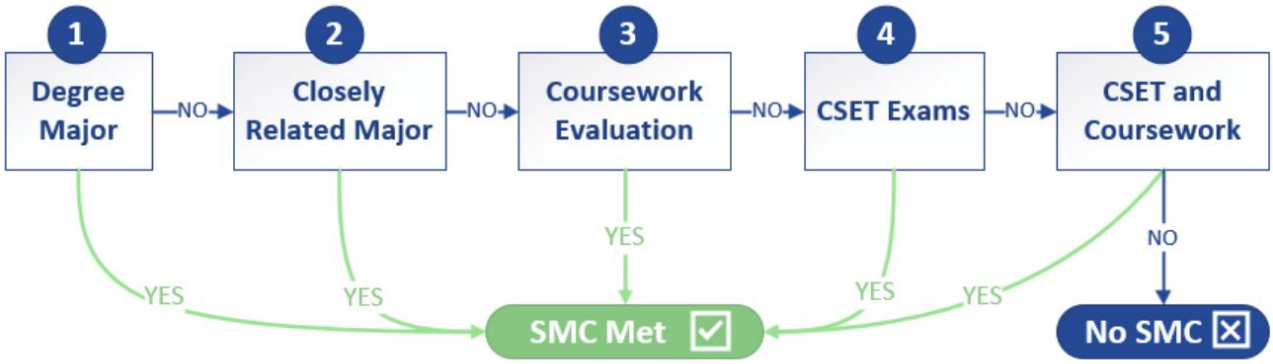
Updated October 30, 2026

Subject Matter Competence Evaluation Steps

There are several ways to determine Subject Matter Competence (SMC). When determining if a candidate has met SMC, evaluate using the following steps:



1. **Does the candidate have an acceptable degree major?** Candidates with bachelor's degrees (or higher) from a regionally accredited institution with acceptable degree majors for the credential or subject being sought have met SMC. The title of the major must match what is listed as acceptable per Title 5 §80096(b). You may find a list of acceptable degree majors here.
2. **Does the candidate have a degree major that is "closely related"?** Candidates who have a degree major in a subject closely related to the subject area to be listed on their credential that includes at least three courses that, together, total at least 12 semester units or the equivalent quarter units have met SMC. The courses must be listed in the coursework required for the degree major the year the individual completed their degree. Institution personnel must consult the *college or university catalog* for the year the degree was conferred to confirm the coursework[1].
3. **Has the candidate completed coursework that covers all required subject matter domains?** Complete a transcript evaluation to determine if the candidate has completed coursework that covers all required subject matter domains for the subject area(s) to be listed on the credential. See the Domain section below for specific subjects.
4. **Did the candidate take the CSET exams?** Candidates who have taken the CSET exams through Evaluation Systems of Pearson and have passing scores on all applicable subtests for the subject area to be listed on the credential have met SMC. Find a list of applicable CSET exams here.

5. **For any domain(s) the candidate was missing coursework, did the candidate take a corresponding CSET exam or complete additional coursework?** If, after a transcript evaluation, a candidate is found to be missing coursework for one or more domains, they can meet SMC by passing the appropriate CSET subtest(s) or completing additional coursework (including coursework taken at a community colleges that cover the missing domains). To determine which CSET covers which domain see the domain section below.

Domains

This section identifies different domain considerations for various credential types.

- **Multiple Subject**: To meet the domain areas for the Multiple Subject, coursework must align with the 18 domains that cover the areas of: Reading, Language, and Literature; History and Social Science; Mathematics; Science; Visual and Performing Arts; Physical Education; and Human Development. If the course description for one course aligns with multiple domain areas, the one course can be applied towards those domains, as well.
- **Single Subject**: The domain areas are dependent on the credential area that is being evaluated. One course cannot be used to meet more than one domain, unless otherwise noted.
- **Special Education:** The domains for either the Multiple Subject or one of the credential areas for a Single Subject credential can be used to meet SMC.
- **PK-3**: Completion of 24 semester units or 36 quarter units of degree applicable coursework from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in Early Childhood Education and/or Child Development.

More detailed information on subject matter domains can be found here.

California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET)

Candidates can satisfy Subject Matter Competence (SMC) through CSET examinations or through a combination of CSETs and coursework. To satisfy SMC exclusively through CSETS, all subtests listed for the subject area must be taken. Please find a list of subjects and qualifying exams for Multiple Subject here or Single Subject here.

To use a combination of CSETs and coursework, verify first which domains are satisfied through CSET exams. A list of the CSET exams and the domains they cover can be found here. Once it has been determined which domains were satisfied through the exam option, it will be necessary to perform a transcript evaluation to determine if the candidate has completed coursework that satisfies any remaining domains.

Best Practices for Coursework Evaluation

- The candidate will need to submit all transcripts from a regionally accredited college or university to be reviewed as degree applicable. Coursework that was completed at a junior college or community college can be reviewed and applied towards the domain areas in option 3 above.
- Coursework must have a grade of "C" or higher; courses earned with "Pass" or "Credit" is acceptable.
- Coursework must be applicable to an associate degree or higher.
- Credits earned through Advance Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or International Baccalaureate is acceptable coursework in option 3 above, but not option 2.