



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

August 2, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Verification of Higher Degrees for Pay Purposes

I suspect that you are well aware that in 2016, the Alabama Legislature changed requirements pertaining to master's and higher degrees that may be recognized to award pay at a higher level. For those of you who may be less aware of that change, I am providing a copy of the current form that is to be completed. Although it is not necessary to submit a verification of higher degree (VHD) form for teachers or other professional staff who complete requirements for and are issued a higher level of Alabama educator certificate based partially on degree completion, members of my staff are pleased to receive and process VHD degree forms for those educators.

Until just recently, most of the individuals for whom we received VHD requests qualified under Option 1 or 2 because they earned an advanced degree before July 1, 2017, or because they earned credit for at least one course used to meet the most recent advanced degree requirements before July 1, 2017. Now, many individuals for whom we receive VHD requests earned credit for their first course and earned their degree after July 2017.

The VHD form and related information are accessible via this link: [https://www.alsde.edu/ofc/otl/Pages/vhd-all.aspx?navtext=Verification of Higher Degrees](https://www.alsde.edu/ofc/otl/Pages/vhd-all.aspx?navtext=Verification%20of%20Higher%20Degrees). Please call this information to the attention of your professional staff members, especially to the Degree Correlation information and the actual request form. Teachers should be cautioned to avoid generic degrees such as a degree in teaching and learning or a degree in curriculum and instruction, especially when those generic degrees do not reflect a significant concentration of courses as verified by course prefixes and titles, specific to one of the options listed on the VHD form. You might also remind employees that recognition of a higher degree does not ensure receipt of a higher level of certificate.

If you or your employees have questions, please send them to payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu.

EGM/JAM/SG

Enclosure

cc: Deans of Education
Dr. Daniel Boyd
Mr. Andy Craig
Dr. Jayne A. Meyer
Ms. Shavon H. Cummings

FY19-2131

Alabama
State Board
of Education

Governor Kay Ivey
President

Jackie Zeigler
District I
President Pro Tem

Tracie West
District II

Stephanie Bell
District III

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV

Ella B. Bell
District V

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

Jeff Newman
District VII
Vice President

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer



Verification of a Higher Degree

(For individuals who hold a valid Alabama educator certificate.)

Questions regarding advanced pay should be sent to payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu.

Local Education Agency	
Name of Professional Educator <i>(for whom form is being completed)</i>	
Social Security Number	
Institution of Higher Education	
Regional Accrediting Agency <i>(Institution of higher education must have been accredited by one of the agencies indicated at the time the degree was earned.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools <input type="checkbox"/> New England Association of Schools and Colleges <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities <input type="checkbox"/> Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools <input type="checkbox"/> Western Association of Schools and Colleges <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Degree Earned	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> Education Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate
Major/Concentration Area of Degree Earned <i>(as indicated on the official transcript)</i>	

Please check **ONE** option regarding the professional educator named above.
 The options on this document are based on ACT #2016-198 accessible via the following link:
<http://arc-sos.state.al.us/PAC/SOSACPDF.001/A0011357.PDF>

<input type="checkbox"/> Option 1	Earned an advanced degree <i>prior to</i> July 1, 2017 <i>Any degree area is acceptable.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Option 2	Earned initial graduate credit (<i>grade of C or better</i>) toward the advanced degree indicated <u>above</u> <i>prior to</i> July 1, 2017, and earned the advanced degree <i>on or after</i> July 1, 2017 <i>Any degree area is acceptable.</i>

Option 1 or 2 should be used if applicable.

If Option 1 or 2 is checked, please STOP, sign the form, and submit it along with the official transcript.

If Option 1 or 2 cannot be used, please see Options 3 through 8 and select only ONE, sign the form, and submit it along with the official transcript.

<input type="checkbox"/> Option 3 <i>Subject matter of advanced degree shall be liberally construed for these teaching fields.</i>	Earned an advanced degree in a field of study for which the educator is properly certified: <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Teacher K-6 <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School (<i>English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School Generalist <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Alternative Achievement Standards
<input type="checkbox"/> Option 4 <i>Use for any area not included in Option 3.</i>	Earned an advanced degree in a field of study for which the educator is teaching/serving or properly certified
	Certificate Area: _____
	Teaching Assignment(s): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Option 5 <i>Use for any area not included in Option 6.</i>	Earned an advanced degree in the same area for which the educator currently holds a valid Alabama certificate
	Certificate Area: _____



Verification of a Higher Degree

(For individuals who hold a valid Alabama educator certificate.)

Questions regarding advanced pay should be sent to payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu.

<input type="checkbox"/> Option 6	Earned an advanced degree in: <input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts) <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Education Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> English for Speakers of Other Languages <input type="checkbox"/> Language(s) other than English <input type="checkbox"/> Library Media <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychometry <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Speech-Language Pathology <input type="checkbox"/> STEAM <input type="checkbox"/> STEM <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Option 7	Holds an advanced degree and ONLY a valid: <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Interim Employment Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in a Career and Technical Teaching Field <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in Library Media <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in School Counseling Instructional Support Area OR Teaching Field:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Option 8 <i>This option may be used if Options (1-7) are not applicable; Option 8 may be possible if all criteria are met.</i>	Earned an advanced degree and is a teacher of a critical shortage area <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching field was reported by LEA to the ALSDE as critical shortage area and <input type="checkbox"/> Letter is being submitted for approval as this is a critical shortage area for the LEA and the individual does not fit into any of the other advanced pay options. Critical Shortage Area for LEA:	

Signature: _____ Date: _____
LEA Superintendent

*****FOR SDE USE ONLY*****

- _____ The degree indicated above has NOT been verified because the SDE has not been able to confirm that the institution is regionally accredited.
- _____ The SDE cannot verify the degree indicated above because it does not meet any of the eight (8) options listed above nor does it meet any of the options listed on the Degree Correlation Table accessible via the following link: www.alsde.edu/ofc/otl/Pages/dc.aspx.
- _____ The SDE has verified and recognizes that this professional educator received the aforementioned degree from a regionally accredited institution.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
For the Alabama State Department of Education

Mail this form and an original, official transcript* to:
 Alabama State Department of Education
 Educator Preparation Section
 Post Office Box 302101
 Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

NOTE: The Highest Degree for Pay is posted on the Certification Portal. The Certification Portal will indicate the degree and the date the degree was recognized, as well as the date when the degree was earned. This form will not be returned after the Alabama State Department of Education has recognized a higher degree from a regionally accredited institution.

*An original, official transcript is enclosed because the Certification Portal verifies that the transcript is **not** on file with Educator Certification.