Process for Institutions Seeking Initial Recognition for a Teacher Education Unit and Approval of Program(s)

The Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/21B-105] states Recognized", as used in this Article in connection with the word "school" or "institution", means such college, university, or not-for-profit entity that meets requirements set by the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board. Application for recognition of the school or institution as an educator preparation institution must be made to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, shall set the criteria by which the school or institution is to be judged and, through the secretary of the State Board, arrange for an official inspection and shall grant recognition of such school or institution as may meet the required standards.

The rules that govern the recognition and approval process are found in Section 25.115 of 23 Illinois Administrative Code. The rules may be found at http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admipcode/023/023000250C01150R.html. As stated in the rules, a college or university must also be approved as a degree-granting institution by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. A not-for-profit entity must show that it is registered with the Illinois Secretary of State as a not-for-profit.

Illinois is a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) partner state. This means that all units that prepare teachers, administrators, and/or professional school personnel in the state are recognized using the NCATE standards found in the Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (2008). These standards may be found at http://www.ncate.org/Standards/NCATEUnitStandards/UnitStandardsinEffect2008/tabid/476/Default.aspx.

Programs in accredited Illinois’ units are based on the national standards, or if there are none for the content area, the Illinois Content-Area Standards. The list of national organizations may be found at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/esd/pdf/spa_std_listing0212.pdf. State standards may be found at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/pcstandardrules.htm. Scroll down the page until you find the set of standards that corresponds to the program for which you are seeking approval. You will be required to submit the matrix as part of your new program proposal. Teacher preparation programs must also address the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards found at http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admipcode/023/023000240001300R.html.

Section 25.155 describes the initial recognition procedures and may be found at http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admipcode/023/023000250C01550R.html. To begin this process, the institution must submit a letter of intent stating its desire to initiate the process to the State Superintendent. A principal consultant from Educator and School Development will then be assigned to assist the institution.

The institution will be required to submit the following materials during the accreditation process.

1. Information indicating that the institution has been granted operating approval and degree granting approval from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, or a Certificate of Good Standing for a not-for-profit organization.
2. Information that the institution has been accredited by the North Central Association (now the Higher Learning Commission), institutions of higher education only.
3. A preliminary report including a written description of the education unit and the organization of the institution with supporting documentation.
4. The unit’s conceptual framework. The format and other helpful information will be provided.
5. A new program proposal for each of the programs that the unit wishes to offer. The format will be provided.
6. The institutional report, a self-study on how the unit meets the NCATE Unit Standards. The format will be provided.
An on-site accreditation visit will be scheduled once the conceptual framework and other documentation have been found to be adequate. Five to seven professional educators from the education community in the state will conduct the visit. They have been trained in the applicable standards and procedures, including one individual who has been trained to chair the team. An ISBE staff consultant or state designee will also accompany the team.

The state consultant assigned to you will help you through every step of this process. We encourage you to keep in close contact with this individual throughout the process.