



## RECERTIFICATION ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE GUIDE FOR NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

For non-accredited schools, evidence is a required part of the recertification package that schools must submit to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Find your school type below and include the corresponding evidence in your package.

**Note:** This document only applies to schools that are not accredited by a [U.S. Department of Education-recognized accrediting agency](#) or an [SEVP-identified accrediting agency](#). If your school is accredited by one of the agencies found on one of these lists, you are not required to submit the additional evidence outlined in this document.

### NON-ACCREDITED PRIVATE K-12

A petitioning school must submit:

- **A minimum of three** pieces of evidence in lieu of accreditation from three different schools.
- Evidence supporting the students referenced in the letters or college acceptance letters, program enrollment and completion/transfer dates at the petitioning school (e.g., transcript or diploma copies).
- Legal documentation demonstrating ownership of the school (e.g., articles of incorporation showing share ownership, share purchase agreements, limited partnership or partnership agreement, sole proprietorship documents, and/or most recent Bill of Sale).

#### Evidence in Lieu of Accreditation

- The evidence must attest that the receiving schools have accepted students from the petitioning (**your**) school and that the students were able to successfully matriculate to the next appropriate grade level. The receiving schools (providers of the evidence to the petitioning school) must either be owned and operated as public educational institutions/systems or be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency.
  - **ALL** evidence in lieu of accreditation must fulfill **ALL** of the criteria listed in either “a” or “b;” the petitioning school can submit a combination of pieces of evidence from the two categories.
    - a) Letters in Lieu of accreditation – This option can be used by ANY school applying for certification of any grade levels K-12. Each letter must:
      - Be on the receiving institution’s letterhead
      - State the receiving institution’s U.S. Department of Education-recognized accrediting body and/or that the institution is operated as a public school/system
      - Include the complete name of the student
      - State the grade level completed at the petitioning school and the date of completion (must be within the last three years)
      - State the grade level entered at the receiving school and the date of entry
      - Include the name of the petitioning school
      - Include an actual signature from the author of the letter (emails and email signatures are not sufficient)
    - b) College acceptance letters – This option is **ONLY** available for schools that are petitioning for certification of grade 12 (on its own or in addition to any other elementary or secondary grade levels) and who issue a high school diploma. The colleges accepting the students must be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency. If you are unsure if they are accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency, visit <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx> and enter the institution or program’s name in the search field.



## DEGREE GRANTING NON-ACCREDITED POST-SECONDARY

A petitioning school must submit:

- **One piece of evidence per program** for which they are seeking certification.
- **A minimum of three** pieces of evidence in lieu of accreditation; therefore, if your school (the petitioning school) is seeking certification for only one or two programs of study, you will need to submit multiple pieces of evidence for at least one of your programs to meet the three item minimum. The pieces of evidence in lieu of accreditation must be from different schools attesting they have accepted, and continue to accept, students from your programs and/or credits from your school for each program for which you are petitioning to enroll nonimmigrant students. The receiving schools (providers of the evidence to the petitioning school) must either be owned and operated as public educational institutions/systems or be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency.
- Provide evidence proving each student referenced in the evidence attended the petitioning (**your**) institution and completed the program of study referenced in the evidence in lieu of accreditation. The evidence must include program enrollment and completion dates (e.g., transcripts).
- Legal documentation demonstrating ownership of the school (e.g., articles of incorporation showing share ownership, share purchase agreements, limited partnership or partnership agreement, sole proprietorship documents, and/or most recent Bill of Sale).

### Evidence in Lieu of Accreditation

Letters in lieu of accreditation – Each letter must:

- Be on the receiving institution's letterhead
- State the receiving institution's U.S. Department of Education-recognized accrediting body
- Include the complete name of the student
- State that the student was accepted from the petitioning school
- State the name of the program the student completed and the degree earned at the petitioning school
- State the date the student completed the program (this date must be within the last two years)
- State the field of study the student entered at the receiving school
- Include an actual signature from the author of the letter (emails and email signatures are not sufficient)



## NON-ACCREDITED VOCATIONAL OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL

A petitioning school must submit:

- A minimum of **three** pieces of evidence in lieu of accreditation.
- Evidence supporting the students referenced in the pieces of evidence completed a program of study at your institution with program enrollment and completion/transfer dates at the petitioning school (e.g., transcript copies).
- Legal documentation demonstrating ownership of the school (e.g., articles of incorporation showing share ownership, share purchase agreements, limited partnership or partnership agreement, sole proprietorship documents, and/or most recent Bill of Sale).

### Evidence in Lieu of Accreditation

Each program for which you are petitioning to enroll nonimmigrant students in must be referenced in a piece of evidence by name; **it is possible that your school will need to submit more than three pieces of evidence so that each program is referenced. If your school has more than three programs, one piece of evidence per program is sufficient.**

Evidence must be:

- Employment letters from different employers – One letter for each program for which you are applying to issue Forms I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," is required and each letter must show the student(s) are **employed in their field of study**. The letters must be written on company letterhead and signed by the employer(s) attesting graduates of your school are fully qualified in their field of study as a result of the training they gained at your institution. Letters must include the complete name of the student, name of your school, date graduated (must be within the last two years), identify the student's program of study at the school, dates of employment, and position for which the student was hired. SEVP does not accept letters from persons who are self-employed. All letters must be from different employers.

**OR**

- Professional licenses – If the field of study requires a professional government-issued license, SEVP will accept a copy of the student's professional license.



## NON-DEGREE GRANTING NON-ACCREDITED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

- A petitioning school must submit **one piece of evidence per program** for which they are seeking certification **AND** must submit a **minimum of three** pieces of evidence in lieu of accreditation; therefore, if your school (the petitioning school) is seeking certification for only one or two programs of study, you will need to submit multiple pieces of evidence for at least one of your programs to meet the three item minimum.
- If you are submitting evidence listed under the first option below, please provide proof that each student referenced in the piece of evidence attended the petitioning (**your**) institution and pursued the program of study referenced in the piece of evidence. The evidence must include program enrollment and completion/transfer dates (e.g., transcripts).
- Legal documentation demonstrating ownership of the school (e.g., articles of incorporation showing share ownership, share purchase agreements, limited partnership or partnership agreement, sole proprietorship documents, and/or most recent Bill of Sale).

### Evidence in Lieu of Accreditation

- **ALL** evidence in lieu of accreditation must fulfill **ALL** of the criteria listed in either option below; the petitioning school can submit a combination of evidence from the two categories.
    - Unconditional credit acceptance letters – The letters must be from different schools attesting they are accepted, and continue to accept, graduates from your programs and/or credits from your school for each program for which you are petitioning to enroll nonimmigrant students. The receiving schools (writers of the letters) must either be owned and operated as public educational institutions/systems or be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency. Each letter must:
      - Be on the receiving institution's letterhead
      - State the receiving institution's U.S. Department of Education-recognized accrediting body
      - Include the complete name of the student
      - State the name of the program pursued by the student at the petitioning school
      - State that credits from the petitioning school's program of study have been accepted and continue to be accepted unconditionally at the receiving school
      - State the date the student finished study in the program at the petitioning school (this date must be within the last two years)
      - Include an actual signature from the author of the letter (emails and email signatures are not sufficient)
- OR**
- Articulation and/or credit transfer agreements – These agreements must be with different institutions that are either owned and operated as public educational institutions/systems or be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency. Each agreement must:
    - State that credits from the petitioning school have been and continued to be accepted unconditionally by the receiving school
    - State, by name, the program(s) for which credits transfer
    - State into what programs the credits are accepted at the receiving school
    - Be signed by the appropriate persons from both institutions
    - Be currently in place and show the date(s) the agreement went into effect