

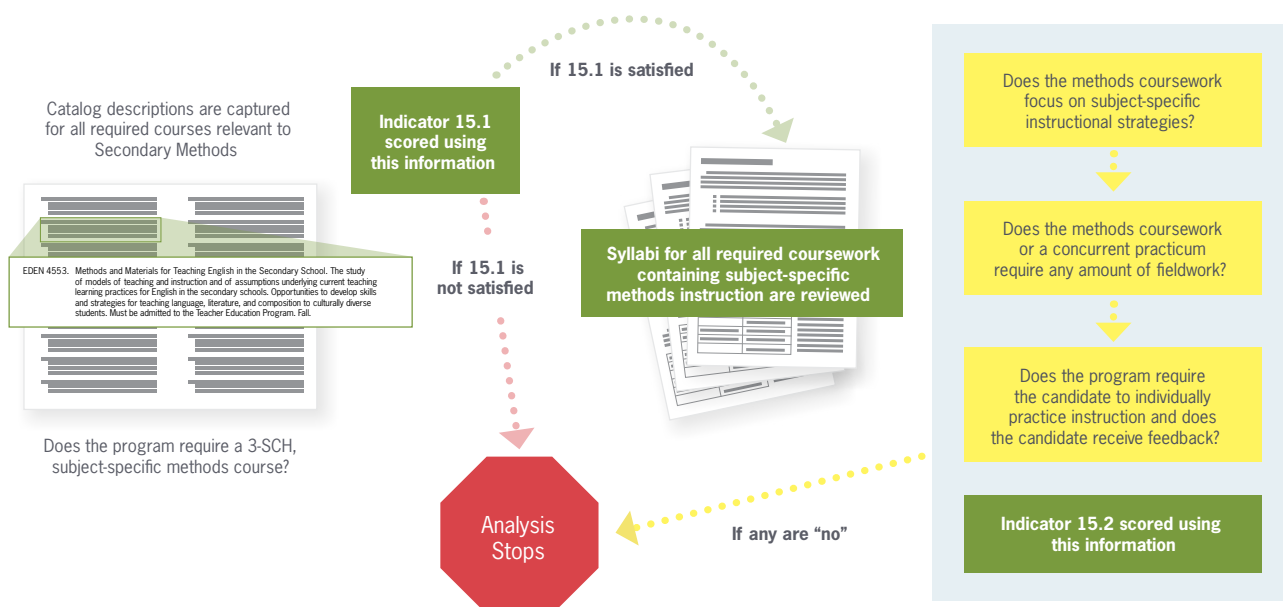
## Fine Points:

# Teacher Prep Review 2016 Changes in Evaluation of the Secondary Methods Standard

The Secondary Methods Standard appearing in the first two editions of the Teacher Prep Review evaluated the pedagogical coursework for one randomly selected content area.<sup>1</sup> NCTQ completed this analysis by first determining if the selected certification route required a subject-specific methods course, and if such a course was found, the syllabus was used to determine if teacher candidates completed fieldwork for which direct feedback on an individual teaching episode was provided.

In the evaluation of the Secondary Methods Standard, methods courses were identified using the program requirements found in the university catalog. Programs not requiring any subject-specific courses did not meet the standard and no further analysis was completed. When a relevant course was found, and the syllabus for that course was made available to NCTQ, we looked for the requirement of a fieldwork experience in which teacher candidates practiced delivering classroom instruction.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1. Flow of the Analysis for the Secondary Methods Standard in the Teacher Prep Review 2016



Findings from two editions of the Review indicate that not all content areas perform equally under the standard. In particular, where English was the selected route, programs were found to score higher.

- 1 NCTQ randomly selected one route for evaluation from English, mathematics, the sciences, or the social sciences. Although just one route was analyzed under this standard, all available certifications routes were reviewed under the Middle School Content and High School Content Standards.
- 2 More information about evaluation of the Secondary Methods Standard, including the use of related practicum courses, can be [found here](#).

Table 1. Average score for each secondary content area under the Secondary Methods Standard<sup>3</sup>

Subject area	Program count	Average score
English	146	2.10
Mathematics	154	1.86
Science	145	1.86
Social Science	127	1.81

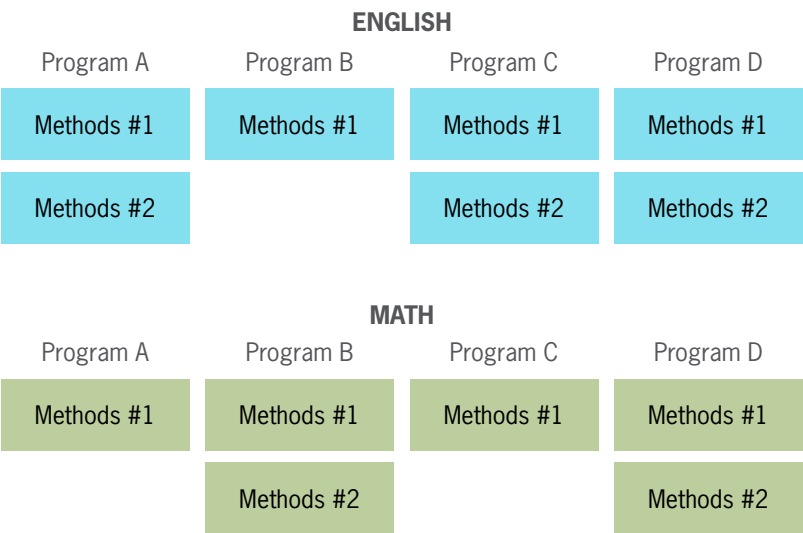
The relatively higher scores in English appear related to the fact that this route typically requires more pedagogical coursework, making it more likely that programs will satisfy the standard. Across a sample of 1,095 secondary programs that will be included in the forthcoming *Teacher Prep Review*, we found that the average number of methods courses is indeed higher in English than in math:

Table 2. Subject-specific secondary methods course counts

Subject area	Total courses	Average courses per program
English	1,912	1.75
Mathematics	1,660	1.52

Although the difference in the average number of methods courses may not seem large, in a random draw of four programs it represents one more English certification route offering an additional methods course:

Figure 2. Example of Subject-specific Methods Coursework in English and Mathematics



3 In total, 1,132 programs were evaluated under the Secondary Methods standard in the *Teacher Prep Review 2014*. Without the needed syllabus for 467 programs, a final score for these could not be determined and they have been excluded here. Additionally, the scores for 46 middle school programs and 47 graduate programs with no subject-specific designation are also excluded from this table.

**Because the evaluation of a randomly selected certification route will continue to produce biased results when English is only one of the possible routes, NCTQ has revised the Secondary Methods Standard to include two analyses consistently focused on both English and mathematics.<sup>4</sup> Analysis of coursework will proceed with no change, but the final standard score will now represent an average of scores in each of the two routes.**

In instances where either an English or a mathematics route is not offered at an institution, or if the necessary documents are only provided for one of the two routes, the standard score will be based on the analysis that can be completed.<sup>5</sup>

### **Keeping program evaluations parallel**

The Secondary Methods Standard currently only applies to traditional teacher preparation programs. However, in keeping with the goal to apply parallel standards to both traditional graduate secondary programs and non-traditional secondary programs, we are exploring the feasibility of applying the first indicator of this standard (a requirement for a subject-specific methods course) to non-traditional programs as well.<sup>6</sup>

- 4 Because the high school content standards are focusing more intensively on the other two core subjects in secondary programs – the sciences and social sciences – this change also complements and rounds out evaluation of secondary programs.
- 5 In the very rare instances where a secondary program is available, but neither English nor mathematics certification routes are offered, analysis will be completed using the science/biology route.
- 6 We cannot apply the second indicator of this standard to non-traditional programs because it relies on practice teaching, and a non-traditional candidate may already be the teacher of record in the classroom.



**National Council on Teacher Quality**

1120 G Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Tel: 202 393-0020 Fax: 202 393-0095  
Web: [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org)