

Highly Qualified Questions and Answers

General Questions:

Do I have to be highly qualified in the core academic subjects I teach?

Yes. All teachers in all schools who provide instruction in core academic subjects must be highly qualified.

When do I have to be highly qualified?

The current expectation is all teachers must be highly qualified prior to being hired or reassigned. All teachers should be highly qualified or on a plan to obtain this status.

What does highly qualified mean?

All teachers must have at least a baccalaureate degree, full state certification, and have demonstrated subject matter competency in **each** of the core academic subjects in which they teach.

What are the core academic subjects?

English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry, earth science, general science, physical science, and physics), foreign languages, civics and government, economics, music, theater, art, social studies, history, and geography are designated as core academic subjects.

What is full state certification?

Teachers holding Initial, Professional, or Master Certificates hold full state certification.

How do I become highly qualified?

Elementary teachers:

- **New** elementary teachers must take either of the two Praxis II tests identified for elementary teachers.
- **Experienced** elementary teachers may take one of the two Praxis II tests identified for elementary teachers, **or** may build a HOUSSE if they were teaching prior to the 2002-2003 school year.

Middle and Secondary teachers:

- **New** middle or secondary teachers may hold a posted major in their content area, the equivalent to a major (30 semester hours), an advanced degree in the content area, or advanced certification in the content area **or** may take the Praxis II exam for their content area.
- **Experienced** middle or secondary teachers may hold a posted major in their content area, the equivalent to a major (30 semester hours), an advanced degree in the content area, or advanced certification in the content area, may take the Praxis II exam for their content area or may build a HOUSSE if they were teaching prior to the 2002-2003 school year.

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ELL teachers who provide instruction in core academic subjects must meet the highly qualified requirements. The requirements are the same as those for elementary and secondary teachers previously given.

Elementary school art or music teachers who hold a major in the content area, the equivalent to a major (30 semester hours), an advanced degree in the content area, or advanced certification in the content area are already highly qualified. If they are not already highly qualified, they may take the Praxis II in music or art.

Special Education teachers:

- **Elementary** special education teachers must hold an endorsement in special education and may take one of the Praxis II tests that have been designated for elementary teachers or may build an elementary HOUSSE if they were teaching prior to the 2002-2003 school year.
- **Middle and Secondary** teachers who provide instruction in core academic subjects must meet the highly qualified requirements. They must hold an endorsement in special education. They may have a posted major or the equivalent in the core content area(s) they teach, may take the Praxis II in the core academic subject(s) they teach or build a HOUSSE for the subject(s).
 - **Special notes:**
 - Special education teachers, who only provide consultative service to highly qualified teachers, do not have to meet the highly qualified requirements.
 - Secondary special education teachers may use the multiple subjects HOUSSE to become highly qualified.
 - Special education teachers exclusively providing instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible to take the Alaska Alternate Assessment at any grade level can meet the highly qualified requirements for Elementary Special Education.

Does National Board Certification make me highly qualified?

- If you teach elementary school and hold National Board Certification as an Early Childhood Generalist, or as a Middle Childhood Generalist, you earn 100 points on the HOUSSE and are highly qualified for the grade levels of your National Board Certification.
- If you teach all middle school core academic subjects in a self-contained classroom in grades 6, 7, or 8 and hold National Board Certification as an Early Adolescent Generalist, you are highly qualified.
- If you teach a middle school or high school core academic subject and hold National Board Certification in that core academic subject, you are highly qualified.

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Does a Masters of Education (M.ED or MAT) mean I am highly qualified?

No. The Masters of Education or the Masters of Arts in Teaching does not constitute an advanced degree in a **content** area.

Does an endorsement on my teaching certificate make me highly qualified?

If the endorsement is based on a major, masters, or doctorate degree in the core-content area, you are highly qualified in that content area.

Does a minor in a core content area make me highly qualified?

No. An equivalent to a major (30 credit hours) is required for highly qualified.

I have been designated as highly qualified by another state. What do I do?

If you have been designated as highly qualified in a **core academic content area**, you need to show your district the information from the other state. Please follow your district's procedures.

I am highly qualified in my district but I want to move to another district next year. Will I still be highly qualified?

Once you obtain the highly qualified designation in a core academic subject in Alaska, you will be considered highly qualified for that subject. If you move to a new district and a new teaching assignment, you would need to obtain the designation for the new subject area.

How does highly qualified apply to my position?

I teach four subjects in a rural secondary or K-12 school. What do I do?

You must be highly qualified in at least one of the core academic subjects that you teach. You must meet the highly qualified requirements in all the core academic subjects you teach as soon as possible. The multi-subject HOUSSE may be used.

I teach vocational education. Do I need to be highly qualified?

If students earn credit in a core academic subject for work in a vocational course, the teacher must be highly qualified.

I teach in a charter school in Alaska. Do I need to be highly qualified?

Yes. Charter school teachers must meet the same highly qualified requirements based on whether they are elementary, secondary or special education teachers

I teach in a correspondence school in Alaska. Do I need to be highly qualified?

Yes. Each correspondence school teacher assigned a course in a core academic subjects must be highly qualified. The highly qualified teacher determines and assigns a grade or other determination that the student has met the standards of a course.

I am a consultative special education teacher. Do I need to be highly qualified?

Special education teachers, who only provide consultative service to highly qualified teachers, do not have to meet the highly qualified requirements.

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When can a middle school teacher qualify using the elementary highly qualified?

6th grade teachers that teach more than two core academic courses can qualify under elementary. Teachers of 7th and 8th grade who teach more than two core academic courses can qualify using the middle school content area test. Otherwise, teachers must be highly qualified in both of the core academic areas that they are teaching.

Do all teachers meet the highly qualified requirements the same way?

No. Teachers meet the highly qualified requirements specific to whether they are “elementary or secondary” teachers and whether they were teaching prior to 2002-03 school year. Rural secondary teachers and special education teachers have additional methods of meeting highly qualified requirements.

What flexibility is provided for teachers teaching in small, rural schools to meet the highly qualified requirements?

Teachers may have additional time to fully meet the highly qualified requirements. Teachers hired who meet the highly qualified requirement in at least one core academic subject, have three years from the date of hire to meet the highly qualified requirements in all other core academic subjects that they are assigned to teach.

What happens if a teacher does not meet the highly qualified requirements?

The district is encouraged to assign teachers where they are highly qualified. Districts are required to keep supporting documentation when this does not occur and must have a plan to ensure that the teacher will become highly qualified as soon as possible.

Does a social studies teacher who teaches several of the individual content areas (e.g. economics, history, geography, civics and government) need to demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the individual content areas?

Yes. The teacher must be highly qualified in the specific content course that is reported in the certified staff accounting. If social studies is the reported course, then the teacher can be highly qualified in the general social studies category.

Does a science teacher who teaches several of the individual content areas (e.g. biology, chemistry, earth science, general science, physical science, and physics) need to demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the individual content areas?

Yes. The teacher must be highly qualified in the specific content course that is reported in the certified staff accounting. If general science is the reported course, then the teacher can be highly qualified in the general science category.

Do online teachers need to be highly qualified?

If the teachers are responsible for assessing, making curriculum decisions, assigning grades and/or answering content questions, the teacher must be highly qualified. However, teachers assigned solely to ensure that students are on task do not need to be highly qualified. These teachers are reported as on-site supervising teachers.