

Florida Department of Education (FDOE)
Technical Assistance for Rule 6A-1.0503, F.A.C., Definition of Qualified Instructional Personnel
August 24, 2018

The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers and select examples are provided to further clarify changes to [Rule 6A-1.0503, F.A.C.](#), that require implementation effective for the 2018-2019 school year.

Q-01. What differentiates a primary instructor from a non-primary instructor?

A-01. Any teacher who provides direct support in the learning process by planning, delivering and evaluating instruction for all students registered is the primary instructor for a course. Primary instructors include teachers in a self-contained classroom as well as two or more teachers who share responsibility for student instruction and evaluating achievement through co-teaching or team teaching. Other instructional personnel who provide support services for students registered in a course but who are not responsible for evaluating content instruction are not primary instructors.

Q-02. Which in-field conditions require the instructor to hold a Florida Educator's Certificate?

A-02. The course instructor must first hold a valid Florida Educator's Certificate to qualify as in-field based on the following conditions:

- holding a Florida Educator's Certificate with appropriate coverage(s) as indicated for the assigned course(s) in the Course Code Directory (CCD);
- completing a minor field of study;
- passing an approved subject area examination;
- demonstrating attainment of essential competencies pursuant to district school board policy; or
- having a previously documented Florida or out-of-state High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) plan in his/her personnel file.

Q-03. May a district assign a teacher with a valid HOUSSE plan to a new subject area and revise the HOUSSE plan?

A-03. No. A valid HOUSSE plan completed prior to the 2006-2007 school year may only be used to qualify a veteran teacher as in-field for the core academic subject area(s) included when the HOUSSE plan was initially completed, including subject area(s) verified by another state.

Special Categories with HOUSSE plans completed on or after July 1, 2006:

- Some middle/secondary special education content teachers may have an acceptable HOUSSE plan completed prior to July 1, 2008, for core academic subject(s).
- Foreign language teachers may have an acceptable HOUSSE plan completed prior to July 1, 2008, for the following world language areas: Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese or Russian.
- Middle/secondary teachers in eligible small rural districts (Liberty County only) teaching multiple subjects may have an acceptable HOUSSE plan completed prior to July 1, 2009, for core academic subjects.

Q-04. Which in-field conditions permit the instructor to hold a district-issued certificate?

A-04. A course instructor may be qualified and reported by the school district as in-field for whom the district:

- grants an adjunct teaching certificate to teach part-time in the subject(s) for which s/he demonstrated a passing score on a standardized examination developed or approved for Florida; or
- grants a certificate to teach only career and technical education courses that permit a non-degreed instructor as indicated in the CCD.

Q-05. May a district assign instructional personnel certified for career and technical education courses to teach any academic courses?

A-05. No. A career and technical education instructor certified based only on nonacademic preparation shall not be assigned to teach in a regular academic field within the K-12 program, pursuant to section (s.) 1012.43, Florida Statutes (F.S.). Similarly, a junior reserve officer training corps (JROTC) instructor must be appropriately qualified to teach any other assigned courses as per s. 1012.55, F.S.

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Q-06. Must instructional personnel assigned to teach, but not as the primary instructor, meet one of the permissible in-field conditions for a course subject area(s)?

A-06. Regardless of whether instructional personnel are designated as primary instructors or not, they must still comply with qualification requirements for the course(s) to which they are assigned to be considered in-field. If not, they must still be approved as out-of-field and comply with the out-of-field requirements outlined in Rule 6A-1.0503, F.A.C.

Example: The primary instructor in a self-contained 1st grade elementary course holds a state certificate in Primary Education with the ESOL endorsement. Twice a week, a speech pathologist visits her class to assist three students with speech development. To be designated as in-field, the speech pathologist must be licensed in speech language pathology or certified in Speech Language Impaired per the Course Code Directory (CCD).

Q-07. May an out-of-field instructor be designated as having the “appropriate subject certification” by meeting the requirements for another eligible in-field condition?

A-07. Yes. Satisfying requirements for another in-field condition (i.e., completing a subject area minor, passing an approved subject area examination, or demonstrating the subject competencies adopted in school board policy) may be considered as attainment of “appropriate subject certification.”

Example: A primary instructor holds a state certificate in Middle Grades General Science and she is assigned to teach middle school courses in both general and computer science. She is out-of-field for computer science for the current school year. For the following school year, her teaching assignments remain the same; however, she passes the Florida subject area examination in Computer Science K-12 and is no longer out-of-field.

District Policies:

Q-08. May a district school board (or charter school governing board) adopt local policy to permit acceptance of fifteen (15) semester hours of college credit as equivalent to a minor in the field?

A-08. No. Completing a minor field of study must be notated on an official transcript or verified by the accredited or approved institution where the college credit was earned. A primary instructor will be considered in-field based on a minor if s/he completes college credit of at least fifteen (15) semester hours, demonstrating a cohesive and sequential set of courses in a specific concentration or area of study as determined by a postsecondary institution.

Q-09. May a district school board (or charter school governing board) approve local policy that permits passage of a standardized examination other than those developed or approved to satisfy Florida subject area mastery per s. 1012.56, F.S.?

A-09. No. A district school board (or charter school governing board) may not approve a standardized assessment in any subject area for which a Florida subject area examination is already developed or approved. For subjects without a FDOE developed or approved examination, educators must demonstrate achievement of subject matter competencies approved through school board policy. Standardized assessments offered by any provider, even if approved by another state agency, shall not be valid unless approved by the Florida Department of Education.

Example: A middle school instructor, who holds a state certificate in Mathematics and passed the *PRAXIS*® Subject Assessment in Business Education, is assigned to teach Introduction to Business courses. The instructor shall **not** be designated as in-field for business education by a school district. To be designated as in-field, the instructor must pass the Florida subject area examination in Business Education 6-12.

Q-10. What should districts consider when developing school board policies for determining if instructional personnel have demonstrated subject matter expertise?

A-10. It is recommended that district school board policies include requirements for comparable methods to demonstrate subject matter expertise that consider the following:

- Grade levels associated with relevant course(s);
- Level of the assigned course(s), e.g., regular, honors, etc.;

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- Length of the assigned course(s), i.e., semester, year, credit recovery, multiple;
- Subject-area graduation requirements, as applicable;
- Major subject area and unique standards of relevant course(s);
- Student standards evaluated on relevant standardized assessment(s), i.e., FSA, EOC, IB, AP, AICE, etc.;
- Specialization rule requirements, including credit in specified content preparation;
- Competencies and skills adopted for a Florida-developed subject area examination, when it exists; and,
- Examinee standards assessed on standardized examinations adopted by State Board of Education, i.e., ACTFL, etc.

Out-of-field Notification Requirements:

Additional technical assistance was previously provided by the department on August 9, 2016, after enactment of Chapter 2016-237 through its memo, "[Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Regarding Out-of-Field Teachers](#)."

- Q-11.** Who must the school district or charter governing board notify when a course instructor is approved for an out-of-field course assignment?
- A-11.** The parents or legal guardians of each student in each class shall be notified in writing, either in paper or electronic format. It is recommended that the notification include the name of the school, the course name, the teacher's name, the certificate subject(s) and/or endorsement(s) for which the teacher is approved to teach out-of-field, and the date of approval by the school board or charter school governing board.
- Q-12.** What information about out-of-field teachers should districts post on their websites per s. 1012.42, F.S.?
- A-12.** Each school district shall publicly report approved out-of-field teachers on the district's website within thirty (30) calendar days before the beginning of each semester. It is recommended that the website information include the name(s) of the school(s), the course name(s), each teacher's name, the certificate subject(s) and/or endorsement(s) for which each teacher is approved to teach out-of-field, and the date of each teacher's approval by the school board. School districts should maintain the website to provide an accurate listing of out-of-field teachers.

Reporting Requirements:

- Q-13.** How does the new definition for "primary instructor" in the rule impact reporting?
- A-13.** The district will be responsible for correcting the Scheduling Method, Team Teacher Training or Primary Instructor Indicator codes for records that need to be loaded but are rejected based on new Teacher Course reject rules. Districts should carefully review the revised [Teacher Course – Reject Rules](#) documented by [PK-12 Education Information Services](#) to identify changes in reporting requirements.
- Q-14.** What impact do these rule changes have on reporting the Certification/Licensure/Qualification Status in the Teacher Course reporting format for Surveys 1, 2, 3 and 4?
- A-14.** The qualification status code descriptions were revised and two new codes were added to provide greater clarity and to better differentiate between state-level certification, district-level qualification and external licensure. A new code (T) was added to identify teachers certified locally by their district as nondegreed teachers of career and technical education courses. A new code (L) was added to identify instructional personnel licensed to provide specialized student support services related to their licensed field. Teachers coded with the H, I, M, O, P or S qualification status codes must hold a valid Florida Educator's Certificate. Teachers coded with an A or T qualification status code must be qualified by the district.
- Q-15.** What impact do these rule changes have on reporting the Florida Educator's Certificate Number in the Teacher Course reporting formats for Surveys 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5?
- A-15.** Instructional personnel coded with a qualification status of H, I, M, O, P or S must be reported with their Florida Department of Education Number/License Number assigned to them by the Bureau of Educator Certification. The new code 7777777777 must be reported for instructional personnel qualified by the district and coded with a

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qualification status of A or T. The new code 8888888888 must be reported for instructional personnel coded with the qualification status of L as being licensed to provide specialized student support services.

Q-16. Will districts need to review and report the qualification status of substitute teachers?

A-16. The school district must review and accurately report the qualification status of substitute teachers based on whether or not they meet any of the in-field conditions. The only substitute teachers whose Qualification Status should be reported as a Substitute teacher (out-of-field) are those who do not meet one of the permissible in-field conditions, but who the school district identifies as satisfying minimum qualifications pursuant to s. 1012.35, F.S.

Q-17. How should a district report the Certification/Licensure/Qualification Status for a substitute teacher who holds a Florida Educator's Certificate in the field(s) being taught?

A-17. Instructional personnel reported under substitute teacher job codes (i.e., 51080, 52080, 53080, 54080, 55080, 59080) should not automatically be coded with the Substitute teacher (out-of-field) status code (B). If the substitute teacher holds the respective qualifications, s/he should be reported according to the appropriate "in-field" code.

For questions relating to English as a Second Language (ESOL), please contact the Bureau of Student Achievement through Language Acquisition (SALA) at (850) 245-0417 or SALA@fldoe.org.

For questions relating to Exceptional Student Education (ESE), please contact the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) at (850) 245-0475.