

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE**  
School of Education & Human Development  
Counselor Education Program

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF CREDENTIALS  
PURSUANT TO ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION  
AS A PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

I. Certificate Eligibility Pathway 1.

- A. Candidates *who are graduates from the Counselor Education program at the University of Southern Maine* will be provided a duplicate of the official letter of confirmation that is sent to the Certification Office in the Maine Department of Education. Further information about state requirements can be found through the following link: <http://maine.gov/doe/counseling/>

**Please note: Graduates of the USM Counselor Education Program who have waited five years or more to pursue school counseling certification – certification requirements may have changed to necessitate the completion of additional requirements.**

II. Certificate Eligibility Pathway 2 and Conditional Certificate.

- A. Individuals applying to ascertain if their academic and work experiences are equivalent to a master's degree in professional school counseling must comply with the following procedures. (*Please see checklist.*)

**Please note: A degree in a related helping profession, such as social work or school psychology, is not equivalent to the preparation for becoming a professional school counselor. Keep in mind that the reverse is also true – a degree in school counseling would not prepare individuals for work as a social worker or school psychologist.**

B. Candidate's responsibilities for credential review:

1. Write a letter requesting that your credentials be reviewed for the purpose of ascertaining eligibility for K-12 certification in Maine. (As of July 1, 1988 all school counselor certification is for K-12, and all credentials will be reviewed in that context.) Please include contact information.
2. Inclusion of a complete set of credentials to include the following items.
  - a. **Official** undergraduate and graduate transcripts. Please note that transcripts will become the property of USM and will not be returned.
  - b. Course descriptions of your graduate course work **from the time when graduate work was completed.** (Syllabi may be requested as needed.)
  - c. A current professional vita/resume (which details professional activities, education, workshops, courses, etcetera).
  - d. Two letters of recommendation from professionals in the field (one preferably from a school counselor). This letter is not to be a recommendation for certification per se, only an endorsement of the applicant's knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working in school settings.
  - e. Documentation of licensure or certification.

***Additional materials that may be included:***

- f. Reprints or copies of publication
  - g. Any additional material that may be relevant to your application
3. Completion of the Academic Worksheet delineating how your credentials meet the academic requirements set forth by USM.
  4. The applicant should also submit a written narrative that includes a statement of one's philosophy of school counseling, theoretical orientation/framework, and description of special considerations related to the credential review.

C. Faculty review process:

1. Upon receipt of the requested credentials, a designated counselor education faculty member will examine the documents to ensure their completeness and then request that at least one other member of the department faculty review these credentials. A third review will be requested when there is a disagreement between the recommendations of the two initial reviewers. The purpose of the review is to determine if the academic and work experiences of the applicant are equivalent to having graduated from an approved graduate program in school counseling.
2. The criteria to be used in this review are the Counselor Education Program Approval Standards of the Maine Department of Education. The implementation of these standards is evidenced by the required program of study for a Masters Degree in School Counseling as established by the University of Southern Maine. The area requirements of these standards are:
  - a. an understanding of the profession of school counseling.
  - b. the ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with children, youth and adults.
  - c. an understanding of educational philosophies and school operations.
  - d. consultation skills.
  - e. counseling skills (group and individual).
  - f. an understanding of human development and behavior.
  - g. knowledge of career development and career education.
  - h. knowledge of assessment and testing.
  - i. research skills related to the field of school counseling.
  - j. internship under a certified Professional School Counselor at the appropriate level or its equivalent.
3. Additional criteria the faculty reviewers consider include:
  - a. Masters degree from an accredited institution.
  - b. accepted courses must carry a grade of "B" or better.
4. Candidates with a counseling master's degree who need more than 18 credit hours for certification are strongly encouraged to consider pursuing a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) with a concentration in school counseling. ***The pursuit of this certificate will allow the candidate to be ranked higher on wait lists, apply for financial aid, as***

*well as be considered for a higher pay grade once employed.* For information about graduate admissions and application for a CAS specifically, please click the following link: <http://usm.maine.edu/counselor-education/certificate-advanced-study-counseling-admissions>

5. The following actions may be taken by a designated Counselor Education faculty member:
  - a. Recommendation for certification. An official letter will be sent to the Maine State Department of Education indicating equivalency of preparation and recommending certification. A copy of this letter will be sent to the applicant.
  - b. Recommendation for further education. An official letter will be sent to the individual listing the specific courses or degree program that need(s) to be completed to meet the above requirements. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Maine State Department of Education.
6. The applicant may appeal the decision concerning eligibility for certification. The appeal will be processed through the Certification Officer, Maine State Department of Education.

**A FEE OF \$50 IS REQUIRED OF ALL INDIVIDUALS  
REQUESTING CREDENTIAL ANALYSIS.  
(Please make checks payable to USM.)**

Please submit materials to:

Counselor Education Program  
Attn: Credential Review  
8H Bailey Hall  
University of Southern Maine  
Gorham, ME 04038

9/2017