

Procedures for Qualifying for TQS Categories Five (5),

Five Plus (5+) and Six (6) After a First Degree

Category Four (4) to Five (5) & Five Plus (5+)

Teachers who have been assigned category four (4) and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree have several options for qualifying for TQS categories five (5), five plus (5+) and six (6). They may qualify for category five (5) by completing an additional program acceptable to the TQS. The completion of two additional acceptable programs (which may be degrees, diplomas or integrated programs) would qualify the teacher for TQS category five plus (5+).

Category Four (4) to Six (6)

In order to obtain category six (6), two complete programs are required beyond category four (4). One of these programs must be an acceptable graduate degree, the other can be a second acceptable degree or a TQS integrated program. It is immaterial to the TQS which of these programs is taken first; however, the usual pattern is to complete an integrated program followed by an acceptable graduate degree. It is advisable to consult with the TQS to ensure that the graduate degree you are considering is acceptable.

Category Five (5) to Five Plus (5+)

Teachers who have been assigned category five (5) can qualify for TQS category five plus (5+) with the completion of an integrated program. (Note: This option is not available to teachers who have completed an acceptable graduate degree. An applicant who completes an integrated program in this case would qualify for category six (6).)

Integrated Program Requirements

The basic requirements of an Integrated Program are:

- ☐ thirty semester credits
- ☐ in a theme related to K-12 education or K-12 educational practice in British Columbia
- ☐ third year university level or higher
- ☐ completed within a ten year time frame
- ☐ from an accredited degree granting institute

TQS Regulation 4.05 states that an “Integrated Program” contains a minimum of 30 semester credits of **senior level and/or graduate level** courses which make up a program **containing a common theme or purpose, or** a degree or post baccalaureate diploma **containing a common theme or purpose** and a minimum of 30 semester credits, 24 of which must be senior level. Senior level courses are usually courses numbered 300 and above undertaken at an accredited university or college. Courses for an Integrated Program can be taken from academic and/or education faculties. The theme requirement is met when at least 20 semester credits are in a cognitive area of study applicable to teaching in the BC public school system. Cognitive themes are not met by simply taking all courses within the same faculty. At least 20 of the total of 30 credits must be eligible for inclusion in a degree or diploma as part of a major area of study. **Courses included in an integrated program must be completed within a ten year time period.** (See TQS policy 4.1).

Typical integrated program themes include Special Education, Library Science, Counselling, Language Arts, and Curriculum Development. Under most circumstances, all courses in an integrated program must be senior and/or graduate level (third year university or above) (*see TQS Policy 4.14*) and while all courses must be undertaken at an accredited degree granting institution, the courses need not create a formal university degree or diploma program. It is therefore possible to complete the requirements of a TQS integrated program at more than one accredited institution. When more than one institution is involved, care must be taken **not** to duplicate course content.

Most formal diploma programs which contain sufficient course credit are generally acceptable for category five (5) or category five plus (5+). This would also be true for most formal pre-master's programs. When thirty semester credits (or equivalent) of course work from an incomplete but approved master's degree is used for an acceptable integrated program to award category five (5), the completed master's does not then affect the assigned category; it simply satisfies the requirement for one of the two programs needed to progress from category four (4) to six (6). However, when this same program is used to upgrade from TQS category five (5) to five plus (5+), completion of the degree will then qualify the applicant for category six (6).

In order to qualify for TQS categorization credit, an approved graduate degree must be completed at an accredited university and must contain at least thirty semester credits of course work/projects (or equivalent) and a capstone relevant to teaching in the BC public school system. Most M Ed degrees would be acceptable. Many MA's and M Sc's in academic subjects taught in the public school system of BC would also be approved. Graduate degrees designed for other professions or specific purposes may **not** be appropriate for TQS categorization purposes. **It is advisable to consult with the TQS to ensure that the graduate degree you are considering is acceptable.**

It should be noted that although the TQS has established a minimum thirty semester credit (or equivalent) requirement for acceptable graduate programs, there is **no upper limit**. This means that a completed **graduate degree counts as a single program for one step** on the TQS scale and in itself does not guarantee eligibility for category six (6). Holders of acceptable master's degrees may be assigned category four (4), five (5), or six (6) depending on prior qualifications. Courses beyond the thirty semester credit minimum *cannot* form part of another program counting toward a higher category.

In order to avoid misunderstandings and disappointment **it is strongly recommended that proposed integrated, pre-master's, and diploma programs be submitted in writing to the Teacher Qualification Service for approval.** A written commitment from the TQS is the only one with any official status. Due to the risk of misinterpretation, please note that arrangements made by telephone or in person are not considered binding by the TQS.

Individuals seeking a category upgrade should review the deadline dates in articles 7.06, 7.07 and 7.08 of the TQS Regulations brochure or general information item 5 on the TQS application form. Complete TQS Regulations and application forms are available from the TQS office or on the web at www.tqs.bc.ca.

In order to seek a change in category, you must submit a formal application, official transcripts documenting the new program, and verification of your employment in the BC public school system.

Some Possible Themes for TQS Integrated Programs

Guidance Studies
Special Education
Education of the Hearing Impaired
Education of Visually Impaired Children
Educational Psychology
English Education
English as a Second Language
French Education
Library Education
Reading Education
Business Education
Computer Studies Education
Technology Education
Mathematics Education
Mathematics and Science Education
Science Education
Canadian Studies
First Nations Studies
Educational Studies
Multicultural and Minority Education
Social Studies
Art Education
Music Education
Visual and Performing Arts Education
Curriculum and Instructional Studies
Early Childhood Education
Law Related Education
Physical Education
Primary Education
Values Education
Educational Leadership
Educational Policy
Humanities
Philosophical Issues in Education

Twenty semester credits must be related to the theme while ten semester credits can be taken as “electives.”

