



Commonly Asked Questions About the GATE/EXCEL Teacher Certification

1. Why do we need a certification?

The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) established GATE standards that were approved by The California State Department of Education in 2001 and became Ed Code 52205d. These standards define what constitutes an exemplary GATE program and specify, “All teachers assigned to teach gifted students are certified through a variety of formal and informal certificate programs.” (Section 5: Professional Development EC 52212a1)

2. Who designed the certificate?

Teachers from the GATE/EXCEL Leadership Team created the certificate. They represented grades 1-8, all disciplines and both GATE and EXCEL classrooms. They examined existing certificates from UCI, UC Riverside, UC San Diego and numerous school districts in Orange County. Once the first draft was completed, the certificate plan was shared with school site teams, administrators, curriculum leaders, BTSA and individual teachers. It was revised numerous times prior to being included in the district’s Coordinated Compliance Review.

3. Should high school teachers become certified?

Any teachers who are interested in the courses offered are welcome to participate. High school teachers who work with advanced learners in programs such as International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement or Honors classes are encouraged to design a “pathway” of coursework that would enhance the program offered for advanced learners. For example, a high school teacher in the AP program might choose to attend the College Board Institute, a session on “Introduction to Differentiation”, a session on the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students and a session on GATE Identification. Any other coursework would be based upon individual need or interest.

4. May I count past professional development towards this certification?

No. The new standards are quite specific about the details that make up a quality program and a lot of the specifications reflect *new* trends in gifted education. This is an opportunity for teachers, counselors, administrators and parents to establish common goals. Individuals who would like to request an exception should fill out a “Request for Certification Credit” and send it to the GATE office.

5. How long will I have to complete the certificate?

That will vary among individuals and will depend upon personal schedules. Each school site team should meet with their principal to establish a timeline for beginning the process as well as setting realistic goals for completion.

6. What should I do if I want to apply for the waiver?

The waiver process includes presenting a professional portfolio at an interview with your principal, the GATE Coordinator and a teacher selected by you *who is already certified*. (Call the GATE office for details.)

