

Credit Flexibility: Teacher of Record and Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

May 10, 2011

This Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Web conference, co-hosted with the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, focused on Teachers of Record and Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements. The goal of the conference was to increase participants understanding of HQT, to share information about EMIS that supports credit flexibility (CF), and to respond to questions about HQT and credit flexibility implementation. The session provided direction to the participants, giving them ideas to think about as they work through these important issues. Wesley Williams III, ODE director of educator quality, and Tom Rutan, ODE associate director of curriculum and instruction, were the main presenters.

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which took effect in 2002, requires that all teachers be highly qualified in the core academic content area(s) they teach. NCLB places major emphasis upon teacher quality as a factor in improving achievement for all students. This emphasis grows out of the research showing that teachers' mastery of the academic content they teach is critical to engaging students and is a significant factor in raising levels of student achievement.

When planning the student credit flexibility plans, there are several factors that must be considered in regards to the use of Teachers of Record and HQTs:

- Teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree.
- Teachers must have a certificate/license that is appropriate to their teaching assignment.
- Teachers must be able to demonstrate their subject area expertise in the core academic subjects (CAS) as they teach.
- The appropriate credentialed educator at the building level should play an integral role in a student's credit flexibility plan.
- Highly qualified teachers are required in CAS areas.
- Credentialed teachers or credentialed educator professionals can be used in non-CAS areas (e.g., counselor, principal, assistant principal).

Educational Management Information System (EMIS) Requirements:

| Delivery Method | HQT Requirements (Yes or No) |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Correspondence Course (CC) | Yes (No if an Educational Option) |
| Educational Travel (ET) | Yes (No if an Educational Option) |
| Face-to-Face Classroom Instruction (FF) | Yes |
| Home Instruction (HI) | Yes |
| Interactive Distance Learning (ID) | No |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Independent Study (IS) | Yes |
| Online Learning (OL) | Yes |
| Other Delivery Method (OD) | Yes (No if an Educational Option) |

Questions and Answers

Q: What is the definition of an Educational Option?

A: An educational option is a means by which a student would seek learning for purposes of earning a credit toward graduation credit in a non-traditional manner—with the definition of traditional manner as being in a classroom face-to-face with a teacher on a regularly scheduled basis, such as second period, five days a week, 180 days a year.

Q: Is credit flexibility required?

A: State law required every school district to have credit flexibility (CF) in place at the high school level effective with the 2011-12 school year. It allows students to earn credits towards graduation; therefore, students who are earning CF credits must have established high school status.

Q: Would a teacher meeting that is face-to-face once a week be required, if there's a certain amount of time required for contact with the student as the teacher of record?

A. ODE advocates and encourages as students are developing student credit flexibility plans that the appropriate credentialed educator is involved in the process and plays an integral role. As far as meeting face-to-face once a week, this would be a local decision between the school and the educators who are involved.

Q: Can students take a course outside of the high school that is offered by the high school?

A: Yes, with CF it would be possible. A conference with the student to explore reasons for the CF request is suggested. An example of a possible reasons might include a college course that the student would like to take (e.g., a college physics course) and the school is only offering the standard high school physics, but not a college-level opportunity that the student might like to have.

Q: What are the duties for a teacher of record who is involved in a student credit flexibility plan?

A. As the student, the principal, and the appropriate teacher (or teachers) design the CF plan for the student, the duties of a teacher of record can be determined. Examples include: monitoring protocols and checking up on the student's progress (including timelines whereby the teacher of record works with the student and the third-party provider by meeting and/or collaborating).

Q: What guidelines might exist for a school district to deny a student an opportunity to take credit flexibility?

A. There are no set guidelines. Each request must be evaluated individually.

Q: Does HQT teacher requirement for IEP students prevent them from using a Computer as Instructor (CI) model?

A: No, unless the student's IEP says the student is not to use a CI model. In such case, the credit flexibility plan should not permit that. If there's no prohibition in the IEP, and the judgment of the teacher who's working with the student to develop that plan permits it, then CI might be permissible.

Additional Information and Resources

The following resources provide additional information regarding teacher of record and highly qualified teacher requirements:

- [ODE Credit Flexibility Guidance Documents](#)
 - [Highly Qualified Teachers Requirements](#)
 - [HQT Update: Expert Contracted from Outside Company, Computer as Instructor](#)