

Preparing to Teach Elementary School

Description

There are several types of credentials offered by the state of California that students can receive. Students interested in teaching at the elementary school level will be obtaining a bachelor degree and a **Multiple Subject Teaching Credential**. The Multiple Subject Teaching Credential authorizes the holder to teach in a "self-contained" classroom, meaning that one teacher teaches all subjects to the same students all day.

Duration

While the length of time for completion of a bachelor degree may vary from student to student, the degree typically takes 4-5 years full-time to complete. A bachelor degree is between 120-124 units. In addition, a professional preparation program takes approximately 1 year to complete, if attending school full-time.

Multiple Subject Teaching Credential Requirements

- **Education:** A bachelor degree or equivalent from a regionally accredited college or university.
- **Professional Teacher Preparation:** Complete a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) approved multiple subject teacher preparation program, including student teaching.
- **Provisions and Principles of the U.S. Constitution:** Complete a U.S. Constitution course with a "C" or better (Political Science 103 at Citrus College) or equivalent exam.
- **Basic Skills Requirement:** This requirement can be satisfied by passing the California Basic Skills Test (CBEST) or by considering one of the alternative options that have been approved by the CCTC. For more information on the CBEST, go to <http://www.cbest.nesinc.com>.
- **Subject Matter Competence:** Pass all sections of the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET): Multiple Subjects to establish subject matter competency. For more information, go to <http://www.cset.nesinc.com>.
 - *Note: The CSET: Multiple Subjects Exam may be taken with the CSET: Writing Skills Exam to obtain subject matter competency and fulfill the basic skills requirement.*
- **English Language Skills:** Complete a developing English Language Skills courses, including reading requirement by successful completion of a comprehensive reading instruction course.
- **RICA:** Pass the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). For more information, go to <http://www.rica.nesinc.com>.
- **Character and Identification Clearance:** Submit the appropriate paperwork along with fingerprints to the CCTC.

College Majors for Elementary Teaching

As an elementary teacher you will need to teach many subjects, namely, Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, Visual & Performing Arts, Physical Education and Human Development. There are many possible majors, but it is best to major in a subject that will encompass all of these areas, such as Liberal Studies. However, other majors such as Human Development, Human Services, or Psychology are also excellent pathways for elementary teaching. See a counselor for help with major selection.

Basic Recommendations

- Take general education courses that cover subject matter areas required for elementary teaching and cover CSET preparation.
- Seek advisement since teacher education requirements differ at each university.
- Earn good grades. Most credential programs require a minimum 2.7 to 3.0 grade point average.
- Obtain as much experience in the classroom as possible. Stop by the STEM Center (math/science) and Learning Center (all other subjects) to find out about tutoring opportunities.

How to prepare for the CSET?

- Become familiar with content specifications and CA frameworks (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/>).
- Take classes that support your knowledge in each subject area.
- Choose a major that prepares you in subject matter knowledge.
- Keep your notes, exams, and papers from all subject matter classes.