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NCTQ RELEASES NEWEST TEACHER PREP RATINGS IDENTIFYING TOP PROGRAMS PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI & THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI RANK AMONG
BEST IN THE NATION; MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE RANKS AMONG THE WEAKEST**

Washington DC –Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) releases its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including 11 in Mississippi.

Of the 16 programs nationally to be named to NCTQ’s list of the “Nation’s Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” Mississippi can claim one program, the University of Southern Mississippi.

“Top Tier” programs have solid admission standards, provide sufficient preparation in each candidate’s intended subject area, and show them how best to teach that subject. Many also do well in teaching how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in Mississippi

The University of Mississippi comes close to “Top Tier” status, ranking in the top three percent nationally.

However, the state has three programs falling in the bottom 10 percent--Jackson State University, Tougaloo College, and Mississippi Valley State University.

Undergraduate Secondary Programs in Mississippi	Percentile
University of Southern Mississippi	98
University of Mississippi	97
Mississippi State University	67
Delta State University	57
William Carey University	44
Mississippi University for Women	25
Alcorn State University	25
Blue Mountain College	21
Jackson State University	7
Tougaloo College	6
Mississippi Valley State University	2

Key Findings: As for overall performance of the 700+ programs, a common problem that surfaced in the analysis is the weak content preparation provided to science and social studies teacher candidates. That weakness contrasts sharply with almost uniformly strong preparation in English and mathematics content in the same institutions. A sizeable portion of programs (43 percent across the country) struggle to prepare teachers who will be qualified to teach the subjects under the umbrella of either science or social studies. For example, even though history is the subject most teachers with general social studies certification will be asked to teach, one out of five programs requires minimal to no history courses of their candidates.

- While 75 percent of Mississippi programs provide adequate content preparation in science, just 31 percent do so in social studies, compared to the national average of 65 percent.

To see how programs in each state perform on their coverage of science go [here](#), and for social studies go [here](#).

Only 42 percent of programs succeed at teaching future teachers both the content and teaching methods for their subject. For a list of these programs in each state, go [here](#).

Other Findings:

- A quarter of all programs nationally and in Mississippi do not require a course on the best ways to teach a specific subject.
- There are early signs of some programs becoming more selective in their admissions, but it is still the case that 44 percent of programs set the bar too low for who gets into their programs. In Mississippi, 46 percent of programs are not sufficiently selective. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs, half also meet diversity goals. No program in Mississippi is selective and diverse. For a list of selective and diverse programs in each state, go [here](#).
- Only 6 percent of programs pay sufficient attention to the quality of student teaching by establishing an expectation that only skilled teachers should be allowed to mentor a future teacher and requiring student teachers to be regularly observed by program staff. Unfortunately, no programs in Mississippi earn top marks in this area. For a list of programs with strong student teaching in each state, go [here](#).
- Fewer than half of all programs (44 percent) evaluate teacher candidates on their use of the most effective strategies for managing classrooms while student teaching. In Mississippi, 40 percent of programs do so. For a list of programs that do well on classroom management, go [here](#).

Recommendations: Based on this research, NCTQ recommends that states make sure that high school teachers have a deep understanding of the content they will teach students, a goal that can be met by better licensing tests. Most states, including Mississippi, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score on another. For instance, Mississippi has inadequate licensing tests for General Science, Physical Science, and Social Studies certification. Currently, only Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri have strong tests in all core subject areas.

NCTQ also calls on programs to raise subject content requirements to require a solid education in *all* the subjects the future teacher will be licensed to teach, even in the broad categories of science and social studies. For more on what programs do to successfully ensure the preparation of all candidates in science, go [here](#), and for social studies, go [here](#).

This edition of the *Teacher Prep Review* analyzes undergraduate programs preparing secondary school teachers. The next set of ratings from NCTQ will appear in Fall 2017 and will cover graduate and alternative (or nontraditional) programs preparing elementary teachers. The ratings for graduate and nontraditional secondary programs will follow in Spring 2018, followed by undergraduate and graduate special education programs in Fall 2018.

To read the *Landscape* report, click [here](#). To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Kate Walsh, please contact Stephen Buckley at (202) 393-0020 ext. 129.

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About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. NCTQ is the nation's expert on the quality of teacher preparation programs and evaluates national teacher education against evidence-based criteria. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org