

In-Service, Graduate Level, Online and Correspondence Courses Taken for Advancement on the Salary Schedule

There have been a number of inquiries to the STA office regarding confusion over procedures for gaining credit on the salary schedule for in-service, graduate level, online and correspondence coursework. Not everything that I am hearing is contractually accurate. If you are in the process of taking courses or applying for movement on the salary schedule, it is important that you are aware of your contractual rights.

*Language contained in parentheses and italics throughout this document is the contractual language that can be found in **Appendix "C" beginning on page 79 of the 2005-2010 STA/District contract.***

- *Requests for advancement on the salary schedule should be made by submitting proof of completion of the requirements to move to the next column. Each teacher will maintain his/her course completion certificates and submit them in total at the time when the request of advancement is made. It is the teacher's responsibility to follow all requirements of this section pertaining to course work.*
- *Advancement on the salary schedule shall take place at the beginning of four quarters (January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st) for course work completed prior to the beginning of the quarter. Official notification (official transcript for college and university courses and course completion document for in-service courses) must be received by the Personnel Office no later than the first two calendar months of the quarter for salary schedule advancement at the beginning of that quarter. If official notification is received after the first two calendar months, the advancement on the salary schedule will commence at the beginning of the following quarter.*
- *Upon attaining MA+15 credits, a teacher may only advance a maximum of one (1) column per school year thereafter, except that a teacher achieving a Doctorate shall not be subject to this restriction in the year in which he/she attains the Doctorate.*

There are three types of coursework that you can take for movement on the salary schedule:

1. Traditional graduate level courses from a college/university,
2. In-service courses offered by a number of institutions as well as our own Teacher Center,
3. Online and correspondence type courses offered by a variety of sources including colleges and universities across the country.

Each one of these has different requirements for approval and acceptance for movement on the salary schedule. This document is a general review of what the contract does and does not allow. If you have questions and concerns generated by a specific issue, you should contact the STA office. This document has been divided into five parts, each of which outlines different contractual requirements.

College Coursework

1. You do not need prior approval if you are taking courses leading to a Master's or Doctorate degree. Such coursework is automatically applicable for movement on the salary schedule. *(Salary credit shall be granted for all graduate level courses leading to the attainment of a Master's or Doctorate degree or other approved courses from a New York State accredited college, university, or its equivalent- Appendix "C" Section 1)*

2. Likewise, you do not need prior approval to take additional, non-duplicating, coursework within your tenure area or if it is leading to certification in a new tenure area. *(Approval is unnecessary for all non-duplicating college graduate level courses taken in the teacher's subject or tenure area- Appendix "C" Section 2. And, approval is unnecessary for other courses leading to certification in a new tenure area- Appendix "C" Section 3.*

3. Unlike 1 and 2 above, this third area of study is open to more interpretation concerning what is applicable for salary schedule movement—
Other courses, which are clearly relevant to the teacher's performance in the District shall also receive salary credit- Appendix "C" Section 4.

Prior to taking any coursework whose applicability regarding your performance in the District might be subject to interpretation, it is advisable that you ask for a course review. Keep in mind that you can challenge a negative reply through the grievance procedure—

Teachers desirous of a review of course relevance should request such a review from the Superintendent or his/her designee prior to the initiation of study- Appendix "C" Section 6.

NOTE: **It is important that you know that the coursework cited in 1 through 3 above must all be obtained from a New York State accredited college, university, or its equivalent.**

In-service Coursework

4. In-service course work is unique. It is the **only** type of coursework that **requires** prior approval from the District. Prior approval must be requested 15 days in advance of course registration. *(Salary credit shall be granted for in-service courses with prior approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Requests for approval must be submitted at least fifteen (15) days in advanced of the in-service course registration- Appendix "C" Section 7.)*

NOTE: There is a cap on the total number of in-service credits that can be accrued. Contractually, that number has been established at 45 total in-service credits. In addition, the District can control the rate of accrual. Contractually, that rate cannot be reduced below nine (9) credits per year. The Board of Education is currently in the process of adjusting present Board policy from twelve (12) credits per year down to the contractual minimum of nine (9).

Correspondence and Online Coursework (NEW CONTRACTUAL LANGUAGE)

5. If these courses are being taken under the banner of in-service courses, see # 4 above and follow the application procedures for in-service coursework.

If the correspondence or online course is being taken for **graduate credit that will NOT be counted towards your Master's degree**, the course being offered **must be a part of an accredited college or university's regular degree-bearing program**. If the course is not a part of an accredited college or university's regular degree-bearing program, you can still apply to take the course and be approved, but only for in-service credit. In such cases, you must follow in-service application procedures as stated in #4 above.

It is the teacher's responsibility, not the District's, to contact the college to find out whether or not the course would be accepted for graduate credit if the course were taken at the college itself.

For a list of a few common educational institutes that offer online or correspondence courses, see page 4 of this document. The list has been created by the District and reflects whether or not graduate credit will be awarded for courses offered by various institutes.

Once again, if you have questions or concerns generated by a specific issue or situation, you should contact the STA office at 265-4218.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>In-service Credit*</u>	<u>Graduate Credit</u>
NYSUT	yes	SUNY Stony Brook courses—yes Other graduate—N/A
SCOPE	yes	not applicable
Dellecave	yes	**
Smithtown Teacher Center	yes	SUNY Stony Brook courses—yes Other graduate—N/A
LIPS	yes	yes
Leeds	yes	Coaching graduate - yes Other graduate - no
NY Center for Teacher Development, Inc.	yes	no
BEST	yes	***
LILIE	yes	****
Fresno	yes	no
Chapman	yes	*****
LaVerne	yes	*****
College of St. Rose	yes	*****
Teacher Effectiveness Institute	yes	no

* Dependent upon individual and particular course

** If graduate course is approved for graduate credit in the graduate program(s) at Endicott College and/or Alfred University

*** If graduate course is approved for graduate credit in the graduate program at Fullerton

**** If graduate course is approved for graduate credit in the graduate program at Fitchburg State University

***** Individual to submit documentation demonstrating graduate course is part of the university's graduate program