review transcripts from an institution in a foreign country?**

A: Faculty or staff should review transcripts from a foreign institution only after the transcripts have been reviewed by a company that is knowledgeable about equivalency standards of the foreign transcript.

**Q: Must the transcript review process result in a one-to-one match between an institution's courses and the courses on a potential candidate's transcript?**

A: No, the review should include course titles and descriptions to determine that all *topics* necessary to demonstrate competency in a subject. It is possible for these topics to appear in more than one course.

**Q: Some applicants to alternative teacher preparation programs graduated from college many years ago. Should these transcripts be evaluated differently from those earned in recent years?**

A: Evaluation of transcripts dated several years ago can be a challenge. Older transcripts should be reviewed consistently by the admitting institution. This kind of review may require more time because a closer review of course descriptions may be necessary to establish equivalent content and currency of topics related to the NYS Learning Standards for students. The results of the review of all transcripts should be the same—equivalent satisfaction of all standards.

**Q: What process should be used to review transcripts from institutions that do not issue grades or that offer courses in interdisciplinary or other formats?**

A: In addition to conducting credit conversions, flexibility should be applied. If a student has received a degree from a regionally accredited institution that does not issue course grades, uses non-standard transcripts, or offers courses in interdisciplinary blocks, a reasonable estimate of student effort can usually be extrapolated from course descriptions. In addition, the college should consider that the student was successful in earning a degree.

**General Requirements of Alternative Teacher Certification Programs** [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(a)]

**Q: Is it possible for candidates to meet general education and content core requirements through alternative means, rather than through completion of undergraduate or graduate course work?**

A: Yes. In these alternative programs, assessments that demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skills of candidates are encouraged. The college should agree on acceptable assessments so all candidates are treated equitably. Those assessments can include, among others, evaluation of experience; passing scores on alternative examinations, such as the CLEP; and completion of portfolios demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and skills. [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(a)(3)]

**Q: For candidates preparing to teach subjects other than a foreign language, can colleges accept completing a foreign language in high school to meet the general education core requirement for a language other than English?**

A: Yes, as long as the standard for accepting the high school foreign language study includes successfully completing the appropriate Regents exam with a score set by the institution or program. The most common standard has been passing the Regents exam with a minimum grade of 85. For students who graduated from high schools outside New York State, a reasonable equivalent standard to the Regents' exam should be used; e.g., three or more full-year courses in a foreign language with grades of "B" or higher.

**Q: Knowledge of languages other than English by native foreign language speakers are often unsupported by course work on a transcript. How can an evaluation of this type of knowledge, understanding, and skill be accomplished?**

A: Speakers of languages other than English are encouraged to take proficiency examinations such as the CLEP. Institutions may determine the score on the CLEP that would be equivalent to course credits at the institution. Alternatively, institutions with foreign language departments may request an evaluation by a faculty member to assess the candidate's knowledge of the culture of countries in which that language is spoken and/or the candidate's understanding and skill in speaking, writing, and reading the language, including literature and grammar.

**Q: Can credit for knowledge, understanding, and skill in a foreign language be given for courses that were taught in a language other than English, or for study abroad where communication and education were primarily in a language other than English?**

A: Yes, it is reasonable to accept successful study in a language other than English as evidence that the candidate is knowledgeable in that language. The institution should use discretion to assess the candidate's depth and breadth of knowledge in accepting credit, and should keep in mind that it is necessary to have knowledge of culture and literature in order to succeed on the language Content Specialty Test.

**Q: During a transcript review, what courses can be accepted to meet the *information retrieval* (literacy) requirement?**

A: Acceptable courses include those offered within a computer department, such as educational technology, library sciences, and research; and credit-bearing internships that focus on research and/or information literacy. Other courses may be included in this list, depending on the review of course descriptions.

**Q: During a transcript review, what courses can be accepted as meeting the *artistic expression* requirement?**

A: Acceptable courses include art history, photography, music, and computer graphics. Colleges have also accepted the humanities CLEP exam to meet this requirement.

**Q: During a transcript review, what courses can be accepted as meeting the *written analysis and expression* requirement?**

A: A variety of upper level undergraduate and graduate courses can provide evidence of written analysis and expression. Successfully completing a course that required researching and writing a thesis can also be considered as meeting this requirement.

### **Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Admission Requirements** [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1)]

**Q: What requirements must a candidate meet prior to entering an alternative teacher preparation program?**

A: The candidate must hold at least a baccalaureate or graduate degree from an appropriate institution in which he/she has completed "study that prepares candidates with knowledge, understanding, and skills in the liberal arts and sciences, including but not limited to: artistic expression; communication; information retrieval; concepts in history and social sciences; humanities; a language other than English; scientific and mathematical processes; and written analysis and expression." [52.21(b)(2)(ii)(a)]

The candidate should also have completed a content major or concentration (30 semester hour credits) in the subject to be taught, providing a knowledge base to teach to the State Learning Standards for students. The 30 credit-hour major or concentration may include up to 12 credit hours in cognate courses. [52.21(b)(2)(ii)(b) and 52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1)(i)]

**Q: Do the admission requirements for alternative teacher preparation programs have to follow exactly those for all other students at the institution or in the department?**

A: Specific admission requirements can be developed and applied only to alternative teacher preparation program candidates *as long as* the same admission requirements are applied to all potential alternative teacher preparation program candidates. The requirements must meet the minimum admission requirements set in 52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1).

**Q: Are the actual grades received for prior course work and to meet prior degree requirements considered in the transcript review?**

A: The institution may set minimum grades to accept a course; for example, a “B” in content courses. By Regulation, candidates must have a 3.0 GPA or its equivalent for admission. However, potential candidates who do not have a 3.0 GPA can request to have their entire record reviewed and, with justification, be admitted on a probationary or full admission basis. This admission must be supported by evidence that demonstrates that the candidate has the requisite knowledge and skills to successfully complete the program. The justification must follow guidelines for the program and must be included in writing in the student’s record. [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1)(ii)]

**Q: Regulations state that candidates for certification in specific 7-12 or 5-9 content areas must have completed an undergraduate or graduate major in the subject to be taught or a related field approved by the Department at the time of program registration. Can you provide examples of related fields and how the content should be reviewed?**

A: Related fields are those in which there are courses that would develop knowledge, understanding, and skills to teach to the State Learning Standards in that subject area. Examples of degrees in related fields that could be reviewed for appropriate course work include engineering for mathematics certification, biology for chemistry certification, and library science for educational technology specialist certification. If a particular course is not entirely devoted to the subject area of certification, then an appropriate portion of the credit may be counted toward the content credit requirement.

**Q: Can both undergraduate and graduate courses be used to meet the requirements for admission to alternative teacher preparation programs?**

A: Yes, any course taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education may be considered to meet admission requirements. [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1)(iii)]

**Q: If a candidate’s transcript does not indicate that he/she has met all of the general education and content core requirements, can he/she still enter the program?**

A: If a candidate’s transcript does not include a sufficient knowledge base to teach to the State Learning Standards in the certificate area sought, the program may require that the candidate complete additional study prior to completion of the program. [52.21(b)(3)(xvii)(b)(1)(i)]