

7. Policy on Approval of New Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs or Training Sites

New Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs

This policy addresses the use of blended learning courses or programs which require student to complete both a distance study and an on-site or resident study component for successful course completion.

When an accredited institution proposes to offer a new combination distance study and resident course/program, it must notify the Executive Director in writing, disclose its intention, and provide the distance study course material for evaluation in accordance with the Commission's Policy on Course/Program Approval (Appendix C.5.).

The institution must document that it is properly authorized by the applicable state authority (or its equivalent for non-U.S. institutions) to offer the new Combination Distance Study-Resident Program.

Students *may not* be enrolled in the course until approval for the distance study course has been extended and until the resident training site has been evaluated and approved in accordance with the information below.

If an institution wishes to have approval to begin enrolling students in the **distance study** portion of the course **prior to** having an evaluation of the resident training site, it must submit the following to the Executive Director:

- A. Written notification of intent to secure approval.
- B. One complete set of the distance study course/program, packaged in accordance with the Commission's C.5. Policy on Course/Program Approval.
- C. Three copies of a *Training Site Report* (TSR), which must include:
 1. Projected date for start of first resident class (month and date).
 2. Proposed marketing strategy and methods.
 3. Proposed location of the site (city and state).
 4. Estimate of months the average enrollee should take to complete the distance education course/program.
 5. Estimate of time the average enrollee should take to complete the resident portion.
 6. Statement of the learning goals for both distance education and resident portions of the course/program.
 7. Program of instruction (class schedule) that outlines titles of class sessions, anticipated class loads, student/instructor ratios, and an hour-by-hour descriptive schedule of activities.
 8. Proposed enrollment agreement, catalog, and advertising copy.
 9. Admission standards.
 10. Description and number of pieces of resident training equipment, texts, and office equipment.

11. Proposed organizational chart for resident site, plus outline of faculty and staff duties and position qualifications.
 12. General description of proposed resident facility, including estimates of space requirements, floor plan, classroom and site layout, etc.
 13. List of audio-visual teaching equipment and instructional material that will serve the needs of the residential program.
 14. Explanation of plans for retention of student records.
 15. Description of counseling services to be available to students at the site.
 16. Description of placement services to be available to students at the site.
 17. Description of provisions for housing of students.
- D. If the subject specialist evaluation of the course/program and the resident training plan is given a favorable review, approval can be extended to the school to begin enrollment of students in the course/program.

No later than 90 days before the proposed start date for resident training, the institution must submit a complete Training Site Report (TSR) to the Accrediting Commission. Upon receipt of the TSR, the Executive Director will schedule a review of the site.

- E. If for any reasons the institution: (1) fails to submit its TSR as required in section D above; (2) fails to undergo or refuses the on-site visit; or (3) fails to receive a favorable on-site review report, enrollments in the course/program must be immediately suspended and the institution must automatically refund within 30 days all money received from students. If the resident training site is subsequently approved, previously enrolled distance study students will be afforded the opportunity to resume and complete their distance study courses and must be afforded the opportunity to attend resident training, within 60 days of completing their distance study training, free of charge.

New Training Site

All new sites must be visited and individually approved by the Accrediting Commission **before** students may be trained there. Failure by the accredited institution to notify the Commission in a timely way of a new training site may bring a full review of the entire institution.

An accredited institution planning to establish a training site or planning to move an approved training site to a different location must notify the Executive Director in writing in advance of the new site's activation. A site cannot be advertised until the Executive Director acknowledges receipt of the school's notification and a schedule for a review of the site has been set. The institution must document that it is properly authorized as required by the applicable state authority (or its equivalent for non-U.S. institutions) for the new training site.

The on-site review of the new site by an examining committee will take place at the earliest practical time after notification. The committee will include at least one subject matter specialist for each subject taught.

Action

In preparation for the on-site visit, the institution must submit six copies of a *Training Site Report* (TSR) and one copy of the distance study (pre-training) course. The institution's President must sign the TSR.

The TSR must include (but is not limited to) the following:

- A. Name, address, and telephone number of the site, plus a map with driving directions to the site from the nearest airport and/or the hotel where the committee will be staying (check with the Commission staff).
- B. Copy of the lease or deed for the site.
- C. A statement about: (1) why the new site is being opened; (2) the expected impact on the institution's overall mission (how the site will support the mission); (3) how management of, and communications with, the site will be handled; and (4) the rationale for the location of the site.
- D. Copy of course catalogs, enrollment agreement, and advertising and promotional materials.
- E. A Program of Instruction (POI) for each training program given at the site, plus information on anticipated class loads.
- F. A list of full- and part-time personnel at the site, including resumes outlining qualifications, time spent each week at the site, and job descriptions.
- G. Name, model number, and brief description of all training equipment and the number of students and length of time each student will train with each piece of equipment during the session.
- H. Copies of proof of ownership or lease agreements for training equipment.
- I. Copies of maintenance procedures, schedules, and contracts for equipment.
- J. Evidence of insurance coverage, safety equipment, first aid availability, etc., at the site.
- K. A diagram or plat of the training area and a list and description of outside facilities or routes provided at or from the site.
- L. A copy of required state and local approval documents, e.g., licenses, permits, etc. Approval for a site cannot be extended until formal evidence of final state approval, if applicable, has been received.
- M. A description of how student records are maintained, used, and safeguarded at the site.
- N. A description and list of student housing facilities (or arrangements), food service, sanitation, parking, and other student support services.
- O. A description of academic support services, placement services, academic counseling, and other services offered at the site.
- P. A description of the student-to-faculty ratios for classroom, lab, field, and other modes of instruction.

Accrediting visitation fees must be paid prior to the visit.

The institution will receive a copy of the Report of the Chair of the Examining Committee and will be given the opportunity to comment on its factual elements in accordance with normal Commission procedures. The established procedure for the training site approval is: (1) receipt of Chair's Report in the Commission's office; (2) transmittal of Chair's Report to institution; (3) written acknowledgment from the Chief Executive Officer that the institution agrees with the findings and will comply with all recommendations in the Chair's Report*; and (4) a written letter of training site approval or disapproval is sent to the institution from the Commission's office.

***Exceptions:** Following the on-site review of a new training site of an accredited school, the normal procedures for acting on examining committee reports will be observed by the Accrediting Commission with the exceptions below:

- If the Chair's Report on the new training site is **favorable** to the institution, the Executive Director is authorized to notify the institution that the site has interim approval. This approval is subject to receipt of the institution's written statement that it agrees to the findings and will comply with the recommendations in the Chair's Report, and agrees that the interim approval is subject to the final review and action by the Accrediting Commission at its next meeting.
- If the Chair's Report is **negative**, the new training site may not be used for the training of students until the Accrediting Commission acts to approve the site at its next meeting or until the institution makes changes which are verified by a second and favorable examining committee. A negative report might be the result of the absence of required documentation or the instance in which the Chair raises questions of a substantive nature about the quality of the institution's program, services, or facilities.

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