



How NCTQ scores the Secondary Methods Standard

[Standard and indicators](#)

Data used to score this standard

Evaluation of middle and high school teacher preparation programs on Standard 15: Secondary Methods uses the following sources of data:

- Course requirements and descriptions found in institution of higher education (IHE) catalogs
- Degree plans provided by IHEs
- Syllabi of required courses deemed relevant¹

Who analyzes the data

Two [general analysts](#) evaluate each program using a detailed scoring protocol from which this scoring methodology is abstracted. For information on the process by which scoring discrepancies are resolved, see the “scoring processes” section of the [General Methodology](#).

Scope of analysis

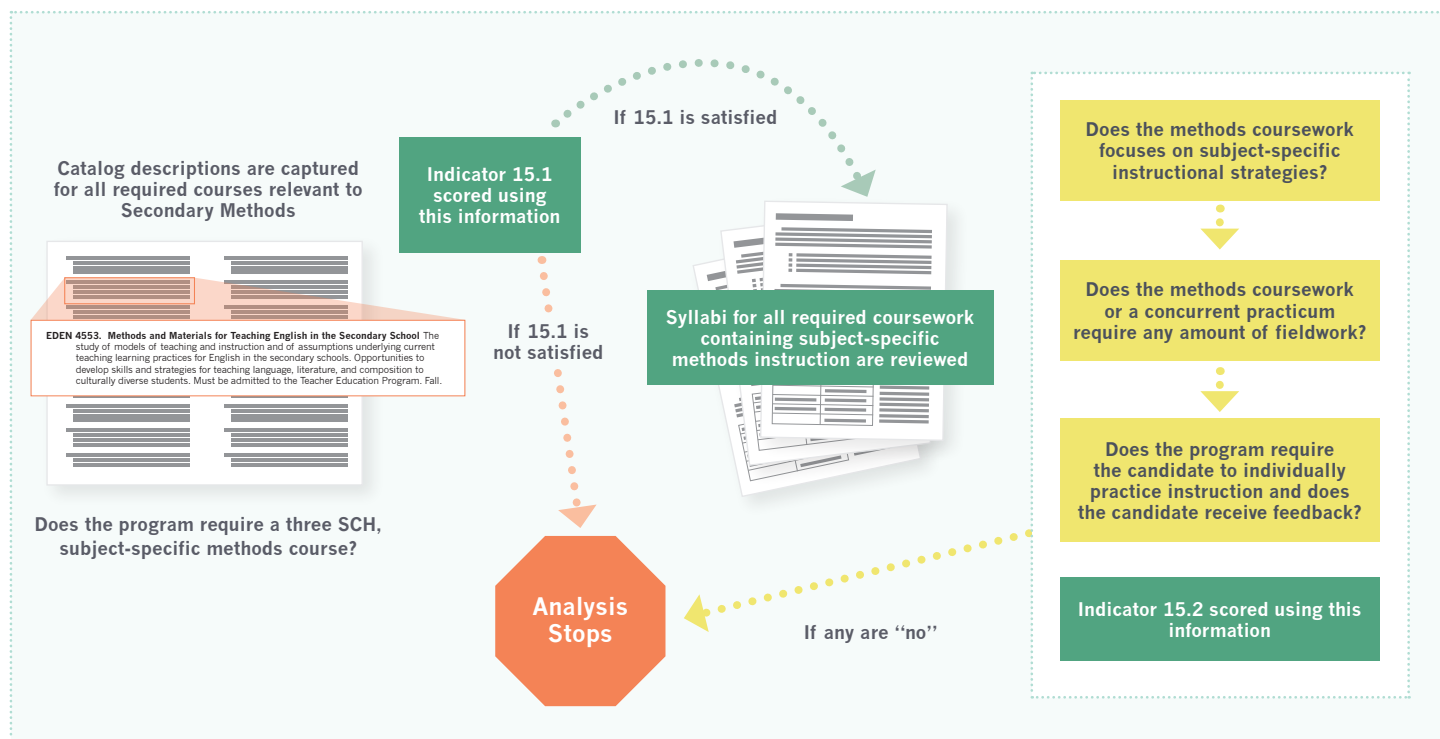
Analysis under this standard focuses on the required methods coursework in a single secondary teacher certification major selected from the **undergraduate** or **graduate** secondary program being evaluated.² The specific major was randomly selected from the core subject areas, or “pathways,” of English, mathematics, the sciences or the social sciences.³ The selected major might, for example, be an undergraduate high school mathematics major or a graduate middle school social sciences major. If the sciences or social sciences pathway chosen has multiple subpathways available (e.g., the social sciences pathway might involve majors in history, government or social studies), a subpathway major was randomly selected.

¹ Courses relevant to this standard are ones whose course titles and/or descriptions indicate coverage of instructional methods with terms such as *methods*, *instructional strategies*, *techniques*, *materials* and *teaching*. Most often, these terms are accompanied by a subject area, as in *Teaching Social Studies* or *Instructional Strategies in Secondary English*.

² Refer to the [general methodology](#) for more information about secondary program selection principles.

³ When a middle school certification is selected, multiple-subject certifications (e.g., dual certification in English and the social sciences) are another possible pathway. When a multiple-subject certification is evaluated, the requirements under this standard must be met in each subject area covered under the certification. For the English/social sciences example, the program must satisfy the standard for methods coursework in both English and the social sciences.

The graphic below depicts the general evaluation approach used for this standard:



For both **undergraduate** and **graduate** programs, Indicator 15.1 is evaluated using course titles and descriptions in catalogs and syllabi as necessary and available. More discussion of evaluation using coursework descriptions is found [here](#); more discussion of analysis using syllabi is found [here](#).

Analysis focuses on the requirement of a three-semester credit hour (SCH), subject-specific course in the methods of instruction in the relevant subject area. General methods courses⁴ and subject-specific courses with fewer than three SCHs⁵ do not satisfy this indicator. If Indicator 15.1 is satisfied, analysis continues to Indicator 15.2. In cases in which Indicator 15.1 is not satisfied, there is no further analysis of the program.⁶

Indicator 15.2 is evaluated using syllabi for all courses that satisfy Indicator 15.1, as well as for any practicums that are taken concurrently with subject-specific methods coursework. Analysis proceeds sequentially, and the program may be deemed not to satisfy the indicator if any of the three criteria below are not satisfied:

- *Does the methods course focus on specific instructional strategies?* Analysts are trained to use the broadest possible interpretation of “instructional strategies.” For example, even general references to teaching strategies, methods and materials, or curriculum planning in a syllabus course description are deemed to satisfy.
- *Is there a requirement of any amount of fieldwork as part of the methods course or a concurrent practicum?*

⁴ Courses lacking subject specificity—for example, *Methods of Secondary Instruction*, as opposed to *Secondary Mathematics Methods*.

⁵ Except when the sum of credits entailed in a methods course and a corequisite practicum course total three or more SCHs.

⁶ In such instances, findings for Indicator 15.1 and Indicator 15.2 will indicate that neither is satisfied.

- *Does the methods course or concurrent practicum require the teacher candidate to individually practice instructional strategies through a teaching experience for which feedback is provided? The teaching experience must take place in a classroom of students relevant to the certification sought and must be for full-class instruction (not tutoring or small group instruction).⁷ Feedback on instruction can be in the form of any kind of evaluation or graded assignment based on the teaching experience.*

If an evaluation of Indicator 15.2 is not possible due to a missing or incomplete syllabus, the program is removed from the sample.

Common misconceptions about how analysts evaluate the Secondary Methods Standard:

- *General methods coursework is equivalent to content-specific methods coursework. These two types of coursework are not considered equivalent in evaluation because a teacher candidate receiving methods instruction specific to his/her content area is more likely to be better prepared for the secondary classroom than one prepared by general secondary methods instruction.*
- *A program can receive credit for an optional teaching experience offered in conjunction with a methods course. Only a required teaching experience receives credit in evaluation of this standard.*
- *Any teaching experience “counts” in evaluation of this standard: The only teacher experience considered in evaluation is whole-class instruction for which feedback is provided.*

Examples of what satisfies or does not satisfy the standard’s indicators

Requirement of a subject-specific methods course (Indicator 15.1)

| ✓ - fully satisfies the indicator | ✗ - does not satisfy the indicator |
|--|---|
| <p>A program satisfies the indicator if it requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>A single course or a combination of courses that provides at least three SCHs of subject-specific methods instruction.</i> ■ <i>A combination of a two SCH, subject-specific course in the methods of content instruction, plus a concurrent one SCH practicum.</i> | <p>A program does not satisfy the indicator if it requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Only a course in the general methods of secondary instruction.</i> ■ <i>A subject-specific course in the methods of content instruction requiring fewer than three SCHs or addressing methods in only one aspect of the relevant content area (for example, an English methods course that only addresses the methods of literature instruction and not methods of teaching writing).</i> |

⁷ Peer teaching, or micro-teaching (a common requirement of many methods courses) does not satisfy this aspect of Indicator 15.2.

Subject-specific instructional strategies and practice (Indicator 15.2)

| ✓ - fully satisfies the indicator | ✗ - does not satisfy the indicator |
|--|---|
| <p>A program satisfies the indicator if the syllabus for the subject-specific methods course:</p> <p>References teaching/instructional strategies, methods or planning that focus on the full range of topics covered within the subject area; requires fieldwork; and specifies that teacher candidates must teach a lesson in a classroom appropriate to the subject, and grade level for the relevant certification and that the teaching experience is evaluated through one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A formal evaluation (graded or ungraded) by either the supervising teacher or a university supervisor: <i>During the course of your time in a school classroom, you will prepare and teach two days (consecutive is best). Your cooperating teacher and I will evaluate your lesson plans, and the cooperating teacher will evaluate your teaching.</i>■ A graded reflection assignment based on the teaching experience: <i>As part of the practicum, you will be required to:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Grade a set of student papers2) Teach a whole-class lesson3) Write three papers (three-four pages) reflecting on the specific required assignments/activities and addressing the ways in which you are integrating the experience to develop a personal, coherent view of teaching language arts to adolescents■ Analysis of a videotaped lesson by an audience, including either the supervising teacher or university supervisor (graded or ungraded): <i>Each student will be required to tape a 15-30-minute segment of classroom teaching. We will view the video and provide a critique. After the roundtable critique, each student will write a summary of the roundtable with suggestions for improving his or her teaching.</i> | <p>A program fails to satisfy the indicator if the syllabus for the subject-specific methods course:</p> <p>Indicates limited coverage of the instructional strategies within a subject area (for example, a science course that only covers laboratory experiences).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Does not indicate that a fieldwork experience is required, or requires a fieldwork experience for a subject and/or grade level not appropriate to the certification sought.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Does not indicate that there will be a teaching experience or that the candidate will not receive formal or graded feedback from that experience, as in the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>As part of this course, you are required to complete 10 hours of field observations and submit brief written and oral reflective reports.</i>■ <i>You are strongly encouraged to participate in teaching in the classroom at whatever level your mentor teacher allows (working with students one-on-one, teaching lessons, planning lessons, taking attendance, recording grades, reflecting on lessons, etc.).</i>■ <i>Forty-five hours of fieldwork is required.</i>■ <i>You will participate in a 30-hour field experience and write a report that summarizes this experience. This report must include documentation of your field experience visits and signatures of your cooperating teacher(s).</i>■ <i>You are required to spend 30 hours in observation of a high school classroom and to keep a reflective journal of your observations.</i> |