



Guide for Freshman Students Interested in Teaching

The School of Education Faculty and Staff at Sonoma State University are delighted you are interested in pursuing a career in teaching! We are here to provide as much support as possible to make sure you understand the process by which a teacher becomes credentialed in the State of California.

This six-step guide is intended to provide the basic information you need to know as a potential teaching credential candidate. Please do not hesitate to contact the Credentials Office in the School of Education, Stevenson 1078, at 707-664-2832 or credentials.office@sonoma.edu with any questions or concerns.

Thank you!

Step 1: Decide what type of a teaching credential you would like to pursue.

Options are:

- ❖ Single Subject Credential (to teach a single subject, usually at High School and/or Middle School)
- ❖ Multiple Subject Credential (to teach in a self contained classroom, usually Elementary School)
- ❖ Special Education Credential (to teach as a Special Education teacher in Elementary School and/or High School/Middle School)

(see handouts: Elementary Teaching Guide and Secondary Teaching Guide under "Freshman Information" link at www.sonoma.edu/education; and Education Specialist Program Information Sheet under "Programs" link at www.sonoma.edu/education)

Step 2: Research undergraduate majors and Subject Matter Competence.

Subject Matter Competence

The State of California requires that anyone pursuing a credential meet "subject matter competence". This means that you have to prove to the state that you know the subject area that you will be teaching. Depending on the type of credential you want to pursue, you can meet subject matter competence by either taking the appropriate exam(s) (CSET, Praxis, SSAT) OR by completing a subject matter preparation program through your bachelor's degree.

Undergraduate Majors

Research undergraduate majors that when completed will either give you subject matter competence or provide content area preparation for the appropriate subject matter exam(s). Meet with a subject matter advisor to review the courses you will need to obtain subject matter competence or preparation as part of your bachelor's degree. Do this as soon as possible to make the most out of your time as an undergraduate at SSU.

(see handouts: guides mentioned in step 1)

Step 3: Take prerequisites, CBEST and U.S. Constitution.

Prerequisites

Each credential program has different pre-requisites. Check the appropriate program information sheet for the list of pre-requisites you need to take. You DO NOT need to be admitted into a credential program to take the pre-requisite courses. Prerequisites are offered Fall, Spring and usually summer session. You should try to fit the pre-requisites in during your junior or senior year.

CBEST Exam

The CBEST exam is required of anyone who is pursuing a teaching credential. Take this exam as soon as you can. You need to demonstrate you are in progress of passing the CBEST before you can start a credential program.

U.S. Constitution Requirement

Anyone pursuing a credential in California must also take a U.S. Constitution exam or course. Courses that meet this requirement are usually Political Science 1, Government 1 or a series of U.S. History classes. If you think you have already taken a course that meets the requirement, check with the credentials office to verify. If you need information about approved courses and/or where to take an exam, contact the credentials office.

(see handouts: guides mentioned in Steps 1-3 and "Financial Aid Update for Credential and Masters Students" under "Student Resources" link at www.sonoma.edu/education)

Step 4: Seek and document experience working with children and/or adolescents.

Experience Requirement

It is important to explore teaching and work with children and/or adolescents in order to make an informed decision about pursuing a career in teaching. A minimum of 40 hours of experience working with children/and or adolescents is required before you can begin a credential program.

Education 250

EDUC 250 is a great class that provides experience in the classroom as well as a challenging curriculum that explores teaching. You can even take this class as a community college student through cross enrollment provided you are taking a minimum of 6 units at the community college. You DO NOT need to be admitted into a credential program to take this course. Please contact the Teacher Diversity Project at 707-664-4124 for more information.

Step 5: Research financial aid/scholarship opportunities.

Visit the SSU Scholarship Office in Salazar Hall to find out about scholarships available for students pursuing a career in teaching. Visit the Credentials Office at Stevenson Hall 1078 for information about the APLE loan assumption program and Cal Grant T, both specific assistance programs for prospective teachers. *(see handout: "Financial Aid Update for Credential and Masters Students")*

Step 6: Apply to the School of Education and to the University.

Make sure to complete the School of Education Application for Credential Programs AND the University Graduate Application. Both are required for admission into a credential program*. Check for applicable deadlines *(visit www.sonoma.edu/education under "Applications" and www.csumentor.edu for the latest application information).*

**If you are in a blended or integrated credential program, the need to apply to the University will depend on when you plan to complete your bachelor's degree. Check with the Credentials Office for more information.*