



KENTUCKY

CERTIFICATION

According to its Title II report, Kentucky offers Type A, B, and C certificates. The state labels these certificates provisional and professional. To acquire the provisional (initial) license, candidates must complete an approved program of preparation. Each approved university sets its own requirements for completion of this program. National program (content area) standards are required components of an approved preparation program of an accredited preparation unit at a college or university. Teacher candidates are expected to take the Praxis II specialty exam and obtain a passing score of 151 and 155.

Elementary Certification

Elementary certification covers primary levels through grade 5. Preparation for elementary teachers in Kentucky includes a study of the academic disciplines taught in the elementary school.

Middle-Level Certification

Middle school teachers must prepare in either one or two teaching fields. The first option requires candidates to earn the equivalent of one major. The second option requires candidates to have two teaching fields. Social studies is considered the teaching field/major in both options. Middle level teachers are certified to teach grades 5–9.

Secondary Certification

Secondary teachers are certified in grades 8–12. Specialization in one or more areas such as social studies is required.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

Kentucky outlines standards for preparation and certification for both new and experienced teachers. These standards are not discipline specific. Rather, New Teacher Standard VIII and Experienced Teacher Standard 2 require knowledge of content.

Standards for Students

Kentucky has created two documents related to standards and assessment. The Program of Studies for Kentucky's Schools Grades Primary–12 outlines the curriculum for social studies at each grade level. Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment is a companion document to the former and is the basis for assessment.

The Kentucky Program of Studies outlines the minimum content required for high school graduation. The document specifies the required content at the primary, intermediate, middle, and ultimately high school level. The content found in this document is based on Kentucky's Learning Goals, and references to the ways in which the standards relate to the Learning Goals are made throughout the document. The following are the four Learning Goals that appear most prominently in the standards.

- ❖ Learning Goal 1: Basic Communication and Mathematics Skills
- ❖ Learning Goal 2: Application of Core Concepts
- ❖ Learning Goal 5: Think and Solve Problems
- ❖ Learning Goal 6: Connect and Integrate Knowledge

Learning Goal 3: Developing Self-Sufficiency and Learning Goal 4: Responsible Group Membership are not assessed at a statewide level.

The section labeled Required Content Areas in the Program of Studies document contains the standards organized at the primary, intermediate, middle, and high school levels. Each subject area subsection contains an introduction that provides background information and then charts that describe the minimum content required at that level. Social studies at the primary level consists of content from the five strands: government and civics, culture and society, economics, historical perspective, and geography. The content descriptions are not meant to be course or grade level descriptions. Instead, they describe a comprehensive program that is to be completed during the primary grades. The content descriptors are listed and flow from entry-level descriptors to exit level descriptors. At the intermediate level (grades 4 and 5) the five social studies strands are also used, but a specific context at each grade level is designated. The five strands are incorporated in each grade, but fourth graders focus on Kentucky and fifth graders learn about United States history. This same pattern continues at the middle level. Students in grade 6 focus on world geography, while seventh graders study world history to 1500. Eighth graders study U.S. history from the earliest settlements to Reconstruction.

The high school standards are designed to ensure that each student meets graduation requirements. Three social studies credits are required and schools can organize course content in any way they deem fit as long as U.S. history, economics, government, world geography, and world civilization are part of the three credits. The five strands (historical perspective, geography, economics, government and civics, and culture and society) are addressed in the following areas:

- ❖ U. S. history, Reconstruction to the present;
- ❖ world civilization, 1500 to the present;
- ❖ economics; and
- ❖ government.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

Students in Kentucky must earn three credits in social studies in order to graduate from high school. The credits must incorporate U.S. history, economics, government, world geography, and world civilization, but schools can arrange the content in ways they see fit in order to meet the requirement.

Exit Exam

No evidence of an exit exam has been located.

ASSESSMENT

Since 1998 the Kentucky legislature has required the implementation of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). This system replaces the KIRIS system of assessment in Kentucky. CATS testing includes: the CTBS 5-Survey Edition test in language arts, reading, and math; the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) in reading, science, mathematics, social studies, arts and humanities, and practical living/vocational studies; a writing portfolio; a writing prompt; and alternate portfolios for students with disabilities.

In CATS, social studies is tested in grades 5, 8, and 11. The state has identified Core Content for Assessment. This content has been determined to be essential knowledge for all Kentucky students. Assessments are based on topics within the Core Content, and test developers reportedly use the Core Content as they design assessments involving multiple choice, open response, on-demand writing, and writing portfolios. In social studies, there are 24 multiple-choice questions and 6 open-response questions on the exam. Performance expectations have also been designated by the state.

