

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

1812 Ninth Street
Sacramento, California 95814-7000
(916) 445-0184
FAX (916) 327-3166

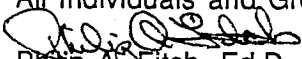


OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

91-9117

Date: November 22, 1991

To: All Individuals and Groups Interested in Evaluating Foreign Transcripts

From: 
Philip A. Fitch, Ed.D., Executive Secretary

Subject: Criteria for Agencies Seeking Approval to Review Foreign Academic Programs for Equivalency to California Standards

The Commission is responsible for evaluating California credential requirements based on educational programs and degrees obtained from colleges and universities located not only in other states but also in countries outside of the United States. Because the Commission does not have the staff, training, or other resources necessary, those candidates trained outside of the United States and Canada are required to seek an outside determination of coursework and degree equivalency to U.S. standards. The Commission would like to broaden the list of approved evaluating agencies to allow candidates more options and, in some cases, not force the candidate to duplicate a service already performed by another evaluating agency of equal status.

If your agency meets the criteria set forth in this document, you will need to submit verification to the Commission by **FEBRUARY 15, 1991**. The Commission will reply within four to six weeks after the cut-off date. The Commission will have an open period for approval each February if this cut-off date is missed.

If you do not perform these services or are not interested in seeking approval but know of an agency that might, please forward this correspondence to them. They may also obtain a copy by contacting the Commission. If there are any questions regarding the criteria or procedure, please contact Sarah Gómez at (916) 445-0233.

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

Box 944270

(916) 445-7254

Sacramento, California 94244-2700



LICENSING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

**CRITERIA FOR AGENCIES SEEKING APPROVAL
TO REVIEW FOREIGN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
FOR EQUIVALENCY TO CALIFORNIA STANDARDS**

If an agency meets the criteria set forth in this document, it will need to submit verification of such to the Commission by **FEBRUARY 15, 1991**. The Commission will reply to each agency within four to six weeks after the cut-off date once the review of the responses has been made. A list of the agencies approved will be sent to the Commission's constituent organizations and will be made available, upon request, to candidates. The Commission will have an open period for approval each February.

Each agency must verify each competency in Section I. The agency's responses will be assessed on a point system in Sections II, III, and IV. Points will be given for each competency listed. The maximum points available for the individual competency is listed in parentheses at the end of each competency in Sections II and III, and at the end of the introductory paragraph of Section IV.

The maximum points available for these three sections is 150. Seventy percent (70%) of the total must be obtained. If an agency does not perform the services listed in competencies 1, 5, and/or 6 in Section II, then the points for that competency or competencies will be deducted from the total and 70% of the remainder will be required for approval.

An agency's response will be reviewed individually by two outside readers who will be chosen based on their background in reviewing foreign transcripts. In case of discrepancies, a third reader will be used.

An agency can request approval for evaluating collegiate programs from all foreign countries or from just a few. If less than all, the specific countries must be listed in the response. If your agency is approved, you will be responsible to notify the Commission of any change within 40 days prior to implementing the change.

There will be no compensation paid to an agency by the Commission. Fee arrangements must be made between the agency and each applicant. A standard fee schedule for all services must be submitted to the Commission. If the cost for the services required by the Commission, excluding the translation, are deemed to be exorbitant, the agency will not be approved.

Each agency approved will be expected to send a representative to the Commission to receive training on California credential requirements so the agencies will be able to provide the needed information. Each agency will also provide a contact person as a liaison with whom Commission staff could clarify specific procedures or concerns. The individual agency will assume the costs for this.

The criteria used to evaluate agencies who seek approval is divided into four sections. The first section is a list of fifteen pre-condition statements which all agencies must meet. The second section is the standard of quality control required for the appraisal of the foreign documents. The third section covers the requirement of adequate support staff including phone operators and secretaries to assist the evaluators. The fourth section involves the information made available in the evaluation letter sent to the foreign-trained individual. Responses must be made to each area under all four sections. Please give clear, concise, and complete information. Include the name of a contact person and their direct phone number in case there are any questions. Also include a copy of your application form that the foreign-trained individual would complete to initiate the evaluation. The Commission is planning to review those agencies which gain approval on a periodic basis.

SECTION I

Preconditions for Agencies Seeking Approval to Review Foreign Academic Programs for Equivalency to California Requirements

1. Each individual's records are reviewed by two or more members of the evaluating staff. If there is a discrepancy, there will be an established procedure for making a final determination on the case. Please submit a copy of your procedure for this.
2. The evaluating staff has both present and historical knowledge of the educational system offered by the country(s) they are responsible to evaluate. The knowledge covers the coursework, programs, degrees, grading system and unit value as it equates to United States standards. Please submit biographical information on the staff, including the director and supervisors of the evaluating staff, as it applies to the above. Also submit the criteria used for hiring new personnel including minimum employment qualifications.
3. Staff development occurs on a regular and frequent basis with in-depth training. Please submit a copy of the training procedure and include biographical information on the trainers as it applies to the above. Also submit sample copies of handouts or memos from prior staff development sessions. If staff was sent to other countries for training, submit a statement listing dates sent, length of stay, and agencies contacted, i.e., ministry of education, universities, and so forth.
4. Complete historical and current reference materials needed for evaluations are available. Please submit a listing of these materials and, if they are not located at your agency, where they are located.
5. The 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. If information has not been published on a specific country or the information has not recently been updated, then another established reference is used. Please submit a list of associations and organizations whose standards you follow when evaluating.

6. Translations of transcripts and documents into English are only accepted from recognized authorities. All originals must be submitted by the applicant for a credential along with the translated copy. Please submit a listing of the authority's profession. (For example, Dean of the Italian Department of University of Milan), or, if the authority is not in such a profession, biographical information as it applies to the above. If your staff is responsible for translating, list the language and the background of the staff member as it applies to the above. Also list any additional fees charged for this service.
7. Evaluations are made based on original, official transcripts and degrees. Please submit a copy of your policy regarding this. If you have a policy to accept anything other than original copies, please submit your policy and reason(s) why you accept other than originals.
8. The agency will equate foreign grading systems, unit values, and grade levels (i.e., upper or lower division) to United States standards. Please submit your policy statement regarding the above including reference sources used.
9. The agency will determine if the foreign colleges and universities are of equivalent stature to regionally accredited institutions in the United States. Please submit a list of references used to determine this, including the year of the edition.
10. If the foreign-trained individual disagrees with the evaluation or the process, there is an established method by which he or she may appeal the decision to the evaluating agency. Please submit a copy of the appeal procedure. Also submit the amount of any fee charged to the individual for this service.
11. The fee required to determine degree equivalency, including course-by-course breakdown with academic grades, units, and level of course, is not detrimental to the individual. Please submit a fee schedule highlighting the above cost.
12. The agency lists the degree equivalence to those offered in the United States. The degree information will also include major and minor (if given), the date of the degree, and the institution that granted the degree. The degree title and institution name will be listed in the language of the foreign country. The institutions location including the city, country, and, if needed for identification, state or province is also noted.
13. The agency does a course by course breakdown of the college program. Included in the breakdown is the following information:
 - a. English translation of course title,
 - b. completion date of course,
 - c. traditional letter grade (A-F) on a five-point scale,
 - d. semester unit equivalence,
 - e. institution offering course,
 - f. department offering course, and
 - g. level of course (lower, upper, or graduate level).
14. Please submit a copy of your policy that insures candidacy privacy and a copy of the notification you have made available to the foreign-trained individual.

15. A copy of the evaluation letter is retained, and duplicates of the letter are available for a reasonable fee. The applicant can request duplicates to be sent to employers, universities, and others. Please submit a copy of your policy regarding the above including the length of retention and the duplicate fee.

SECTION II

Quality Control

The Commission is required to maintain specific standards for the degrees and coursework used for determining completion of credential requirements. We must be guaranteed that these same standards will be upheld by each evaluating agency that obtains Commission approval. The method of verifying the following competencies is mentioned at the end of each area.

1. If transcripts are unavailable due to a natural disaster, political upheaval, or the closing of the institution, there is an established, valid procedure for assisting the individual. The fact that documents were unavailable is noted on the evaluation letter. Please submit a copy of the procedure for the above. If you utilize individuals who were in responsible positions at these institutions, submit biographical information as it pertains to the above. An example would be the dean of the school of education at the Kabul University in Afghanistan. (10)
2. A networking system with other evaluators of foreign programs has been established. Please submit a list of the organizations, agencies, and professional titles of any individuals who are part of this system. (10)
3. An individual will receive a response in a timely manner. Please submit a statement giving the current average turnaround time. Also include the fastest and slowest average turnaround time since January 1, 1991, and the reasons for the slowest. If available, submit information regarding any express service including turnaround time and any additional fee. (30)

Note: If your agency is approved and the turnaround time exceeds the agreed upon number of working days, you will be responsible to notify the Commission, giving the reason(s) for the delay and the methods used to alleviate the problem.

4. The evaluating agency has been in service at least five years prior to applying for approval. Please submit copies of your business license. Also submit at least three letters of reference from schools, public agencies, or private agencies that have used your services. List any organization with which you are affiliated or accredited. Also, provide the number of applications processed annually for the last five years. (30)
5. When authoritative reference sources are unavailable, direct contact is made with the foreign university or ministry of education. Please submit your policy regarding the above including whether you or the foreign trained individual makes contact and what level of authority you require for confirmation. (10)

6. The agency will evaluate inservice programs sponsored by non-collegiate organizations such as the state-approved second examination for teachers from what was the Federal Republic of Germany. Please submit your policy regarding the evaluation of these programs and an example of the wording used confirming the program on an individual's evaluation letter. (10)
7. The materials upon which the evaluation is based are retained for an established length of time in case the individual questions the determination. Please submit a copy of your policy regarding the above including a list of the materials saved and the site of the retention. (10)

SECTION III

Support Services/Staffing

The Commission feels that to insure efficient response time to an individual who either phones, writes, or makes application, the agency must have adequate support staff.

1. There are adequate evaluators and secretarial support staff available. Please submit a list giving the total number of staff members with a breakdown listing the number of evaluators, secretaries, and phone operators. If the evaluators are also responsible for typing and answering the phones, indicate this. Also submit the ratio of the evaluators and the ratio of secretarial support staff to the number of applications processed annually. (20)

SECTION IV

Information on the Evaluating Letter

The Commission requires specific information about an individual's academic background in order to determine if credential requirements have been satisfied. Not only does the degree equivalency need to be ascertained, but a full breakdown of coursework, as described in 12 and 13 under Section I, is needed. As proof of items one through three below and items 12 and 13 under Section I, submit copies of three actual evaluations which include teacher preparation programs, each from a different country. Include photocopies of the foreign transcripts, the resulting evaluation letter, and the list of the specific reference sources used for these three evaluations. If you are applying for approval of only one country, submit actual evaluations and the supporting materials from three different institutions within that country. If approval is sought for only two countries, submit the requested information from three different institutions, one from one country and two from the other. A total of 20 points will be given for the three areas listed below.

1. The information on the evaluation letter is clear, concise, and in a format that is easy to understand.
2. The evaluation letter lists the current name of the credential candidate plus any former name under which the course work was taken.
3. The evaluation letter includes the name of the language of the original transcript.

The Commission's Responsibility

If, for whatever reason, the approved agency fails to meet the conditions stated in the agency's approved proposals, the Commission will remove the name of the agency from its approved list. The Commission will have no involvement with the administration of any approved agency or any legal authority over the approved agency. The Commission will not become involved with any dispute between the individual and the agency regarding any aspect including the evaluation and fees.

Return your responses to:

**Sarah Gómez, Director
Licensing and Professional Development Division
Commission on Teacher Credentialing
1812 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-7000**