

Word Up: Common Terms in Educator Licensing

Most statutes, regulations and rules have a definition section that specifies what meaning words have for that particular statute or rule. However, not all words will be defined in a definition section. In general, words have their plain meaning in all statutes, regulations and rules, unless specified otherwise. Below is a list of common terminology that you may encounter in a licensure statute, regulation or rule.

Accreditation – a process of evaluation and approval. Degree programs and universities can be accredited by different governmental and private agencies.

Advanced Teaching Licensure Program – A program designed for educators who hold a teaching license and are seeking to add an endorsement or content area to that license.

Administrative Licensure Program – A program designed for educators who hold a teaching license and are seeking administrative or leadership certification.

Approved program – a degree program that meets the requirements for licensure. Approval can be by the governing Board or state Department of Education or a private organization.

Board – group with authority to issue licenses and regulate profession.

CAEP--Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Through the consolidation of NCATE and TEAC, CAEP will serve as a single accreditor for educator preparation programs.

Credential---legal authority to practice profession. Some states classify a license as a credential.

Credit conversion---ratio used to convert semester credit hours to quarter credit hours or clock hours.

Degree---an award conferred by a college or university signifying that the recipient has satisfactorily completed a course of study. Capella offers degrees at the bachelor's, master's, specialist and doctoral level.

Distance Learning---education for students who are not physically "on site" in a traditional classroom or campus.

Educator is categorized as a teacher, administrator or support professional who may be required by the NASDTEC Member Jurisdiction to hold a license. A Member Jurisdiction may recognize additional categories of licensure (e.g. Career and Technical educators) not addressed by this Interstate Agreement.

Endorsement—an additional subject or content area added to an educator's license.

Equivalent program---degree program that satisfies the requirements for licensure, even though it is not accredited or approved.

Initial Teaching Licensure Preparation Program – a program designed for individuals who are seeking to become licensed teachers for the very first time. This type of program would be for an individual who has never been licensed as a teacher or for individuals who want to move from provisional or temporary licenses or certificates to permanent, initial teaching licenses or certificates.

Initial Professional Licensure Program – a program designed for individuals who are seeking to become a licensed school services professional (e.g. school counselor or psychologist).

Instructional hours---time spent learning material. Can be measured in quarter, credit or clock hours.

Internship---a temporary position with an emphasis on “hands-on” training. Internships provide opportunities for students to gain experience in their field, determine if they have an interest in a particular career, create a network of contacts, or gain school credit. Many Capella programs have required internships.

License---legal authority to practice a certain profession. Licenses are issued by governing Boards or state agencies, such as the Department of Education, in order to ensure that the public will not be harmed by the incompetence of the practitioners.

NCATE--National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE accredits schools, colleges, and departments of education in U.S. colleges and universities, as well as non-university entities that prepare educators for P-12 schools. Capella programs designed to prepare P-12 educators are part of Capella’s NCATE accredited Professional Educator Unit. NCATE and TEAC are in the process of merging and will become CAEP.

Program---area of study, similar to “major”.

Reciprocity--the exchange or recognition of licenses between states of the U.S. Complete reciprocity does not exist for educator licenses. Each individual states requirements must be met when a license is applied for.

Regionally accredited--- a college or university which has been evaluated and “approved” by one of the regional accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Capella University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

SPA -- Specialized Professional Association. National program recognition through NCATE’s accreditation process. Some of Capella’s programs have SPA recognition.

State Approved Program– Usually, state department or board of education approval (or appointed organization, e.g., Minnesota Board of Teaching) for a program designed to prepare candidates for an area of licensure or certification.

TEAC--Teacher Education Accreditation Council. TEAC accredits education programs designed for educator preparation. Capella’s programs do not have TEAC accreditation, but Capella’s School of Education is NCATE accredited. TEAC and NCATE are in the process of merging and will become CAEP.