

30. Policy on High School Programs

The Policy on High School Programs sets forth the Commission’s policies for the accreditation of distance study institutions offering degree programs. In addition, the Policy **expands** on the Accreditation Standards (see Appendices A) for distance study institutions offering high school programs. Institutions offering high school programs must meet the Accreditation Standards **inclusive** of the requirements listed in this Policy.

All high school programs offered by the institution must be reviewed and approved by the Accrediting Commission before institutions may advertise the program or students may enroll.

Whenever a DETC-accredited institution considers adding a new high school diploma program, the high school program must be separately listed on its website, catalog, and other promotional literature. The institution must clearly indicate that it is offering a “high school” diploma program and that no college credit is assigned. The name given to the program should clearly suggest the “secondary level nature” of the program.

The institution must document that it is properly authorized by the appropriate state regulatory authority (if applicable) to offer the new high school diploma program.

DETC institutions may not offer a GED certificate. However, they may offer a GED preparation course. A GED is not a high school diploma, but a recognized equivalent to one.

A maximum of three-fourths of the total semester credits required for a high school diploma may be awarded for transfer credit.

Action

As stated in C.5. Policy on Course/Program Approval: “If an institution has **not** had a high school program previously approved by DETC, adding a new high school program to its current offerings is considered a “substantive change.” An institution proposing to add a new high school diploma program must list it separately on its website, catalog, and other promotional literature. The institution must clearly indicate that it is offering a “high school diploma program,” and no college credit is assigned. It must submit: 1) *New High School Report* (template on DETC’s website) and all the required documentation; and 2) **50%** of the curriculum for the high school program (half of the completed courses).” For details on how and when to submit the course materials, please refer to DETC Policy C.5.

The institution must also undergo a follow-up on-site visit by an examining committee within one year of the first enrollment to verify that the institution meets the administrative requirements found in the Standards. In preparation for the on-site review the institution must submit a streamlined and updated Self-Evaluation Report, which must be submitted to DETC one month before a scheduled on-site visit. The revised SER must address all of the Accreditation Standards and Business Standards as they specifically apply to the new high school program

Institutional Profile: Update the organizational chart to reflect the new high school program. Update the chart under Course Data to include all the courses in the new high school program.

I. Institution Mission, Goals, and Objectives: Describe how the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives have been revised to include the new high school program. Provided information on the review and implementation of the revised mission, goals, and objectives.

II.A. Program Objectives: The learning objectives will indicate the outcomes and competencies a graduate of the high school program will attain upon successful completion of the program, including expected skills, knowledge, attitudes and insights characteristic of other high school diploma holders of similar nature and level at comparable, appropriately accredited or approved institutions.

II.B. Appropriate Program Objectives: Describe in detail each option available to students earning a high school diploma, such as a “healthcare” track or a “technology” track. List the number of semester credits required for each subject, such as 4 English, 3 Math, 3 Science, 3 Social Studies. Describe how the institution identifies the courses and other educational experiences the student needs to progress along the career pathway and achieve postsecondary goals.

II.C. Comprehensive Curriculum: List the required courses and the electives for each option. Provide documentation that the curriculum is comparable to other traditional high schools. Describe how the instructional procedures, texts, and material appropriate to other high school programs.

II.D. Up-to-Date Curriculum: Describe your procedures and schedules for keeping the courses and the high school program curriculum up-to-date and adequate. Document that the curriculum is up-to-date in terms of content and practice.

II.E. Comprehensive and Up-to-Date Instructional Materials (“Instructional Materials” are the components that make up the program of instruction.) Provide evidence that the instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive and have sufficient depth and breadth to meet course objectives.

II. F. Examinations and Other Assessments: Document that the types and numbers of tests and assessments are appropriate for the subject and level taught. Describe the method used for submitting examinations. Describe how the exams and assignments are used to measure the objectives and learning outcomes for each course. Describe how subjective exams/projects are used to measure the student’s ability to apply skills that are taught in the courses.

II.G. Authorship: Describe how the textbooks/curricula used in the courses are suitable for distance study. Document that the textbooks/curricula are similar to the ones used at traditional high schools.

II.H. Organization of Instructional Materials: Describe how the content of each course in the high school diploma program is organized in such a way that students understand why and when they are taking the course(s).

II.I. Curriculum Delivery: Describe how school-prepared lesson booklets/curricula are used and keyed to the reading competence of the students in the program.

II.J. Study Instructions: Describe how the instructions on how to proceed through each course are adequate and clearly written. For online courses, document that the instructions are adequate on how to access chat rooms, bulletin boards, and other appropriate resources.

II.K. Educational Media and Learning Resources: Describe how the learning resources for faculty and students are available and that they are appropriate to the high school level and scope of the course offerings. Provide details on library media available to students.

II.L. Student Integrity, Privacy, and Identify: Document that the institution has clear, specific, academic policies related to student integrity, student privacy, and academic honesty. Explain the student identity verification process.

III. Educational Services: Provide information on any significant changes to educational services resulting from the addition on the new high school program.

IV. Student Support Services: Provide information on any significant changes to student support services resulting from the addition on the new high school program.

V. Student Achievement and Satisfaction: Describe how decisions regarding parameters for evaluating student achievement can be described within an accountability framework, which is defined by federal and state requirements, including the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, and state policies. Each set of requirements includes significant considerations.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) establishes:

- The requirement of a core curriculum
- The measurement of student achievement within that curriculum
- A method for evaluating a school's ability to help students learn the curriculum
- An expectation that evidence-based practice be applied in the classroom

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) establishes:

- That students with disabilities must be assured access to, support for achievement in, and be assessed against the same standards as all other students.
- Provisions and assurances that students with disabilities are not held to a separate standard.
- An expectation that evidence-based practice be applied in the classroom.

While federal legislation establishes basic parameters, it leaves to states the authority and flexibility to define the core curriculum and how achievement in that curriculum is measured. Provide details on the institution's state of domicile's requirement, if applicable.

Describe any analysis of the student's current and past levels of performance, including student strengths and weaknesses (e.g., transcript and formal and informal assessment data).

Describe how the high school program will be incorporated into the institution's outcomes plan.

VI. Qualifications and Duties of Administrators and Faculty: Provide evidence that the faculty members are qualified and appropriately credentialed to teach the subject and level he/she is teaching.

VII. Admissions: Describe how the institution's admission practices and enrollment agreements conform to DETC Business Standards II.A and B. Verify that no more than the maximum number of semester credits (75%) may be awarded as transfer credits.

VIII. Advertising, Promotional Literature and Recruitment Personnel: Provide proposed copies of any advertisements for the high school program. Demonstrate and describe how the institution is conforming to DETC Business Standards I.A. and B., and II.C.

IX. Financial Responsibility: Describe how the institution has budgeting process that demonstrates that the current and future budgets are sufficient to allow the institution to accomplish its mission and goals while implementing the

high school program. Demonstrate that the institution maintains adequate administrative staff, faculty, and other resources to support the high school program. Provide projections of how many students will be enrolled in the high school program for it to be self-sustaining.

X. Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures and Cancellations/Refunds: Demonstrate that the institution’s tuition policies for the high school program are keeping with the provisions of DETC Business Standards III.A.

XI. Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Record Protection: Demonstrate that the institution maintains sufficient facilities, equipment, and supplies to achieve its mission and goals and support its programs and future growth. Document that financial, administrative, and student records are adequately maintained and protected.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement: Demonstrate that the institution collects and analyzes data from its high school program to consistently monitor the status and effectiveness of its services.

#

Adopted December 2011