

VSBPE Agenda Item 3(PAC)**Date: Oct. 23, 2019****Item: For discussion- Clarifying Program Levels (Undergraduate, Postbac, Graduate, Advanced Graduate Study)****ITEM:** For discussion- Clarifying Program Levels (Undergraduate, Postbac, Graduate, Advanced Graduate Study)**AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The agency recommends that the VSBPE clarifies the ROPA approval of different types of programs, specifically Undergraduate, Postbac, Graduate, and Advanced Graduate Study.

BACKGROUND: In the Annual Reports that all of the VSBPE-approved educator preparation programs submitted this past June, they indicated the program level (U, P, G) that each completer completed. Some of the programs indicated a level for which they do not have approval. The ROPA Consultant wrote to the Licensure Officers at all of the approved institutions to ask about their understanding of these levels. On the chart of program approval that has been kept by the AOE, there is also a designation of Advance Graduate Study, but no programs currently have approval at that level.

The question was:

One thing I noticed as I reviewed the Annual Reports was some variation in the program levels cited in your list of candidates versus what the program is approved for- at least in the Pos-bac versus Graduate categories (and not all of you, but I'm reaching out to all of you to help me with this).

My understanding is that the only difference is whether someone got their advanced degree (Graduate program) vs. took the required courses to be recommended for the endorsement without getting the degree (Post-bac). I'm wondering if that is how you all use those designations, or if I'm missing something. What is the purpose of having those program levels differentiated for ROPA- with the exception of the administrative endorsements which require a Master's degree (though even those wouldn't mean they got that degree from your program)?

The candidate could have earned a Masters previously and then took the Ed Leadership courses through one of your approved programs and be recommended for the administrative endorsement).

The answers that I received were:

- 1) At UVEI, the post-bac/licensure level is about 2/3 of what is required for an advanced degree (24 Credits). Candidates who wish to go on to get their MED need to demonstrate advanced competencies in teaching or leadership (6 Credits) AND do an Action Research thesis (6 Credits).
- 2) Generally, the course sequence is the same since the Post Bacs and MATS are seeking licensure and need to attend to the CTS and UVM requirements and benchmarks. They do not need to do a thesis since they have their portfolio and other assignments related to the program. With our Middle and Secondary MAT and Art Post Bac that is the case. With the special education MAT and Accelerated Masters, the courses are more in depth and different.
- 3) This is an interesting question – thanks for starting the thread. I have a semi-related question that I thought you might have advice on. If this will need to wait until the Program Approval Committee discusses it, that’s fine. This question came up in our school counseling department last week as they are working on their Institutional portfolio in preparation for our 2020 review. Currently NVU-Johnson has a master’s degree program that includes licensure with endorsement in School Counseling. In the rules, it states:

*Additional Requirements: **Master’s degree, with a concentration in school counseling or the equivalent.** AND A supervised internship experience (600 clock hours) in counseling with a minimum of 60 hours of experience in school counseling at both the elementary (PK-6) AND the middle/secondary level (7-12), under the supervision of a licensed school counselor.*

Our question is about the language that says that students need a “Master’s degree with a concentration in school counseling or the equivalent.” Hypothetical question that came up through a recent inquiry: if a student comes to us with a Master’s degree in something other than school counseling and wants to go through our program to earn licensure (but not earn a second master’s degree), we might suggest to them that they

could take all the required course work and meet all of the field and licensure requirements, but not take the courses that do not include licensure-related standards (that would grant them the master's degree). Would this be considered a "post bac" in our current system? Also, would our licensure-related course work, field experiences, and other requirements qualify as a "concentration," or would it be considered "the equivalent?"

- 4) I wonder how it works when we have a program where the first 36 credits are dedicated to the licensure work (summer- 10 credits, fall- 11 credits, spring- 15 credits including student teaching) and the remaining 15 credits complete the Master's requirements (mostly research-informed courses leading to a thesis. We advertise it as a Master's degree and teacher licensure but it seems like people can choose to do JUST the licensure coursework (which is really a post bac) and then come back to finish the Master's degree.... or not.....
- 5) We are approved for, and offer post-bac options for initial licensure in Elementary Ed and some areas of Secondary Ed. To most people though they appear to be graduate M.Ed. programs. To receive the recommendation for licensure though, the teacher candidate does NOT have to complete the M.Ed. As such our post-bac programs are licensure programs while our M.Ed. have officially no involvement with ROPA/Vt AOE. I maintain that I would think that the data available to the VT AOE and researchers examining topics such as equitable educational opportunities would benefit from the continued separate classification through VT AOE. To me a post-bac suggests that the educator may have switched careers and as such likely has not completed as many education credits (undergraduate & post-bac) as would an educator who completed an M.Ed. program. Obviously, this is not a perfect view, but to me the difference does have meaning. A person who had time would look deeper in attempts to reveal the meaning and functional implications of such a difference.
- 6) Those pursuing initial licensure at the graduate level were considered post-BA as they could earn the license without completing the master's program. We do ask all applicants to our post-BA program to also apply for a master's program as this enables us to matriculate and track them, and for them to be eligible for financial aid. If they choose to go on to complete the master's degree, they could apply 18 credits from their licensure program to the 36 required for the master's degree. I'd say about 1/2 of our students would go on to complete the master's (maybe more) as they had seven years from their first course to do so. This has shifted slightly with our new MAT program.

Almost all post-BA initial licensure candidates are choosing the MAT (30-42 credits depending on the track) and completing both their master's and their license. (For ROPA) - Not sure the distinction is necessary and/or helpful.

In addition, there are two VSBPE Policies that are relevant to this question:

POLICY N8

... It shall be the policy of the Standards Board to interpret these regulations as follows:

I. All baccalaureate candidates for licensure, unless otherwise exempted by regulation, shall document a major in the liberal arts or sciences by:

- a. A major listed on their transcript; or
- b. Thirty credit hours that fulfill the definition of the equivalent of a major or interdisciplinary major as defined above.

II. All post-baccalaureate and master's candidates for licensure, unless otherwise exempted by regulation, shall document a major in the liberal arts or sciences by:

- a. A major listed on their transcript; or
- b. Thirty credit hours that fulfill the definition of the equivalent of a major or interdisciplinary major as defined above; or
- c. Documentation and evaluation of equivalent learning experiences.
- d. A combination of "b" and "c".

POLICY N15

Policy on Program Approval for Various Educator Preparation Delivery Models and Recommendations for Licensure or Additional Endorsements

Vermont institutions and alternate routes to licensure offer a variety of delivery models for the preparation of educators within their programs. These may include the following:

- Undergraduate- Designed for candidates in a bachelor's degree program who are seeking a recommendation for initial licensure.
- Post-baccalaureate- Designed for candidates who have an undergraduate or graduate degree and seek only to complete a program's licensure requirements and seek initial licensure. Candidates may go on to complete a master's degree, but this is not a requirement for licensure recommendation.
- Master's- Designed for candidates who have an undergraduate degree and are seeking a recommendation for either an initial license or a second endorsement in conjunction with a master's degree.
- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)- An individualized program designed for candidates who hold a master's degree and are completing requirements for an additional endorsement.

In any of the above delivery models, an individualized program may be designed for candidates using the frame of the existing program.

The approval process for all educator preparation programs will include review of each program's system for reviewing entrance and exit requirements. These requirements must include a process for review of applicants' academic credentials, including their demonstration of all general licensure requirements (e.g., academic major in the liberal arts or sciences, or the equivalent), and all endorsement requirements, including knowledge and performance standards and additional requirements, for the endorsement, if any, prior to recommendation. Specifically, when a person is admitted into a preparation program, institutions or alternate routes must complete a comprehensive transcript review to assess the candidate's prior academic work for both breadth and mastery and to determine where the candidate stands in relation to the general licensure and specific endorsement requirements. This may necessitate that the institution create an individual plan of study for a candidate needing coursework beyond the program's requirements prior to recommendation.

Each of the above delivery models will be considered as a separate program at the institution or alternate route; therefore, information on each program must be included in the Institutional Portfolio, Two-Year Reports, and communication with the AOE regarding approved programs.

RATIONALE: This is especially important to clarify in terms of program approval – should a program that is approved at the Postbac level need to have a new program review in the endorsement area in order to be able to recommend at the Graduate level, and vice versa?