

7. Responding to Course Ratings

Procedure for Responding to any “Partially Meets” or “Does Not Meet” Ratings on Subject Specialists Course Reviews

Course materials are required to be submitted as part of the accreditation process. C.5. Policy on Course Approval describes what courses, programs, and materials must be submitted for review.

Course materials are sent to subject matter experts, who are also called “subject specialists.” The responsibility of a Subject Specialist Evaluator is to ascertain whether the course materials offered by a distance study institution are complete, accurate, and up-to-date in light of the stated course objectives. In essence, they are asked to make a judgment on whether a course is of good quality and meets the published standards of the DETC Accrediting Commission. The consequences to the institutions being reviewed are very significant. In addition, the reviewer objectively validates the product/materials of other professional educators who probably have spent several months or even a year or more developing the course or program.

As the Subject Specialist reviews the course materials, he/she is asked to answer the questions on the worksheet “Rating Form for Off-Site Vocational Subject Specialists” or “Rating Form for Off-Site Degree Subject Specialists” to help him/her determine if a standard is being met. His/her comments must address the issue of whether or not the course meets the minimum standards.

He/she is asked to rate each standard by using the following:

Meets Standard = Yes, the course/program meets the intent of the standard overall. (Please make certain that you evaluate each item according to DETC Standards, not your personal feelings.)

Partially Meets Standard = Yes, the course/program meets some of the elements of the standard, but not all. The institution should take specific actions to correct the matter and implement the required action(s) to enhance the course/program. Approval cannot be extended at this time.

Does Not Meet Standard = No, course/program does not meet the standard and overall course approval cannot be extended at this time. (Please note the specific element of a standard that is not being met.) Approval cannot be extended at this time.

NA = Not applicable or not known from materials received.

Options

If an institution is undergoing its initial or re-accreditation examination, a “Partially Meets” and “Does Note Meet” rating on a course/program may be resolved if the institution produces evidence during the on-site examination that the Subject Specialist’s concerns have been addressed to the Committee’s satisfaction.

If an institution receives any “Partially Meets” or “Does Not Meet” ratings as part of a new or revised course review, the institution may exercise one of the following options:

1. **Respond to Comments, Makes Changes and Re-Submit:** (Institution responsible for a \$300 follow-up fee.)

Respond to comments of the evaluator on any “Partially Meets” or “Does Not Meet” ratings and re-submit the course. The response and course will be forwarded to the **same** evaluator for review.

2. **Request New Reviewer:** (Institution responsible for a \$600 review fee, or for degree programs \$700 + \$100 each course [see original fees].)

Request a completely **new** reviewer and have the course reviewed again.

3. **Withdraw Course:** Withdraw the course from consideration (no charge).

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