INTERPRETING EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Accreditation of Schools

- The United States has no centralized authority exercising sole national control over educational institutions.
- Institutions of post-secondary education are permitted to operate with considerable independence and as a result, they vary considerably.
- Accreditation is generally considered the most reliable indicator of the quality of an institution.
- U. S. Department of Education recognizes approximately 70 accrediting bodies.
- In higher education, accreditation is granted by one of the six regional accrediting bodies authorized by the United States Department of Education.
- Regionally accredited institutions of higher education normally do not accept outside coursework unless it is completed at an institution of higher education that is accredited by one of the regional accrediting bodies.
- Acceptable college degrees are those that are accredited by one of the following regional accrediting associations found on the **Regional Accrediting Associations Information Page.** If a college or university is not listed, we will **not** recognize the degree/hours as qualifying.

Accreditation of Social Work Education

For social worker positions, the required master's degree must be from an accredited school of social work.

- **The Council on Social Work Education** is a national association responsible for developing accreditation standards that define competent preparation and ensuring that social work programs meet them. We accept social work degrees only from colleges that are accredited by this association, either master or baccalaureate level as required by the Minimum Qualification requirements. Once you have accessed the site, click on “Membership,” then “Database of Affiliated Programs,” and complete the requisite information. You do not have to log in with a membership number to get this information.

Evaluating Degrees From Foreign Universities

- Applicants must have their educational background evaluated.
- Applicants must receive a statement of educational equivalency from one of the evaluation services accepted by the Department of Civil Service. A list of the accepted evaluation services can be found on the **NACES website.**

Verification of College Transcripts

- Official transcripts must be maintained by the hiring agency when college training was used to qualify the applicant.
    - When verifying college coursework OR college degrees, you must look for an official transcript in either of the following 2 formats:
        - Official paper transcript issued by the university
            - When verifying the transcript, you must look for obvious signs of possible falsification such as:
                - different size or style of type or font
                - wrong social security number
                - university name misspelled
                - white out
                - hand written corrections
        - Official electronic transcript e-mailed by the university directly to the hiring agency's human resources office
            - Documentation required for e-transcripts include:
                - A printed copy of the e-mail from the university to the hiring agency
                - A printed copy of the cover form included with the e-transcript
                - A printed copy of the e-transcript
                - The following statement written on the printed e-transcript: "This transcript was received by (receiver's name) directly from the university as an e-transcript and has not been altered in any form." This statement must be followed by the signature of the recipient of the e-mail.

NOTE: Photocopies will not be accepted. Also, electronic transcripts printed or forwarded electronically by a student are not official transcripts.

    - Overall GPA when appointing under the provisions provided in Rule **22.8 (c)** particularly when applicant has attended several schools.
    - Difference between a "degree in" and a "degree with": When a Minimum Qualification states a "degree in", the official transcript must reflect that field as the major field of study; when a Minimum Qualification states a "degree with", any major will be accepted as long as the applicant has the number of hours in the required field.
    - Difference between "a degree plus" experience and "a degree followed by" experience: When the minimum requirement states, "a degree plus experience", applicant obtains work experience and degree in no certain order. When the minimum requirement states, "a degree followed by experience", applicant receives degree *then* obtains work experience.
    - **Documents which will NOT be accepted as verification of educational qualifications include grade notices, student records, diplomas, teaching certificates or any transcripts marked "UNOFFICIAL."**
    - When using semester hours to substitute on the basis of 30 semester hours for one year of experience, click on this link for Educational Equivalency Chart.
    - For universities awarding quarter hours, multiply the number of quarter hours earned by 2/3 to get the semester hour equivalency.

- **Claims that transcripts cannot be obtained:**
  - Sometimes when transcripts are required to verify college, applicants will claim they are unable to obtain a transcript. When dealing with such claims, it is our policy to determine the reason why the applicant cannot obtain a transcript by contacting the institution granting the degree or hours.
  - If the reason the applicant cannot obtain his transcript is because he/she has defaulted on student loans, failed to pay fees or parking tickets, or failed to meet other financial obligations due to the university, we will not accept any other document as proof of obtaining required degrees or hours.

- **Admitting Prior to Graduation**
  - Should you have the need to recruit for a hard to fill position that requires a baccalaureate or master's degree as the requirement as outlined in the minimum qualifications, you may indicate on your job posting that applicants may apply 90 days prior to receipt of the baccalaureate/master's degree. You may move these applicants to the eligible list, interview and make an offer contingent upon verification of receipt of the required degree. The effective date of the appointment cannot be prior to the graduation date.
  - This does not mean we will credit persons who have completed all but the thesis requirement on a master's degree. If the thesis is part of the degree requirement, a person will not be credited with the degree until the thesis is completed.