

Glossary Grid: Distinctions between Accreditation, Certification and Approval

This grid has been developed by the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service to help clarify terms often associated with recognition of accomplishments related to ministry formation. These terms have specific meanings in the context of the USCCB Subcommittee and should not be used interchangeably. This grid clarifies the definition, who is responsible for it, and how the USCCB Subcommittee relates to the process.

<i>TERM</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>	<i>WHO DOES IT?</i>	<i>HOW USCCB SUBCOMMITTEE RELATES TO IT</i>
accreditation	The public status granted an institution or program by an authorized national or regional accrediting agency that assures the public that the institution or program is in compliance with accreditation standards. Examples include: the accreditation of academic programs associated with colleges, universities, and schools of various types.	Typically, institutions who monitor and administrate credentialing of schools and programs within schools accredit those schools or programs to ensure public confidence and awareness of their compliance with academic or similar standards. This accrediting agency’s determination is often constitutive of the recognition of the school or program as an appropriate location for learning in the areas accredited. An example of an accrediting body for theological schools is the Association for Theological Studies (ATS). Examples: The Middle States Commission on Higher Education accredits Saint Bonaventure	The USCCB Subcommittee does not accredit any school, program or process. This is due to its nature – and that of the USCCB as a whole – as a body which does not perform the functions necessary to ensure accreditation. Instead, the USCCB Subcommittee does offer consultation , upon request, to lay ministry formation programs and academic institutions for the purpose of improving the quality and effectiveness of these programs in accord with the guidance offered by <i>Co-</i>

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		University to grant academic degrees; ATS accredits the Oblate School of Theology to grant academic degrees.	<i>Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord</i> and by other relevant pastoral documents of the USCCB and the universal Magisterium. This consultation may, in turn, have an impact on the accreditation process which these programs and academic institutions pursue independently as part of their academic credentialing process.
certification	Certification is a formal, often renewable, process by which competency in a particular area of knowledge or capability is recognized. In formation for ministry, a candidate's competency in a specialized ministry is regularly evaluated and acknowledged by an authorized committee of an organization, diocesan or similar program. That competency is based on established criteria and standards. Candidates who receive certification are judged to have adequately demonstrated that they have met	Certification for roles in ecclesial ministry is accomplished by an appropriately authorized committee of an organization, diocese or program in accord with established standards determined by a competent authority. Certification is not granted for the general category of "lay ecclesial ministry" or "lay ecclesial minister," but for particular	The USCCB Subcommittee does not certify organizations or individuals. It does offer consultation and resourcing for those dioceses, Catholic conferences or ministry organizations which voluntarily submit their certification standards and procedures for review by the subcommittee.

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	the standards and competencies of the diocese, organization or program. They are granted formal recognition of certification for a stipulated period of time before a renewal of certification is due.	ministerial roles based on those established standards. Examples: A psychologist is certified in a particular area / role in the field (e.g. rehabilitation psychology). The Catholic Campus Ministry Association certifies a person for the role of professional Catholic campus minister; the Diocese of San Bernardino certifies a person for the role of Charity & Justice Coordinator.	<i>Upon request</i> , the subcommittee offers guidance for the development of certification standards based on the <i>National Certification Standards for Ecclesial Ministry</i> based on those produced by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers and other approved diocesan programs and ministry organizations.
approval	Approval is the means by which some information or activity is acknowledged to be good and valuable for its intended purpose based on an established framework of what is expected. In the context of	Approval of a program of certification for roles in ecclesial ministry for a diocese may be granted by a competent ecclesial authority (e.g. a bishop and/or a	The USCCB Subcommittee approves voluntarily submitted certification standards and procedures for (1) dioceses and diocesan

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	<p>formation and certification for roles in ecclesial ministry, approval refers to the granting of this status as a means of identifying a program as expressing or emulating ‘best practices’ in the preparation, formation, and certification of ecclesial ministers.</p>	<p>bishops conference) or his delegate. For institutes for consecrated life, this approval could be granted by provincials or provincial councils.</p> <p>For ministry organizations which offer certification, approval is typically sought by an appropriate ecclesial authority (e.g. a bishop, a conference of bishops, a provincial or provincial conference, etc.)</p> <p>Examples: The National Institute of Standards Technology approves a cybersecurity framework as meeting best practices for U.S.-based cyber technology; The Pennsylvania Dept. of Education approves a program framework for Grades 7-12.</p> <p>The Archbishop of New York approves a program of study for Pastoral Life Coordinators for his diocese. The USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service approves the</p>	<p>offices, (2) national organizations of specialized ministers listed in <i>The Official Catholic Directory</i>, and (3) national organizations sponsored by state Catholic conferences.</p> <p>Diocesan offices, national organizations of ecclesial ministers, and state Catholic conferences with approved certification standards and procedures are listed in the <i>USCCB Subcommittee Directory</i>, which is available on the USCCB website.</p>

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		standards and procedures for certification of the Archdiocese of Detroit.	