

## ACCS Teacher Certification

Revision 1— 2004

Revision 2— 2017. Required for schools who are accredited or under accreditation renewal after January 1, 2018. Teachers who were certified under the 2004 standards are grandfathered into their current level of certification, but must meet the 2017 standards to advance to the next level.

Note on implementation: ACCS-accredited schools, with existing teacher certification programs approved by ACCS, will need to develop revised programs compliant with these guidelines when they renew ACCS school accreditation. These schools may elect to do so sooner, at their discretion, if desired.

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### Requirements

- ◆ All accredited ACCS schools must certify their full-time teaching staff in accordance with this document. (In their specific plan, schools will address how part-time staff are to be included. Part-time staff may be exempt from mandatory aspects of ACCS teacher certification)
- ◆ All provisional, professional, and masters level certifications must be registered with the ACCS by the accredited school.
- ◆ All accredited ACCS schools are asked to recognize the certification level of any teacher who transfers from another ACCS-accredited school.

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### Purpose

ACCS Teacher Certification provides schools and administrators with a common understanding of what a classical Christian teacher should be, and a structure by which a path to excellence can be awarded. Teacher certification should verify the presence of demonstrable philosophical understanding and competent teaching skills in the one certified. ACCS Teacher Certification has no relationship or connection to state teacher licensing or public school certification.

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### Philosophy

Modern (public) teacher certification prescribes a series of courses and some service in the classroom. This system arises from the idea that most people can be trained to do the job. Classical Christian philosophy asserts that teaching is a gift (Ephesians 4:8–11, Romans 12: 3–8), and a practiced art. For those who have the gift (and it is given, as all

spiritual gifts, in varying degrees), it must also be developed. The ancients did this through an apprenticeship.

Rather than passing a prescribed course of classes, apprenticeship involves a combination of training, observed instruction, imitation of a master, and evaluation by a master. Historically, this process takes artisans from novice to apprentice, to journeyman, to master.

In this light, the ACCS teacher certification system is built around the local accredited school. We believe that those who serve alongside a teacher know them best. And, we believe that mastery is assessed in community, with the local organization's people as the keepers of the flame, so to speak. Nationally, we provide these guidelines to ensure that each local school is able to understand and provide a consistent standard to teachers. Rather than the apprenticeship terms above, we use three more common terms: provisional, professional, and master level certification.

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## Guidelines

Certification is awarded to a teacher who can demonstrate that he or she has met the following primary requirements. The categories listed below are important and none may be excluded. However, ACCS desires to establish a somewhat flexible process for demonstrating competence. The measures of competence listed below are presumed to be those most common to classical, Christian schools. They are not meant to be the only means to demonstrate competence. School administrators may substitute alternative forms of assessment of teacher competencies as they deem them necessary and appropriate.

Once the administrator of an ACCS-accredited school has established the school-specific guidelines in accordance with the below framework, it must be submitted to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for mutual concurrence before it will become the accepted norm for that school.

When a teacher completes the requirements for a given level of competency, the administrator will need to enter the ACCS Member's Resource Center (MRC) and fill out the teacher certification form indicating the teacher's name, the level attained, and the date it was attained. (See <https://mrc.classicalchristian.org/certified-teacher-list/>) ACCS will record this information in our database and mail back a certificate for the administrator to sign and present to the teacher, commemorating the achievement.

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## Verification

The local school administrator of an ACCS-accredited school is authorized to determine whether competency has been demonstrated for purposes of ACCS Teacher Certification. The school administrator is only authorized to grant teacher certification to teachers who work for the same school as the administrator. However, teachers themselves

will receive a certificate acknowledging their certification. Teachers can expect to transfer this certificate and status as an ACCS certified teacher to any other ACCS member school.

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## Certification requirements

**I. Provisional certification:** Candidates for a provisional teaching certificate must demonstrate that they have met the following qualifications. These must be done by the start of the second year of the teacher's full-time tenure at the school.

A. Fundamental training in classical Christian education

- Evidenced by a training course taken as offered by the employee's school, former training in classical Christian education at the collegiate level, previous classical conference attendance, ACCS Endorsed Training (live or online) in classical Christian pedagogy, or the ACCS Foundation of Classical Christian Excellence course (FCCE), available in January, 2019.

B. Philosophy of the Christian aspects of classical Christian education

- Evidenced by the submission of a written paper to the administrator for review after completing requisite readings.

C. Philosophy of the pedagogical or classical aspects of classical Christian education

- Evidenced by the submission of a written paper to the administrator for review after completing requisite readings.

D. Knowledge of subject matter

- Evidenced by the successful completion of thirty hours of college credit, or equivalent experience in the main content area.

E. Knowledge of children

- Best evidenced by parenting of own children. May be enhanced, or if childless, introduced through the study of children's development and training, according to biblically grounded authors. In addition, prior experience with children of the applicable age(s).

F. Knowledge of the teaching process

- Evidenced by reading and providing some written response to *The Seven Laws of Teaching*.

**II. Professional certification (called ACCS-Certified Teacher):** Teachers who have been teaching full-time at the issuing school for more than 3 years must achieve this level of certification or be placed on probation until it is completed.

- A. Completion of all requirements for the Provisional Certification
- B. Completion of the ACCS Foundation of Classical Christian Excellence course (FCCE).<sup>1</sup> (This requirement to take effect January, 2019.)
- C. Demonstration of successful teaching. A minimum of three years of successful teaching experience at an ACCS-accredited school. Success is measured by the receipt of positive personnel evaluations during that three year period.
- D. Evidence of continual learning
  - 1. Documented and personal evidence that teachers are continuing to learn and grow in their interest and knowledge of the above areas, particularly in their understanding and application of the classical, Christian philosophy.
  - 2. Two practical demonstrations of this continuing interest is the amount and type of reading done, and continued through classical Christian teacher training.

**III. Master's certification**

- A. Completion of all requirements for the professional certification
- B. Evidence of training in the Trivium.
- C. The involvement of the teacher in the development of uniquely classical curriculum within the school, training other teachers within the school, or conducting training in classical Christian education on a national level.
- D. The teacher will demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of logic and rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup> This course is offered periodically by the ACCS at the Repairing the Ruins conference, is offered as a video course online (free to members), or through an ACCS Certified Training partner or event.