

21. Policy on Required Institutional Documents

This policy is to give guidance to DETC accredited institutions on what documents they should maintain. Institutions should check with their legal counsel and their state laws to make certain they are in compliance.

Essential Documents

The following items should be maintained electronically, in print or by other means at all times:

1. A master copy of each course or program;
2. Copies of each current catalog, bulletin, or brochure, promotional material, and advertisement;
3. Each student's permanent record showing admission date(s), transcript of academic progress from other sources, tuition payments, financial aid, termination, or completion;
4. Each student's application for admission and/or enrollment contract showing name, address, age, date enrolled, and other pertinent information with documents supporting accomplishment of prerequisites established for each course/program; and
5. A copy of the academic record/transcript of credits for each student completing a course or program from the institution.*

* must be maintained indefinitely.

Any document that contains a signature, seal, certification, or any other image or mark required to validate the authenticity of its information must be maintained in its original hard copy or in an imaged media format. An institution may maintain a record in an imaged media format only if the format is capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document. When printed, the copy must be approximately the same size as the original document.

When maintaining documents electronically, the institution must document the procedures and provide audit trails to serve as the record that the images were created properly and validated. A migration plan may also be needed to ensure that the information in the images can be accessed through the retention period of the records.

If an institution accepts digitally signed transcripts or verified data that is electronically transferred from an outside source, the institution must document that the outside source uses a system that provides registration and verification of participants, protocols for securely sending and receiving files, logging of file transmissions, and electronic notification. The outside source must also comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing the activities and services provided, including FERPA and other laws concerning the privacy and confidentiality of information and records.

Useful Information

As helpful guidance to institutions, students should have access to the following information:

(Degree-granting institutions should also see Standard VIII. Advertising, Promotional Literature, and Recruitment Personnel in C.9. Policy on Degree Programs.)

1. Name, address, and telephone number of the institution;
2. Ownership of the institution;
3. Names of the governing body members, officials, and faculty of the institution, indicating position held and appropriate educational and/or occupational credentials of each person;
4. A statement describing the origin of the institution;
5. Accreditation, licenses, endorsements, or affiliations in the format prescribed by the appropriate accrediting agency or other agency;
6. Current Mission Statement;
7. Objectives of the institution;
8. Admission requirements and procedures with required documentation for enrollment;
9. Credentials awarded and graduation or completion requirements;
10. If residence training is required, facilities and/or equipment available to support courses or programs;
11. Basis for awarding academic credit (quarter hours, semester hours, clock hours) and the procedures for awarding credit for prior education and/or experience;
12. Academic policy including grading system, progress report, and procedures for evaluating student achievement of stated learning outcomes;
13. An enrollment agreement/contract, disclosing tuition and fee policy, including all charges and fees;
14. Cancellation and refund policy in compliance with DETC minimum standards;
15. Student disciplinary policy to include conditions of disenrollment;
16. Academic Calendar listing key events, starting and ending dates of terms (as applicable) holiday schedules, academic advising and registration dates, assignment schedules, faculty/instructor office hours (when applicable), office hours, etc.;
17. Student complaint policy; and
18. Curriculum outline of each course or program. List titles, objectives, and major subject outlines or description of each course giving units of measurement in credit hours, clock hours, semester, or approximate time of completion.

When prepared for use in a brochure or web site, the above may be in abbreviated form.