

## Talking the Talk: Contacting a State Educator Licensing Office

Each state vests licensing authority in a specific office or agency, such as the Department of Education (DOE), Professional Standards Commission (PSC) or Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The licensing office then creates rules that provide the specific details governing the profession, including licensing requirements.

### What to ask

After you have located all of the licensing requirements in the state statutes and regulations, you will likely have questions. It is appropriate to contact your state licensing office and ask them. Even if you have a solid understanding of your state's requirements, it is wise to confirm your understanding with the state office. Remember that they are the gatekeepers and are the only group that has the power to issue licenses. The questions that arise from research will vary greatly from state to state. Here are a few examples of questions:

- Will you accept a Minnesota or Arizona approved degree program?
- Does your state participate in the NASDTEC interstate agreement?
- Can required coursework be completed outside of a degree?
- Is online coursework acceptable?
- Does a NCATE accredited degree program fulfill all academic requirements?
- What is your semester to quarter hour conversion ratio?

**Best Practice Tip:** Take detailed notes and request that the licensure representative send you an email, if possible, with a link or cite to the rules upon which they are basing their opinion.

### What to expect

Licensing offices rarely, if ever, will offer you their opinion on whether you will become licensed with a particular degree because licensure laws and rules are regularly changed; universities can change their programs; and there are many other factors or requirements besides your education that will be evaluated before a license will be issued. These include, among other things; actual degree earned, testing results, field experience completed, background checks and fingerprint clearance. In short, there are no guarantees when it comes to licensure. The best that any learner attending an "out-of-state" program can do is to understand and regularly review their state's requirements.