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III-9.2 Credential Check at Point of Hire

(6/1/03; 9/03; 1/08; 5/14; 7/20/23)

Effective July 20, 2023, this policy has been revised. For the most current version without redlining, return to [III-9](#).

- a. Focus of check.

(1) Merit staff (temporary or regular):

(a) All hires in classifications that require a specific certification or license.

(b) Specific hires where the hiring selection was influenced by the representation of a higher education degree, certification, or license.

(2) Professional and scientific staff (temporary or regular): All hires.

(3) Faculty (temporary or regular): All hires.

(4) **Postdoctoral scholars: All hires.**
- b. Scope of check. In all cases, departments check the degrees, certifications, or licenses<sup>1</sup> that either are relevant to a hiring selection or that influences the setting of a salary. In most cases, departments need only check the highest-level credential represented on the candidate's resume or application. However, in some cases because of the position requirements, it is necessary to check the highest-level credential and/or the most directly relevant or any required credential related to a hiring decision.
- c. Notice and timing of check.

(1) Candidates are informed **during the interview stage** that **an offer of** employment **at with** The University of Iowa is contingent on a successful check of their credentials. This allows candidates to provide clarifying information, e.g., a degree obtained under a different last name. Departments secure a signed release from each candidate **at the close of the interview prior to a check being conducted**. This permits the department to check credentials through a variety of methods including **Degree-Verify**, the National Student Clearinghouse's electronic database. The release form can be downloaded at <https://hr.uiowa.edu/sites/hr.uiowa.edu/files/2019-07/Disclosure%20of%20Credential%20Verification.pdf>.

(2) If the offer letter is given to the candidate of choice prior to completion of the credential check, the offer letter reiterates that a credential check is being conducted and that University of Iowa employment is contingent on a successful outcome.

(3) Credential checks are conducted immediately upon selection of the candidate(s) of choice and submitted for verification no later than 15 days following the candidate's first day of employment.
- d. Acceptable methodologies. Departments may use the following methodologies to carry out a credential check.

(1) For verification of license or certification:

(a) Verification through contacting the granting institution, or

(b) Verification through visual inspection of original certification or license.

(2) For verification of academic degree:

(a) Verification through the National Student Clearinghouse's electronic database, **Degree-Verify**.<sup>2</sup> Verification via this method must be attempted before contacting the granting institution.

(b) If **Degree-Verify cannot verify for any reason** a candidate's degree **for any reason cannot be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse's electronic database**, including that the granting institution is not included in **Degree-Verify's** the database, the hiring department may contact the granting institution directly. For faculty hires, if the contact is made by telephone, a dated, signed memo of the contact should be prepared by the person making the inquiry (countersigned by the DEO if they did not make the inquiry), stating the name of the office and the name and title of the person who provided the verification.

(c) If **Degree-Verify the National Student Clearinghouse** cannot verify and a granting institution is not willing to release the information, then visual inspection of the original diploma or certified copy of a transcript may be used.

(3) Additional verification methods for faculty hires:

(a) A letter from the granting institution's graduate college, professional college, registrar, or other institutional office certifying that the candidate has received the degree or completed all of the requirements for the degree.

(b) A letter of reference on the granting institution's letterhead from the applicant's major adviser or department chair which includes language that clearly indicates that the candidate has received the degree or completed all of the requirements for the degree.

Note: Verification of professional credentials for faculty health care providers by one University of Iowa unit need not be redone by another (e.g., if M.D. degrees have been verified by the UIHC, a college may use their verification).

Colleges may set more stringent requirements, for example, disallowing verification by phone or requiring that a letter of reference from the major adviser is acceptable only if it states that the degree has been granted.

(4) **Additional verification methods for postdoctoral scholars: An official transcript or letter from the granting institution's graduate college, registrar, or other institutional office certifying that the candidate has completed all requirements for awarding the terminal degree.**

e. Documentation and record keeping.

(1) Departments list credentials on the Human Resources transaction (appointment or transfer) and identify whether a credential check has been completed. If the check is complete, the list also indicates which credentials were verified as relevant to the hiring selection or the setting of salary.

(2) Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) departmental reports indicate incomplete credential checks. Colleges, divisions, units, and departments are responsible for reviewing credential checks reports on a biweekly basis.

(3) All supporting documentation is be kept at the departmental level in the interview file, and in the event the candidate is hired, in the personnel file.

f. Falsification of credentials.

(1) Departments who believe a candidate has misrepresented a credential discuss the discrepancy with the candidate to provide a reasonable opportunity for the individual to provide clarifying information.

(2) If upon further review, it is the hiring department's judgment that a material misrepresentation has occurred, such that the candidate should no longer be considered for employment, or if already employed should be terminated, the department informs their Human Resources senior leadership representative (or dean, in the case of faculty) immediately. This person consults with University Human Resources (or the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost in the case of faculty) and/or General Counsel before taking negative action.

(3) The disqualified candidate/employee is informed in writing of such action.

(4) If a disqualified candidate/employee seeks future employment at The University of Iowa, University Human Resources (or the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost in the case of faculty) may inform the new hiring department. It is the responsibility of the hiring department to take into consideration this information in evaluating the candidate/employee.

g. Credentials acquired post-hire or corrections to existing information.

(1) If employees request a change in the HRIS credentials listing at any time post-hire, they notify the department, which then must verify the change per the methodologies identified above.

(2) When changing faculty credential information, a copy of the verification document should also be provided to the Associate Provost for Faculty, 111 Jessup Hall.
- Footnotes
1. Includes driver's license when required for completion of duties. Verification can be completed through Risk Management.

2. **Degree-Verify is an electronic service sponsored by the National Student Clearinghouse that provides verification of higher education degrees.** The **National Student** Clearinghouse is a non-profit corporation, established in 1993, with an original mission to assist schools in their obligations to report student enrollment status. It has expanded its mission to degree verification. Verification can be completed at their website 24 hours per day/7 days per week. Typically, the response is immediate. However, if a degree pre-dates a participating school's electronic records, the response will typically take up to 24 hours.