

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER GUIDELINES**

**Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**September 2006**

**SUMMARY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S HQT REQUIREMENTS**

**NCLB's Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements**

All public school teachers with primary responsibility for direct instruction in one or more of NCLB's core content areas are required to demonstrate that they satisfy the definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher." This requirement includes:

- Elementary level (grades K-6) teachers who teach all subjects to a particular grade;
- Middle- and secondary-level (grades 7-12) core content area instructors;
- Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas;
- English as a second language (ESL) teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas; and
- Alternative education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas.

**In Pennsylvania , the NCLB core content areas include English, Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Sciences, Foreign Languages, Music and Art, and Social Studies (history, economics, geography, and civics and government).**

**Pennsylvania's Definition of Highly Qualified Teacher**

To satisfy the definition of a Highly Qualified Teacher, teachers must:

- 1) Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
- 2) Hold a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate (i.e., Instructional I, Instructional II or Intern certificate but not an emergency permit); **and**
- 3) Demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach.

Generally, all Pennsylvania certified teachers may demonstrate subject matter competency through having passed a content area test in the subject area of their teaching assignment. Middle and Secondary level teachers may also demonstrate competency by having completed a content area major or a graduate degree in the subject area of assignment.

Additionally, experienced teachers (i.e., one or more years of teaching experience) may demonstrate subject matter competency through having attained National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification in the subject area of their teaching assignment or through completing Pennsylvania's HOUSSE programs. These programs are Pennsylvania's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) pursuant to NCLB (Section 9101(23)(C)). The following Pennsylvania

HOUSSE programs permit certain experienced teachers of core content areas to obtain Highly Qualified status:

- **Bridge Certification Program** (NOW CLOSED FOR NEW PARTICIPANTS); [\(Completing the Bridge Program\)](#) (pdf)
- **State-level HOUSSE** (for Elementary Education teachers certified before 1988 when PA implemented teacher testing requirements) [\(State-level HOUSSE Summary\)](#) (pdf)
- **HOUSSE HQT Designation** (100 point matrix) [\(HOUSSE HQT Requirements and Rubric\)](#) (pdf)

## Pennsylvania's HQT Requirements

**Please click on the link under the level that best describes your teaching assignment to determine how to obtain your Highly Qualified Teacher status:**

### ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Regular education teachers providing core academic content instruction to elementary level (grades K-6) students. [\(Elementary Level - Regular Education\)](#) (pdf)

Special Education certified teachers providing core academic instruction to elementary level (K-6) special education students or to special education students taking an alternative assessment (PASA). [\(Elementary Level - Special Education\)](#) (pdf)

ESL teachers certified with an ESL Program Specialist certificate providing core academic content instruction to Elementary level English Language Learners (ELL) students. [\(Elementary Level - ESL Program Specialist\)](#) (pdf)

Alternative Education teachers providing core academic content instruction to students in Alternative Education programs. [\(Elementary Level - Alternative Education\)](#) (pdf)

### MIDDLE AND SECONDARY TEACHERS

Regular education [teachers providing core academic content instruction to middle/secondary level \(grades 7-12\) students.](#) [\(Middle-Secondary Level - Regular Education\)](#) (pdf)

Special Education certified teachers providing core academic instruction to middle/secondary level (7-12) special education students. [\(Middle-Secondary Level - Special Education\)](#) (pdf)

ESL teachers **certified with an ESL Program Specialist certificate** providing core academic instruction to middle/secondary level (7-12) ESL students. [\(Middle-Secondary Level - ESL Program Specialist\)](#) (pdf)

Alternative Education teachers providing core academic instruction to middle/secondary level (7-12) alternative education students. ([Middle-Secondary Level - Alternative Education](#)) (pdf)

| Assignment Area   | Praxis II Content Knowledge Exam: Fundamental Subjects, Content Knowledge | College/ Graduate Degree in Content/ Equivalency | Bridge (Must have entered program on or before 7/31/06) | State Level HOUSSE (Only for El. Ed. Certified before 1988) | HOUSE (100 Point Matrix) | National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification |
|---|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|--|
| New Elementary teachers (must have valid elementary education certificate)  | √   |  |   |   |                          |  |
| Experienced Elementary teachers (must have valid elementary education certificate)  | √   |  |   | √   | √                        | √  |
| New Special Education elementary-level teachers (must have valid special education certificate)                           | √   |  |   |   | √                        |  |
| Experienced Special Education elementary-level teachers (must have valid special education certificate)                   | √   |  |   |   | √                        |  |
| New ESL elementary-level teachers (must have valid ESL program specialist certificate)                                    | √   |  |   |   |                          |  |
| Experienced ESL elementary-level teachers (must have valid ESL program specialist certificate)                            | √   |  |   |   | √                        | √  |
| New Alternative Education elementary-level teachers   | √   |  |   |   |                          |  |
| Experienced Alternative Special Education elementary-level teachers   | √   |  |   |   | √                        | √  |
|   |   |  |   |   |                          |  |
| New Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction   | √   | √  |   |   |                          |  |
| Experienced Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction   | √   | √  |   |   | √                        | √  |
| New Special Education Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction (must have valid special education certificate)         | √   | √  |   |   | √                        |  |
| Experienced Special Education Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction (must have valid special education certificate) | √   | √  | √   |   | √                        | √  |

|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| New ESL Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction (must have valid ESL program specialist certificate)         | √ | √ |   |  |   |   |
| Experienced ESL Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction (must have valid ESL program specialist certificate) | √ | √ | √ |  | √ | √ |
| New Alternative Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction  | √ | √ |   |  |   |   |
| Experienced Alternative Middle & Secondary Core Content Instruction  | √ | √ | √ |  | √ | √ |

### ***Definitions & Abbreviations***

A. The following abbreviations and acronyms are used throughout these *Guidelines* to refer to the following terms:

- (1) “Act 48” means Act 48 of 1999, the law that established the program of continuing professional education for teachers and other professional educators. Act 48 is codified in section 1205.2 of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, 24 P. S. § 12-1205.2.
- (2) “PDE” or “the Department” means the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- (3) “HQT” means Highly Qualified Teacher, and “HQT provisions” means the provisions on Highly Qualified Teachers in section 9101(23) of the No Child Left Behind Act. (20 U.S.C. § 7801 (23)).
- (4) “NCLB” or “No Child Left Behind Act” means the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
- (5) HOUSSE means Highly Objective Uniform State System of Evaluation as established by the state.

**B. New to the Profession:** Teachers who have been in the profession for less than one year.

**C. Not New to the Profession:** Teachers who have one or more years of experience in the profession.

**D. Full-Time Teaching:** Service on a half year basis or more (with a half day or more each day) as a teacher in a professional position .

**E. Nonpublic school:** An elementary or secondary school that is either (a) a licensed private academic school as defined in 24 P. S. § 6702 (generally a nonpublic, non-sectarian school) or (b) a non-public (religiously affiliated) school that is registered with the Department’s Division of Nonpublic and Private Schools.

**F. School-district-based Alternative Education Program:** The term “alternative education program” is defined in section 1901-C(1) of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, 24 P. S. § 19-1901-C(1). The term “school-district-based Alternative

Education Program” includes a program implemented by a school district, an area vocational-technical school, a group of school districts, or an intermediate unit. It does not include an alternative education program offered at a private alternative education institution as that latter term is defined in section 1901-E of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, 24 P. S. § 19-1901-E.

**G. Teacher of Record:** A teacher of record is a professional or temporary professional educator assigned by a school entity as the primary instructor for a group of students.

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