

## Florida College Registrars and Admissions Officers High School Diploma Validation Procedure

This procedure explains the Florida College Registrars and Admissions Officers' (FCRAO) voluntarily-adopted role in developing best practices to validate the integrity of a student's reported high school completion. The goal of this procedure is threefold.

1. To identify a standard set of criteria that validates or invalidates a high school completion as legitimate in order to establish a best practices model relative to general college admission as well as in the context of 34 CFR 668.16 (p), *Standards of administrative capability*, requiring postsecondary institutions to develop and follow procedures...*to evaluate the validity of a student's high school completion if the institution or the Secretary has reason to believe that the high school diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education.*
2. To define the limited role of FCRAO in validating high school credentials and to clearly declare that FCRAO and its committees only act in an advisory role to its member institutions. In no way does FCRAO impose governance or compliance to its recommendations. FCRAO acknowledges that each member institution has the right and discretion to make its own interpretations.
3. To establish the *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* and describe procedures by which it operates.

### I. **Criteria for validating high school completion**

FCRAO endorses the following list to be the most trustworthy criteria by which a high school credential is judged as valid. Level I lists criteria for determining that the credential is valid. If Level I is not met, then Level II consists of the elements by which the high school may be evaluated.

#### **Level I**

1. All public high schools within the U.S. or U.S. territories
2. Previously validated private high schools by FCRAO's *High School Diploma Integrity Committee*, if the FCS institution chooses to follow the recommendation.
3. Regionally accredited high schools
4. High schools accredited through agencies approved by CHEA such as the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)
5. All U.S., U.S. territory, and military-issued GED's
6. Foreign high school transcripts evaluated by an National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) affiliate as equivalent to a standard high school diploma
7. International Baccalaureate diplomas

#### **Level II**

1. Determine mode of delivery for education (online, face-to-face, hybrid, diploma-test only\*)
2. Determine whether or not credentialed teachers delivered education

3. Determine if education is delivered over specified periods of time
4. Determine if curriculum is consistent with a valid secondary education
5. Determine if website is consistent with findings
6. Other information/criteria as determined by the member institution if member institution has reason to believe the high school diploma is not valid.

*\*"Diploma-test only" diplomas are considered invalid.*

Transcripts for which validation cannot be made through Level I or Level II assessment or for which the decision is challenged by the student should be referred to the local institution's appeals process. If the institutional appeals process determines that the transcript has not met the criteria for an acceptable high school credential, the student will be directed to obtain a state issued GED or pursue other Title IV alternatives. All institutional determinations are final and the High School Integrity Committee has no governance over such decisions.

## **II. Process by which committee will generate information**

1. A *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* will be selected from FCRAO membership, members to serve for two years.
2. Member-at-Large 2 will serve as Chair of the committee.
3. The purpose of the *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* is to:
  - Maintain the High School Invalidated Transcript list (H.I.T.) which is posted on the FCRAO website available to all member institutions.
  - Maintain the High School Approved Transcript list (H.A.T.) which is posted on the FCRAO website available to all member institutions.
  - Maintain a repository of completed validation forms.
  - Send a notification to the FCRAO listserv when a new institution has completed Level II validation.

- III. The *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* will accept a completed validation check sheet from a member institution as acceptable and the high school will be added to the appropriate statewide list – H.I.T. or H.A.T. If any member of the *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* or another member -institution seeks to challenge the completed validation, that member will perform a Level II validation. If results are different, the members of the *High School Diploma Integrity Committee* will vote on which Level II validation will prevail. The prevailing validation will be added to the H.I.T. or H.A.T. list with notation that it was a committee decision.

FCRAO recommends the **High School Diploma Validation Procedure** set forth above be adopted as the statewide guideline for meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 668.16 (p) to ensure all students are treated equitably across Florida College System institutions. FCRAO acknowledges that this procedure does not apply to home education students who apply for admission as having graduated from a home education program and present a valid home school affidavit according to Florida Statutes § 1007.263.(2a). FCRAO continues to recognize the autonomy of each member institution to make its own decisions and judgments in validating high school diplomas.