

VERIFICATION OF EDUCATION

Provider Responsibilities for Verifying Education of Paraprofessionals

We all want to ensure that anyone caring for vulnerable members of our communities meet the minimum education requirements. Failure to do so raises risk to the member, provider, and our system overall.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their paraprofessionals have a valid high school diploma or state recognized equivalent of a high school diploma (for example, a GED).

North Carolina Administrative Code Chapter 10A Subchapter 27G.0104, requires the following:

"Paraprofessional" within the MH/DD/SAS system of care means an individual who, with the exception of staff providing respite services or personal care services, has a GED or high school diploma; or no GED or high school diploma, employed prior to November 1, 2001 to provide a MH/DD/SAS service."


Providers must also demonstrate that they verified that its staff meets the educational requirements. Verifying, means making sure the high school diplomas and State recognized equivalent of high school diplomas (GEDs) presented by staff are valid, issued by legitimate institutions, and documenting the steps taken to verify the educational requirements.

Paraprofessional Education Requirements

In North Carolina, unless the paraprofessional started employment prior to November 1, 2001, anyone who provides MH/IDD/SUD services must meet the minimum education requirement of having a valid high school diploma/transcript or a valid state recognized equivalent of a high school diploma (GED) from an organization recognized by the state in which the diploma or equivalent was issued.

A High School Diploma is typically issued by a regionally accredited high school to students to recognize completion of all state and local graduation requirements.

Whether or not the school is accredited, the diploma must be recognized by the high schools' home state as a high school diploma. Many states recognize schools through regional accreditation, which is generally true for public high schools, though it may or may not be true for private schools, including online and correspondence high schools. In North Carolina, a

 For more information, go to <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/about-doa/divisions/division-non-public-education>.

private high school must be listed with the NC Division of Non-Public Education *for the school year when the student graduated.*

Home School Diploma: Is a diploma issued by a non-public school where the student receives academic instruction from his/her parent, legal guardian, or a member of the household in which the student resides. The chief administrator of the home school issues the diploma.

An Adult High School Diploma (Adult HSD) is generally issued through the community college system in most states. Colleges issuing adult high school diplomas must have nationally recognized regional accreditation in the United States.

The GED (General Education Development) is a copywritten test licensed by a trade association and vendor (the American Council on Education and Pearson). The GED tests measure the academic skills and knowledge expected of high school graduates in the United States. Successfully passing the tests results in award of a GED credential (which may be called a diploma, certificate, credential, or endorsement). The State, in which the test is taken, will issue the GED credential. A GED prep-course completion certificate is not the same as a GED and alone is not valid proof of a GED.


WARNING: Graduation Certificate and Certificate of Achievement: These are high school exit documents for students who do not meet the requirements for a diploma. These documents are NOT recognized as high school diplomas or equivalents.

Verification of Education Requirements for Paraprofessionals

As was indicated in LME-MCO Joint Communication Bulletin J270, dated November 2, 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provider monitoring tool review guidelines use the phrase “[v]erify educations (diploma, transcript)” with respect to staff documentation and qualifications.

To show that the verification of education requirements were met, you must maintain documentation to demonstrate that you received sufficient evidence that the staff earned a high school diploma or received a GED credential, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Typically, keeping in the personnel file the diploma/transcript or GED credential from the school or other organization that issued it may serve as sufficient evidence.

If there is any question about the legitimacy of the documentation or of the organization the staff member claims to have obtained their high school diploma or GED from, you may need to take additional steps and document those steps in the verification process. Be certain to document what you did to verify the education of your

 *Helpful tip, want to verify what your staff has told you in his/her job application? Ask that they have a copy of their diploma sent to you from the institution that issued it.*

staff, e.g., save screen shots, make notes of phone calls (i.e., include the date of the call, the phone number and person you spoke to), etc.

Resources for Verifying Paraprofessionals' Education

Some helpful resources for verifying high school diplomas and state recognized equivalent of a high school diploma (GED) include:

For High School Diplomas: Recognized regional accrediting bodies for high school diplomas.

North Central and Southern Association CASI (commission on accreditation and school improvement) <http://www.advanc-ed.org/oasis2/u/par/search>. CASI covers the states of Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools (MSCSS) <http://www.msac-cess.org/>. MSCSS covers the states of Delaware, the District of Columbia (D.C), Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

New England Commission on Public Secondary Schools <http://cpss.neasc.org/> and New England Commission on Independent Schools <http://cis.neasc.org/> (such as traditional boarding and day preparatory schools, private elementary schools, schools serving students with special needs, and religiously affiliated schools of many faiths) Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont

Western Association of Schools and Colleges <http://www.wascweb.org/> (secondary schools are listed under The Accrediting Commission for Schools) Covering the states of California and Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Pacific Basin, and East Asia, and areas of the Pacific and East Asia where American/International schools or colleges may apply to it for service

Northwest Accreditation Commission: <http://www.advanc-ed.org/oasis2/u/par/search> (distance education, elementary, foreign nation, high, K-12, middle level, post-secondary non-degree granting, residential, special purpose, supplementary education and travel education schools) Encompassing Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Adult High School Diploma: The nationally recognized regional accrediting bodies for colleges (and the geographic regions they serve) can be used to verify the legitimacy of an institution issuing an adult high school diploma:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools www.msche.org Delaware, the District of Columbia (D.C), Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

New England Association of Schools and Colleges www.neasc.org Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities www.nwccu.org Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools www.sacscoc.org Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia

Western Association of Schools and Colleges <https://www.acswasc.org/> (senior colleges and universities) and www.accic.org (community and junior colleges) California and Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Pacific Basin, and East Asia, and areas of the Pacific and East Asia where American/International schools or colleges may apply to it for service

Home Schools: The NC Division of Non-Public Education is authorized by state law to receive home school notices of intent to begin initial operation and to terminate operation, and to annually inspect the school's student attendance and nationally standardized achievement test result records. They provide a list of home schools by county at this website: <http://www.ncdnpe.org/hhh301.htm>

It is worth noting that schools listed with the NC Division of Non-Public Education change over time and, therefore, diplomas issued at different times may not have the same weight.

GED: The only official GED is given by the GED TESTING SERVICE and its approved sites. All approved testing locations are listed, as well as instructions on how to obtain a transcript can be found, at: www.GEDtest.org.

The official GED is NOT offered online via the internet. Currently the GED is a paper and pencil test only. The GED test is a series of 5 tests covering different subjects and takes 7 hours to complete.