

7. Responding to Course Ratings

Procedure for Responding to any “B” or “C” 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 “Examiner’s Rating Form for Subject Specialists” and include a commentary on a separate sheet(s). 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:

- A** = Yes, course/program meets the standard overall and is approved as meeting that standard.
- B** = Yes, course/program meets the standard and the institution should consider implementing the suggestion(s) to enhance the course/program. (When any standard is rated using this category, the institution must reply in writing to any comments made by the Subject Specialist.)
- C** = No, course/program does not meet the standard and overall course approval cannot be extended at this time. (When any standard is rated using this category, the entire course/program is not approved and must be re-submitted for review after all revisions are completed.)

If an institution is undergoing its initial or re-accreditation examination, a “B” and “C” 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 “B” or “C” 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 \$250 follow-up fee.)

Respond to comments of the evaluator on any “B” or “C” 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, \$1,000 for degree programs.)

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

3. **Withdraw Course:** Withdraw the course from consideration.

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