

Graduate Level Salary Increment Information

Educators employed by a Delaware public school district or charter school may take advantage of the opportunity to earn a salary supplement based on completion of a certain degree, a course of study, or coursework towards certification that is aligned to the content or area in which the educator is employed. These supplements are known as Graduate Level Salary Increments (GSI) or Plus Credits.

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has final approval of all Graduate Level Salary Increments (GSI). GSI approval is governed by the following State Code and Regulation:

- Delaware Code - 14 Del. C. §1305(a): <http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c013/index.shtml>.
- Delaware Administrative Code - 14 DE Admin Code 728 Graduate Level Salary Increments: <http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/700/728.shtml#TopOfPage>.
- Professional Standards Board Regulations: <http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/1500/index.shtml#TopOfPage>.

Educators may apply for a GSI if they pursue advanced professional learning for the following reasons:

- Pursue an appropriate advanced degree
- Pursue an appropriate graduate level course of study as defined in Regulation 728
- Pursue additional certification as approved
- Pursue certification as an Elementary or Secondary School Counselor
- Pursue certification as a School Principal, or Assistant School Principal (with limitations)

APPROVALS

Pursuing coursework or an advanced degree for certification or GSI may require prior approval by an educator's district or charter school Human Resources Office, particularly if the educator has the opportunity to request local reimbursement. District or charter approval does not equate to or guarantee DDOE approval. The DDOE will determine if coursework, proposed or completed, meets state Code and Regulation requirements for GSI.

The following information is provided to assist the educator in selecting an IHE and coursework:

SELECT AN APPROPRIATE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

There are multiple factors in determining if the IHE that is offering courses, programs of courses, or degrees is acceptable.

1. ACCREDITATION

When choosing a college or university to complement a career in education, the accreditation of the school is vital. Many IHEs are **Institutionally Accredited**; this alone is **not** sufficient. For licensure, certification, or GSIs, Delaware requires coursework and degrees from a **Regionally Accredited college or university**.

- To determine if the college or university being considered is regionally accredited, search the U.S. Department of Education's Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs website [\[https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home\]](https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home). Search for the IHE name.
 - If an IHE is on this list, they have **Institutional Accreditation. This is not sufficient.**
 - Look further and check the current **Regional Accreditation**. The chosen IHE must have **Regional Accreditation**. Delaware only accepts accreditation from the following regional accrediting members of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC). (<https://www.c-rac.org/members>):



- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, WASC (ACCJC)
- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission










2. AUTHORIZATION TO OPERATE IN DELAWARE

Under DDOE Regulation 292 Post Secondary Institutions and Degree Granting Institutions of Higher Education [<http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/200/292.shtml>], an IHE must have approval from the DDOE to offer courses, programs of courses, or degrees in Delaware. There are two (2) ways to obtain this authorization:

- i. Visit the **List of Delaware Department of Education Approved Institutions (Universities/Colleges)** to verify that the IHE has sought and earned approval from the DDOE and is on the approved list OR
- ii. Is a member-institution of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA or SARA, for short). Delaware has joined this agreement. Visit the **NC-SARA Member States and Institutions** webpage at <https://www.nc-sara.org/sara-states-institutions> to determine if the IHE is on the SARA list.

3. “RED FLAGS”

There are “RED FLAGS” to look for when choosing a college or university. If any of these flags appear, we recommend submitting the **GRADUATE LEVEL SALARY INCREMENTS APPROVAL FORM** to the DDOE Licensure and Certification Office prior to enrollment. Some “RED FLAGS” the educator should look for are:

-  The IHE is not regionally accredited.
-  The IHE is not legally authorized to operate in Delaware.
-  The IHE is not actually offering the coursework. Coursework is offered through a separate entity, affiliate, or partner.
 - This entity could be, but is not limited to, a professional development company, an extension of the IHE, or a professional development group affiliated with the IHE.
 - The URL for the website may be a .net or a .com.
-  The provider has varying price levels. The provider may let an educator pay one price for professional development coursework and another price for professional development with college credits.
-  The IHE itself does not accept the professional development coursework for its own degrees.
-  The back of the transcript indicates that the provider assigns course numbers for professional development coursework that is different from courses for an advanced degree program; ask to see the back of a transcript.
-  The provider offers a discount for multiple courses.
-  The provider offers incentives for referrals, such as gift cards or cash.
-  The offer seems too good or too inexpensive to be true.

SELECT THE RIGHT COURSEWORK

1. CONTENT ALIGNMENT TO AREA OF EMPLOYMENT

- All coursework, whether program, course of study, certificate program, or degree, must be directly related to an area or specialty in which the educator is currently employed, or as required by regulation. Exceptions may be made for educators wishing to pursue certification as a Principal, Assistant Principal, or Elementary or Secondary School Counselor. These programs are eligible for GSI if the IHE and its program meet the necessary requirements.
- Professional development coursework for which an educator purchases graduate credits may not be used for GSIs.



2. LEVEL OF COURSEWORK

- Educators at a Bachelor's degree level must pursue a Master's degree for GSIs.
- Educators at a Master's degree level may pursue another Master's degree, a Doctoral degree, or a Graduate Level Course of Study comprised of graduate credits (e.g. a certificate program).

3. COURSE OF STUDY

- Licensure & Certification utilizes the following working definition of a **Course of Study**:
A Course of Study is a sequence of integrated courses representing a focused study of content that includes specific instruction that leads to the achievement of a narrow but cohesive set of learning objectives. The Course of Study should be an opportunity for the participant to obtain the most up-to-date knowledge, skills, tools and competency-based activities the participant will need to excel in the chosen area.
- An ad-hoc group of unrelated coursework does not qualify as a course of study.
- An IHE may state that a group of courses is a "course of study," when, in fact, it does not meet Delaware's definition or requirements.

4. LIMITATIONS ON APPROVAL

Before an educator begins any coursework towards certification, it is imperative that the educator ensure that the coursework or program will meet State requirements. Educators should visit the specific Regulation that governs the certification they are pursuing by visiting <http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/1500/index.shtml#TopOfPage> to determine if the certification they wish to pursue:

- Has specific degree and content/subject requirements that must be met.
- Has specific programs in which an educator may enroll.
- Requires a program that has approval from the Council of Accreditation of Educator Preparation (**CAEP**) (formerly NCATE). School Administrator and School Counselor certifications, among others, require the program to have this programmatic accreditation.
- To be accepted for a GSI, the educator must earn a grade of B or better in each course or "Pass" if taken as Pass/Fail.

5. TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS

- Credits that are previously denied by the DOE and then transferred to another IHE, will remain denied.
- All transferred credits are subject to review by the DDOE. Official transcripts from all issuing IHEs must be submitted for evaluation.

PRE-APPROVAL FOR AN ADVANCED DEGREE OR COURSE OF STUDY

Pre-approval is available and is strongly recommended if there is a question about a degree, course of study, or IHE. Please use **Graduate Level Salary Increments Approval Form** [<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3484>]. This form should be completed by the educator, endorsed/signed by their HR, and then submitted to DDOE Licensure and Certification. HR endorsement does not guarantee that an educator will meet certification or GSI requirements at the time of course, program or degree completion. Please allow up to four (4) weeks for processing.

Each GSI application is reviewed and evaluated based on the educator's unique set of facts (eg., current position, existing certifications, teaching position and transcripts). Do not assume that one educator's approval will carry over to another educator's situation. DDOE has the final authority to approve or deny GSIs. A public school district or charter school's support for tuition reimbursement is not the same as the DDOE's approval for licensure, certification, or for GSI. The educator should contact their HR Department or DDOE Licensure and Certification (deeds@doe.k12.de.us) with questions regarding the GSI process.



SITUATIONS WHERE PRE-APPROVAL WILL NOT BE ISSUED

Educators may take coursework at any IHE to advance professional learning. Coursework, however, from the following companies and IHEs are not eligible for pre-approval as DDOE is unable to discern appropriateness of the program in advance of educator enrollment. Educators who take courses from the following entities run the risk of being ineligible for salary increments and certification.

COMPANIES

Advancement Courses	Ed Technology Specialists	School House Consultants
PLS Classes or PLS 3rd Learning	Educators Academy	SCT Continuing Education Services
Adventures in Education, Inc.	Healthy Teaching Team	Siedow Teacher Education
A Step Beyond: Graduate Studies for Teachers	IFireUp	Simply Me International
Body/Mind Dynamics	Institute for Graduate Studies	Teacher’s Learning Center
Continuing Education Associates	Landmark School Outreach Program	Teachers’ Professional Advancement Institute
Credits for Teachers	Lead Legal and Educational Services	The Educator’s Place
Dewey Walsh Teacher Education	Learners Edge	The Learning Tree Professional Development Network
Ed2go	LearnGeogebra.com	Theracourse
Edpower	Midwest Teachers Institute	Vesi
Edpractica	Northstar Continuing Education	
	Peak Learning Systems	

INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Andrews University (MI) | 9. Rockford University (IL) |
| 2. Avila University (MO) | 10. The College of NJ (NJ) |
| 3. Drake University (IA) | 11. University of West Alabama (AL) |
| 4. Greenville University (IL) | 12. Wilkes University (PA) |
| 5. Indiana Wesleyan University (IN) | 13. William Jessup University (CA) |
| 6. Loyola Marymount University (CA) | 14. Colorado State University – Pueblo (CO) |
| 7. Marygrove College (MI) | 15. University of San Diego (CA) |
| 8. Mercyhurst University (PA) | 16. University of La Verne (CA) |

Please note that these are not exhaustive lists and submission of a pre-approval form is strongly encouraged if the educator has any questions or concerns.

This information is provided as a summary only. For detailed information, visit our website for Graduate Level Salary Increments: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3674>.

Answers to most questions can be found at <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/certification> or email us at deeds@doe.k12.de.us