

## Definitions for Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

**Academic Major:** An academic major *in the subject content area* that is verified on the college/university transcript meets the highly qualified requirement for middle and secondary teachers.

**Advanced Certification or Credential:** National Board Certification (NBC) by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is considered advanced certification. A teacher who has achieved NBC in the subject area, including an elementary teacher, is considered highly qualified.

**Alternative Routes:** Tennessee alternative routes include the Alternative A, Alternative C and Alternative E licenses. Teachers who are actively working on one of these alternative routes and making satisfactory progress meet the licensure requirement for being highly qualified. Teachers on alternative routes must also hold a bachelor's degree and satisfy the applicable subject content requirement to be considered highly qualified.

**Arts:** For the purposes of NCLB, music and art represent the core academic subjects for the arts. A teacher in grades K-8 who teaches music or art the major portion of the day must meet the highly qualified requirement for music or art. A teacher in grades K-8 who teaches music or art as a part of their basic curriculum responsibilities does not need to meet the requirement for the arts.

**Coursework Equivalent of an Academic Major:** Twenty-four (24) semester hours is the equivalent of an academic major. (Divide quarter hours by 1.5 to translate quarter hours to semester hours.)

**Fully Licensed:** A teacher who holds an apprentice, professional, out-of-state, or alternative license is considered fully licensed to teach in Tennessee. For a detailed description of these licenses, go to [http://www.state.tn.us/education/lic\\_kind.htm](http://www.state.tn.us/education/lic_kind.htm).

**Graduate Degree:** A graduate degree *in the content area* (not a degree in education or administration) satisfies the highly qualified requirement for middle and secondary teachers.

**Middle Grades:** Middle grades are defined as grades 7 and 8 for the purposes of determining highly qualified. Teachers of core academic subjects for grades 7-8 must meet the highly qualified requirements for middle grades teachers.

**New to the Profession:** Teachers who are new to the profession are those teachers who were hired for the first time in a Tennessee public school after the first day of school in the 2002-03 school year. A teacher who enters a Tennessee public school system with teaching experience from another public school system, an approved private school, or another state is not considered new to

the profession.

**Portable Highly Qualified Status:** The highly qualified status is portable across Tennessee school systems. If a teacher achieves highly qualified status in a core academic subject area(s) in one school system, the highly qualified status carries over (for same content area) if the teacher transfers to another Tennessee public school system. The state will also accept the highly qualified status for out-of-state teachers (with documentation) seeking Tennessee licensure.