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PART I

Information on Becoming a California Academic Teacher

I wrote the following information based upon my experience in this job for a number of years. This information is not “official” and meant only as an overview for reference.

Reference: www.ctc.ca.gov

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (referred to as the CTC) issues your teacher credential. There are three primary types of credentials: multi-subject (for grades K-8, although you usually never teach above grade 6 with this credential); single subject (where you only teach in one subject area in grades 7-12); and special education (which requires additional preparation.)

A side note: To find a job as a teacher consider teaching in the areas where there are always shortages: math; science; or special education. For instance, it is quite competitive and difficult to get hired as a social science or elementary teacher because there is a mass of applicants for every opening. You will eventually get a job in these areas but you will need great patience and the ability to handle rejection! However, in math, science, and special education there is a very high chance of being offered a position because there is a shortage of teachers in these subjects. Often times other subjects are also in high demand and can provide great employment opportunities and accelerated paths to start teaching. Currently these include English and even PE in some locations! Call me and we can discuss your situation to see if this might be a good path for you.

If you have never considered teaching special education (normally children with mild-to-moderate disabilities) then investigate to see if this is something you might be able to do well and enjoy. Call your local schools at all grade levels and ask to observe a special education class for an hour or so. Visit at least three different classes/schools before you decide if you might have the special talents to help our children who have special needs that must be met for them to succeed—yet are often not served because of our shortage of teachers to help them. If you want to make the biggest difference in a child’s life, check out special education.

Of the three types of credentials, multiple, single subject, and special education there are only certain levels of credential that meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act standards. These levels are:

- Professional clear (this is a “permanent” credential if you retain its currency.)
- Preliminary (Usually good for 5 years while you finish additional requirements to qualify for a professional clear credential)
- Intern credential

There is currently a fourth level of credential that is called the “provisional intern permit,” and it permits you to teach before completing full NCLB requirements. See below for more details.

Earning an intern credential permits you to enter the classroom almost immediately and be a paid teacher as you complete your requirements for a Preliminary and the Professional clear

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credential. To be an intern you complete the first five of six required steps to get your credential (see below) and then you start teaching. Your “day job” is as a full-time teacher as you complete the academics required for your credential by attending night school or similar part-time class work. See below for a more in-depth discussion of intern options.

The basic requirements to become a teacher in California are six major steps. There are other steps but they are normally embedded in these six:

1. Evidence knowledge of the US Constitution either by college course work or a written test.
2. Pass a background screening (fingerprint check.)
3. Have a Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college/university. [A good resource for a discussion of regional accreditation is <http://www.elearners.com/resources/agencies.asp>]
4. Pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST.) See www.cbest.nesinc.com* for detailed information about this test. Recently, CCTC has begun to accept basic education skill test results from other states and the use of alternative tests such as the GRE, ACT, and SAT. In addition, a recent policy change now permits those seeking a multiple subject credential to skip the CBEST if they pass the CSET Multiple Subject exam. For detailed information on these options refer to: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl667.pdf>. Also, I have the latest list of tests accepted from other states, so call me if you previously took a basic education skills test.
5. Pass the California Subject Examination Test (CSET) (see www.cset.nesinc.com)**; or have this test waived by participating in a CTC-approved subject-matter program (only California programs) usually completed during bachelor’s degree course work (verified completion requires a form/letter.) A list of the only approved subject matter waiver programs can be found at http://134.186.81.79/fmi/xsl/CTC_NewSubject/AllSubjects.xsl
6. Complete a state-approved teacher preparation program. These programs usually require *about* 32 credits of additional course work to include student teaching.

Many states use the four-year model to train teachers. That is, you go to a teachers college and get your teaching credential at the same time you get your bachelor’s degree. California has always used a “fifth-year” model. You must first earn your bachelor’s then you do an additional “fifth year” to learn to become a teacher. Another method California uses that is different than most states is that the CSET determines your subject matter expertise. Unlike most states, California does not do a transcript screen; so, as an example, you could major in art and still teach math if you pass the math CSET. Consequently, the teacher preparation program is centered primarily on teaching you how to teach, and does not deeply address academic subject matter.

Most public colleges and universities cost around \$5K to \$12K to complete the program. Most private colleges and universities will cost between \$6K to \$16K, with some running as high as \$30K. Some programs are set-up so that you can take a additional courses and write a thesis/do a project/take a test to get your masters while earning your credential.



Please note that many have the misconception that you are required to have a master's degree to be a teacher in California. This is not the case. The confusion usually arrives from the "fifth-year" model we use in this state. To receive your credential, you will do significant post-graduate work, but you are not required to earn a masters degree. You will be taking the "fifth year" to earn your teaching credential and not another degree.

The following website provides a list of those programs currently approved by the CTC. To discover which credentials and intern programs are available at each campus, select the school and review their approval status. http://134.186.81.79/fmi/xsl/CTC_apm/recordlist.html.

Once you have narrowed your choices, then go to the school's specific website to further research your options. A direct link to each program's website can be found at:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/links/links-CTP.html>

Another good reference is the following website that provides names, phone numbers and email addresses for individuals that work with intern programs at preparation programs and districts that use them. You can use this information to contact the different programs to learn more:

https://info.ctc.ca.gov/fmi/xsl/InternContacts/region_all.xsl

FOOTNOTES

*It is advisable to prepare for these tests. A good way to prepare for the CBEST is to buy a book found under the "test preparation" section at your local bookstore. These books have sample tests and explain the correct answers. Usually self-study is sufficient to pass this examination.

**A good way to prepare for the CSET is to take a prep course. There are some on-line and some classroom prep courses available. Do an internet search on "CSET Prep" and you will discover many options. I am aware of the following, however I don't know enough to recommend any one option (Note: All of these will cost you a couple of hundred dollars to attend):

- www.csetprep.org (Free prep services for general science tests and chemistry.)
- Contra Costa and Solano County Offices of Education offer CSET prep courses (about \$300) in 2008. Contacts are: Contra Costa—Dr. Barara Berman (925) 296-1461; Solano—Dr. Cheryl Lynn de Werff or Priscilla Ramelo (707) 399-4445.
- Math and science prep via UC Irvine on-line courses (about \$350 each)
<http://ocw.uci.edu/courses/AR0111006/>
- English prep site: <http://www.chompchomp.com/>
- Math sites:
 - <http://www.math.com/>
 - www.csetmath.com
 - <http://www.purplemath.com/>
- Many Subjects: <http://www.highschoolace.com/ace/ace.cfm>
- www.bobrowtest.com for multiple subjects
- www.teachinginterchange.org Click on "services" to reach test prep section.
- CSU Stanislaus often has test prep opportunities. Call (209) 667-3111
- Call the local county office of education to inquire if they offer test prep classes or can provide a list of providers.

Options for Completing a State Approved Academic Teacher Preparation Program

There are two basic ways to achieve your California credential:

1. **Traditional.** This is done by attending a college or university for the “5th year” of teacher preparation, to include student teaching experience. Another method is to transfer an acceptable out-of-state credential to a California preliminary credential. See the following web pages to determine how to transfer an out-of-state credential to California:

Multiple subject (elementary): <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl561.pdf>

Single subject (middle/high) : <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl560.pdf>

2. **Alternative Method.** Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) this channel has been narrowed to just the intern programs. There are different types of intern programs:

- **University Intern (UI).** A University Intern has a full-time teaching job during the day and goes to evening and weekend classes at the university to complete the required education classes. A UI’s progress is monitored, mentored, and evaluated by university faculty. Normally it can take from 18 months to 3 years to complete a UI program, depending on the number of courses transferred in (if any.) (See steps for this path below)
- **District Intern (DI).** This is the same as the UI, only classes are provided by the district or a consortium of districts and the monitoring, mentoring, and evaluation are done by school district staff. Every intern must take all the courses so it takes two to three years to complete (no transfer-in credit allowed by the state.) (See steps for this path below.)
- **Early Completion Intern Option (“Fast track.”)** This is a way to speed through the intern process as either a District or University Intern. It is designed to allow the intern to test out of many education courses, which shortens the length of the intern program. (See information about this path below.)
- **Provisional Intern Program (PIP)** This program does not meet NCLB “Highly Qualified standards,” however it is the quickest method to get on the payroll as a math or science teacher. If you have 18 or more units of math or science in undergraduate or graduate work, then you can enter the classroom immediately provided you promise to pass the CSET exam prior to the end of your first year of teaching and then commence an approved intern program. Detailed information about his option can be found at: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl856.pdf>.

UNIVERSITY INTERN

Overview. These programs are offered at most California State Universities and University of California campuses. In addition, there are many private universities with a state approved UI program.



Typical Requirements. There are different specific admission requirements for each school, but the following four are common to them all. In order to gain admittance to the school's UI program you must:

- Have a bachelors degree
- Pass the CBEST
- Pass the CSET
- Have an intern job arranged!

Advantages. Often times the UI route is the best because it offers a wider range of choices. There is a limited choice in the DI program (math, science, special education and sometimes English.) Often UI programs offer more subject matter choices, however it is difficult getting hired as an intern in fields where there are plenty of fully credentialed teachers applying for jobs (i.e. social science, elementary, business etc.)

DISTRICT INTERN

Overview. Only 8 districts/programs in California have state approval to run their own DI programs. Only the largest districts have sufficient need for new teachers each year to justify keeping full-time staff available to run the program. LAUSD, being the largest district in the state and second largest in the nation, has an excellent DI program. San Diego also has a good program for math, science, and special education. Some other DI programs have suspended classes because they were only for elementary teachers which are no longer in high demand. Now there is an abundance of elementary teachers available so there is no real need for the districts to "grow their own." In northern California, Project Pipeline and Project IMPACT are major DI programs. They supply interns to over 65 districts in the Stockton/Modesto, Kern County, Sacramento and SF East Bay areas.

Requirements. In order to be admitted to a DI program you normally must meet the following basic eligibility requirements:

- Possess a bachelors degree with a sufficiently high GPA (above 2.6 usually.)
- Desire to enter teaching in math, science, special education (or whatever program is offered at that DI location.)
- Pass the CBEST
- Pass the CSET
- Be selected (it can be very selective)—This is where we can sometimes help.

Advantages. The DI programs are often less expensive and have very easy payment plans. Money is usually not a deterrent to starting a DI program (they often collect the charges out of your teacher's salary before you even see the money!) In most DI programs, you step on the front of the "treadmill" and come off the other end with your preliminary or professional clear credential two to three years later. As with the UI, this program can get on the payroll and start teaching quickly.

EARLY COMPLETION INTERN OPTION.(ECO)

Overview. If you are familiar with pedagogy and experienced in the subject matter you desire to teach, then this option might save you from taking about half the academic classes required in a normal intern program. The ECO permits you to test out of many pedagogy classes. By passing the Teacher Foundations Examination (TFE) you can complete the intern program in around nine months while you are working full-time as a paid teacher. All the requirements to enter an ECO program are the same as other intern programs with the addition of the TFE.

Details. One university that offers the ECO is Alliant International. For details on this unique option contact: Tina Moncada (tmoncada@alliant.edu), Director, Special Projects, Alliant International University www.alliant.edu and/or <http://teachersCHOICE.alliant.edu>. The district intern program Project Pipeline also offers the ECO. Contact Ravinder Dhaliwal, (916) 924-8633, rdhaliwal@projectpipeline.org. Their website is www.projectpipeline.org.



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PART II

OPTIONS ON BECOMING A CALIFORNIA CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) TEACHER

In California, a large percentage of career technical education (formerly known as vocational training) for high school students is conducted by the Regional Occupation Programs (ROP.) ROP Centers are normally managed by the county office of education and service various school districts. Most often the students travel to the centers for their vocational courses. Full-time vocational teachers for high school students in some instances are provided the same pay and benefits as academic teachers.

To teach CTE subjects in California a teacher must have a Designated Subject Credential for the subject being taught. If you have a high school diploma or equivalent and at least five years experience in one of fifteen industry sectors, then you can get a Designated Subject Credential to teach Career Technical Education. The requirements and list of industry sectors can be found at:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl880.pdf>

Additional information can be found at: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl698a.pdf>.

To receive a Designated Subject Credential you must visit an approved “Local Education Authority” (LEA) counselor who will advise you on which subjects your experience has prepared you to teach. A list of where these approved counselors are located can be found at:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl506.pdf>

Your local ROP will be your primary hiring opportunity to teacher CTE. A list of ROP centers can be found at : <http://www.carocp.org/carocps.html>.

The process to receive your Designated Subject Credential will be explained to you by the LEA counselor. It basically consists of proving your education and experience then completing forms and fingerprint checks. The process usually takes less than four weeks and under \$200. You will be required to complete about four courses following receipt of your credential in order to retain it. Once you have your credential, then you apply at ROPs/school districts for any matching jobs that may come open. Please remember that not all CTE teaching positions are full-time high school teachers. ROPs also conduct adult education courses with part-time and full-time instructors. However, Troops to Teachers benefits are only available to full-time high school teachers, regardless of the subject.

PART III

REFERENCES FOR FINANCIAL AID RESEARCH

In addition to any Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers financial assistance you might be qualified to receive, you should investigate other sources of student aid to use in getting your teaching credential. Here is a little information on financial aid opportunities to help get you started in your research:

California student aid commission

<http://www.csac.ca.gov/>

Federal Financial Aid website:



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<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>
Free Application for Federal Aid
www.fafsa.ed.gov
Teaching Grants
<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/TEACH.jsp>
Scholarships
[Military Spouse Education](http://www.scholarships.com)
www.scholarships.com
www.fastweb.com
<http://benefits.military.com/education/scholarship/ScholarshipSearch.jsp>
Loan Forgiveness Programs
www.collegeinvest.org
www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/stafford.html
Cal State Monterey Bay special programs:
<http://teach.csumb.edu/site/x15906.xml#hqa>

PART IV

TIPS ON FINDING A JOB!

There are many resources available to help you locate a teaching position. The first place to start your research is to read the information available under the “Getting Hired” tab on our www.caltroops.org website.

The second place to go is www.edjoin.org. Approximately 65% of the 1,000 school districts in California list all their job openings on this website. You can sort the information by when the jobs were posted, geography, subject to be taught, kind of school, etc., etc. etc.

The third place to go is www.greatschools.net. This is where you can augment the www.edjoin.org search to make sure you are aware of jobs in the 35% of the districts that do not use edjoin.org. On www.greatschools.net every school and school district in America is listed. You can enter the geographic area where you want to teach and it will list every school district in the region. Drill down into that district’s information and you will be linked to their website. On their website you will find a tab for “Employment opportunities” or “Working at ABC District” or something similar. About 65% of the time when you click on that tab it will take you right back to edjoin.org. But sometimes it will not and that means you have found a district that does not use the state job bank. By using greatschools.net you are ensuring that you have researched every local district’s opportunities. That is important because some of the 1,000 school districts in California are quite small and could be within commuting distance to you but they are unknown to you and your family and friends.

Eventually you will be offered an interview. Make sure you are totally prepared before you interview. Use www.greatschools.net to research that individual district and school. Do a Google search for the district and school to be sure you are current on the history and recent news about the campus. CALL ME and I will send you a DVD on interviewing tips. Included in the DVD jewel case is a list of questions YOU WILL BE ASKED! Take time to rehearse excellent answers to these questions.

Additionally, if you are asked to teach a mini-lesson as part of your interview process, CALL ME and I will send you a DVD on lesson planning that covers the California state standards required for each lesson plan.

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