K12 ACADEMICS — A FIELD GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

The Complete Guide to Accreditation

Who accredits schools, colleges, and professions, how the U.S. system works in 2026, and how to confirm any school is the real thing.

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community**. A search engine, a community, and a resource in one.

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Years online, since 2004

200+
Directories, national & global

30M+
People reached each year

185
Countries reached monthly

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Our State of Education Reports have been featured by AP News, Bloomberg and network TV affiliates, and K12 Academics is cited in journals, textbooks and news across the education sector.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Understanding accreditation

What accreditation is, how the U.S. system works, and the two tiers that decide aid, transfer and licensure.

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What accreditation is

WHAT IT IS

Accreditation is a voluntary, peer-reviewed quality review. An independent body publishes standards for what a sound school or program looks like, then checks schools against them on a regular cycle. A school that passes is accredited.

WHY THE WORD MATTERS

That single word unlocks federal financial aid, lets credits and degrees transfer, satisfies licensing boards, and signals legitimacy to employers. Without it, a degree can be worth very little.

WHAT IT IS NOT

Accreditation is not a ranking of how good a school is. It is a yes-or-no answer to whether the school meets an agreed floor of quality, and whether a recognized body still vouches for it.

THE CYCLE

Accreditation is never permanent. Schools are reviewed on a cycle, usually every five to ten years, with interim reports in between. Status can be affirmed, placed on warning, or withdrawn.

How the U.S. system works

NO SINGLE OFFICE

There is no one government office that runs accreditation. Private accrediting bodies do the reviewing, and two kinds of recognizer sit above them and decide which accreditors count.

USDE

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes accreditors for eligibility for federal student aid. If financial aid matters, USDE recognition is the list that counts.

CHEA

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation is a private, non-governmental seal of academic legitimacy. Many accreditors hold USDE recognition, CHEA recognition, or both.

THE 2024 CHANGE

The old regional-versus-national split ended in 2024. Institutional accreditors now operate nationwide, so the real question is whether USDE or CHEA still recognizes the accreditor.

The two tiers of accreditation

INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional accreditation covers the whole school. It carries federal financial aid and lets credits and degrees transfer between schools. Every legitimate college has it.

PROGRAMMATIC

Programmatic, or specialized, accreditation covers a single program or profession within a school. For many careers it decides whether you can sit a licensing exam.

WHY BOTH MATTER

A school can be institutionally accredited while a program inside it is not programmatically accredited. For a licensed field, check the program, not just the school.

MATCH IT TO YOUR GOAL

Working toward a license? Check the programmatic accreditation. Planning to transfer or use aid? Check the institutional accreditation and Title IV eligibility first.

SECTION 02 OF 07

K-12 school accreditation

The regional, independent, faith-based and state bodies that accredit American schools.

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K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

Cognia Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	**LEVEL** PreK–12 + systems	**REACH** 40,000+ schools · ~90 countries
DIVISIONS NCA · SACS · NWAC	**STANDARDS** 5 domains · 15 rubric	**CYCLE** 6 years

WHO COGNIA IS

Cognia is a non-profit school-improvement and accreditation organization that accredits and serves more than 40,000 institutions across roughly 90 countries, reaching an estimated 25 million students. That scale makes it the largest school accreditor in the world by institution count. It is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia, and is the direct successor to AdvancED. Cognia.

A 130-YEAR LINEAGE, IN PLAIN ORDER

Cognia is new as a name but old as an institution. Untangling the history explains why so many schools display different-looking seals for what is, today, a single credential.

WHAT COGNIA ACCREDITS

Cognia accredits at the level of the whole institution, not the individual program, and it works across nearly every model of school: Because accreditation attaches to the institution, it covers every enrolled student for as long as the school stays in good standing — a student never applies for or holds Cognia accreditation individually.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

Middle States (MSA-CESS)

TYPE Institutional	LEVEL PreK–12 + CTE	REGION Mid-Atlantic + intl
FOUNDED 1887	STANDARDS 12	TERM 7 years

WHO MIDDLE STATES IS

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), founded in 1887, is one of the oldest accrediting bodies in the United States. Its K-12 accreditation is carried out by the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS), which is actually two commissions working in tandem.

REGION AND REACH

Its core footprint is the Mid-Atlantic — New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia — extending to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Beyond that, Middle States has a large international presence, accrediting American-curriculum and international schools in dozens of countries. A Middle States seal is a common sight on.

WHAT MSA-CESS ACCREDITS

MSA-CESS accredits a notably broad range of institutions, which is part of why it is so widely held.

THE 12 STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

Every Middle States school must meet the same 12 Standards for Accreditation — the “building blocks” of a quality school. There is deliberate flexibility inside them so that very different schools can meet the same bar in ways that fit their mission. The twelve cover areas such as: A subset, the Standards for Candidacy.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

NEASC Accreditation

TYPE	**LEVEL**	**REGION**
Institutional	PreK–12	New England + 85+ countries
FOUNDED	**COMMISSIONS**	**CYCLE**
1885	3	5–10 years

WHO NEASC IS

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), founded in 1885, is the accreditor for schools across Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and for a large network of American and international schools worldwide. As of mid-2024 it accredited roughly 659 U.S. public schools, 532 U.S. private schools, and 339.

THE THREE COMMISSIONS

NEASC accreditation is delivered through three commissions, each with its own standards and pathways: Each commission is a panel of practicing educators that meets several times a year to decide accreditation actions based on visiting-team reports.

STANDARDS AND LEARNING PRINCIPLES

NEASC accreditation rests on research-based Standards for Accreditation, anchored by Foundation Standards that every school must meet and a set of Learning Principles that describe high-quality learning. The standards emphasize learning culture and impact on students, and include DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) and child-protection expectations. The model is deliberately reflective: schools evidence.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

WASC (ACS WASC)

TYPE Institutional	LEVEL PreK–12 + postsec.	REGION CA · HI · Pacific · Asia · intl
FOUNDED 1962	PROCESS Focus on Learning	CYCLE 6 years

WHO ACS WASC IS

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is the K-12 arm of WASC, founded in 1962. It accredits schools in California and Hawaii, across Guam and the Pacific Basin, throughout East Asia, and in dozens of other countries — one of the six historic regional bodies, and the.

WHAT ACS WASC ACCREDITS

ACS WASC accredits a wide span of institutions and is unusually flexible about model.

THE ACS WASC CRITERIA & SCHOOLWIDE LEARNER OUTCOMES

ACS WASC accreditation rests on two connected ideas. The first is the ACS WASC criteria — research-based guidelines for systemic school improvement, organized by category (purpose and governance, curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability, and the culture and support for learning). The second is a school's Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs): a set of outcomes the.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

NAIS & Independent Schools

TYPE Association	MEMBERS ~1,700 schools	ROLE Sets criteria
ACCREDITOR? No — via associations	OVERSIGHT ICAISA	CYCLE Assoc. 10-yr review

WHAT NAIS IS

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is the national membership organization for private, independent PreK-12 schools in the United States. As of 2024 it represented roughly 1,700 member schools and associations, serving more than 738,000 students. It provides research, professional development, and advocacy, and it sets expectations for good practice across the sector.

HOW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ARE ACTUALLY ACCREDITED

The independent-school world runs on a three-layer model, and knowing it makes everything clear: So the entity that accredits your child's school is almost always a regional or state independent-school association, not NAIS itself — often alongside a regional accreditor such as Cognia, Middle States, NEASC, or ACS WASC.

ICAISA — THE COUNCIL BEHIND THE CRITERIA

The International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA) is a non-profit that was, until 2017, the NAIS Commission on Accreditation. ICAISA does not accredit individual schools either. Instead, its roughly 20 member accrediting associations — representing schools in more than 100 countries — do the accrediting, and ICAISA holds each of them to the.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

NCPSA Accreditation

TYPE	**FOUNDED**	**ROLE**
Umbrella / recognizer	1993	Accredits accreditors
MEMBERS	**REACH**	**SCOPE**
20+ associations	~15,000 schools	Private schools

WHAT NCPSA IS

The National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA), founded in 1993, is a non-profit that recognizes private-school accrediting bodies — an "accreditor of accreditors." It does not accredit individual schools. Instead it convenes a nationwide network of more than 20 recognized accrediting associations, which together accredit roughly 15,000 schools worldwide, and it holds each.

THE REASON NCPSA HAD TO BE INVENTED

NCPSA exists because of a specific gap. In 1985, the U.S. Department of Education determined that it had no legal authority to recognize elementary and secondary (K-12) accrediting agencies — federal recognition is a higher-education, student-aid function. That left the diverse world of private-school accreditors with no national body to vouch for them.

HOW NCPSA "ACCREDITS THE ACCREDITORS"

Through a rigorous peer-reviewed process, NCPSA evaluates each accrediting agency's standards, operations, and integrity — not the individual schools, but the machinery that accredits them. A recognized member has demonstrated that its accreditation program is credible, consistent, and accountable.

K-12 SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

Catholic & Faith-Based Schools

TYPE Association + accreditors	ASSOCIATION NCEA (1904)	STANDARDS NSBECS · 4 domains
MAIN ACCREDITOR WCEA	MODEL Co-accreditation	LEVEL PreK–12

THE NCEA'S ROLE

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), founded in 1904, is the professional membership association for Catholic educators in the United States. It supports Catholic schools with formation, advocacy, and — most importantly for accreditation — a shared framework of standards. Like NAIS on the independent side, the NCEA is a supporting association, not the.

THE NATIONAL STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS (NSBECS)

The framework the whole Catholic sector uses is the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) — second edition released in 2023, with rubrics completed in 2024. It is organized into four domains that Catholic accreditors align their processes to: Schools use the NSBECS rubrics both to self-evaluate and.

HOW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE ACTUALLY ACCREDITED

A Catholic school earns accreditation from a Catholic accrediting body and/or a regional accreditor — very often both at once. The main Catholic accreditors include.

State Accreditation

TYPE State-run / recognized	PUBLIC SCHOOLS Authorized by state	APPROACHES Several
AID LINK None (K-12)	PRIVATE State-recognized bodies	FIRST STOP State agency

AUTHORIZATION VS. ACCREDITATION

Start with the distinction that resolves most confusion. Every U.S. public school is authorized by its state — the legal permission to operate and enroll students. Accreditation is a separate, usually voluntary quality review by a recognized body. A public school is always authorized; it may or may not additionally be accredited.

HOW THE STATES ACTUALLY HANDLE IT

Approaches vary widely, and the numbers are worth knowing: All fifty states have accountability systems even where they have no accreditation; the two are different tools.

WHEN THE STATE ITSELF ACCREDITS

Two concrete examples show how state-run accreditation looks: In several states — Mississippi, Missouri, and Virginia among them — school performance rolls up into an overall accreditation rating, folding accreditation into the accountability system.

STATE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE-SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

For private schools, states generally require registration or licensing and then recognize accreditation from approved bodies for practical purposes. The state usually delegates this to a recognized umbrella.

SECTION 03 OF 07

Higher-ed institutional

The bodies that accredit whole colleges, and how USDE and CHEA recognition works.

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HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

HLC Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION 19 states	FOUNDED 1895 (NCA)
STANDARDS 5 Criteria	CYCLE 10 years	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

WHO HLC IS

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), headquartered in Chicago, accredits degree-granting colleges and universities. It was historically the North Central Association accreditor and covers a 19-state footprint across the Midwest and Mountain West — Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia.

THE FIVE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

HLC judges institutions against five Criteria for Accreditation (revised in 2024, effective September 2025), each broken into Core Components, and underpinned by non-negotiable Assumed Practices.

THE STANDARD AND OPEN PATHWAYS

HLC members reaffirm accreditation on a 10-year cycle via one of two pathways (a third, AQIP, was phased out in 2020).

HOW THE REVIEW WORKS

- Eligibility & candidacy New institutions apply for HLC membership and pass through eligibility and candidacy. - Assurance Argument The institution assembles evidence into a peer-reviewed narrative showing it meets every Criterion and Assumed Practice. - Peer review & visit Trained peer reviewers evaluate the evidence and visit the campus. - Commission action HLC.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

MSCHE Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION Mid-Atlantic + PR	INCORPORATED 2015
STANDARDS 7	CYCLE 8 years	RECOGNITION USDE · left CHEA 2024

WHO MSCHE IS

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accredits degree-granting colleges and universities in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, plus international institutions — around 500 in all. It became a legally separate entity in 2013 (incorporated as the Mid-Atlantic Region Commission.

THE SEVEN STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

MSCHE's current standards (the consolidated set effective July 2023) number seven, with detailed Criteria beneath each. They lean hard on student learning, assessment, and data-driven improvement.

THE EIGHT-YEAR CYCLE & MID-POINT PEER REVIEW

MSCHE reviews its members on an eight-year cycle. Its signature feature is the Mid-Point Peer Review (MPPR) at the midpoint, which draws on five years of accumulated data from the Annual Institutional Update (AIU) to confirm the institution remains financially healthy and effective between full reviews.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

NECHE Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION New England + intl	ROOTS 1885
STANDARDS 9	CYCLE 10 years	RECOGNITION USDE · left CHEA 2025

WHO NECHE IS

The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) accredits degree-granting colleges and universities across Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, plus a number of international institutions — around 200 in all, including some of the most selective universities in the world such as Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Brown. Tracing its roots.

THE NINE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

NECHE evaluates institutions against nine Standards for Accreditation, with a strong emphasis on educational effectiveness and continuous improvement.

THE 10-YEAR CYCLE

NECHE reviews members on a 10-year cycle: a comprehensive self-study and evaluation visit, a five-year interim report at the midpoint, and reaffirmation at the end. New institutions may spend up to five years in candidacy before earning initial accreditation.

RECOGNITION AND STANDING

NECHE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the federal Title IV gate. Like MSCHE and WSCUC, NECHE declined to renew CHEA recognition (ending January 1, 2025); CHEA recognition is voluntary and separate from federal recognition, so this does not affect its federal standing or its institutions. As the oldest accreditor, with many.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

SACSCOC Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION 11 Southern states	STANDARDS Principles of Accreditation
SIGNATURE QEP	CYCLE 10 yr + 5th-yr	RENAMING Sept 2026

WHO SACSCOC IS

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredits degree-granting colleges and universities across the eleven Southern states — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia — and, since 2020, may accredit beyond them. It is the largest of the former regionals by region.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION

SACSCOC bases accreditation on The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2024 Edition) — its single source document of standards. The Principles are organized into Core Requirements (threshold requirements every institution must meet) and additional Standards covering mission, governance, faculty, academics, student services, finances, and institutional effectiveness. Compliance is documented in a Compliance.

THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (QEP)

SACSCOC's signature, and what sets it apart from other accreditors, is the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Every institution undergoing reaffirmation must develop a focused, data-driven plan (no more than about 75 pages) targeting a specific area of student learning or student success, commit resources to it, and assess its results.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

NWCCU Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION 7 states + BC	STANDARDS 2 (2020)
CYCLE 7 years	FOCUS Student success & equity	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

WHO NWCCU IS

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accredits degree-granting colleges and universities in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and in British Columbia, Canada — and, since 2020, beyond its historic region. Its members range from large research universities to tribal and community colleges.

THE TWO 2020 STANDARDS

NWCCU streamlined its framework in 2020 to just two Standards for Accreditation, with a distinctive up-front emphasis on student success and equity: Institutions must also meet NWCCU's Eligibility Requirements and Commission policies.

THE SEVEN-YEAR CYCLE

NWCCU runs a seven-year Cycle of Accreditation with three self-evaluations plus annual reporting.

HOW A COLLEGE JOINS AND STAYS

- Applicant One to three years to prepare to meet the Standards. - Candidate Up to five years of pre-accreditation status. - Member (Accredited) Initial accreditation begins the seven-year cycle, with annual reports throughout. - Peer review Evaluations are conducted by trained peer reviewers, not government inspectors.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

WSCUC Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	FORMER REGION CA & HI + national	LEVEL Four-year / senior
STANDARDS 4 (2023) + CFRs	OPENED OUT-OF-REGION 2020 (first)	RECOGNITION USDE · left CHEA 2024

WHO WSCUC IS

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits four-year ("senior") colleges and universities historically in California and Hawaii, and its members include some of the most prestigious institutions in the world — Stanford, Caltech, USC, and the University of California system. It is one of three commissions that use the WASC name; the.

THE 2023 STANDARDS & CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

WSCUC's 2023 Standards of Accreditation (mandatory for reviews after June 30, 2024) are four Standards, each amplified by detailed Criteria for Review (CFRs) that spell out what compliance looks like. Broadly, the four cover: The CFRs are what evaluation teams actually cite, making WSCUC review notably evidence-driven.

HOW THE REVIEW WORKS

- Institutional Report The institution assembles an evidence-based self-review against the Standards and CFRs. - Offsite Review A team reviews the report remotely and identifies lines of inquiry. - Accreditation Visit A peer team visits campus to test the findings and meet the community. - Commission action WSCUC acts on reaffirmation, with a Mid-Cycle.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

ACCJC Accreditation

TYPE Institutional	SERVES Community / junior colleges	REGION CA · HI · Pacific
STANDARDS 2024 Standards	SIGNATURE ISER	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

WHO ACCJC IS

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), part of WASC and headquartered in Novato, California, accredits associate-degree-granting community, junior, and career-and-technical colleges in California and Hawaii and across U.S. territories in the Pacific (such as Guam and American Samoa), plus some non-domestic associate-degree institutions. It is the accreditor for the large California.

THE 2024 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

ACCJC adopted new 2024 Accreditation Standards, alongside its Eligibility Requirements and Commission policies. The Standards center on educational quality, student learning and achievement, and institutional effectiveness, with review criteria and suggested evidence for each. Institutions document their alignment in the ISER.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (ISER)

The heart of ACCJC review is the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) — a comprehensive, evidence-based self-analysis of a college's educational quality and effectiveness against the Standards. A typical ISER runs to several hundred pages and is produced by cross-functional teams drawing in faculty, staff, and students, then validated by a peer review team whose.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

National & Career Accreditors

TYPE	SERVES	MAIN BODIES
Institutional · national	Career · online · vocational	6
RECOGNITION	**FOOTING**	**CAVEAT**
USDE (some + CHEA)	Equal since 2020	Transfer varies

WHAT "NATIONAL" ACCREDITORS ARE

Historically, U.S. institutional accreditors split into regional (region-bound, broad universities) and national (nationwide, focused on career, technical, online, and for-profit schools). The 2020 rule erased that federal distinction — all are now simply institutional accreditors held to the same standards and conferring the same Title IV aid eligibility. But the term "national" persists for.

THE MAIN NATIONAL & CAREER ACCREDITORS

- DEAC — Distance Education Accrediting Commission Founded 1926 (as the National Home Study Council); accredits online and distance-education institutions. Recognized by both USDE and CHEA. Members include large online universities. - ACCSC — Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges Since 1965; the leading accreditor of career, trade, and technical schools — over.

SAME FEDERAL FOOTING, DIFFERENT HISTORY

Post-2020, a degree from a national-accredited institution is federally equivalent to one from a former regional: same Title IV eligibility, same recognized-institution status. What differs is history and market perception — employers, licensure boards, and universities built decades of habits around regional accreditation, and those habits change slowly.



HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

Faith-Related Accreditors

TYPE Institutional · faith-related	SERVES Seminaries · Bible · rabbinical	RECOGNIZED FOUR ATS·ABHE·TRACS·AARTS
RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA (the four)	COMMON Dual w/ regional	CAVEAT Watch "approval" boards

A CATEGORY OF THEIR OWN

Religious postsecondary institutions — seminaries, Bible colleges, theological schools, and rabbinical yeshivas — are often accredited by national faith-related accreditors. CHEA formally distinguishes these from ordinary institutional accreditors, and recognizes four of them, all also recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

DUAL ACCREDITATION WITH A REGIONAL BODY

Many faith-based colleges hold both a faith-related accreditation and a former-regional (institutional) one. Of ATS's member schools, well over half are also regionally accredited. Schools do this for transfer, prestige, and doctoral pathways — a regional credential travels more easily into secular graduate programs. A seminary embedded in a university, or one offering undergraduate.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

- Federal aid A USDE-recognized faith-related accreditor makes a school eligible for federal aid. - Ministry vs. secular paths For ministry roles, faith-related accreditation is often exactly what's expected; for secular graduate school or licensure, check whether a regional credential is needed. - Transfer Credits from faith-only-accredited schools may transfer less easily to secular.

HIGHER-ED INSTITUTIONAL

USDE vs. CHEA Recognition

TWO RECOGNIZERS USDE + CHEA	USDE ROLE Title IV gate	CHEA ROLE Academic quality
USDE ADVISER NACIQI	STATUS ≠ Quality rank	AS OF 2026

ACCREDITING THE ACCREDITOR

Accreditation only means something if the accreditor itself is credible. In the United States, two independent bodies recognize accreditors, and they answer different questions. Neither accredits colleges directly; they vet the organizations that do.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (USDE)

USDE recognition is governmental and rests on the Higher Education Act. Its purpose is narrow but powerful: to decide which accreditors may serve as gatekeepers for federal student aid (Title IV). An institution can only draw federal grants and loans if it is accredited by a USDE-recognized agency.

THE COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION (CHEA)

CHEA recognition is private and non-governmental. Established in 1996 by college and university presidents, CHEA recognizes institutional, national faith-related, and programmatic accreditors on grounds of academic quality — beyond the federal-funding bar. Its recognition is voluntary, and it is a leading advocate for the independence of accreditation. CHEA is led by president Nasser Paydar.

SECTION 04 OF 07

Programmatic by field

For a licensed profession, the specialized accreditor is often the one that decides whether you can get licensed. Every field, with all its accreditors.

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Health professions 29

Business, law & engineering 60

Education & behavioral 67

Design, arts & media 76

Other professional & technical 81

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Nursing Accreditation

FIELD	ACCREDITORS	ALSO REQUIRED
Nursing	CCNE · ACEN · CNEA	State board approval
EXAM	**RECOGNITION**	**VERIFY**
NCLEX	USDE (ACEN also CHEA)	Accreditor + board

HOW NURSING ACCREDITATION WORKS

Nursing has three recognized programmatic accreditors, all recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, plus a separate and equally important layer: state board of nursing approval. Getting these two things straight prevents almost every nursing-school mistake.

THE THREE NURSING ACCREDITORS

For a BSN or graduate program, either CCNE or ACEN (or CNEA) meets the bar. For LPN/ADN programs, use ACEN or CNEA — CCNE does not cover those levels. (Nurse-anesthesia programs have their own accreditor, the COA.).

WHAT ACCREDITATION BUYS A NURSING STUDENT

- NCLEX & licensure Many state boards require graduation from an accredited (or state-approved) program to sit for the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN. - Graduate school Virtually all MSN, DNP, and PhD programs require a degree from an accredited nursing program. - Employers & Magnet hospitals Many health systems, especially Magnet-designated hospitals, prefer or require.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Medical School Accreditation

FIELD Medicine (MD / DO)	ACCREDITORS LCME (MD) · COCA (DO)	GATES USMLE/COMLEX · residency
REQUIRED FOR Licensure, all states	RECOGNITION USDE	VERIFY Accreditor directory

TWO ACCREDITORS, SPLIT BY DEGREE

U.S. medical education is accredited by one of two bodies, depending on the degree: Both are programmatic accreditors recognized by the Department of Education. Which one applies is determined entirely by whether the school grants the MD or the DO.

WHY MEDICAL ACCREDITATION IS THE GATE TO EVERYTHING

In medicine, accreditation is not optional signaling — it is the gatekeeper for the entire licensure pathway.

THE INTERNATIONAL ROUTE (ECFMG)

Graduates of medical schools outside the U.S. can pursue U.S. licensure through ECFMG certification, provided their school is listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools as meeting eligibility requirements. This is a separate, well-defined pathway — but it still hinges on the school's recognized standing, not an unaccredited shortcut.

LCME STANDARDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Medical-school accreditation is caught up in the 2025-26 federal scrutiny of accreditors. Executive Order 14279 named the LCME specifically, and the LCME revised its standards — notably reworking the former diversity element (Standard 7.6) in its 2027-2028 framework toward clinical reasoning and self-directed learning. The LCME and COCA remain the recognized medical accreditors.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Physician Assistant Accreditation

FIELD Physician assistant	ACCREDITOR ARC-PA	DEGREE Master's
EXAM PANCE (NCCPA)	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION CHEA

ARC-PA AND PA EDUCATION

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the recognized accreditor of physician assistant programs, which are now master's-level. CHEA-recognized.

ARC-PA ACCREDITATION, THE PANCE, AND LICENSURE

- ARC-PA-accredited master's The required professional degree. - PANCE The national certifying exam (NCCPA) — open only to accredited-program graduates. - PA-C National certification, required for state licensure. - State license Issued by the state medical or PA board.

ACCREDITATION STATUSES

New PA programs earn Accreditation-Provisional status before Accreditation-Continued; graduates of provisionally accredited programs are eligible for the PANCE, which protects early cohorts. Always confirm a program's current status, since PA program accreditation is closely watched.

WHO ACCREDITS PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), the recognized accreditor of PA master's programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Nurse Anesthesia Accreditation

FIELD Nurse anesthesia	ACCREDITOR COA	DEGREE Doctoral
EXAM NBCRNA	CREDENTIAL CRNA	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

COA AND NURSE ANESTHESIA EDUCATION

The Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA) is the recognized accreditor of nurse anesthesia programs, which are now doctoral-entry (DNP or DNAP). Recognized by USDE and CHEA.

FROM RN TO CRNA

- Registered nurse + critical-care experience The prerequisite before a nurse anesthesia program. - COA-accredited doctoral program DNP or DNAP — the required entry-level degree. - NBCRNA National Certification Exam Passed to earn the CRNA credential. - APRN licensure State licensure as an advanced-practice registered nurse.

WHO ACCREDITS NURSE ANESTHESIA PROGRAMS

The Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA), which accredits doctoral-entry nurse anesthesia programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED A COA-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A CRNA

Yes. You must graduate from a COA-accredited doctoral program and pass the NBCRNA exam to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Midwifery Accreditation

FIELD Midwifery	ACCREDITORS ACME · MEAC	CREDENTIALS CNM/CM · CPM
EXAMS AMCB · NARM	RECOGNITION ACME: USDE	NOTE MEAC left USDE 2026

TWO PATHS INTO MIDWIFERY

U.S. midwifery has two education-and-credential routes, each with its own accreditor.

MEAC AND FEDERAL RECOGNITION

MEAC withdrew from U.S. Department of Education recognition in 2026, as several programmatic accreditors did. That did not change its role as the accreditor for the CPM route — another example that recognition status and field role are separate. ACME remains USDE-recognized.

WHO ACCREDITS MIDWIFERY PROGRAMS

Two bodies: ACME (the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education, part of ACNM) for the nurse-midwifery/CNM-CM route, and MEAC (the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council) for the direct-entry/CPM route.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CNM AND A CPM

A Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) is an advanced-practice nurse from an ACME-accredited program, licensed in all states; a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) comes from a MEAC-accredited or NARM portfolio route and is licensed in many states.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Dental Accreditation

FIELD Dentistry	ACCREDITOR CODA	DEGREES DDS · DMD
REQUIRED FOR INBDE / licensure	RECOGNITION USDE	VERIFY CODA directory

CODA AND DENTAL EDUCATION

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), part of the American Dental Association, is the national programmatic accreditor for dental and dental-related education — more than 1,400 programs. Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

SPECIALTIES AND ALLIED DENTAL

Dental specialties require a CODA-accredited advanced-education (residency) program on top of the DDS/DMD. On the allied side, dental hygienists and dental assistants typically need a CODA-accredited program to sit for their respective board exams and be licensed or certified — so CODA matters across the whole dental team, not just dentists.

FOREIGN-TRAINED DENTISTS

Internationally trained dentists usually complete an advanced-standing program at a CODA-accredited U.S. dental school to meet the domestic education requirement, and CODA also runs an international consultation-and-accreditation process that some state boards recognize for foreign schools.

WHO ACCREDITS DENTAL SCHOOLS

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), part of the American Dental Association, which accredits predoctoral (DDS/DMD), advanced/specialty, and allied dental programs. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Veterinary Accreditation

FIELD Veterinary medicine	ACCREDITOR AVMA-COE	DEGREE DVM / VMD
REQUIRED FOR NAVLE / licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA	VERIFY AVMA directory

THE AVMA COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA-COE) is the recognized accreditor of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM/VMD) programs in the United States (and it accredits schools internationally as well). Recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and CHEA.

WHAT AVMA-COE ACCREDITS

AVMA-COE accredits the professional DVM program at colleges of veterinary medicine — covering curriculum, clinical resources, faculty, and outcomes. Veterinary technician programs are accredited separately by the AVMA's Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA).

WHO ACCREDITS VETERINARY SCHOOLS

The American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA-COE), which accredits DVM/VMD programs in the U.S. and internationally. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED AN AVMA-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A VETERINARIAN

Yes. You must graduate from an AVMA-COE-accredited program and pass the NAVLE, plus meet your state's requirements, to be licensed.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Optometry Accreditation

FIELD Optometry	ACCREDITOR ACOE	DEGREE OD
EXAM NBEO	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

ACOE AND OPTOMETRY EDUCATION

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), affiliated with the American Optometric Association, is the recognized accreditor of Doctor of Optometry (OD) programs, along with optometric residencies and technician programs. Recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and CHEA.

WHAT ACOE ACCREDITS

ACOE accredits professional OD degree programs, optometric residency programs (for advanced clinical training), and optometric technician programs. For becoming a licensed optometrist, the ACOE-accredited OD is the degree that matters.

WHO ACCREDITS OPTOMETRY PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), affiliated with the American Optometric Association, which accredits OD programs, residencies, and technician programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED AN ACOE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME AN OPTOMETRIST

Yes. You must graduate from an ACOE-accredited OD program and pass the NBEO exams to be eligible for licensure, which all states require.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Opticianry Accreditation

FIELD Opticianry	ACCREDITOR COA	DEGREE Two-year
CERTS ABO · NCLE	LICENSED Some states	RECOGNITION CHEA

COA AND OPTICIANRY EDUCATION

The Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA) accredits two-year opticianry degree programs at post-secondary institutions. CHEA-recognized (since 2010). Opticians fit and dispense eyewear based on prescriptions from optometrists and ophthalmologists.

WHO ACCREDITS OPTICIANRY PROGRAMS

The Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA), which accredits two-year opticianry degree programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

WHAT CERTIFICATIONS DO OPTICIANS EARN

National certification through the ABO (American Board of Opticianry, for eyeglasses) and the NCLE (National Contact Lens Examiners, for contact lenses).

ARE OPTICIANS LICENSED

About half of U.S. states license opticians, often requiring ABO/NCLE certification and/or an accredited program or apprenticeship; the other states do not regulate the field.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN OPTICIAN AND AN OPTOMETRIST

Opticians fit and dispense eyewear from a prescription; optometrists (see the optometry page) examine eyes and write prescriptions and hold a doctoral degree.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Pharmacy Accreditation

FIELD Pharmacy	ACCREDITOR ACPE	DEGREE PharmD
REQUIRED FOR NAPLEX / licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA	VERIFY ACPE directory

ACPE AND THE PHARMD

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) is the recognized accreditor of professional Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) programs in the United States. It also accredits continuing pharmacy education and pharmacy-technician programs. Recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and CHEA.

WHAT ACPE COVERS

- PharmD programs The professional doctorate required for pharmacist practice. - Pharmacy technician programs ACPE accredits technician education and training programs. - Continuing pharmacy education ACPE is the standard for providers of pharmacist continuing education. - International recognition ACPE also offers an international certification for pharmacy programs outside the U.S.

HOW PHARMACY ACCREDITATION WORKS

Like other health-professions accreditors, ACPE uses a self-study and site-visit model against its standards, with new programs earning pre-candidate and candidate status before full accreditation — and students in candidate programs are generally eligible for licensure on graduation, an important protection for early cohorts.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Podiatric Medicine Accreditation

FIELD Podiatric medicine	ACCREDITOR CPME	DEGREE DPM
EXAM APMLE	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION USDE

CPME AND PODIATRIC EDUCATION

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) is the recognized accreditor of Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) programs, and it also approves podiatric residencies and fellowships. USDE-recognized.

DEGREE, EXAM, RESIDENCY

- CPME-accredited DPM The professional degree in podiatric medicine. - APMLE The national licensing exam series for podiatry. - CPME-approved residency Required postgraduate training, three years in length. - Board certification After licensure, boards such as ABFAS and ABPM certify podiatric specialties.

WHO ACCREDITS PODIATRY PROGRAMS

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME), which accredits DPM programs and approves podiatric residencies and fellowships. It is USDE-recognized.

DO I NEED A CPME-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A PODIATRIST

Yes. You must graduate from a CPME-accredited DPM program, pass the APMLE, and complete a CPME-approved residency to be licensed.

WHAT IS THE APMLE

The American Podiatric Medical Licensing Examinations, the national exam series required for podiatric licensure.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Physical Therapy Accreditation

FIELD Physical therapy	ACCREDITOR CAPTE	DEGREES DPT · PTA
REQUIRED FOR NPTE / licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA	VERIFY CAPTE directory

CAPTE AND PT EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), part of the American Physical Therapy Association, is the recognized accreditor of U.S. physical therapy education. It accredits Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs for physical therapists and physical therapist assistant (PTA) programs. Recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DPT AND PTA

- DPT — Doctor of Physical Therapy The entry-level professional degree for physical therapists; a CAPTE-accredited DPT is required for PT licensure. - PTA — Physical Therapist Assistant A CAPTE-accredited associate-level PTA program is required to become a licensed or certified physical therapist assistant.

WHO ACCREDITS PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), part of the APTA, which accredits DPT and PTA programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED A CAPTE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Yes. A Doctor of Physical Therapy from a CAPTE-accredited program is required for licensure, and it makes you eligible for the NPTE.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Occupational Therapy Accreditation

FIELD Occupational therapy	ACCREDITOR ACOTE	DEGREES OTD/MSOT · OTA
REQUIRED FOR NBCOT / licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA	VERIFY ACOTE directory

ACOTE AND OT EDUCATION

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), part of the American Occupational Therapy Association, is the recognized accreditor of U.S. occupational therapy education. It accredits entry-level occupational therapist programs (master's, MSOT, and doctoral, OTD) and occupational therapy assistant (OTA) programs. Recognized by USDE and CHEA.

OT AND OTA

- Occupational therapist (MSOT / OTD) Entry-level master's or doctoral programs for occupational therapists; ACOTE accreditation is required to sit for the NBCOT OTR exam. - Occupational therapy assistant (OTA) Associate- or bachelor-level ACOTE-accredited programs for OTAs, leading to the NBCOT COTA credential and state licensure.

WHO ACCREDITS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), part of the AOTA, which accredits occupational therapist (MSOT/OTD) and occupational therapy assistant (OTA) programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED AN ACOTE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME AN OT

Yes. Graduating from an ACOTE-accredited program is required to sit for the NBCOT certification exam, which underpins state licensure.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Respiratory Care Accreditation

FIELD Respiratory care	ACCREDITOR CoARC	DEGREE Associate+
EXAM NBRC (TMC/CSE)	CREDENTIAL CRT · RRT	RECOGNITION CHEA

COARC AND RESPIRATORY THERAPY EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) is the recognized accreditor of respiratory therapy education programs, offered at the associate through master's level. CHEA-recognized.

CRT AND RRT

- CRT — Certified Respiratory Therapist Earned by passing the NBRC TMC exam after a CoARC-accredited program. - RRT — Registered Respiratory Therapist The advanced credential, earned by passing the TMC at a higher cut score plus the Clinical Simulation Examination. - Specialties NBRC also offers specialty credentials (e.g., pulmonary function, neonatal/pediatric) built on.

WHO ACCREDITS RESPIRATORY THERAPY PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC), the recognized accreditor of respiratory therapy education. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A COARC-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

Yes. You must complete a CoARC-accredited program to sit for the NBRC exams that lead to the CRT/RRT credentials and licensure.

WHAT ARE THE NBRC EXAMS

The Therapist Multiple-Choice (TMC) exam, which earns the CRT, and the Clinical Simulation Examination (CSE), which with a higher TMC score earns the RRT.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Radiologic & Imaging Accreditation

FIELD Radiologic / imaging tech	ACCREDITORS JRCERT · JRCNMT	CERTIFICATION ARRT · NMTCB
LEVELS Certificate–degree	RECOGNITION USDE	VERIFY Accreditor directories

JRCERT AND JRCNMT

Medical-imaging education has two main accreditors. The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) accredits programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance, and medical dosimetry, and the Joint Review Committee on Education Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) accredits nuclear medicine programs. JRCERT is USDE-recognized.

WHAT EACH ACCREDITOR COVERS

- JRCERT Radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance (MRI), and medical dosimetry programs. - JRCNMT Nuclear medicine technology programs, leading to ARRT or NMTCB certification. - Sonography note Diagnostic medical sonography programs are accredited through CAAHEP (see allied health), leading to ARDMS or ARRT certification.

WHO ACCREDITS RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) accredits radiography, radiation therapy, MRI, and medical dosimetry programs; JRCNMT accredits nuclear medicine. JRCERT is USDE-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE CERTIFIED

In most cases, yes. ARRT (and NMTCB) certification generally requires graduation from an accredited program, and most jobs and state licenses require certification.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Clinical Laboratory Accreditation

FIELD Clinical laboratory science	ACCREDITOR NAACLS	CERTIFICATION ASCP (MLS/MLT)
LEVELS Associate · bachelor's	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY NAACLS directory

NAACLS AND LAB SCIENCE EDUCATION

The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredits medical laboratory science programs — the Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) at the bachelor's level and the Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) at the associate level — along with related specialties like phlebotomy and cytogenetics. CHEA-recognized.

MLS AND MLT

- MLS — Medical Laboratory Scientist The bachelor's-level generalist credential, from a NAACLS-accredited program plus the ASCP exam. - MLT — Medical Laboratory Technician The associate-level credential, from a NAACLS-accredited program plus the ASCP exam. - Related programs NAACLS also accredits or approves phlebotomy, cytogenetic technology, diagnostic molecular science, and pathologists' assistant programs.

WHO ACCREDITS MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PROGRAMS

The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), which accredits MLS (bachelor's) and MLT (associate) programs and related specialties. It is CHEA-recognized.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Medical Physics Accreditation

FIELD Medical physics	ACCREDITOR CAMPEP	PROGRAMS Grad · residency
CERTIFICATION ABR	REQUIRED FOR Board certification	RECOGNITION CHEA-adjacent

CAMPEP AND MEDICAL PHYSICS EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Education Programs (CAMPEP) accredits medical physics graduate programs, residency programs, and certificate and continuing-education programs — the pipeline for clinical medical physicists in radiation oncology, diagnostic imaging, and nuclear medicine.

GRADUATE PROGRAM THEN RESIDENCY

- CAMPEP-accredited graduate program A master's or doctoral program (or a certificate for those with a physics doctorate). - CAMPEP-accredited residency Clinical training, typically two years. - ABR certification The board exams that credential a clinical medical physicist.

WHO ACCREDITS MEDICAL PHYSICS PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Education Programs (CAMPEP), which accredits graduate programs, residencies, and certificate/continuing-education programs.

DO I NEED A CAMPEP-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE BOARD-CERTIFIED

Effectively yes. The American Board of Radiology requires CAMPEP-accredited graduate education and a CAMPEP-accredited residency to sit for medical physics certification.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Audiology & Speech Accreditation

FIELD Audiology · speech-language	ACCREDITOR CAA (ASHA)	DEGREES AuD · SLP master's
REQUIRED FOR CCC / licensure	EXAM Praxis	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

THE CAA OF ASHA

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA), the semi-autonomous accrediting arm of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), is the sole accreditor of U.S. graduate programs in these two fields. It accredits the clinical-doctorate AuD (audiology) and the master's in speech-language pathology (SLP). Recognized by USDE and CHEA; roughly an eight-year.

AUD AND SLP

- Audiology (AuD) The clinical doctorate is the entry-level degree for audiologists; a CAA-accredited AuD leads to the CCC-A, the Praxis, and licensure. - Speech-language pathology (master's) A CAA-accredited SLP master's leads to the CCC-SLP, the Praxis, and licensure — the gold-standard path into the field.

WHO ACCREDITS AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROGRAMS

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA), the accrediting arm of ASHA — the sole accreditor of AuD and SLP graduate programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED A CAA-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME AN SLP OR AUDIOLOGIST

Effectively yes. A CAA-accredited graduate degree satisfies the academic and clinical requirements for the CCC, prepares you for the Praxis, and is required for licensure in most states.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Nutrition & Dietetics Accreditation

FIELD Nutrition & dietetics	ACCREDITOR ACEND	CREDENTIAL RDN
EXAM CDR	NOW REQUIRED Graduate degree	RECOGNITION USDE

ACEND AND DIETETICS EDUCATION

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), part of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, accredits the education programs that lead to becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) or a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR). Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

ACEND AND RDN CREDENTIALING

- ACEND-accredited program A Coordinated Program, a Didactic Program in Dietetics plus a dietetic internship, or a Graduate Program. - Supervised practice The required experiential hours, often via a dietetic internship. - CDR exam Pass the registration exam to earn the RDN (or NDTR at the technician level). - State license Where the state.

WHO ACCREDITS DIETETICS PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), part of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

DO I NEED AN ACEND-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME AN RDN

Yes. Becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist requires completing an ACEND-accredited program and supervised practice, then passing the CDR exam.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Athletic Training Accreditation

FIELD Athletic training	ACCREDITOR CAATE	DEGREE Master's (entry-level)
EXAM BOC	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION CHEA

CAATE AND ATHLETIC TRAINING

The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) accredits professional athletic training programs. The field has moved to a master's degree as the entry-level credential — the transition away from bachelor's professional programs is complete — so a CAATE-accredited master's is now the standard path. CHEA-recognized.

PROFESSIONAL AND POST-PROFESSIONAL

CAATE accredits professional programs (the entry-level master's) as well as post-professional residency and fellowship programs for practicing athletic trainers. The entry-level master's is the one that matters for initial certification and licensure.

WHO ACCREDITS ATHLETIC TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), which accredits professional (now master's-level) and post-professional athletic training programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A CAATE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME AN ATHLETIC TRAINER

Yes. You must graduate from a CAATE-accredited professional program and pass the BOC exam to be certified and licensed.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Genetic Counseling Accreditation

FIELD Genetic counseling	ACCREDITOR ACGC	DEGREE Master's
CERTIFICATION ABGC (CGC)	LICENSED Most states	RECOGNITION CHEA

ACGC AND GENETIC COUNSELING EDUCATION

The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) accredits master's-level genetic counseling programs. CHEA-recognized.

WHO ACCREDITS GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), which accredits master's-level genetic counseling programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ACGC-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A GENETIC COUNSELOR

In practice, yes. An ACGC-accredited master's is the route to ABGC certification, which most licensing states require.

WHAT IS ABGC CERTIFICATION

The American Board of Genetic Counseling certification, earned by passing its exam, which yields the Certified Genetic Counselor (CGC) credential.

WHAT DEGREE DO GENETIC COUNSELORS NEED

A master's degree from an ACGC-accredited genetic counseling program.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Creative-Arts Therapies Accreditation

FIELDS Art · music · dance therapy	BODIES ACATE · AMTA · ADTA	CERTS ATCB · CBMT · DMTCB
LEVEL Master's	LICENSED Growing	RECOGNITION Varies

THREE DISCIPLINES, THREE SYSTEMS

The creative-arts therapies use art forms in clinical mental-health practice. Each discipline has its own education standard and board certification.

WHO ACCREDITS CREATIVE-ARTS THERAPY PROGRAMS

Each discipline has its own body: ACATE (a CAAHEP committee) for art therapy, the AMTA for music therapy, and the ADTA for dance/movement therapy.

WHAT CERTIFICATIONS DO CREATIVE-ARTS THERAPISTS EARN

Art therapists earn the ATR/ATR-BC (ATCB), music therapists the MT-BC (CBMT), and dance/movement therapists the R-DMT/BC-DMT (DMTCB).

ARE CREATIVE-ARTS THERAPISTS LICENSED

Increasingly. A growing number of states license art and music therapists specifically, and in many states these therapists practice under counseling licensure. Requirements vary by state.

WHAT DEGREE DO THEY NEED

A qualifying master's in the specific therapy, from a program accredited or approved by the discipline's body.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Chiropractic Accreditation

FIELD Chiropractic	ACCREDITOR CCE	DEGREE DC
EXAM NBCE	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION Left USDE 2026 (CHEA)

CCE AND CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) is the recognized accreditor of Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) programs in the United States. CHEA-recognized.

RECOGNITION VS. ROLE

Like several programmatic accreditors, the CCE withdrew from U.S. Department of Education recognition in 2026, concluding that federal recognition's burden outweighed its benefit. This did not change its role: CCE accreditation is still what state chiropractic boards require. It is another clean example that federal-recognition status and field requirement are separate — see the.

WHO ACCREDITS CHIROPRACTIC PROGRAMS

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), the recognized accreditor of Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A CCE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BECOME A CHIROPRACTOR

Yes. You must graduate from a CCE-accredited DC program and pass the NBCE exams to be eligible for licensure, which all states require.

WHAT IS THE NBCE

The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners exam series, required for chiropractic licensure.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Naturopathic Medicine Accreditation

FIELD Naturopathic medicine	ACCREDITOR CNME	DEGREE ND (4-year)
EXAM NPLEX	LICENSED Regulated states	RECOGNITION USDE

CNME AND NATUROPATHIC EDUCATION

The Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) accredits four-year, in-residence Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND) programs in the U.S. and Canada. USDE-recognized.

LICENSED IN SOME STATES, NOT ALL

Naturopathic medicine is regulated in some U.S. jurisdictions and not others — roughly two dozen states, plus D.C. and several territories, license naturopathic doctors, while other states do not regulate the field. A CNME-accredited ND is the standard path where licensure exists; check your state's current status before enrolling.

WHO ACCREDITS NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL PROGRAMS

The Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), which accredits four-year ND programs in the U.S. and Canada. It is USDE-recognized.

DO I NEED A CNME-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE LICENSED

Yes, where the profession is regulated. Only CNME-accredited (or pre-accredited) ND graduates can sit for the NPLEX, which is required for licensure.

WHAT IS THE NPLEX

The Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examinations, administered by NABNE, required for naturopathic licensure in regulated jurisdictions.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Acupuncture Accreditation

FIELD Acupuncture / East Asian med	ACCREDITOR ACAHM	DEGREES Master's / doctoral
CERTIFICATION NCCAOM	LICENSED ~47 states	RECOGNITION USDE

ACAHM AND ACUPUNCTURE EDUCATION

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM) — formerly ACAOM — is the recognized accreditor of acupuncture and East Asian / Chinese herbal medicine programs at the master's and doctoral levels. USDE-recognized.

DEGREES AND SPECIALIZATIONS

- Master's of Acupuncture With or without a Chinese herbal medicine specialization. - Doctoral programs Professional and post-professional doctorates in acupuncture and herbal medicine. - Herbal module NCCAOM offers a Chinese Herbology module required for herbal practice in some states.

WHO ACCREDITS ACUPUNCTURE PROGRAMS

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM), formerly ACAOM, the recognized accreditor of acupuncture and East Asian medicine programs. It is USDE-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ACAHM-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE LICENSED

In practice, yes. An ACAHM-accredited program is the route to NCCAOM certification, which most of the ~47 licensing states reference for acupuncture licensure.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Massage Therapy Accreditation

FIELD Massage therapy	ACCREDITOR COMTA (specialized)	LEGAL GATE State approval + MBLEx
EXAM MBLEx (FSMTB)	LICENSED Most states	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

COMTA AND MASSAGE EDUCATION

The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA) is the only accreditor dedicated specifically to massage therapy education, recognized by USDE and CHEA. But many massage programs are instead accredited by career/national accreditors like NACCAS, ACCSC, or ABHES — so COMTA accreditation, while a strong quality signal, is not the thing that gets you licensed.

CERTIFICATION VS. LICENSURE

Separate from the state license, the NCBTMB (National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork) offers a voluntary board certification that some therapists hold for credibility. A few states/localities do not regulate massage at all; most do. Always check your specific state board.

WHO ACCREDITS MASSAGE THERAPY PROGRAMS

The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA) is the massage-specific accreditor (USDE- and CHEA-recognized), but many programs are accredited by NACCAS, ACCSC, or ABHES instead.

DO I NEED A COMTA-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE LICENSED

No. The legal requirement is a state-board-approved program plus the MBLEx. COMTA accreditation is a quality signal, not the licensure gate.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Orthotics & Prosthetics Accreditation

FIELD Orthotics & prosthetics	ACCREDITOR NCOPE	DEGREE Master's
CERTIFICATION ABC	LICENSED Some states	RECOGNITION CAAHEP-affiliated

NCOPE AND O&P EDUCATION

The National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE) accredits orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) education and residency programs. Entry to the profession is now at the master's level, and NCOPE works in coordination with CAAHEP for its accreditation.

FROM DEGREE TO CERTIFIED PRACTITIONER

- NCOPE-accredited master's The entry-level professional degree. - NCOPE-accredited residency Supervised clinical training. - ABC certification CO, CP, or CPO — the professional credential. - State license Required in the states that regulate O&P.

WHO ACCREDITS ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS PROGRAMS

The National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE), which accredits O&P master's and residency programs, in coordination with CAAHEP.

DO I NEED AN NCOPE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO PRACTICE

Yes. The path runs through an NCOPE-accredited master's and residency, then ABC certification. About 17 states also license O&P practitioners.

WHAT DEGREE DO O&P PRACTITIONERS NEED

A master's in orthotics and prosthetics from an NCOPE-accredited program, followed by a residency.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Allied Health Accreditation

FIELD Allied health (many)	ACCREDITOR CAAHEP	MODEL 25+ committees
PROGRAMS 2,000+	LEADS TO Certification	RECOGNITION CHEA

CAAHEP, THE ALLIED-HEALTH UMBRELLA

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) is one of the largest programmatic accreditors, overseeing 2,000+ programs across roughly 30 allied-health professions. It works through more than 25 Committees on Accreditation (CoAs) — discipline experts who review programs and recommend accreditation to CAAHEP. CHEA-recognized.

SOME OF THE PROFESSIONS CAAHEP ACCREDITS

- Surgical technology & surgical assisting Via ARC/STSA — leading to the CST credential (NBSTSA). - Emergency medical services / paramedic Via CoAEMSP — leading to NREMT paramedic certification. - Diagnostic medical sonography Via JRC-DMS — leading to ARDMS/ARRT certification. - Cardiovascular technology & advanced cardiac sonography Cardiac and vascular imaging programs.

WHAT IS CAAHEP

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs — one of the largest programmatic accreditors, overseeing 2,000+ programs across roughly 30 allied-health professions through 25+ Committees on Accreditation. It is CHEA-recognized.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Health Informatics & HIM Accreditation

FIELD Health informatics / HIM	ACCREDITOR CAHIIM	CREDENTIALS RHIA · RHIT
CERTIFIER AHIMA	LEVELS Associate–master's	RECOGNITION CHEA

CAHIIM AND HIM EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) accredits health information management (HIM) and health informatics programs. CHEA-recognized.

WHO ACCREDITS HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), which accredits HIM and health informatics programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

WHAT CREDENTIALS DOES CAHIIM ACCREDITATION LEAD TO

A CAHIIM-accredited bachelor's leads to the RHIA exam and an accredited associate to the RHIT exam, both credentialed by AHIMA.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RHIA AND RHIT

RHIA (Registered Health Information Administrator) is the bachelor's-level credential; RHIT (Registered Health Information Technician) is the associate-level credential.

WHO CERTIFIES THESE CREDENTIALS

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) administers the RHIA and RHIT exams.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Healthcare Management Accreditation

FIELD Healthcare management	ACCREDITOR CAHME	DEGREES MHA / graduate
MATTERS FOR Reputation, not license	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY CAHME directory

CAHME AND HEALTHCARE-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) accredits graduate healthcare management programs — the Master of Health Administration (MHA) and equivalent degrees. CHEA-recognized. Healthcare management is not a licensed profession, so CAHME accreditation is a quality and reputation benchmark.

WHAT CAHME ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality CAHME reviews curriculum, competencies, faculty, and outcomes against healthcare-leadership standards. - Employer & fellowship recognition Health systems and administrative-fellowship programs value CAHME-accredited degrees. - Not a license Because the field is unlicensed, CAHME accreditation is never legally required — it is a mark of quality. - Career leverage A CAHME-accredited MHA.

WHO ACCREDITS HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME), which accredits graduate healthcare management programs (MHA and equivalents). It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A CAHME-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO WORK IN HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

No. Healthcare management is not a licensed profession, so CAHME accreditation is never legally required. It is a quality and reputation benchmark.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Public Health Accreditation

FIELD Public health	ACCREDITOR CEPH	COVERS MPH · DrPH · BSPH
CREDENTIAL CPH exam	RECOGNITION Left USDE 2026	VERIFY CEPH directory

CEPH, THE PUBLIC-HEALTH STANDARD

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredits schools of public health and standalone public-health programs — the MPH and DrPH, and standalone bachelor's (BSPH) programs. It is the field's recognized quality standard, and employers and graduate programs expect it.

WHAT CEPH ACCREDITATION BUYS

- Employer expectation Public-health employers, especially government agencies, look for CEPH-accredited degrees. - The CPH credential The Certified in Public Health (CPH) exam and many roles reference CEPH-accredited preparation. - Graduate study Doctoral and advanced programs expect a CEPH-accredited foundation. - Quality assurance CEPH reviews competencies, practice experience, and outcomes across the public-health disciplines.

WHAT CEPH COVERS

CEPH accredits at the school level (a school of public health offering multiple degrees) and the program level (a standalone public-health program, often an MPH within a larger university), plus standalone baccalaureate public-health programs. Its competency framework spans epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy and management, social and behavioral sciences, and environmental health.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Business Accreditation

FIELD Business & management	ACCREDITORS AACSB · ACBSP · IACBE	MATTERS FOR Recognition, not license
LEVELS Bachelor's – doctoral	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY Accreditor directory

BUSINESS ACCREDITATION IS DIFFERENT

Unlike nursing or engineering, business is not a licensed profession — there is no "business license" exam. So programmatic business accreditation is about reputation, employer and graduate-school recognition, credit transfer, and faculty and program quality, not licensure. Three CHEA-recognized bodies accredit business programs, and they target different kinds of institutions.

THE THREE BUSINESS ACCREDITORS

All three are recognized by CHEA. A business school may hold any one of them; none is a licensure requirement.

WHAT BUSINESS ACCREDITATION BUYS

- Employer & recruiter recognition AACSB in particular signals a vetted, research-active program to employers and recruiters. - Graduate school (MBA) admission Top MBA programs weigh the accreditation and reputation of an applicant's undergraduate business school. - Faculty & program quality Accreditation reviews faculty qualifications, curriculum, and assurance-of-learning outcomes. - Transfer of credit Accredited.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Law School Accreditation

FIELD	ACCREDITOR	MATTERS FOR
Law (JD)	ABA	Bar exam eligibility
SCHOOLS	**RECOGNITION**	**EXCEPTION**
~200 ABA-accredited	USDE	California + a few

THE ABA AND THE JD

U.S. law schools are accredited by the American Bar Association — specifically its Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, which the U.S. Department of Education recognizes as the accreditor for professional (JD) law programs. Around 200 law schools hold ABA accreditation.

WHY ABA ACCREDITATION IS CLOSE TO MANDATORY

- Bar eligibility The dominant requirement — an ABA-accredited JD qualifies you to sit for the bar in every U.S. jurisdiction. - Portability An ABA JD lets you seek admission across states; non-ABA degrees are usually limited to the state that approved them. - Employers & clerkships Most large firms, government roles, and judicial.

CALIFORNIA AND LIMITED-EXCEPTION STATES

A few states allow paths outside ABA accreditation. California is the notable one: it recognizes California-accredited and even registered (unaccredited) law schools, and offers a Law Office Study Program (a modern apprenticeship) as a route to the California bar. A handful of other states have narrow provisions. These paths are generally state-bound — they.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Paralegal Accreditation

FIELD Paralegal / legal studies	BODY ABA (approval)	NOT Accreditation
LICENSED? No	CERTS CP · RP (optional)	VERIFY ABA list

ABA APPROVAL, NOT ACCREDITATION

The American Bar Association (ABA) approves paralegal education programs — a distinct process from "accreditation." ABA-approved programs meet the ABA's guidelines for paralegal education, and the credential employers most recognize is graduation from an ABA-approved program. The school's own institutional accreditation is a separate matter.

APPROVAL VS. ACCREDITATION

Because ABA approval is voluntary and separate from institutional accreditation, a strong paralegal program can be at an institutionally accredited college without holding ABA approval. Look for both signals — the college's institutional accreditation, and (ideally) ABA approval of the paralegal program.

ARE PARALEGAL PROGRAMS ACCREDITED

Paralegal programs are recognized through ABA approval, which is distinct from accreditation. The college itself holds separate institutional accreditation.

ARE PARALEGALS LICENSED

No. No state license is required to work as a paralegal, though California and a few states have limited voluntary registration.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Public Affairs Accreditation

FIELD Public policy & administration	ACCREDITOR NASPAA	DEGREES MPA · MPP
MATTERS FOR Reputation, not license	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY NASPAA directory

NASPAA AND PUBLIC-SERVICE DEGREES

The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), through its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, accredits master's degrees in public service — the Master of Public Administration (MPA), the Master of Public Policy (MPP), and related degrees. CHEA-recognized. Public administration is not a licensed profession, so NASPAA accreditation is a.

WHAT NASPAA ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality NASPAA reviews mission, curriculum, faculty, and student outcomes against competency standards for public service. - Standing in the field An accredited MPA/MPP is a recognized benchmark among public-sector and nonprofit employers and peer institutions. - Not a license Because public administration is not licensed, NASPAA accreditation is never legally required. -.

ACCREDITED VS. NOT

NASPAA-accredited programs meet a shared competency benchmark, which is valued in public-service hiring and further study. But many respected public-affairs programs are not NASPAA-accredited; judge unaccredited programs on faculty, placement, and reputation.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Planning Accreditation

FIELD Urban & regional planning	ACCREDITOR PAB	DEGREES Planning bachelor's/master's
CREDENTIAL AICP	LICENSED? Mostly no	RECOGNITION CHEA

THE PAB AND PLANNING EDUCATION

The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) accredits urban and regional planning degree programs (bachelor's and master's). CHEA-recognized. Planning is generally not a licensed profession (New Jersey is a notable exception), so PAB accreditation connects to the profession's certification rather than a license.

WHAT PAB ACCREDITATION BUYS

- Certification foundation A PAB-accredited degree is the cleanest route toward AICP certification. - Employer recognition Public agencies and planning firms recognize PAB-accredited programs. - Not a license Because planning is largely unlicensed, PAB accreditation is not legally required to work as a planner. - Competency standards PAB reviews curriculum and outcomes against planning-profession.

WHO ACCREDITS URBAN PLANNING PROGRAMS

The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), which accredits urban and regional planning bachelor's and master's degrees. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ACCREDITED PLANNING DEGREE TO BE A PLANNER

No. Planning is generally not a licensed profession (New Jersey is an exception), so accreditation is not legally required. But a PAB-accredited degree is the cleanest path to AICP certification.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Engineering & Computing Accreditation

FIELD Engineering · computing · tech	ACCREDITOR ABET	COMMISSIONS EAC · CAC · ETAC · ANSAC
MATTERS FOR PE licensure	RECOGNITION CHEA + USDE	REACH ~4,700 programs

ABET, IN BRIEF

ABET (the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) is the recognized accreditor for college programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology. It accredits programs, not institutions — roughly 4,700 programs at over 900 colleges across 40-plus countries. Recognized by CHEA (since 1997) and by the U.S. Department of Education as.

ABET'S FOUR COMMISSIONS

A program is reviewed by the commission that matches its title, against General Criteria plus discipline-specific Program Criteria developed with the professional societies.

WHY ABET IS CLOSELY TIED TO LICENSURE

- PE licensure This is the big one. To become a licensed Professional Engineer (PE), most state boards require — or strongly prefer — a degree from an ABET-accredited engineering program, which is the smoothest path to sitting for the FE and PE exams. - Employers Many employers, and most government and defense roles.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Construction Management Accreditation

FIELD Construction management	ACCREDITOR ACCE (some ABET)	LEVELS Associate–master's
CREDENTIAL CPC (AIC)	MATTERS FOR Quality, hiring	RECOGNITION CHEA

ACCE AND CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION

The American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) accredits associate, bachelor's, and master's programs in construction, construction science, and construction management. CHEA-recognized. Some construction engineering and engineering-technology programs are instead accredited by ABET.

WHAT ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Employer recognition Contractors and construction firms recognize ACCE-accredited programs when hiring. - Professional credential The Certified Professional Constructor (CPC), from the American Institute of Constructors (AIC), is the field's professional certification. - Not a single license Construction management itself is not licensed, though specific roles (e.g., licensed general contractors, PEs on the engineering.

WHO ACCREDITS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) accredits associate, bachelor's, and master's construction management programs; ABET accredits some construction engineering and technology programs. Both are recognized.

IS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT A LICENSED PROFESSION

No, not as a single license. Specific roles — licensed general contractors, or professional engineers on the engineering side — are state-regulated, but construction management itself is not licensed.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Educator Preparation Accreditation

FIELD Teacher / educator prep	ACCREDITORS CAEP · AAQEP	ALSO REQUIRED State program approval
LICENSES Teacher certification	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY Accreditor + state

TWO LAYERS, LIKE NURSING

Educator preparation has two recognized national accreditors — CAEP and AAQEP — and a separate, decisive layer: state approval of the program. The two do different jobs, and confusing them is the classic mistake.

CAEP AND AAQEP

Neither is a federal Title IV gatekeeper — federal aid follows the college's institutional accreditation — so both are CHEA-recognized rather than USDE-recognized.

STATE PROGRAM APPROVAL IS THE LICENSURE GATE

Every state runs its own educator-preparation program approval through its department of education or a teacher standards commission. Completing a state-approved program is what makes you eligible for that state's teaching license (usually after a certification exam such as the Praxis or a state test). A program can be nationally accredited and still need.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Psychology Accreditation

FIELD Psychology	ACCREDITORS APA · MPCAC · PCSAS · NASP	LICENSURE APA doctoral (all 50)
EXAM EPPP	RECOGNITION APA: USDE + CHEA	VERIFY Accreditor + state board

FOUR ACCREDITORS, FOUR PATHS

Psychology is unusual: four recognized accreditors cover different pathways, so the one that matters depends entirely on the role you want.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY (NASP)

For a school psychologist working in K-12, the credential path runs through NASP-accredited specialist or doctoral programs together with the state education department 's certification rules — similar to the teacher-licensure model. Many school psychology programs hold both NASP accreditation and APA accreditation (for the doctoral track).

MPCAC AND MASTER'S PROGRAMS

For master's-level psychology and counseling roles, MPCAC accreditation signals a vetted program. Whether it satisfies licensure depends on the state and the specific credential — some counseling licenses point to CACREP instead. Check your state board's exact educational requirement.

WHO ACCREDITS PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMS

Four recognized bodies for different paths: APA (doctoral, internship, postdoc), PCSAS (clinical science PhD), NASP (school psychology), and MPCAC (master's). APA is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Social Work Accreditation

FIELD Social work	ACCREDITOR CSWE	REQUIRED All 50 states
EXAM ASWB	LEVELS BSW · MSW	RECOGNITION CHEA

ONE ACCREDITOR, ONE CLEAR RULE

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), through its Commission on Accreditation, is the sole recognized accreditor of U.S. social work programs. It accredits baccalaureate (BSW) and master's (MSW) programs (practice/research doctorates like the DSW and PhD are not CSWE-accredited).

ABOUT CSWE

Founded in 1952, CSWE accredits more than 750 BSW and MSW programs, including many online programs, on roughly an eight-year cycle with a self-study and site visit. A BSW from a CSWE-accredited program can qualify a student for advanced-standing MSW admission, shortening the master's.

CSWE AND SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE

- LBSW / LSW A CSWE-accredited BSW and the ASWB Bachelors exam, where the state offers bachelor-level licensure. - LMSW A CSWE-accredited MSW and the ASWB Masters exam. - LCSW / LICSW A CSWE-accredited MSW, two to three years of supervised clinical experience, and the ASWB Clinical exam — the credential for independent clinical.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Counseling Accreditation

FIELD Counseling	ACCREDITOR CACREP (MPCAC alt)	TREND Increasingly required
LICENSES LPC · LMHC · LCPC	EXAM NCE / NCMHCE	RECOGNITION CHEA

CACREP AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the main accreditor of master's and doctoral counseling programs — clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, marriage and family, addictions, and more. In 2017 it absorbed the rehabilitation-counseling accreditor (CORE). CHEA-recognized.

MPCAC AND OTHER ROUTES

In some states, a MPCAC -accredited master's program (or another state-approved program) also satisfies licensure. But because the CACREP requirement is spreading, a CACREP-accredited degree is the safest choice for portability. The right answer is set by your state counseling board, so confirm before you commit.

FROM DEGREE TO LICENSE

- CACREP-accredited master's Typically a 60-credit clinical mental health counseling or school counseling degree. - Supervised experience Post-degree supervised clinical hours set by the state. - Licensing exam The NCE or NCMHCE, depending on the state and credential. - State license LPC, LMHC, LCPC, or the state's equivalent professional counselor license.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Marriage & Family Therapy Accreditation

FIELD Marriage & family therapy	ACCREDITOR COAMFTE	ALT PATHS CACREP · regional
CREDENTIAL LMFT	EXAM AMFTRB	RECOGNITION CHEA

COAMFTE AND MFT EDUCATION

The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), a committee of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), accredits master's, doctoral, and post-degree marriage and family therapy programs. CHEA-recognized. It is the gold-standard specialized accreditor for the field.

COAMFTE, CACREP, AND LMFT LICENSURE

- Graduate MFT degree COAMFTE-accredited, or a CACREP-MFT or regionally accredited MFT program per state rules. - Supervised hours Post-degree supervised clinical experience (commonly 1,000–4,000 hours). - AMFTRB exam The MFT National Examination from the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards. - State license LMFT (and often an associate LMFTA stage first).

WHAT COAMFTE ACCREDITATION ADDS

- Streamlined licensure A COAMFTE degree meets the education bar in every state and simplifies the application. - Portability It improves license portability if you move between states. - Direct-hour credit Some states let COAMFTE-program clinical hours count toward the post-degree total. - Not always required Because CACREP and regional routes exist, COAMFTE is.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Human Services Accreditation

FIELD Human services	ACCREDITOR CSHSE	LEVELS Associate–master's
CREDENTIAL HS-BCP	MATTERS FOR Quality, not license	RECOGNITION CHEA

CSHSE AND HUMAN SERVICES EDUCATION

The Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE) accredits human services programs at the associate, bachelor's, and master's levels. CHEA-recognized. Human services is not licensed as a single profession, so CSHSE accreditation is a program-quality standard.

WHAT CSHSE ACCREDITATION AND THE HS-BCP ADD

- Program quality CSHSE reviews curriculum and competencies against national standards for human services education. - The HS-BCP credential The Human Services–Board Certified Practitioner credential (via the Center for Credentialing & Education) recognizes practitioners; graduates of accredited programs are well-prepared for it. - Pathways onward A human services degree often leads toward social work.

WHO ACCREDITS HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

The Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE), which accredits associate, bachelor's, and master's programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A CSHSE-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO WORK IN HUMAN SERVICES

No. Human services is not licensed as a single profession, so CSHSE accreditation is a program-quality standard rather than a legal requirement.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Early Childhood Accreditation

FIELD Early childhood education	ACCREDITOR NAEYC	TWO SYSTEMS Degrees + programs
LEVELS Associate–master's	ALSO Center accreditation	RECOGNITION CHEA

TWO NAEYC ACCREDITATIONS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) runs two separate accreditation systems that are easy to confuse.

WHO ACCREDITS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which runs two systems: higher-education accreditation of degree programs (CHEA-recognized), and Early Learning Program accreditation of centers and preschools.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NAEYC'S TWO ACCREDITATIONS

One accredits college degree programs that prepare early-childhood educators; the other accredits the early-learning centers and preschools themselves. They serve different purposes.

AS A PARENT, WHICH NAEYC ACCREDITATION MATTERS

Early Learning Program accreditation — a widely recognized quality mark for a childcare or preschool program.

AS A STUDENT, WHICH NAEYC ACCREDITATION MATTERS

Higher-education accreditation, which vouches for the degree program preparing you to be an early-childhood educator.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Behavior Analysis Accreditation

FIELD Behavior analysis (ABA)	ACCREDITOR ABAI	GATE BACB course sequence
CREDENTIAL BCBA / BCaBA	LICENSED Many states	RECOGNITION CHEA (ABAI)

TWO SYSTEMS TO UNDERSTAND

Behavior analysis has a program accreditor and a separate certification gate, and the certification gate is usually what matters most.

WHO ACCREDITS BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PROGRAMS

The Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) Accreditation Board accredits behavior-analysis degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. It is CHEA-recognized.

WHAT ACTUALLY GATES THE BCBA EXAM

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) requires coursework from an ABAI-accredited program or a BACB-Verified Course Sequence, plus supervised fieldwork, to sit for the BCBA exam.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ABAI AND BACB

ABAI accredits degree programs; the BACB certifies individuals (BCBA/BCaBA). The BACB's course-sequence requirement is usually the practical gate to certification.

ARE BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS LICENSED

A growing majority of states license behavior analysts, generally requiring BCBA certification. Check your state's rules.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Interpreter Education Accreditation

FIELD	ACCREDITOR	CERTIFICATION
ASL / interpreter education	CCIE	RID (NIC)
LEVELS	**SOME STATES**	**VERIFY**
Degree programs	License / cert	CCIE list

CCIE AND INTERPRETER EDUCATION

The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) accredits American Sign Language (ASL) / English interpreter education programs. It is the specialized accreditor for the interpreting field's degree programs.

WHO ACCREDITS SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER PROGRAMS

The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE), the specialized accreditor of ASL/English interpreter education programs.

WHAT CERTIFICATION DO INTERPRETERS EARN

The National Interpreter Certification (NIC) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the standard credential for sign language interpreters.

ARE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS LICENSED

A growing number of states require certification or licensure to work as an interpreter; requirements vary, so confirm your state's rule.

DO I NEED A CCIE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM

It is strong preparation for the RID certification, though pathways vary. Confirm your state's certification/licensure requirements.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Architecture Accreditation

FIELD	ACCREDITOR	PROFESSIONAL DEGREES
Architecture	NAAB	B.Arch · M.Arch · D.Arch
REQUIRED FOR	**RECOGNITION**	**VERIFY**
Licensure (most states)	CHEA	NAAB directory

NAAB AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredits professional architecture degrees in the United States — the Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch), Master of Architecture (M.Arch), and Doctor of Architecture (D.Arch). CHEA-recognized. Most state licensing boards require a NAAB-accredited professional degree as part of the path to becoming a licensed architect.

FROM DEGREE TO LICENSED ARCHITECT

- 1 · NAAB-accredited professional degree B.Arch, M.Arch, or D.Arch — required by most state boards. - 2 · AXP experience The Architectural Experience Program (supervised experience hours), through NCARB. - 3 · ARE exam The Architect Registration Examination. - 4 · State license Issued by the state board, after the above.

WHO ACCREDITS ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMS

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), which accredits professional architecture degrees — the B.Arch, M.Arch, and D.Arch. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A NAAB-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT

In most states, yes. A NAAB-accredited professional degree is required as part of the licensure path, along with the AXP experience and the ARE exam.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Landscape Architecture Accreditation

FIELD Landscape architecture	ACCREDITOR LAAB	DEGREES BLA · MLA
EXAM LARE (CLARB)	LICENSED All 50 states	RECOGNITION CHEA

LAAB AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB), affiliated with the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), accredits first-professional degrees in landscape architecture — the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) and Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA). CHEA-recognized; a six-year accreditation cycle.

FROM DEGREE TO LICENSED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

- 1 · LAAB-accredited BLA or MLA The first-professional degree — the fastest route to licensure eligibility. - 2 · Supervised experience Typically about two years with an accredited degree, more without one. - 3 · LARE The CLARB-administered exam, sometimes with a jurisdiction-specific section. - 4 · State license Issued by the state.

WHO ACCREDITS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMS

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB), affiliated with ASLA, which accredits first-professional BLA and MLA degrees. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A LAAB-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO BECOME A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Effectively yes. Landscape architecture is licensed in all 50 states, and a LAAB-accredited degree is the standard education path — and it greatly shortens the experience required before the LARE exam.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Interior Design Accreditation

FIELD Interior design	ACCREDITOR CIDA	LEADS TO NCIDQ / certification
LEVELS Bachelor's / master's	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY CIDA directory

CIDA AND INTERIOR DESIGN EDUCATION

The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) accredits professional interior design degree programs (bachelor's and master's). CHEA-recognized. Interior design sits between the licensed and unlicensed fields: a CIDA-accredited degree is the standard education foundation for professional certification and, where it exists, state registration.

WHAT CIDA ACCREDITS

CIDA accredits professional-level interior design programs, evaluating curriculum, studio work, and outcomes against standards developed with the profession. It does not accredit short certificates or non-degree programs; for certification and registration, the professional degree is what counts.

WHO ACCREDITS INTERIOR DESIGN PROGRAMS

The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), which accredits professional bachelor's and master's interior design degrees. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED A CIDA-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO BE AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

For professional certification and, in some states, registration, a CIDA-accredited degree is the usual education requirement to sit for the NCIDQ exam.



PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Arts Accreditation

FIELDS
Art · music · theatre · dance

ACCREDITORS
NASAD · NASM · NAST · NASD

MATTERS FOR
Quality, not license

LEVELS
Degree programs

RECOGNITION
USDE

VERIFY
Accreditor directories

FOUR PARALLEL ARTS ACCREDITORS

Higher education in the arts is accredited by four closely related "National Association of Schools of ..." bodies, each covering one discipline. They share a common structure and philosophy and are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Because the arts are not licensed professions, this accreditation is a quality and recognition signal, not.

WHAT ARTS ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality Each association reviews curriculum, faculty, facilities, and standards specific to its art form. - Transfer & graduate study Accreditation supports credit transfer and admission to graduate arts programs and conservatories. - Not a license There is no license to be an artist, musician, actor, or dancer, so this accreditation is never.

ACCREDITED VS. NOT

As with journalism, the absence of NASAD/NASM/NAST/NASD accreditation does not mean an arts program is weak — reputation, faculty, facilities, performance and exhibition opportunities, and outcomes matter more. Treat accreditation as a positive signal where present and judge unaccredited programs on their merits.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Journalism Accreditation

FIELD Journalism / mass comm	ACCREDITOR ACEJMC	MATTERS FOR Reputation, not license
LEVEL Programs / units	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY ACEJMC directory

ACEJMC AND JOURNALISM EDUCATION

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) accredits journalism, public relations, advertising, and mass-communication programs (usually at the school or unit level). CHEA-recognized. Because journalism is not a licensed profession, this accreditation is a quality and reputation signal, not a required credential.

WHAT ACEJMC ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality ACEJMC reviews curriculum, professional values and competencies, diversity, resources, and assessment against its standards. - Employer & industry recognition An accredited program signals professional preparation to newsrooms, agencies, and communication employers. - Not a licensure requirement There is no license to be a journalist, so ACEJMC accreditation is never legally required.

ACCREDITED VS. NOT

Because it is voluntary and not tied to a license, the absence of ACEJMC accreditation does not mean a journalism program is weak — many excellent programs are unaccredited. Treat ACEJMC accreditation as a positive signal where present, and judge unaccredited programs on their faculty, outcomes, internships, and industry reputation.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Culinary Arts Accreditation

FIELD Culinary arts	ACCREDITOR ACFEF (ACF)	LEVELS Certificate–degree
CERTIFICATION ACF (CC–CEC)	MATTERS FOR Quality, not license	VERIFY ACF directory

ACFEF AND CULINARY EDUCATION

The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) accreditation commission accredits culinary arts and pastry programs — from certificates to degrees. Cooking is not a licensed profession, so this is a quality standard tied to the profession's certifications, not a license.

WHAT ACCREDITATION AND ACF CERTIFICATION ADD

- Program quality ACFEF reviews curriculum, kitchens, and instructor credentials against culinary-industry standards. - ACF certification Graduates of accredited programs can more readily earn ACF chef certifications (from Certified Culinarian up to Certified Executive Chef), a respected industry credential. - Employer recognition Restaurants, hotels, and institutions recognize accredited programs and ACF-certified chefs. - Not.

WHO ACCREDITS CULINARY PROGRAMS

The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF) accreditation commission accredits culinary arts and pastry programs from certificate to degree level.

DO I NEED AN ACCREDITED CULINARY PROGRAM TO BE A CHEF

No. Cooking is not a licensed profession, so accreditation is a quality standard, not a legal requirement. It does support ACF certification.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Funeral Service Accreditation

FIELD Funeral service / mortuary	ACCREDITOR ABFSE	EXAM National Board (NBE)
BOARD ICFSEB	REQUIRED FOR Licensure	RECOGNITION USDE + CHEA

ABFSE AND MORTUARY SCIENCE EDUCATION

The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) is the national academic accreditor for funeral service and mortuary science programs — mostly associate degrees, with some bachelor's. Recognized by USDE and CHEA.

WHO ACCREDITS FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), the national academic accreditor for funeral service and mortuary science programs. It is recognized by USDE and CHEA.

DO I NEED AN ABFSE-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE LICENSED

Yes. Graduating from an ABFSE-accredited program is the first step and makes you eligible for the National Board Examination that underpins licensure.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL BOARD EXAM

The National Board Examination (NBE), administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB), required for funeral service licensure.

WHAT DEGREE DO FUNERAL DIRECTORS NEED

Typically an ABFSE-accredited associate degree (some bachelor's programs exist), plus an apprenticeship and state requirements.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Sport Management Accreditation

FIELD Sport management	ACCREDITOR COSMA	LEVELS Bachelor's–doctoral
MATTERS FOR Quality, not license	RECOGNITION CHEA	SCOPE Worldwide

COSMA AND SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) accredits sport management programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, in the U.S. and internationally. CHEA-recognized. Sport management is not a licensed profession, so COSMA accreditation is a quality benchmark.

WHAT COSMA ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality COSMA reviews mission, curriculum, and outcomes against sport-management standards. - Industry recognition Teams, athletic departments, and sport organizations recognize accredited programs. - Not a license There is no license to work in sport management, so COSMA accreditation is never legally required. - A newer, growing benchmark COSMA accreditation is increasingly common.

WHO ACCREDITS SPORT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA), which accredits bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs worldwide. It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ACCREDITED SPORT MANAGEMENT DEGREE TO WORK IN THE FIELD

No. Sport management is not a licensed profession, so COSMA accreditation is a quality benchmark rather than a legal requirement.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Parks & Recreation Accreditation

FIELD Parks, recreation & tourism	ACCREDITOR COAPRT	LEVEL Undergraduate
CREDENTIAL CPRP (NRPA)	NOT CAPRA (agencies)	RECOGNITION CHEA

COAPRT AND RECREATION EDUCATION

The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) accredits undergraduate degree programs in parks, recreation, tourism, and related fields. CHEA-recognized.

COAPRT VS. CAPRA

Two similar NRPA-affiliated systems get mixed up: COAPRT accredits college programs (education), while CAPRA (the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies) accredits park and recreation agencies (the departments and organizations themselves). For a degree, look for COAPRT.

WHO ACCREDITS PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT), which accredits undergraduate degree programs. It is CHEA-recognized.

HOW DOES COAPRT CONNECT TO THE CPRP

A COAPRT-accredited degree lets you sit for the Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam right away; non-accredited graduates typically need a related degree plus experience first.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Library Science Accreditation

FIELD Library & information science	ACCREDITOR ALA (CoA)	DEGREE MLIS / MLS
STANDARD FOR Professional librarian roles	RECOGNITION CHEA	VERIFY ALA directory

THE ALA AND LIS EDUCATION

The American Library Association (ALA), through its Committee on Accreditation, accredits master's programs in library and information science (the MLIS or MLS). CHEA-recognized. Librarianship is generally not licensed, but an ALA-accredited master's functions as the profession's near-universal credential.

WHO ACCREDITS LIBRARY SCIENCE PROGRAMS

The American Library Association (ALA), through its Committee on Accreditation, which accredits master's programs in library and information science (MLIS/MLS). It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED AN ALA-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO BE A LIBRARIAN

For most professional librarian roles, effectively yes. An ALA-accredited master's is the standard entry credential, required or strongly preferred by academic, public, and research libraries.

IS LIBRARIANSHIP LICENSED

Generally no — the ALA-accredited MLIS functions as the profession's credential. School librarians additionally need a separate state teaching/school-librarian certification.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Court Reporting Accreditation

FIELD Court reporting / captioning	BODY NCRA (approval via CASE)	CERTS RPR · RMR · CRR
STATE CSR license (many)	NOT ACCREDITOR NCRA approves	VERIFY NCRA list

NCRA APPROVAL AND COURT-REPORTING EDUCATION

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) is not an accrediting agency — it approves court reporting programs through its Council on Approved Student Education (CASE) against the General Requirements and Minimum Standards (GRMS). All NCRA-approved programs are also independently accredited by USDE-recognized agencies.

NCRA CERTIFICATION AND STATE LICENSURE

- NCRA-approved program Meets the CASE/GRMS standards, and is also institutionally accredited. - RPR The entry NCRA certification; higher credentials follow (RMR, RDR, CRR). - State license (CSR) Required in many states, often satisfied by the RPR.

WHO ACCREDITS COURT REPORTING PROGRAMS

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) is not an accreditor; it approves programs through its Council on Approved Student Education (CASE). NCRA-approved programs are also independently accredited by USDE-recognized agencies.

WHAT IS NCRA APPROVAL

Recognition that a court reporting program meets NCRA's General Requirements and Minimum Standards through the CASE review process.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Aviation Accreditation

FIELD Collegiate aviation	ACCREDITOR AABI	ACTUAL CREDENTIAL FAA certificate
PROGRAMS Degree programs	MATTERS FOR Quality	RECOGNITION CHEA

AABI AND THE FAA LAYER

The Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI) accredits collegiate aviation degree programs — professional pilot, aviation management, maintenance management, and more. CHEA-recognized. But the credential that actually lets you fly or wrench is the FAA certificate, not the degree.

WHO ACCREDITS COLLEGIATE AVIATION PROGRAMS

The Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI), which accredits aviation degree programs (professional pilot, aviation management, and more). It is CHEA-recognized.

DO I NEED AN AABI-ACCREDITED PROGRAM TO BE A PILOT

No. The FAA certificate is what licenses a pilot, earned through FAA-approved training and exams. AABI accreditation is a quality mark on the college program around that training.

WHAT ACTUALLY LICENSES A PILOT OR MECHANIC

The FAA certificate — earned through FAA-approved training (Part 141/142 for flight, Part 147 for maintenance) and FAA exams — not the college degree.

WHY DOES AABI ACCREDITATION MATTER THEN

It signals program quality and can support airline pathway programs and reduced-hour (R-ATP) eligibility for graduates of qualifying degree programs.

PROGRAMMATIC BY FIELD

Forensic Science Accreditation

FIELD Forensic science	ACCREDITOR FEPAC (AAFS)	LEVELS Bachelor's / master's
MATTERS FOR Quality, hiring	RECOGNITION Specialized	VERIFY FEPAC directory

FEPAC AND FORENSIC EDUCATION

The Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC), affiliated with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), accredits bachelor's and master's forensic science programs. Forensic science is not licensed for individuals, so FEPAC accreditation is a quality and hiring standard.

WHAT FEPAC ACCREDITATION SIGNALS

- Program quality FEPAC reviews curriculum, laboratories, and faculty against rigorous forensic-science standards. - Crime-lab hiring Crime laboratories and agencies value — and sometimes prefer — graduates of FEPAC-accredited programs. - Not an individual license Forensic scientists are not licensed; laboratories themselves are separately accredited (e.g., under ISO/IEC 17025). - Selective Only a subset.

WHO ACCREDITS FORENSIC SCIENCE PROGRAMS

The Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC), affiliated with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, which accredits bachelor's and master's programs.

DO I NEED A FEPAC-ACCREDITED DEGREE TO WORK IN FORENSICS

No. Forensic scientists are not individually licensed, so FEPAC accreditation is a quality and hiring standard rather than a legal requirement — but crime labs often prefer it.

SECTION 05 OF 07

Beyond degrees

Certificates, certifications, continuing education and other credentials each have their own quality bodies.

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Certificate & Certification Accreditation 90

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BEYOND DEGREES

Certificate & Certification Accreditation

COVERS	CE / CEUS	CERTIFICATIONS
Non-degree credentials	IACET	NCCA · ANAB
CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS	**STANDARD**	**AS OF**
ICE 1100 · ANAB E2659	ISO/IEC 17024	2026

CREDENTIALING, DEFINED

Credentialing is the umbrella term covering accreditation, licensure, registration, certification, and education. Below the degree, three kinds of non-degree credential each have their own accreditation system — and they are commonly confused.

IACET, NCCA & ANAB

Three bodies do the vouching for these credentials — the meta-accreditors of the non-degree world.

ACCREDITING THE CREDENTIAL, NOT THE SCHOOL

Notice the pattern: just as USDE and CHEA accredit the accreditors of colleges, IACET, NCCA, and ANAB vouch for the organizations and programs that issue non-degree credentials. When a certification says it is “NCCA-accredited” or “ANSI/ISO 17024 accredited,” that means an independent body confirmed the certification is rigorous, fair, and valid — not a.

Continuing Education Accreditation

COVERS	GENERAL ACCREDITOR	INSTITUTIONS
CE / CEUs	IACET	ACCET
BY PROFESSION	**UNIT**	**AS OF**
ACCME · ANCC · CLE · CPE	CEU (10 hrs)	2026

WHY CE HAS ITS OWN ACCREDITATION

Most licensed and certified professionals must complete continuing education (CE) to keep their credential current. Because that CE is what renews a license, its quality has to be assured too — so CE providers and programs are accredited or approved by a mix of general and profession-specific bodies.

IACET AND ACCET

- IACET — the CEU standard The International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training accredits CE and training providers against the ANSI/IACET Standard and authorizes the IACET CEU (one CEU = 10 contact hours) — a widely recognized, cross-industry mark of quality CE. - ACCET — continuing-education institutions The Accrediting Council for Continuing Education.

PROFESSION-SPECIFIC CE APPROVAL

Many professions run their own CE-approval systems, and only approved CE counts toward that license or certification.

HOW IS CONTINUING EDUCATION ACCREDITED

By a mix of general bodies — IACET (CEUs) and ACCET (CE institutions) — and profession-specific systems such as ACCME (medicine), ANCC (nursing), state MCLE (law), and NASBA (accounting).

BEYOND DEGREES

International School Accreditation

COVERS Schools abroad	LEAD ACCREDITOR CIS	US PARTNERS NEASC · WASC · MSA
CURRICULUM AUTH. IB	BRITISH COBIS	COMMON Dual accreditation

HOW SCHOOLS ABROAD ARE ACCREDITED

American-curriculum and international schools outside the U.S. are accredited by a distinct set of bodies. The leader is the Council of International Schools (CIS), a global, non-national accreditor with hundreds of member schools. Many schools hold dual accreditation — CIS together with a U.S. regional body — plus a curriculum authorization such as the.

COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS (CIS)

CIS is the most widely recognized international-school accreditor, evaluating schools against international standards on roughly a five-year cycle. It partners with three U.S. regional bodies — NEASC (its international commission), ACS WASC, and Middle States (MSA-CESS) — to run joint evaluations, so a school can earn dual accreditation from one integrated process. CIS is.

COBIS, CAMBRIDGE, ASIC & U.S. REGIONALS

- COBIS The Council of British International Schools — for British-curriculum schools abroad, on a five-year cycle. - U.S. regional bodies abroad NEASC (international commission), ACS WASC, and MSA-CESS accredit American-curriculum schools overseas, often jointly with CIS. - Cambridge (CAIE) Registration as a Cambridge examination centre — a curriculum/exam credential, not school accreditation. -.

Trade & Industry Certifications

COVERS Skilled trades	MODEL Industry cert + program approval	EXAMPLES ASE · NCCER · AWS · NIMS
AVIATION FAA Part 147	CERTS ACCREDITED BY NCCA · ANAB	AS OF 2026

HOW THE TRADES ASSURE QUALITY

Skilled trades — automotive, construction, welding, machining, aviation maintenance, HVAC, and more — generally do not use college-style accreditation. Instead, quality runs on two things: industry-recognized certifications that test a worker's skills, and accredited or approved training programs that prepare them. Many of the certifications themselves are accredited under the same NCCA and ANSI/ISO.

MAJOR TRADE CREDENTIALING SYSTEMS

- Automotive — ASE The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certifies technicians; the ASE Education Foundation (formerly NATEF) accredits automotive training programs. - Construction — NCCER The National Center for Construction Education and Research provides standardized curricula, credentials, and program accreditation across the construction trades. - Welding — AWS The American Welding Society.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Employer recognition Employers hire on industry certifications (ASE, AWS, NCCER) more than on school prestige. - Program approval An accredited/approved program signals the training meets the industry's standard. - Financial aid & GI Bill Some trade programs qualify for federal aid or GI Bill benefits through their institution's or program's approval. - Licensure.

BEYOND DEGREES

Coding Bootcamps & Alt Credentials

COVERS Bootcamps / alt paths	MOST ARE Not accredited	SOME ARE State-approved · DEAC
OUTCOMES CIRR-style reporting	AID Rarely Title IV	AS OF 2026

WHY MOST BOOTCAMPS AREN'T ACCREDITED

Coding bootcamps and similar intensive, non-degree programs generally are not institutionally accredited — and that alone is not a red flag. Accreditation is tied to the degree-granting, federal-aid system; most bootcamps are short, non-degree, and outside it. What matters for a bootcamp is a different set of quality signals.

WHAT TO LOOK AT INSTEAD

- State approval Many states require career-training programs to be licensed by a state agency (for example California's BPPE). This is a baseline consumer protection, not academic accreditation. - DEAC accreditation A minority of non-degree and distance programs hold accreditation from DEAC (a USDE-recognized institutional accreditor) — see the national/career page. - Outcomes reporting.

ARE CODING BOOTCAMPS ACCREDITED

Most are not institutionally accredited, because accreditation is tied to the degree and federal-aid system that short, non-degree bootcamps sit outside of. Lack of accreditation alone is not a red flag.

BEYOND DEGREES

Micro-Credentials & Badges

COVERS	FORMALLY ACCREDITED?	STANDARD
Micro-credentials	Usually no	Open Badges (1EdTech)
TRANSPARENCY	**VALUE FROM**	**AS OF**
Credential Engine	Issuer + rigor	2026

A FAST-GROWING, LOOSELY GOVERNED SPACE

Micro-credentials — short, focused credentials often shown as digital badges — certify a specific skill or competency. The space is growing fast and is not governed by a single accreditor. There is no "micro-credential accreditation" body the way there is for colleges; value comes from who issues it and what standards it meets.

WHAT STRUCTURE EXISTS

- Open Badges (1EdTech) The technical standard for verifiable digital badges (from 1EdTech, formerly IMS Global) — it makes a badge portable and its metadata checkable, but it is a data standard, not a quality accreditation. - Credential Engine A non-profit building the Credential Transparency Description Language and a registry to make credentials comparable.

STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

Some micro-credentials are stackable — they accumulate toward a certificate or degree at the issuing (accredited) institution. Where that is the case, the stacked pathway inherits the institution's accreditation. A standalone badge from an unknown issuer, by contrast, carries only that issuer's reputation.

BEYOND DEGREES

English-Language Program Accreditation

COVERS	ACCREDITOR	ALSO
English-language / IEP	CEA	ACCET
F-1 RULE	**RECOGNITION**	**AS OF**
Accreditation Act (2010)	USDE	2026

CEA AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), founded in 1999, is the recognized specialized accreditor of intensive English programs (IEPs) and English-language institutions — in the U.S. and internationally. USDE-recognized. Continuing-education institutions offering English training may also be accredited by ACCET.

HOW CEA ACCREDITS

- Programmatic English programs and units within U.S. colleges or universities that are already institutionally accredited. - Institutional Independent U.S. English-language schools — which may also offer TESOL/TEFL teacher-training or other language courses. - General English-language programs outside the U.S., in a range of settings.

WHO ACCREDITS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), the recognized specialized accreditor of intensive English programs and institutions. ACCET also accredits some continuing-education English institutions. Both are USDE-recognized.

BEYOND DEGREES

Montessori Accreditation

COVERS	TEACHER ED	SCHOOLS
Montessori	MACTE	AMS · AMI
NAME	**RECOGNITION**	**AS OF**
Unprotected	MACTE: USDE	2026

WHY ACCREDITATION MATTERS FOR MONTESSORI

The word “Montessori” is not trademarked or legally protected — any school or program can use it. That makes accreditation and recognition the practical way to tell an authentic, well-run Montessori program from one that merely borrows the name. Two layers matter: teacher education and schools.

MACTE

The Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) is the USDE-recognized accreditor of Montessori teacher-education programs and institutions. It works with a range of Montessori organizations (its “recognized organizations”), and freestanding accredited teacher-education institutions can even access federal Title IV aid. A credential from a MACTE-accredited program is the mark of authentic Montessori teacher.

AMS AND AMI

- AMS — American Montessori Society Offers school accreditation and member recognition, plus teacher-education affiliation, on the U.S. side. - AMI — Association Montessori Internationale The organization founded by Maria Montessori, which recognizes schools and training globally (through AMI/USA in the U.S.). - Other organizations Additional Montessori bodies exist; MACTE’s recognized-organization list is a.

BEYOND DEGREES

Online-Learning Quality

COVERS	FRAMEWORKS	IS IT ACCREDITATION?
Online course quality	Quality Matters · OLC	No
ONLINE DEGREES	**WATCH FOR**	**AS OF**
Covered by school accred.	'Online-only' mills	2026

THERE IS NO SEPARATE 'ONLINE ACCREDITATION'

A common misconception: that online programs need a special “online accreditation.” They do not. An online degree from an institutionally accredited college is fully accredited — the school’s regular accreditation (see the higher-ed tier) covers its online offerings. What exists separately is a set of course-design quality frameworks, which are not accreditation but do.

QUALITY MATTERS AND OLC

- Quality Matters (QM) A widely used, research-based rubric for reviewing and certifying the design of online and blended courses; a QM certification marks a well-designed course, not an accredited institution. - OLC — Online Learning Consortium Offers the OSCQR course-design scorecard and a Quality Scorecard for online programs and services — quality benchmarks.

DO ONLINE DEGREES NEED SPECIAL ACCREDITATION

No. An online degree from an institutionally accredited college is fully accredited; the school's regular accreditation covers its online programs. There is no separate 'online accreditation.'.

WHAT IS QUALITY MATTERS

A research-based rubric for reviewing and certifying the design of online and blended courses. A QM certification marks a well-designed course, not an accredited institution.

SECTION 06 OF 07

International & country

There is no single world accreditor. Each country runs its own system, and a recognition layer connects them.

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Foreign Credential Recognition 101

Destinations & Agencies 102

INTERNATIONAL & COUNTRY

Global Recognition

SCOPE
Worldwide higher ed

TREATY
UNESCO Global Convention

DATABASE
WHED (IAU)

EUROPE
Bologna · ECTS · EQAR

ENGINEERING
Washington Accord

BUSINESS
AACSB·EQUIS·AMBA

THE RECOGNITION ARCHITECTURE

Because accreditation is national, cross-border recognition relies on a layered system: treaties that commit countries to recognize each other's qualifications, databases that list recognized institutions, networks that connect national quality agencies, and professional agreements that recognize degrees in specific fields.

UNESCO RECOGNITION CONVENTIONS

- Global Convention (2019) The Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education — the first UN treaty on higher education with worldwide scope, in force since 2023, aimed at facilitating academic and professional mobility. - Regional conventions Regional treaties for Europe/North America (the Lisbon Recognition Convention), Africa, the Arab States, Asia-Pacific.

QUALITY-ASSURANCE NETWORKS

- INQAAHE The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education — the global network of QA agencies. - ENQA & EQAR In Europe, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), which lists agencies that meet European standards. - Regional networks APQN (Asia-Pacific).

INTERNATIONAL & COUNTRY

Foreign Credential Recognition

COVERS	INTO U.S.	U.S. BODIES
Cross-border degrees	Credential evaluation	NACES · AACRAO
OUT OF U.S.	FOR	AS OF
ENIC-NARIC	Study·work·licensure·immigration	2026

RECOGNITION VS. EVALUATION

"Recognition" means a country or institution formally accepts a foreign qualification; "evaluation" means a professional service compares it to the local system. Which you need depends on your purpose — admission to a university, a professional license, a job, or immigration — and on the country.

GETTING A FOREIGN DEGREE RECOGNIZED IN THE U.S.

The U.S. has no central authority that recognizes foreign degrees. Instead, credential-evaluation services compare your qualification to U.S. equivalents, and universities, employers, licensing boards, and immigration authorities rely on those evaluations.

GETTING A U.S. DEGREE RECOGNIZED ABROAD

To use a U.S. degree in another country, you generally go through that country's recognition centre — in Europe, the ENIC-NARIC network; elsewhere, the national ministry or an equivalent body. A degree from a U.S. institutionally accredited college (see the higher-ed tier) is generally recognized; an unaccredited U.S. "degree" usually is not.

INTERNATIONAL & COUNTRY

Destinations & Agencies

COVERS Main destinations	EACH COUNTRY Own QA body	VERIFY WHED · ministry
PAIRS WITH Country Guides	FOR Study abroad	AS OF 2026

ONE COUNTRY, ONE SYSTEM

When you study abroad, the credential that matters is recognition by that country's own authority — a national quality-assurance agency, a regulator, or the education ministry. Below are the bodies for the most common destinations. For any country not listed, the WHED database and the country's ministry are the authoritative check.

MAJOR DESTINATIONS

This is a starting reference, not an exhaustive list — agencies and names change. Always confirm a specific institution in the WHED database or with the country's education ministry.

VERIFYING A UNIVERSITY IN ANY COUNTRY

- 1 · Find the national authority Identify the country's QA agency or education ministry (the table above, or a WHED lookup). - 2 · Confirm the institution is recognized Check the institution appears on the national list and in WHED. - 3 · Check the specific programme For regulated fields, confirm the programme.

PAIR THIS WITH THE COUNTRY GUIDES

For the education system, admissions, and context of a specific country, use the K12 Academics country guides, and the study-abroad and teach-abroad libraries — then use the agency above to confirm a specific school.

SECTION 07 OF 07

Practical guides

The questions people actually ask when a real decision is on the line.

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Accreditation & Credit Transfer	106
Accreditation & Financial Aid	107
Choosing an Accredited School	108

PRACTICAL GUIDES

How to Verify Accreditation

TASK Verify a school	TIME ~5 minutes	TOOLS USDE + CHEA
CONFIRM Accreditor is recognized	ALSO Scope & status	AS OF 2026

VERIFY IN FOUR STEPS

- 1 · Find the claimed accreditor On the school's site, find exactly which body it claims accredits it — the name matters. Vague phrases like "fully accredited" with no named accreditor are a warning sign.
- 2 · Check the two databases Search the school in the U.S. Department of Education's database (DAPIP).

VERIFYING A FOREIGN SCHOOL

For a school outside the U.S., the USDE/CHEA databases won't apply. Use the WHED world database, the ENIC-NARIC network, or the country's own ministry — see international & country accreditation.

HOW DO I VERIFY A SCHOOL'S ACCREDITATION

Find the claimed accreditor, search the school in the USDE database (DAPIP) and CHEA directory, confirm the accreditor is recognized, and check the scope and current status.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHECK

Whether the accreditor is recognized by the USDE and/or CHEA. An 'accreditor' that appears only on the school's own website is an accreditation mill.

WHAT ARE THE TWO DATABASES

The U.S. Department of Education's database (DAPIP) and CHEA's directory of accredited institutions and recognized accreditors.

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Diploma & Accreditation Mills

TWO PROBLEMS Diploma + accred. mills	DIPLOMA MILL Sells degrees	ACCRED. MILL Fake accreditor
THE TEST Recognized?	COST Money + reputation	AS OF 2026

TWO LINKED SCAMS

They work together: the diploma mill buys a stamp from an accreditation mill, then points to it as proof of legitimacy.

RED FLAGS

- Degrees fast or for “life experience” Real degrees take real time and coursework. - Flat fee for the degree Legitimate tuition is per-credit or per-term, not a lump sum for a diploma. - An accreditor you can’t find If the “accreditor” appears only on the school’s site — not in the USDE or.

WHAT IS A DIPLOMA MILL

An operation that sells degrees for a fee with little or no real coursework. The 'degree' is worthless for licensure, most employers, and further study.

WHAT IS AN ACCREDITATION MILL

A fake 'accreditor' that sells accreditation to diploma mills, so they can claim to be 'accredited' even though no recognized authority stands behind it.

HOW DO I SPOT A DIPLOMA MILL

Watch for degrees offered fast or for 'life experience,' a flat fee for the degree, an accreditor you can't find in official lists, names that mimic real universities, and no real faculty or location.

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Accreditation & Credit Transfer

QUESTION Will credits transfer?	DEPENDS ON Accreditation + policy	BEST CASE Institutionally accredited
RISK Unaccredited / mismatched	FINAL SAY Receiving school	AS OF 2026

WHY ACCREDITATION DRIVES TRANSFER

Colleges generally accept transfer credit only from institutionally accredited schools — and they scrutinize the accreditor. Credit from an unaccredited school (or a mill) usually will not transfer at all. But even between accredited schools, transfer is never guaranteed: the receiving school decides, course by course.

HOW TO KEEP CREDITS TRANSFERABLE

- Start at an institutionally accredited school Credits from a USDE/CHEA-recognized institution have the best chance. - Check articulation agreements Community colleges and universities often have formal agreements that guarantee transfer — use them. - Get transfer decisions in writing Ask the receiving school to evaluate specific courses before you commit. - Mind the.

WILL MY COLLEGE CREDITS TRANSFER

It depends on accreditation and the receiving school's policies. Credits from institutionally accredited schools transfer most readily; the receiving school makes the final, course-by-course decision.

DO CREDITS FROM UNACCREDITED SCHOOLS TRANSFER

Usually not. Credit from an unaccredited school or a diploma mill generally will not transfer at all.

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Accreditation & Financial Aid

CONTROLS	REQUIRES	RECOGNIZED BY
Federal (Title IV) aid	Institutional accreditation	USDE
PROGRAMMATIC?	**CHECK**	**AS OF**
Doesn't gate aid	Before enrolling	2026

INSTITUTIONAL, NOT PROGRAMMATIC

It is the school's institutional accreditation (see the higher-ed tier) that gates federal aid — not programmatic accreditation. A nursing or business program can be programmatically accredited, but that alone does not make its students aid-eligible; the college must hold recognized institutional accreditation. Conversely, an institutionally accredited school's students are generally aid-eligible even in.

STATE AID AND OTHER FUNDING

- Federal (Title IV) Requires USDE-recognized institutional accreditation. - State aid States set their own rules, usually also requiring recognized accreditation. - Employer tuition & GI Bill Employers and the VA typically require recognized accreditation or specific approvals. - Mills = no aid Diploma mills are not aid-eligible; "aid" offered by one is a.

DOES ACCREDITATION AFFECT FINANCIAL AID

Yes. Federal (Title IV) aid — Pell Grants, Direct Loans, work-study — only flows to schools accredited by a USDE-recognized institutional accreditor.

WHY IS ACCREDITATION CALLED 'GATEKEEPING'

Because a USDE-recognized institutional accreditor is what makes a school eligible to offer federal Title IV student aid; accreditors gate access to that aid.

PRACTICAL GUIDES

Choosing an Accredited School

TASK Choose a school	FIRST Institutional accreditation	IF LICENSURE Programmatic too
AVOID Mills	MATCH Your goal	AS OF 2026

A PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

- 1 · Confirm institutional accreditation Is the school accredited by a USDE/CHEA-recognized institutional accreditor? This gates federal aid, transfer, and legitimacy. Verify it in the databases. - 2 · If your field is licensed, check programmatic accreditation For nursing, engineering, law, teaching, therapy, and the like, confirm the specific program's programmatic accreditation —.

HOW DO I CHOOSE AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

Confirm institutional accreditation first, then programmatic accreditation if your field is licensed, rule out mills, match accreditation to your goal, and then weigh cost, outcomes, and fit.

WHAT SHOULD I CHECK FIRST

Institutional accreditation by a USDE/CHEA-recognized accreditor — it gates federal aid, transfer, and basic legitimacy.

WHEN DOES PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION MATTER MOST

In licensed fields — nursing, engineering, law, teaching, therapy — where the specific program's accreditation can gate your exam and license.

HOW DO I RULE OUT A MILL

If the school's accreditor isn't recognized by the USDE or CHEA, walk away. See the diploma-mills guide.