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| --- | --- |
| **Agency:** | **Organization:** |

**References:** [5 CFR 5.2](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-5/section-5.2), [5 CFR 5.3](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-5/section-5.3) and [5 CFR 731](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-731); [General Schedule Qualification Standards](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use this checklist to review the legitimacy and accreditation of educational institutions.

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| **“RED FLAGS” OF DIPLOMA MILLS:** |  |
| * Employee has no undergraduate degree, high school diploma or GED, but the job application shows advanced degrees, e.g., master's and PhD degrees.
* Graduate or doctorate received before the lower degree.
* Multiple degrees received in the same year, e.g., bachelor's, master's, and PhD all completed within a few months.
* Most of college credit is for life experience instead of course work.
* Same or similar name to legitimate school but located in a different state.
* Application/resume shows full time employment during the college period, particularly if college and employment, were in different geographical locations.
 | * Institution operates in a state with little or no licensing laws (e.g., Hawaii, Louisiana).
* Institution has been in existence for only a short time or previously existed under another name.
* Institution not accredited by a legitimate accrediting institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
* Faculty lacks appropriate advanced degrees from recognized, accredited colleges/universities.
* Faculty not listed in catalog.
* Backdated degrees.
* Tuition is charged on a degree basis (e.g., $2,000 for a PhD) rather by credit hours, course, or semester.
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[Quick Link to "Case File Summary/Comments:"](#_Case_File_Summary/Comments:)

| **Y** | **N** | **Review Item** | **Comments** |
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|  |  | Agency has a system in place for verifying the legitimacy and accreditation of educational institutions: |  |
|  |  | 1. Agency has written guidance for verifying education
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|  |  | 1. Guidance addresses adjudicating fraudulent degree claims, including the obligation to refer each case to OPM where there is a material false statement or deception or fraud made in connection with educational claims [[5 CFR 5.2](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-5/section-5.2), [5 CFR 5.3](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-5/section-5.3) and [5 CFR 731](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-731)]
 |  |
|  |  | 1. Agency uses sources such as the following to verify that degrees are from accredited institutions:

Web sites:* [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) – U.S. Department of Education
* [The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (aacrao.org)](https://www.aacrao.org/) – American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

Reference Books and Material:* Bears’ Guide to Earning Degrees by Distance Learning
* 2024 Higher Education Directory
 |  |
| Case File Summary/Comments: |
| **Reviewer/Title:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |