Frequently Asked Questions About Letters of Equivalency

These questions and answers are based on current regulations as of September 1999, and are subject to change by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and/or the General Assembly.

What is a Letter of Equivalency?
The Bachelor’s or Master’s Letter of Equivalency is used only for a salary increase. It will not satisfy certification regulations that require an earned degree.

Master’s Equivalency (MEQ)

1. Who qualifies for a Master’s Equivalency (MEQ)?
The MEQ may be issued to those persons who have completed at least thirty-six (36) hours of graduate-level credit in accordance with Chapter 49.191(1) State Board of Education regulations.

2. What are the requirements for an MEQ?
Candidates for an MEQ must hold a valid Level I or Level II Pennsylvania certificate and have earned at least 36 semester hour credits with a grade of “C,” “Pass,” or better. A minimum of 18 academic graduate credits must be earned in the content area of the applicant’s certification area(s) at an accredited college/university.

The remaining 18 credits may be earned through Pennsylvania in-service programs approved by the Secretary of Education after October 1, 1972 or be a combination of graduate college/university and Pennsylvania in-service credits.

3. Are Pennsylvania in-service credits acceptable?
A maximum of 18 of the credit requirement may be satisfied through in-service programs approved by the Secretary of Education. Official in-service letters with raised seal must be submitted with the application.

4. Are community college credits and continuing education units (CEUs) accepted toward the Letter of Equivalency for Master’s Degree?
No. Community college credits and continuing education units (CEUs) are not accepted toward the Letter of Equivalency for Master’s Degree.

5. Are quarter hour credits equivalent to semester hour credits?
No. A quarter hour credit is only equal to two-thirds of a semester hour credit.

6. May I use the credits which were accepted for issuance of the Level II toward the MEQ?
Yes, if they meet the criteria. Documents submitted with a TIMS application need not be re-submitted.

7. How do I determine if my credits are graduate level?
Credits must be clearly listed as graduate level on the transcript. This information is usually on the back of the transcript or may be verified with the college/university registrar.

8. How can I be certain that my school district’s MEQ deadline will be met?
The Bureau cannot be responsible for meeting school district deadlines. We recommend submitting your application well in advance of your deadline.

Bachelor’s Equivalency (BEQ)

1. Who qualifies for a Baccalaureate Equivalency (BEQ)?
The Letter of Equivalency for Baccalaureate Degree is issued to holders of Vocational Instructional I, Vocational Instructional II or their equivalents.

2. What are the requirements for a BEQ?
The accumulation of 90 college semester hour credits with a grade of “C,” “Pass,” or better.
   - The first 60 hours must be from an accredited two-year or four-year college.
   - The final 30 hours must include a minimum of 18 credit hours earned at a State-approved baccalaureate degree granting institution.
   - The remaining 12 of the final 30 credits may be satisfied, in full or in part, through in-service programs approved by the Secretary of Education.

3. Are community college credits and continuing education units (CEUs) accepted toward the Letter of Equivalency for Baccalaureate Degree?
Community college credits are accepted except for 18 credit hours of the final 30 which must be earned at a State-approved baccalaureate degree granting institution. Continuing education units (CEUs) are not accepted toward the Letter of Equivalency for Baccalaureate Degree.

4. Are CLEP credits accepted toward the Letter of Equivalency for Baccalaureate Degree?
Yes.

5. Are quarter hour credits equivalent to semester hour credits?
No. A quarter hour credit is only equal to two-thirds of a semester hour credit.

6. May I use the credits which were accepted for issuance of the Level II toward the BEQ?
Yes, if they meet the criteria. Documents submitted with a TIMS application need not be re-submitted.

7. How can I be certain that my school district’s BEQ deadline will be met?
The Bureau cannot be responsible for meeting school district deadlines. We recommend submitting your application well in advance of your deadline.