COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

HEADQUARTERS
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 W. TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 579 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-2406 • FAX (213) 621-0387

BRANCH OFFICE
510 S. VERMONT AVENUE, 12TH FLOOR • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020
(213) 866-5846 • FAX (213) 637-0821

LISA M. GARRETT
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

January 13, 2026

To: All Departmental Heads

From: Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

UPDATES TO POLICY, PROCEDURE, AND GUIDELINES NO. 123 – ACCREDITED COLLEGE EDUCATION

As part of the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) commitment to providing County of Los Angeles (County) departments with updated and relevant policies and resources, please find attached the revised Countywide Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines (PPG) No. 123, *Accredited College Education*.

The revised PPG does not change the County's established process of verifying educational requirements; rather, the revisions align the policy with current practice, provide departments with relevant resources, and offer the most useful information to readers.

Notable updates to this policy include:

- Clarified guidance concerning verifying accreditation of colleges and universities, particularly with respect to international institutions.
- Added methods by which applicants can provide proof of education, such as electronic transcripts and official letters from the institution.
- Removed "Online Education Degrees" section and other outdated content.
- Described specialized and/or program-specific accreditation standards.
- Updated sample job posting language for classifications with education requirements.

To further streamline the policy, the accompanying Resource Guide was revised to replace the list of accrediting agencies with links to relevant national and international accreditation databases and publications. Furthermore, a new *Frequently Asked Questions* document (Attachment II) was developed to provide readers with an easy-to-understand overview of the key policy content.

The updated policy may be viewed online at http://mylacounty.gov/county-policies under the "Human Resources Policies & Manuals" section.

LMG:RC:WLH
DMM:LR:sl

Attachments (2)

c: Chief Deputies

Administrative Deputies
Departmental Human Resources Managers

PAD\PPGs\PPG 123\LMG to All DHs Re Revisions to PPG 123.docx

County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Subject:	Policy Number:	Pages:
ACCREDITED COLLEGE EDUCATION	**123**	**4**
	Effective Date: **January 13, 2026**	
	Approved By:	

POLICY

This policy applies to all County of Los Angeles class specifications and examinations requiring completion of college or university coursework or degrees.

Education and degrees must be successfully completed at accredited institutions to meet Civil Service examination filing requirements. To qualify applicants for County examinations, examining staff shall accept education and degrees from institutions recognized by regional, national, or international accrediting agencies as proof that the college or university is accredited.

GUIDELINES

The Department of Human Resources accepts degrees from United States institutions that are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Institutions listed in the American Council on Education's publication *American Universities and Colleges* are also acceptable.

Degrees conferred by international institutions are acceptable if these institutions have been evaluated by an academic credential evaluation agency recognized by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc. (AICE) and have been deemed to provide the equivalent of a degree from an accredited United States institution. Institutions listed in the International Association of Universities' (IAU) World Higher Education Database (WHED), or their publication, the *International Handbook of Universities,* are also acceptable.

Please note that some institutions may have received accreditation after the publication of the above-referenced manuals; therefore, it is advisable that each department ensure

that its copies of these references are up-to-date and that exam analysts conduct further research, if necessary, to confirm the accreditation status of institutions.

When minimum requirements, selection requirements, or desirable qualifications include education requirements, job postings must specify the level of education required (e.g., associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate degree, etc.). Applicants are responsible for providing complete and accurate records of the required education to clearly show that they meet the educational requirements at the time of filing, during the examination process and/or prior to appointment, as stated in the job posting. Examples of acceptable documentation include:

- Official college transcript in a sealed envelope or copies thereof
- Official electronic transcript (e-transcript)
- Official verification stating that the required coursework was completed
- Copy of diploma or certificate (original may be required at appointment)
- Official letter from institution confirming completion of degree, and bearing an official seal
- Document from an approved academic credential evaluation agency recognized by the Department of Human Resources
- Official English translation of a degree and/or transcript from an agency endorsed by regional, national, or international academic credential accrediting agencies

For exams that require the completion of specific college courses, the job posting should state that applicants must submit college transcripts to confirm completion of the required number of semester or quarter units of the required coursework.

For exams that require a specific degree, the job posting should state that the applicant must provide a copy of their diploma or college and/or university transcripts that clearly indicates the degree that was conferred.

Specialized /Professional Accreditation Requirements

Some positions may require accreditation of specific degree programs (e.g. nursing, or civil engineering), which is separate from the accreditation of the institution as a whole. While there are no Countywide requirements for program-specific accreditation or recognition of accrediting agencies, individual departments may impose such requirements based on their specific needs and in alignment with Countywide authorities. Some positions may also require licensure in accordance with the class specification.

Job Posting Language

When a job posting includes education requirements as a minimum requirement, selection requirement, or desirable qualification, it should also specify the type of

accreditation or recognition required for the educational institution. The following is sample language that may be included in a posting:

> Accredited institutions are those listed in the publications of regional, national, or international accrediting agencies which are accepted by the Department of Human Resources (DHR). These agencies must be recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Publications such as *American Universities and Colleges* and the *International Handbook of Universities* are also acceptable references. We also accept degrees conferred by institutions that have been evaluated by an academic credential evaluation agency recognized by the *National Association of Credential Evaluation Services* (NACES) or the *Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc.* (AICE) and that have been deemed by the evaluating agency to be the equivalent of a degree from an accredited United States institution.

Note that the above job posting language clearly specifies how to determine whether an institution has appropriate accreditation and covers both United States institutions and international institutions.

PROCEDURES

Departmental human resources staff (e.g., Exams, Operations, and/or Background Unit) are responsible for reviewing educational information submitted by applicants at the time of filing, during the examination process and/or prior to appointment. This may include:

1. Interpreting specific educational requirements for County classifications, which may require consultation with DHR's Countywide Talent Assessment Division (CTAD) Classification Revision Unit.

2. Reviewing official copies of the applicant's diploma, transcripts/e-transcripts or letter of graduation from the college or university.

3. Verifying the completion of relevant coursework and/or degrees from accredited institutions.

4. Verifying that any foreign institution(s) where the applicant has completed their coursework and/or degree(s) has/have been evaluated by an academic credential agency recognized by NACES or AICE and found to provide credentials equivalent to degrees from the accredited United States institutions.

5. Verifying the applicant's education with the registrar of the college or university.

6. Implementing appropriate standards and screening procedures for reviewing educational requirements.

7. Researching educational institutions that may have been accredited after the publication of the above-referenced manuals.

8. Maintaining copies of the provided documentation (pursuant to applicable retention authorities) and recording the date of the review and name of the person reviewing the original documents.

For questions regarding this policy, please contact DHR's CTAD at (213) 738-2084.

AUTHORITY

Appendix 1 of Title 5 of the Los Angeles County Code
Civil Service Rule (CSR) 6.01 – Qualifications for examinations
CSR 6.04 – Nonacceptance of applicant
CSR 7.08 – Method of testing
CSR 11.04 – Withholding names from certification
CSR11.05 – Restoration to certification

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Los Angeles County
DEPARTMENT OF
Human Resources

PPG 123 – Accredited College Education
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What does it mean for an educational institution to be accredited?**
   Accreditation is the process used in U.S. education to ensure that schools, postsecondary institutions, and other education providers meet and maintain minimum standards of quality and integrity regarding academics, administration, and related services. It is a voluntary process based on the principle of academic self-governance. Both institutions and programs within institutions participate in accreditation. The entities which conduct accreditation are associations comprised of institutions and academic specialists in specific subjects, who establish and enforce standards of membership and procedures for conducting the accreditation process.

   Both the federal and state governments recognize accreditation as the mechanism by which institutional and programmatic legitimacy and capacity are measured. In international terms, accreditation by a recognized accrediting authority is accepted as the U.S. equivalent of other countries' ministerial recognition of institutions belonging to the national education system.

2. **What additional documentation is needed when submitting a degree from a foreign university?**
   To demonstrate equivalency to US accreditation, an applicant submitting a degree from a foreign university must generally provide a formal evaluation from a credential evaluation service, such as one that is a member of NACES or AICE, unless their university is listed in the WHED or International Handbook of Universities. The applicant will also need to provide an official translation of the degree or transcript into English if it was conferred in another language.

3. **What type of document is acceptable from an academic credential evaluation agency that is approved and recognized by the Department of Human Resources?**
   We accept credential evaluation reports from evaluation agencies that are recognized either by the *National Association of Credential Evaluation Services* (NACES) or the *Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc.* (AICE). Applicants can either provide a copy of the official electronic document or have it directly sent to the designated exam analyst. Unofficial documents will not be accepted.

4. **What additional documentation is needed for job postings that include unit requirements and/or specific coursework (e.g., governmental accounting)?**
   For exams that require the completion of specific courses, applicants must submit a copy of their official transcript. The document should show the date the degree was conferred (if a degree is required), number of units and the type of unit system used (e.g., semester, quarter). International degrees must be evaluated for equivalency to US standards and indicate the number of units and unit system.

5. **What is the retention policy for exam materials?**
   In general, examination records are to be preserved for no less than a period of five (5) years. More information can be found in the County's *General & Departmental Records Retention Schedules*.

   It is important to keep in mind that departments may also have specific policies and procedures regarding the physical or digital retention of these materials. To learn more about relevant policies and requirements that apply to your workplace, check with your department's Human Resources Manager.

6. **What makes a transcript official?**
   An official transcript is defined as a transcript that bears the college or university seal and states "official and/or copy" issued by the school's Registrar Office and contains the signature of the college or university's Registrar.

7. **Do we accept online degrees?**
   Online degrees are accepted if they are from accredited institutions recognized by an accreditation agency listed by the *U.S. Department of Education* (USDE) or the *Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)*. If a degree is from a foreign online institution, it must also undergo the standard equivalency evaluation process.

8. **Can an applicant submit an electronic copy of their transcript?**
   Electronic transcripts are acceptable if they are sent directly from the issuing institution to the designated exam analyst as provided in the job posting. A physical copy of the electronic transcript that clearly displays proof of authenticity, such as a seal, watermark, or official letterhead is also acceptable.

9. **Is there a way to determine the licensing requirements for a specific position?**
   If a position requires a professional license, this will be specified in the class specification under the "Requirements" heading. The requirements for a specific license will be set by the legally designated board. E.g. the California Board of Registered Nursing. For additional clarification, examining departments should consult with DHR's CTAD Classification Revision Unit.

10. **If a college is not currently accredited, but is in the process of getting accreditation, can the college degree earned be acceptable?**
    No. In accordance with PPG 123, “Education and degrees must be successfully completed at accredited institutions to meet Civil Service examination filing requirements. To qualify applicants for County examinations, examining staff shall accept education and degrees from an institution that is recognized by a regional, national, or international accrediting agency as proof that the college or university is accredited.”

PPG 123 – Accredited College Education: Resource Guide

ONLINE RESOURCES

Below are direct links to resources mentioned in the policy, including supplemental resources. These can be used to verify either the recognition status of an accrediting body or the accreditation status of an institution.

UNITED STATES

- **United States Department of Education (USDE) Institution Database:**
  https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home

- **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Institution Database:**
  https://www.chea.org/search-institutions

- **United States Department of Education**
  www.ed.gov

- **California Department of Education**
  https://www.cde.ca.gov

INTERNATIONAL

- **World Higher Education Database (WHED):**
  https://www.whed.net/home.php

- **The National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES):**
  http://www.naces.org

- **Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc (AICE):**
  http://www.aice-eval.org

- **The International Association of Universities (IAU):**
  www.iau-aiu.net

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- ***American Universities and Colleges***
  Produced in collaboration with the American Council on Education (ACE)
  Published by Walter de Gruyter, Inc
  200 Saw Mill River Road, Hawthorne, NY 10532

- ***International Handbook of Universities***
  By International Association of Universities
  Published by UNESCO
  Jose E Rodo 328, Juan Lacaze, Uruguay 70001