

FEDERAL POLICY GOVERNING THE GRANTING OF ACADEMIC DEGREES BY FEDERAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

(Approved December 23, 1954: Letter from Director,
Bureau of the Budget, to Secretary, Health, Education, and Welfare)

Initial Assumptions

1. It is recognized and granted that Federal agencies may properly establish and operate personnel training programs as needed to improve the effectiveness of the performance of their assigned functions.

2. Because personnel of Federal agencies may need advanced education in order to develop specialized competencies of vital importance to the agencies concerned, each agency should be empowered and authorized, when necessary, to send personnel to institutions of higher education for such necessary preparation.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

3. The pattern of undergraduate training is well established in certain of the existing educational institutions of the Federal Government, such as at West Point and Annapolis. Any new institution created by the Federal Government with authority to grant undergraduate degrees should, like the above mentioned institutions, be accredited by the appropriate accrediting agency if the bachelor's degree is to be granted. The Commissioner of Education should be assigned responsibility for determining the appropriate accrediting agency for each Federal installation that maintains an undergraduate degree program.

Graduate Degree Programs

4. No Federal agency should be empowered to grant a graduate degree for any educational program, except where

the need for the authority to grant graduate degrees is established and there is a clear determination that the need for the graduate degrees cannot be adequately met by institutions set up under the authority of the various States, Territories, or the District of Columbia. Before any Federal agency is authorized to grant graduate degrees, there should be a thorough exploration, by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, of the possibility of having the program operated and/or the graduate degree granted through the facilities of existing educational institutions. For the purpose of such exploration, the services of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare will be available, on request, to the agency concerned or to the Bureau of the Budget. In order to regularize the matter, each such request would be referred by this Department to the Commissioner of Education who, to assist him in reaching conclusions and making recommendations to the Secretary, would convene an impartial group of representative educators appointed by him, after consultation with the appropriate professional associations, to consider the relevant evidence and make recommendations to him in accordance with the procedure outlined below. This procedure could be formalized in an executive order or otherwise.

Procedure

5. In order to give effect to the policies outlined above with respect to the authorization of Federal agencies to grant graduate degrees, the Commissioner of Education would be authorized and directed to establish a Review Committee to advise him concerning recommendations to be made concerning any legislation that may be proposed which would

authorize the granting of graduate degrees by Federal agencies.

6. It is proposed that the Review Committee consist of three continuing members, each to serve for a period of three years, plus six additional members to serve on an ad hoc basis—all to be appointed by the Commissioner of Education after consultation with the appropriate professional associations.

7. The principal functions of the Review Committee would be:

- (a) to receive and review evidence submitted by the applying agency that the following criteria have been met:
 - (1) that the conferring of the authority to grant the graduate degree in question is essential to the accomplishment of the program objectives of the applying agency.
 - (2) that the graduate program in question and/or the graduate degrees proposed cannot be obtained on satisfactory terms through the facilities of existing non-Federal institutions of higher education.
 - (3) that the graduate program conducted by the applying agency meets the standards for the degree or degrees in question which are met by

similar programs in non-Federal institutions of higher education.

- (4) that the administration of the graduate program concerned is such that the faculty and students be free to conduct their research activities as objectively, as freely, and in as unbiased a manner as that found in other non-Federal institutions of higher education. The existence of an advisory committee of educators from regularly-constituted institutions shall be regarded as some evidence of the safeguarding of freedom of inquiry. Accreditation by an appropriate accrediting body, if such exists, shall be regarded as another safeguard.
- (b) on the basis of evidence obtained pertaining to the items listed under 7(a) above, to make a report, including its recommendations as to whether the power to grant graduate degrees should be authorized to the applying agency.

8. The Commissioner would, together with his own recommendations, transmit the report of the Review Committee to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Secretary would, after consideration of the Commissioner's recommendations and the Review Committee's report, make recommendations to the requesting agency and the Bureau of the Budget, and transmit with such recommendations the report of the Review Committee.