



## FAQs: Graduate and Inservice Credits

### INSERVICE

**Is prior approval required for inservice courses for salary credit?** Yes, all courses (inservice and graduate) must be approved PRIOR to the beginning of the class. The My Learning Plan course approval process is explained on the HR Website at [http://www.lakelandschools.org/files/filesystem/course\\_approval\\_process\\_812.pdf](http://www.lakelandschools.org/files/filesystem/course_approval_process_812.pdf) and also covered during New Faculty Orientation.

**How many inservice credits am I allowed to take?** As a general rule the contract provides that 24 credits may be taken over a typical 3 year contract period (e.g., 7/1/19 – 6/30/22).

**What happens when the contract is extended?** When a contract is extended, the number of courses that may be taken over the period is typically similarly increased. So, for example, the 7/1/14 – 6/30/19 contract permitted a total of 40 inservice credits to be taken.

**In the past we were advised not to take more than 8 inservice credits per year. Why is that?** When a contract has expired and a new contract has not been settled, the District and the LFT have agreed that 8 credits per year is the base to be used for calculations. Therefore, when a contract has expired, it is “safer” to keep your inservice credits within the 8 per year base number. That way you’re less likely to experience disappointment if the inservice provisions of the new contract change substantially.

**What providers are approved for inservice for salary advancement courses?** Lakeland Central School District, BOCES, and NYS Teachers Centers.

**What if the provider for a course I want to take is not an approved provider?** The course will not be approved for salary advancement purposes.

**I am a non-tenured teacher in the district. Am I able to take inservice courses for salary advancement?** Yes. However, only tenured teachers are able to submit for salary advancements, so taking courses prior to tenure can be a risk. **How much lead time is needed for a course approval?** Course requests must be submitted 10 school days in advance of the beginning of the course. (If school is not in session, please allow for at least 10 business days.)

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**How are mentoring inservice credits handled? Are they counted within the 24 credits for courses as provided by the contract or are they handled differently?** Mentoring is not considered to be a course that you take, so the credits for mentoring are not subject to the same limitations. In other words, mentoring credits can be used *on top of* the 24 inservice credits that are permitted during the current contract period.

**Is there a certain combination of inservice and graduate credits that I must take?** It depends. If you began employment prior to August 30, 2016, the answer is **no**. For LFT members who began employment after August 30, 2016, there are requirements that a minimum of 25% of the credits taken over your career must be graduate-level. For Masters + 20, 6 credits must be graduate level. For Masters + 40, a total of 9 credits must be graduate level. For Masters + 60, a total of 15 credits must be graduate level. In other words, by the time you reach M.6, a minimum of 15 out of the total 60 credits (i.e, 25%) must be graduate-level credits.

**Can conferences be used for inservice credit?** No. Conferences are not considered to be inservice courses.

**Can workshops be used for inservice credit?** No. Workshops are not eligible for inservice credit as per the LFT agreement.

**Can continuing education courses be used for inservice credit?** No. continuing education courses are not eligible as per the LFT agreement.

## **GRADUATE**

**Is prior approval required for graduate courses for salary credit?** Yes, all courses (inservice and graduate) must be approved PRIOR to the beginning of the class. The My Learning Plan course approval process is explained on the HR Website at [http://www.lakelandschools.org/files/filesystem/course\\_approval\\_process\\_812.pdf](http://www.lakelandschools.org/files/filesystem/course_approval_process_812.pdf) and also covered during New Faculty Orientation.

**What kind of graduate courses can I take for salary advancement?** Effective July 1, 2019 graduate and inservice courses must be directly related to the member's professional responsibilities, and/or District initiatives, and/or be in an area of need as identified by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction or Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

**Can I use graduate courses from third-party providers?** No. Graduate courses must be fully accepted for program credit by the college or university issuing them. Graduate courses offered by the third party providers will not be approved for salary advancement purposes.

**I'm thinking about enrolling in a certificate program. Can I submit all the courses in advance to know whether or not they will be accepted? In other words, will the District pre-approve all the courses in the program?** Unfortunately, programs cannot be pre-approved. However, feel free to reach out to HR to see whether or not there might be any issues with any of the program's proposed courses. Courses can be submitted for approval up to one (1) semester ahead of time.

**Are online courses permitted to be used for salary advancement purposes?** Online courses may or may not be approved depending upon whether or not they meet the contract language. Online courses are considered to be "off-campus" courses and the requirements for off-campus courses are more stringent than on-campus courses. Be sure to submit your request with sufficient lead time and supporting

information for a decision to be made.

**I want to brush up my skills and/or content-knowledge. Am I allowed to re-take graduate courses that I've previously taken for certification purposes?** You can take any course you like, but the contract prohibits the use of "redundant" courses for salary adjustment purposes.

**What's the maximum number of graduate courses that I can take?** Graduate courses, so long as they are pre-approved, are not subject to restrictions the way inservice courses are.

**I want to take graduate courses in a field outside of education. Can I use these courses for salary advancement?** No. Such courses will not be approved for salary advancement.

## **SALARY ADVANCEMENT FAQs**

**When can I apply for Salary Advancement?** If you were hired after February 5, 2015, you must have earned tenure in order to apply for a salary advancement, EXCEPT when the move is from 4.0 to M.0 upon completion of your Master's Degree. That move can be made upon submission of official transcripts. For those hired before February 5, 2015, tenure status is not required for salary advancement purposes.

**What are the time lines for Salary Advancement applications?** Salary Advancement applications are due by October 15<sup>th</sup> and are retroactive to September 1 of that school year. Salary advancements appear in the second pay period in November.

**I've got my 20 credits ready to go, do I have to wait until the fall to submit the Salary Advancement on MLP?** No, you can submit it whenever you like. However, no approval action will be taken on it until October and the advancement will not appear in your check until November.

**How many "lanes" can I move each year?** Salary advancement is restricted to one column per year for those eligible for salary advancement.

**I was hired after July 1, 2015. What do I need to know?** You must obtain tenure in order to submit a salary advancement application.

**I started employment after August 30, 2016. What do I need to know?** In addition to being tenured to be eligible to submit salary advancements, each salary advancement application must include a minimum number of graduate credits.