

New Basic Skills Requirement Options

This new option allows the Commission and Commission-approved preparation programs to verify that a candidate or applicant has demonstrated basic skills proficiency by verifying qualifying college-level coursework from a regionally accredited institution of higher education if the following conditions are met:

- The candidate must have earned a grade of "B" or better ("B-" is acceptable) in the qualifying coursework
- The coursework must have been taken at a regionally accredited college or university
- The coursework must provide three semester units (or 4.5 quarter units)
- The coursework must have been taken for academic credit (earned units)
- The coursework must be degree applicable (AA degree applicable is acceptable)
- For **Reading**, applicable coursework must be in the subject of critical thinking, literature, philosophy, reading, rhetoric, or textual analysis
- For **Writing**, applicable coursework must be the subject of composition, English, rhetoric, written communications, or writing
- For **Mathematics**, applicable coursework must be in the subject of algebra, geometry, mathematics, quantitative reasoning, or statistics
- If taken at a college or university outside the United States, the courses must be English based courses and must be deemed as equivalent to coursework taken at a regionally accredited college or university in the United States. Foreign-prepared educators must obtain an evaluation of their transcripts through a Commission-approved Foreign Transcript Evaluating Agency. See Leaflet CL-635 for more information.

The following coursework is NOT acceptable:

- Professional development or continuing education units
- In-service training or workshops
- Non-credit bearing courses
- Courses where credits do not apply toward the requirements for an Associate degree, Baccalaureate degree, or higher degree. Commission-approved preparation programs may use a combination of coursework and other previously available options to meet the BSR. For example, a candidate who has passed the CBEST examination subtests in reading and writing but not mathematics may use the two passed CBEST subtests and coursework that meets the mathematics criteria as listed above to meet the BSR. Note that the Commission cannot evaluate for this combination of options.

Applicants who wish to combine coursework and examination options must contact a Commission-approved preparation program for assistance. The new law also allows a Commission-approved preparation program to accept other courses not listed in the criteria above if the registrar or relevant academic department chair where the course was completed provides written documentation verifying the course content satisfies the basic skills content of Reading, Writing, and/or Mathematics, as applicable.

Note that a single course may satisfy the requirements of both Reading and Writing if the registrar or relevant academic department chair provides written documentation stating that the course includes the study of reading and writing as outlined in the criteria above. These new options of using coursework or a combination of coursework and examination subtests are available to any applicant or credential candidate and may be used immediately to meet the Basic Skills Requirement.

Educators who are applying for a credential or permit directly with the Commission must submit official transcripts and any relevant documents as described above along with their completed application packet to use this option. The required documentation includes an original letter on letterhead from a Commission-approved preparation program if the applicant is using a combination of coursework and another option to meet the BSR. For applicants who have already submitted an application that is pending evaluation, the Commission will review transcripts for the Basic Skills Requirement, as applicable. No new application or fee is required. For candidates enrolled in and completing a Commission-approved preparation program, the program sponsor may verify completion of basic skills via this combination option. To complete a credential recommendation, each program sponsor will need to indicate how the applicant has fulfilled the Basic Skills Requirement.

Basic Skills Requirement FAQs

1. Can a candidate use the same course to meet both the Reading and Writing requirements?
 - a. Yes. To qualify, the individual will need to get a letter from the registrar or the relevant department academic chair where the course was completed confirming that the course includes the study of reading and writing as outlined in the criteria. Most likely, the department chair letter would come from the English Department, as that subject generally includes content in both reading and writing.
2. Can a candidate apply directly to the Commission when mixing and matching CBEST subtest results and coursework, or does a Commission-approved preparation program need to submit the application?
 - a. It is not necessary for an application to come from a Commission-approved preparation program. However, the option to mix and match coursework and examination subtests can only be verified by Commission-approved preparation programs so applications submitted directly

from the educator will need to include a letter from a Commission-approved preparation program sponsor in order to meet the Basic Skills Requirement through this option.

3. Can an LEA submit an application where the educator is using coursework to meet the Basic Skills Requirement?

a. An application where the educator is attempting to meet the BSR by coursework can be submitted by an LEA, Commission-approved preparation program sponsor, or the applicant directly. However, any applications submitted using this option that do not come from a Commission-approved preparation program will be evaluated for BSR by Commission staff.

4. If I already have an application waiting to be reviewed, will the Commission check my transcripts to see if I meet the requirement under this new option?

a. Yes, the new option will apply to all applications regardless of when they were received by the Commission. Additionally, individuals who were issued credentials and still must meet the Basic Skills Requirement may submit an application, processing fee, and transcripts if they wish to be evaluated under this new option.

5. Can a candidate who took courses at a college or university outside of the United States use those courses to meet the Basic Skills Requirement?

a. Yes, as long as the candidate has obtained an evaluation from a Commission-approved foreign transcript evaluating agency showing that the coursework is equivalent to courses taken at a regionally-accredited college or university in the United States. Additionally, courses covering the reading and writing components must demonstrate proficiency in the English language.

6. Can courses completed with “Pass” or “Credit” be used toward meeting this requirement?

a. Yes, courses in which “Pass” or “Credit” was earned in lieu of a letter grade may be used toward meeting the Basic Skills Requirement.

7. If an educator completed a course that is less than three semester units, can they combine two courses to meet the unit requirement? For example, what if they completed a four-quarter unit course, which equates to 2.67 semester units?

a. Yes. If a course was less than three semester units then an educator can still meet the requirement by completing a second course to make up for the missing units.

8. Are Community College faculty and Teacher Education Coordinators authorized to sign form 41-BSR – Verification of Basic Skills Requirement?

a. Only the authorized submitter(s) for a Commission-approved preparation program are able to sign form 41-BSR to show that the basic skills requirement has been verified by the program. However, the form can be used by other LEAs and be included in an application as a guide for

Commission staff to help with the academic evaluation of how the candidate is meeting the BSR. When the form is submitted and signed by an authorized submitter of a Commission approved preparation program, the Commission will not conduct a review for the BSR and will consider the program to have cleared that requirement. If the form is submitted by another LEA that is not a Commission-approved preparation program or is signed by anyone other than an authorized submitter, the Commission will only use it as a guide and staff will conduct their own coursework review for the BSR. Note that Commission staff cannot review for the BSR if a candidate is mixing and matching BSR options. This review can only be done by a Commission-approved preparation program.

9. An authorized submitter is doing a BSR mix and match evaluation with two CBEST scores. When they are doing this evaluation, is the minimum acceptable score for each subtest 41, or can the score be as low as 37?

a. The minimum score for a subtest that will be used to mix and match BSR requirements is 41. The option to satisfy BSR with a subtest score as low as 37 is only available when candidates have taken all three CBEST subtests to meet the BSR and the total CBEST score for all three subtests combined is a minimum of 123.

The legislation became effective July 9, 2021.

Sources Education Code Sections 44252, 44259, 44280, 44310, and 44830 Contact Information