

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 11th, 2017 at 12:01 AM**

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

**GONZAGA UNIVERSITY BEST IN WASHINGTON STATE;  
NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY HAS STATE'S LOWEST RANKING**

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

None of the 16 programs on NCTQ's list of the "Nation's Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs" is in Washington. The closest "Top Tier" programs are the University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT) and Colorado Christian University (Lakewood).

Programs achieve "Top Tier" status because they have solid admission standards, provide sufficient preparation in each teacher candidate's intended subject area, and show candidates how best to teach that subject. Many also do well in evaluating candidates on how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

### **Teacher Prep Programs in Washington**

Washington's best program is Gonzaga University. The bulk of programs in Washington cluster around the middle of the ranks:

<b>Undergraduate Secondary Programs in Washington</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Gonzaga University	89th
Western Washington University	61st
Central Washington University	59th
Washington State University	49th
Whitworth University	49th
Eastern Washington University	42nd
Northwest University	26th

**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.

- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all programs in Washington earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- Only 50 percent of programs in Washington earn an A for content preparation in the social studies, compared to 65 percent of programs nationally.

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

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

#### **Other Findings:**

- Nationally, three-fourths of all programs require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. However, 89 percent of programs in Washington require teacher candidates to take a methods course in their subject area.
- There are early signs of some programs becoming more selective in their admissions - nationally 57 percent of programs draw most of their teacher candidates from the top half of the college-going population. In Washington, 56 percent of programs do so. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs nationwide, half also meet diversity goals, including Western Washington University and Seattle Pacific University. 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 Washington do well in this area, primarily because none adequately monitor the quality of cooperating teachers. 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 Washington, only 17 percent of programs ensure that future teachers have this feedback. For a list of programs that score well on classroom management in each state, 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 Washington, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. For instance,

Washington could strengthen teacher content knowledge by requiring that licensing tests for Science, History, and Social Studies certification adequately assess teachers in all of the subjects they will be certified to teach. 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](http://www.nctq.org)*