



CODED CORRESPONDENCE

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NUMBER:

08-14

TO:

All Individuals and Groups Interested in the Activities
of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

FROM:

Dale A. Janssen
Executive Director
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

**SUBJECT: Agencies Seeking Commission Approval to Provide Foreign Transcript
Services for Teaching and Services Credentials in California**

Summary:

One of the responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing is to evaluate California teaching and services credential requirements based on educational programs and degrees obtained from colleges and universities located in other countries; however, the Commission does not conduct foreign transcript evaluations. Candidates trained in countries other than the United States need to seek an outside determination of course work and degree equivalency to U.S. standards. The Commission would like to broaden the list of approved evaluating agencies to allow candidates more options for foreign transcript evaluations.

The Commission no longer has an established timeframe in which a foreign evaluation agency may apply for approval. Applications for agency approval may be submitted on an on-going basis. Agencies will be required to meet all the criteria as set forth in the guidelines outlined below to receive Commission approval.

Key Provisions:

Evaluation Agencies that meet the Commission's criteria as set forth in this document will need to submit the request for approval. The Commission will notify agencies regarding its determination within eight to ten weeks.

Agencies that currently have Commission approval will need to be reauthorized to continue approved status and must submit their applications and documentation by January 30, 2009. Foreign transcript agencies currently listed with the Commission who do not seek reauthorization will be removed from the Commission's approved list effective March 31, 2009.

Important Dates:

Reauthorization application date: **January 30, 2008**

Electronic Submission of Transcript Evaluations Date: **July 1, 2013**

Background:

Individuals who have completed college or university course work at an institution in a country other than the United States must obtain a complete evaluation of foreign transcripts, degrees and other relevant documents prior to applying to the Commission for a California credential, permit, or certificate. A foreign transcript evaluation is required any time foreign course work is used to meet any credential requirement, even if the foreign course work has been accepted by a college or university in the United States. Foreign transcripts must be evaluated by an organization that has been approved by the Commission. (See the References section for a link to the Foreign Transcript Evaluation leaflet.) These organizations are private enterprises who charge a fee for their services. Individuals seeking a foreign transcript evaluation must follow the procedures outlined by the organization providing the evaluation.

In previous years, the Commission required agencies to submit their application and information packets for approval within a specific timeframe. With the Commission's streamlined process, agencies can now submit applications for approval year round.

References:

Electronic Submission: California's Education Code §44227

Foreign Transcript Evaluation leaflet:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl635.pdf>

Contact Information:

If there are any questions regarding the criteria or procedure, please contact Edye Ipsaro via email at EIpsaro@ctc.ca.gov or postal mail at:

Attention: Edye Ipsaro
Commission on Teacher Credentialing
1900 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento, California 95811-4213

COMMISSION CONDITIONS FOR ACCEPTING A FOREIGN TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION SERVICE

Schedule for the Evaluation of Agencies

The Commission will notify institutions of higher education with Commission-approved education programs, California county superintendent of schools and other interested agencies known to the Commission. The Commission will review the submitted responses for completeness and notify the evaluating agency of any materials lacking within six weeks of submission to the Commission. The evaluating agency has two weeks from the date of notification of incompleteness in which to respond. The Commission will determine approval or disapproval of the responses and notify those agencies that have requested approval within eight to ten weeks.

Countries Evaluated

An agency may be approved to evaluate collegiate programs from one or more foreign countries. If the agency does not evaluate programs from all foreign countries, the specific countries evaluated must be listed in the response. An approved agency will be responsible for notifying the Commission of any change in the countries evaluated at least 40 business days prior to implementing the change.

Financial Compensation to Approved Agencies

There will be no compensation paid to an approved agency by the Commission. Fee arrangements must be made between the agency and individual applicants.

Responsibilities of Approved Agencies

Each agency will provide a contact person to act as a liaison with which Commission staff can clarify specific procedures or concerns. Approved foreign transcript agencies are required to provide the Commission an email notification and access to a secure website in which the Commission as an authorized subscriber may view and print completed foreign transcript evaluations for potential teacher applicants.

The Commission's Responsibility to Approved Agencies

If the approved agency fails to meet the requirements as stated in the agency's approval document, the Commission will remove the name of the agency from its approved list and notify all interested parties. The Commission will have no involvement with the administration or legal authority over the approved agency. The Commission will not be involved in any dispute between an individual and the agency regarding any aspect of the evaluation. The Commission reserves the right to accept or reject an approved agency's evaluation decision. The Commission will review approved agencies every five years, beginning 5 years from the approval date of the Commission's Foreign Transcript Evaluation Approval Letter, or sooner if substantiated complaints are received from individuals using the agency's services.

CRITERIA FOR AGENCIES SEEKING APPROVAL TO REVIEW FOREIGN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FOR EQUIVALENCY TO UNITED STATES STANDARDS

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing will use the following criteria for evaluating agencies seeking approval to review foreign academic programs for equivalency to United States standards. A checklist of the described area requirements is also provided below.

Approval Structure

The agency seeking approval must respond by submitting documentation electronically that addresses each area under all four sections of this checklist. All information submitted must be *clear, concise, and complete*. Sample documentation and evidence of meeting the criteria must be submitted in the order of the criteria checklist, and be clearly titled. Please include the name of a contact person and his or her direct phone number and email address in case there are questions.

All conditions must be successfully verified. In the event of a denial of approved services for the Commission, the denied agency may request a re-evaluation if the request is submitted to the Commission within 30 business days of the date on the Commission's denial letter. The reconsideration request shall be made based on the grounds of a mistake/error of fact, or clarifying information not included in the original application.

SECTION I: Preconditions

1. The evaluating staff has knowledge of both the present and historical educational system offered by the country or countries they are responsible for evaluating. The knowledge covers the course work, programs, degrees, grading system, and unit value as it equates to United States standards. The agency shall submit:
 - Biographical information on the staff, including the director and supervisors of the evaluating staff, as it applies to the above*
 - The minimum employment qualifications used for hiring new personnel*

2. In-depth staff development occurs on a regular and frequent basis. As evidence the agency shall submit:
 - A copy of the training procedure*
 - Information about the frequency of training sessions*
 - Samples of handouts or memos from prior staff development sessions*

3. Complete set of historical and current reference materials needed for evaluations are available to determine if the foreign colleges and universities are of equivalent stature to regionally accredited institutions in the United States and to equate foreign grading systems and unit values to United States standards.
 - The agency shall submit a list of these materials, including edition dates, and, if they are not located on-site, shall indicate where they are located*

4. The current evaluation criteria established by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) or other authorities of comparable status is used when determining equivalency. The agency shall submit:
 - A list of the associations and organizations whose standards it follows when evaluating*

5. The evaluating staff's work is periodically reviewed by other knowledgeable staff members to maintain consistency and accuracy. The agency shall submit:
 - Evidence of Policy and procedure as it applies to the above, including the frequency of the review*

6. Translations of academic records and documents into English are only accepted from knowledgeable individuals. The agency shall submit:
 - A complete listing of the translating authority's profession, for example: Dean of the Italian Department at the University of California at Berkeley. If the translating authority is not in a related profession or if the agency's staff is responsible for translating, the agency shall submit biographical information as it applies to the above.*

7. Evaluations are made based on original, official academic records and degrees.
- The agency shall submit a copy of any policies or procedures based on these criteria. If anything other than original documentation is accepted, the agency shall submit a copy of the policy and reason(s) for this policy.*
8. If the foreign-trained individual disagrees with the evaluation, there is an established method by which he or she may appeal the decision to the evaluating agency.
- The agency shall submit a copy of the appeal procedure*
9. The fee schedule required to determine degree equivalency, including
- A course by course breakdown with academic grades, units, and level of course, shall be included with the above costs highlighted*
10. On the foreign-trained individual's evaluation letter, the agency shall list degree titles equivalent to those offered in the United States with the following:
- Degree type including a major and minor (if given)*
- Date the degree was granted*
- The institution that granted the degree*
- The degree title and institution will be listed in the language of the foreign country*
- The institution's location including the city, country, and, if needed for identification, state or province*
11. The foreign-trained individual's evaluation letter from the agency shall include a course-by-course breakdown of the college/university program and include the following:
- English translation of course title*
- Completion date of course*
- Traditional letter grade (A-F)*
- Semester unit equivalence*
- Institution offering course*
12. The foreign-trained individual's privacy is respected. The agency shall submit:
- A copy of the agency's privacy policy*
13. A copy of the evaluation letter is retained by the agency, and duplicates of the letters are available. The agency shall submit:
- A copy of its policy regarding the above, including the length of retention*

14. The foreign evaluating agency views the quality and scope of the degree programs, as opposed to only the length, when determining the degree equivalency to those offered in the United States. The agency shall submit:

A statement of the agency's philosophy regarding the above shall be included

15. The agency has an application that the individual completes. The agency shall submit:

A copy of the application form that the foreign trained individual would complete to initiate an evaluation

16. The agency has a contact person to whom the Commission on Teacher Credentialing may direct questions.

Name of the contact person _____

Contact phone number and email _____

17. Approved Foreign Transcript Agencies will be required to provide the Commission an email notification and access to a secure website in which the Commission as an authorized subscriber may view and print completed foreign transcript evaluations for potential teacher applicants by July 1, 2013.

Yes, email notification to the Commission agency currently can be provided and accessed by the Commission

No, email notification to the Commission agency cannot be provided at this time

Yes, this agency will have a secure website in which the Commission can view or print the foreign transcript evaluations by July 1, 2013

No, this agency will not have a secure website in which the Commission can view or print the foreign transcript evaluations by July 1, 2013

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SECTION II: Quality Control

1. A system to communicate with evaluators of foreign programs at other agencies and institutions has been established.

The agency shall submit a list of the organizations, agencies, and professional titles of any individuals who are part of this system

2. An individual will receive a response in a timely manner. The agency shall submit:
 - A statement giving the current average time it takes to respond to an applicant*
 - Information demonstrating the fastest and slowest response time during the last year*
 - The reasons for the slowest response time*

3. The evaluating agency has been in service at least five years prior to applying for
 - The agency shall submit copies of its business licenses verifying five years of business service. Please include initial and current licenses*

4. The agency shall submit references from agencies that have used the agency's evaluation services.
 - Please submit three letters of reference from public or private agencies that have used the agency's services. Note: Reference letters from agencies that are knowledgeable about foreign programs are preferred*

5. The agency shall list any organization with which it is affiliated or by which it is accredited.
 - List of Affiliations and Accreditations*

6. The agency shall provide the number of foreign transcripts evaluated for degree comparability applications processed annually for the last five years.
 - Number of Applications processed annually*

7. The agency shall demonstrate that materials upon which the evaluation is based will be retained for an established length of time for use by the Commission or others who may question the determination.
 - The agency shall submit a copy of the policy regarding its retention policy including a list of documents saved and the site of the retention*

8. The agency shall demonstrate that if academic records are unavailable due to a natural disaster, political upheaval or the closing of the institution, there is an established procedure for assisting the individual. The agency shall submit evidence of the following:
 - Information regarding the unavailability of documents is noted on the evaluation letter*
 - A copy of the procedure followed regarding the unavailability of documents*

9. The agency shall demonstrate its ability to evaluate in-service programs sponsored by non-collegiate organizations such as the state-approved second examination for teachers from what was the Federal Republic of Germany
- The agency shall submit its policy regarding the evaluation of these programs and an example of the wording used confirming the program on the individual's evaluation letter*
10. The agency lists the countries for which it provides evaluation services.
- Please provide a list of countries*

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SECTION III: Support Staff

1. To determine an adequate number of available evaluators and secretarial support staff, the agency shall submit the following:
- The total number of staff members with a breakdown listing the number of evaluators, secretaries, and telephone personnel*
- Information regarding whether the evaluators are responsible for typing and answering telephones*
- The agency shall submit the ratio of evaluators and ratio of secretarial support staff to the number of applications processed annually*
- Information regarding the staff's area of foreign expertise and affiliations*

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SECTION IV: Evaluation Letter

1. The information on the evaluation letter must be clear, concise, and in a format that is easy to read and understand. The evaluation letter lists the current name of the individual plus any former name(s) under which the course work was taken. The agency shall submit copies of three actual evaluation cases (redacted for privacy), that include teacher preparation programs with inclusion of the following:
- Photocopies of the foreign academic record*
- Any language translation used for determining equivalencies*
- The resulting evaluation letter*
- A list of specific references used for the evaluation*

2. If the agency evaluates individuals from three or more countries, it shall submit the following information from three different countries and at least *one evaluation from Mexico, Spain, and/or the Philippines.*

If the agency evaluates individuals from only two countries, it will submit the requested information from three different institutions, one from one country and two from the other country

If the agency evaluates individuals from only one country, it will submit the requested information from three different institutions within that country

3. Approved Foreign Transcript Agencies are required to provide the Commission an email notification and access to a secure website in which the Commission as an authorized subscriber may view and print completed foreign transcript evaluations for potential teacher applicants.

Yes, email notification to the Commission agency can be provided at this time

No, email notification to the Commission agency cannot be provided at this time

Yes, this agency currently has a secure website in which the Commission can view or print the foreign transcript evaluation

If your agency provides email notification and has a secure website accessible by the Commission please provide detailed procedural information

No, this agency currently does not have a secure website in which the Commission can view or print the foreign transcript evaluations

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