

National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Educator/Applicant

If you have questions regarding the **NBPTS Program**, you may find these commonly asked questions and answers designed for the Educator/Applicant helpful. **Use the “Ctrl+F” to search specific words or phrases.** If your question is not answered below, please review the Educator Incentive Programs website or contact the Program Specialist by email at tssp@schools.utah.gov.

- 1. How do I qualify for the National Board Bonus?** CACTUS must show all of the following: 1. A current National Board Certification, 2. Hold a CLASSROOM assignment, 3. Assignment in a public/charter school. An educator is not required to qualify for the Teacher Salary Supplement Program (TSSP) bonus in order to qualify for the National Board Certification bonus. Some may qualify for both, and your application on the [TSSP Service Site](#) will indicate if you qualify for one or both.
- 2. If I have a current assignment in a Title 1 school, what do I need to do to be eligible for the additional bonus?** The Title 1 bonus is automatically awarded to educators who hold a classroom assignment in a Title 1 school AND who have a current NBPTS certification. There are no additional steps to qualify. The bonus will be awarded automatically at the end of the program year (during the Annual payment cycle) and is based on the percentage of your current classroom assignment in a Title 1 school. Please note that a school’s Title 1 status can change annually.
- 3. If part of my assignments is in an administrative/support role and the other portion is in a classroom assignment, do I qualify for all of the NBCert and/or Title 1 funds?** No. You would only be eligible to receive a percentage of the funding based on the classroom assignments.
- 4. Do I need to notify TSSP or document something specific in my application to be considered for the National Board Certification bonus?** No. The TSSP system will validate your eligibility through CACTUS for this additional bonus area at the time your TSSP application is being processed at the end of the program year (during the Annual payment cycle). New or renewed certifications are entered in CACTUS during the month of December.
- 5. How may I apply for the NBPTS Pre-Payment Program?** If you are obtaining or maintaining a National Board Certification, you may be eligible for Pre-pay Program where USBE will help pay for related fees on your behalf. Please follow the [Pre-payment Program Steps](#) to apply between **July 1st and January 31st of the program year**. All applications will be reviewed to determine the funds to be allocated to National Board at the end of February. Application for the Pre-Payment Program should be done within the same cycle an educator registers to earn or maintain a NBPTS certification.
- 6. Where and when can I apply?** The application is submitted electronically on the [TSSP Service Site](#). The application must be submitted between **October 1st and April 30th** each program year. Earlier application deadlines exist if electing the Semester or Trimester payment terms. Refer to the [Home](#) page of the TSSP Service Site for the various application deadlines. It is recommended that the educator set an annual reminder in their calendar for the application submission.
- 7. Can I select any payment term?** The payment “term” or cycle should match to your school’s schedule. If your LEA is structured with a semester cycle, you can only request a semester or annual payment. *Any term elected that does not match the LEA schedule will be automatically switched to an Annual payment term by either the LEA or USBE.* If you have elected or want to change your term, send an email to the TSSP Program Specialist at tssp@schools.utah.gov.
- 8. I had an account in the last TSSP system before 2016, do I have to reapply?** Yes. You will need to first create an *Educator Profile* in the new system, confirm your email address and contact information and set up your password. The applications can then be submitted during the application window once the profile has been created. There is no need to create a profile again, only applying each year.

9. **I have been trying to access my account, but the system will not allow me to enter.** The TSSP Service Site login screen defaults to your email address but be sure that you are entering your **Username**. Remember that the Username and password are both case-sensitive. Use the “Forgot your Username” or “Forgot your Password?” options on the Log in page (<https://tssp.schools.utah.gov/Account/Login>).
10. **How do I reset my TSSP account password?** If you need to reset your password, please be sure to use a different browser than Chrome. For some reason Chrome does not like the TSSP website or the website does not like Chrome... we do not know why it happens. Firefox, Safari, or Microsoft Edge seems to work. When you open a new browser:
 - Clear your browser history,
 - Go to the [TSSP Service Site](#) login page,
 - Click on the “forgot password” link even before you try to log in.
 - Find the Reset email at email on your TSSP account. Be sure to check junk mail, spam, or even trash.
11. **My email has changed, how do I update it?** Send an email to TSSP Program Specialist at tssp@schools.utah.gov. Provide your First and Last Name, CACTUS# and new email address.
12. **I created an account but did not get the confirmation email.** First confirm that the email did not go to your Junk or SPAM folder. If you still cannot find the email, follow the “Returning User” link, and select the “Forgot your Username”. If you still are not receiving the email, contact the TSSP Program Specialist for assistance.
13. **I applied for this year, but my application does not show that I am TSSP Qualified, why?** To qualify for the TSSP bonus, the educator must meet ALL of the legislative requirements: 1. Qualified Teaching Assignment* in a public or charter school with a current license status, 2. Hold a current endorsement for the qualified TSSP assignment, 3. Show a degree MAJOR in the applicable subject area in your CACTUS profile OR show in CACTUS 10-or more years as a qualified educator in a TSSP-approved subject area.
14. **I have worked over 10 years in Utah in my qualified subject area, but the system does not show that I qualify.** The new legislative changes are still being programmed into the system. If your CACTUS record reflects the assignment history, it will automatically be updated in your TSSP application as soon as the new programming is completed. However, if your CACTUS does not show this history, you will need to submit an Appeal for the Assignment History. Refer to the Program Appeals tab on the USBE website on the steps to submit the correction or appeal review.
15. **If I do not earn my degree until the end of the school year, (or any time after the submission of the application) can I still receive the bonus?** Possibly. To receive the bonus, educators must meet ALL qualifications **before May 31st of the program year**. Any term payment “skipped” because of eligibility will be adjusted in the final payment at the end of the program year.
16. **I missed the deadline for my application. Can I apply after the deadline has closed?** Maybe. This deadline depends upon the type of application you are submitting. If you have missed the Semester or Trimester Application deadline, you would still be eligible to submit an Annual Application. However, once the Annual Application Deadline has passed (after April 30th), no additional applications can be submitted for that program year. Due to legislation and budget constraints, the USBE must determine if proration of bonuses will need to occur, so no late submissions are permitted.
17. **Do I need to submit more than one application if I apply for a Semester or Trimester payment schedule?** No. In the new TSSP program, you will only need to submit ONE application each year and elect the payment term. Each LEA determines the payment cycle that matches the school schedules.
18. **When I review my CACTUS account, it does not show my degree. How do I get this posted?** The USBE must receive an ORIGINAL transcript or submit the transcript electronically. Paper transcripts are not required to be a “sealed” document but must be on the university parchment, however, electronic transcripts must be sent from the university’s clearing house DIRECTLY to USBE at “transcripts@schools.utah.gov”. Forwarded electronic documents are unacceptable. Please either send the form [Posting of a Degree on CACTUS](#) with original paper transcripts or send an email to the TSSP Program Specialist at tssp@schools.utah.gov and alert them that an

electronic transcript has been requested to post a degree. Include in the email your full name, CACTUS #, and university name. Degree posting may take 10 business days from download or receipt of the official transcript.

19. **CACTUS shows my degree major as "Other - See Transcript", how do I get this fixed?** The initial design of the CACTUS system only allows selection from a pre-existing list of degree majors. If your major does not *exactly* match one of these options, the system will default to "Other - See Transcript". If you feel that your degree major is entered incorrectly, submit a [Posting of Degree on CACTUS](#) form. However, if the degree major does not exist, you may need to consider submitting an appeal.
20. **I have confirmed with the USBE/LEA that my degree major is not available in CACTUS, how can my TSSP application be considered?** You will need to submit your electronic TSSP application first, (your application will show as not qualified). Then refer to the [Appeal Process](#) for the steps to submit an appeal, if you feel the degree should be considered "substantially equivalent".
21. **My Special Education area is not listed as a Degree Major on my transcript. How is this fixed?** In the event your degree major is not listed as "Special Education", but appears as either a *minor, concentration, emphasis, program, plan, or specialty*, we are unable to list these classifications as a major. The direction from the legislature has been very specific regarding this qualification because these alternative listings are not considered a degree and may not be eligible for an appeal.
22. **How do I correct the CACTUS data in TSSP because my assignments/FTE are incorrect?** Contact your LEA/HR to make corrections to assignments, percentages, FTE, or Intern Status.
23. **Why is an assignment listed twice in my application?** Some assignments may qualify for the TSSP bonus through more than one subject area. To verify the eligible percentage, only add the assignment percentages highlighted in green and multiply this by 4100 and the FTE percentage for the estimated value of the bonus.
24. **How do I know if my application has been approved?** The TSSP Service Site allows participants to log in anytime and view their current application status (and review historical applications starting 2017FY). The "Audit History" section will show when you, your LEA, or USBE has viewed or made changes to your application. If an item is underlined in the "Type" column, you can hover over the item to see the system notation or processor's notes. Until the end of the approval window, the application will show as "pending".
25. **Why was my application denied?** All applications require the approval of both your LEA and the USBE. If either of these agencies denied the application (or did not process the application), the system will show a reason/explanation with the date it was denied. If you feel this was an error, contact your LEA for assistance.
26. **How do I calculate the value of my TSSP bonus?** The basic formula is:
$$\text{Eligible Assignment \%} \times \text{FTE} \times 4100 = \text{"TSSP Award"}$$

An additional amount is calculated for taxes that is funded to the LEA. This amount is listed as the "Benefit" amount that will be posted under the Employer Paid Benefits section on your paycheck. All awards are subject to tax and other elected deductions.
27. **How do I calculate my NBPTS award?** Total of all Eligible *Classroom* Assignment percentages x FTE x 1000 (or 2000, if working in a Title 1 School).
28. **When can I submit an Appeal?** An appeal can be submitted after the electronic application has been created for that program year. The steps for submitting an appeal can be found at [Educator Licensing](#). All appeals must include the completed and signed application, along with the ORIGINAL transcript (sealed documents are not required) or the completed Verification of Utah Educator Experience Form. **Applications Must be RECEIVED by USBE Before May 31st to be considered.** Incomplete applications or applications missing transcripts or supporting documentation will not be processed. Due to funding requirements and deadlines, late appeal applications cannot be accepted.
29. **What is my option if I do not agree with the Appeal Board decision?** All appeal applications are reviewed by a panel to verify the coursework or assignments are following the current Legislative rules. All decisions are final.
30. **If I am submitting for payment installments (Trimester or Semester), what happens if my application is on an appeal and not approved by the deadline?** In the event an appeal is submitted, and the decision is not

completed by the semester/trimester deadline, the application will be converted to an Annual application so that the educator does not lose the value of the first-payment cycle.

31. **How long does it take to receive my approved TSSP Bonus?** We anticipate 4-6 weeks from the deadline until the payment authorization is funded to the LEA. Traditionally, the USBE approval date in your application allocates the funding to your LEA at the end of that month electronically through the Monthly Allotment Memo. The distribution through your payroll will depend on your LEA's payroll cycle at the time the electronic deposit is received. Due to this difference, some teachers may receive their payment earlier than others.
32. **Am I able to submit 1st Semester or 1st Trimester applications after the deadline?** No. These application options will be disabled and cannot be submitted or approved. However, you are welcome to submit an Annual application for full payment to be distributed at the end of the program year.
33. **What is the difference between a TSSP Award, NBCT Award, Other, Benefit and the Total amount showing in my application?** The TSSP bonus is based on the formula: $\text{Eligible Assignment\%} \times \text{FTE} \times 4100$. The **TSSP Award** amount is what the TSSP educator receives in their payroll before applicable taxes or deductions. The employer paid **Benefit** amount is the TSSP Award x Utah's Benefit Rate (0.3063) and includes percentages for Retirement, Workers Compensation, Medicare, and Social Security. This employer-paid Benefit value is also included in the electronic transfer to your LEA. This Benefit money is designated to cover the employer-paid benefit portion so that the LEA does not have to find or be charged additional money when an educator participates in the program. These funds are listed as earnings for the employee and are reported in payroll under the "Employer-Paid Benefits" section on your paycheck. The Benefits are distributed to the educator because these have been allocated to the appropriate fund accounts. The payment **Total** is the value of all bonuses including the TSSP Award, National Board Certification Funds (if eligible), Title 1 (when applicable) and employer-paid **Benefit** Total. Currently, there is no use of the "Other" category.
34. **How do I know my course assignment qualifies for TSSP and/or NBPTS?** Course codes are based on the current Qualified Subject Areas for TSSP as defined by the Utah legislature. Once an application is submitted, you will be able to review your CACTUS data in the TSSP Service Site for the current program year. The TSSP Service Site will highlight in **green** all course code assignments that qualify. If the assignment is highlighted in **yellow**, this indicates that it is an approved course, *but you do not meet the subject qualifications* (such as not having the endorsement or applicable degree major or work history or your license is expired). Course codes not highlighted are not part of the TSSP program.
35. **I have one class assignment where I assist students with (Math/Chemistry/Physics) in "Student Study Skills". Why is this assignment not part of the TSSP program?** Based on the Utah Legislature's current definition regarding Course Assignments, Student Study Skills (25-02-00-00-010) does not qualify for TSSP because the Student Study Skills class can support any number of subject areas and is not solely linked to Math, Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, or Special Education. We are unable to include it in the TSSP assignment codes and do not have the authority to make an exception.
36. **If I submitted an appeal last year, will I be required to submit another appeal?** No. Once your appeal has been reviewed by the Appeal Panel and the decision made, it is documented in the system. However, if your application is not approved for a *different* subject area not previously reviewed on an appeal, you will need to submit a new appeal for the additional subject area.
37. **Does having any math or science-related endorsement qualify me for the bonus?** No. Although an endorsement typically confirms an individual's expertise and proficiency in a given field, it does not meet the acceptable requirements for a degree or a degree major alone, based on the current legislative rules. The endorsement is only one of the program's requirements.
38. **If I have a certification for another nationally recognized organization (Example: ASHA) am I eligible for the National Board bonus?** No. The legislature has only identified the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification as eligible for the TSSP program.
39. **Can I submit for partial reimbursement for the National Board Certification fees?** No. If you completed or are in the process of earning the NBPTS certification and paid out-of-pocket for the fees after July 2016, the

Reimbursement Application Program ended in the 2020 program year. Any new application for the initial or maintenance of the certification after July 2019 must be part of the pre-pay program.

40. **If I missed an application, can I be considered for the bonus for a previous year?** No. Once the application window for that program year has closed, no bonus can be considered.
41. **Do I need to qualify for the TSSP Bonus to receive the NBPTS Bonus?** No. Each bonus eligibility is qualified independently but utilizes the same application to track and process the salary-based bonuses. One bonus is not contingent upon the other.
42. **If my assignment does not qualify for the NBPTS bonus, can I still be reimbursed for the NBPTS program fees?** Maybe. The current assignment determines eligibility for the bonus. The Reimbursement Application Program ended in the 2020 program year, but you may apply to the [NBPTS Pre-payment Program](#) between **July 1st and January 31st of the program year**. Once your application is approved and the funds are allocated to National Board at the end of February, an overpayment may show on your National Board account, which would allow for a “refund” to be paid to you. Please note that there is no guarantee that National Board would reimburse you the money. Application for the Pre-Payment Program should be done within the same cycle an educator registers to earn or maintain a NBPTS certification.
43. **The Legislative code references an "integrated science" degree. How do I earn an Integrated Science degree?** An Integrated science degree is a historical degree which is no longer attainable or in existence but has been included in the program’s legislative rules.
44. **The Approval Deadline has passed, but I still have not received my bonus?** First, review your TSSP Application under the “History” section to confirm that your bonus was processed and approved by both the LEA and USBE. The system will show values in the “Payments” section. Allow at least 2 weeks for funding to be allocated after the last day of the month in which your bonus was approved. If you still have not received funding by mid-month, contact your LEA Payroll department for distribution information.
45. **How do I earn or maintain a National Board Certification?** For information about earning or maintaining a National Board Certification, go to www.nbpts.org. The “renewal” program has been replaced by the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) beginning September 2020. It is the Board-certified teacher’s pathway for keeping their certification active. The MOC is a process that will allow a National Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) to extend their certificate for five years. The process is designed to recognize that a Board-certified teacher is growing professionally and maintaining a positive impact on student learning. MOC is consistent with the National Board’s goal to make the Board certification process more affordable, flexible, and more accessible to teachers. The [Utah National Board Coalition](#) may also be another great help and support as you start the process to earn or maintain this certification.