

POLICY FOR APPROVAL OF A NEW OR REVISED PROGRAM/COURSE Certificate/Diploma, Occupational Associate Degree (OAD), and Interactive Distance Learning (IDL)

Standards: Document 2, Sections II-B; IV A - E; V A - E; and VI-B

Rationale: Institutions accredited by ACCET seek to provide high-quality educational programs through a methodical, ongoing process of curriculum development and revision. In so doing, these institutions enhance the benefits of the education and training provided to the public, employees and/or member participants and thereby demonstrates their commitment to offering programs that are administratively and educationally sound.

Policy Requirements: The guidance established in this policy document is a reference point for reviewing curriculum to ensure sound practice and for establishing certain minimum threshold requirements necessary to maintain compliance with the ACCET standards for accreditation.

Institutions accredited by ACCET are required to do the following:

1. Seek and obtain written approval from ACCET *prior* to advertising, accepting applications for, enrolling students in, or teaching any new, revised, or converted curriculum, as required by this policy document.
2. Provide full and accurate written disclosure of information regarding the completion of the application for curriculum addition/revision and submission of the required ACCET documents and supplemental information.
3. Notify ACCET, in writing, if an approved program or course is not currently being offered and has not been offered (or will not be offered) for at least 24 consecutive months.
4. Initial applicants should note that any program that cannot be reviewed at the time of an on-site visit due to lack of enrollment will not be considered by the Accrediting Commission and, therefore, will not be included in any subsequent letter of accreditation.

Applications for program/course approval *cannot be accepted* unless the institution meets *all* of the following criteria:

1. The institution is not in reaccreditation status with ACCET. Reaccreditation status is defined as the period between the scheduled due date for receipt of the electronic Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (eASER) and the date of the letter granting reaccreditation.
2. Neither the main campus nor any of its branch campuses can be under any restrictive action by ACCET, the state, or federal agency. ACCET restrictive actions include deferral, denial, withdrawal, appeal, and "show cause" status of institutional accreditation.

3. Institutions which undergo a change of ownership are not eligible to submit an application for a curriculum addition or revision until at least 12 months have lapsed from the date on which ACCET approved the change of ownership.
4. Institutions which receive initial accreditation are prohibited from submitting a new or revised curriculum until 12 months have lapsed from the official date of accreditation.

Procedures:

Upon receipt of an application, the ACCET staff will review it to see that all required materials and information are included. Applications will not be processed until all required materials are received.

Once a complete application and all supporting materials have been received in the ACCET office, they will be closely examined by members of the Program Review Committee. A determination will be made as to whether an outside subject specialist must be called upon to review them prior to approval. A favorable review of the application and supporting materials, including curriculum materials will result in ACCET approval to offer the new or revised course/program of study. Approval of minor program/course changes or additions (e.g., program name changes or the addition of a new stand-alone course) may be granted by the full Program Review Committee or its Chair. All major changes or additions (e.g., the offering of an already-approved program at an additional location, the addition of a new program of study, or the conversion of a program from clock hours to credit hours) must receive approval of the Executive Committee of the Accrediting Commission upon recommendation of the Program Review Committee. The full Accrediting Commission will be apprised of all program/course approvals at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

In instances where a new program is considered to be out of the scope for which the institution was previously accredited, *interim* approval may be granted. Typically, within four months of the implementation of an out-of-scope new program, an ACCET evaluation team comprised of a minimum of two persons will be scheduled to review the program on-site. The results of this review, including the institution's response, will be presented to the Accrediting Commission. The requirement for this special on-site evaluation may be waived if the institution is visited for the purpose of reaccreditation within a twelve-month period from the date of interim approval, in which case the program will be reviewed in the normal course of reaccreditation. Following the Accrediting Commission's review, a decision will be made as to whether or not the new program will receive final approval, thereby recognizing the institution's expansion in scope. An institution is limited to seeking and obtaining approval for one out-of-scope program, until the institution can demonstrate the successful outcomes of graduates of its out-of-scope program (e.g. above benchmark completion and, if applicable, placement rates).

Appropriate federal and state education agencies will be notified by ACCET of the approval and its inclusion in the institution's grant of accreditation. While ACCET provides this notification, institutions which participate in Title IV student financial assistance programs are responsible for

notifying the U.S. Department of Education and obtaining any required approvals to ensure that the new curriculum is "eligible" and that the institution remains in good standing.

An unfavorable review will result in denial of the proposed curriculum request. Such action will be accompanied by written justification to which the member may respond with an appeal or request for reconsideration upon submission of additional documentation and/or information.

A maximum of 45 days is usually required to process an application once it is received by ACCET and determined to be a complete application. Factors which may affect the amount of time required to process an application include the program requiring a subject matter specialist's review and additional information needed for completion or clarification.

Definitions and Explanations:

Program

A program is defined as a series of sequentially combined courses which has a terminal objective and leads to a certificate of completions, diploma, or occupational associate degree.

Course

A course is a defined instructional unit which may be offered as a component of a program or as a stand-alone unit for personal and professional development.

Clock Hour

For institutions that represent their training in clock/contact hours, a clock hour is defined as a 60-minute span of time with no less than 50 minutes of actual class instruction. Students must be given breaks which represent sound educational practices. No more than 1.0 clock hour can be assigned to any discrete 60-minute period.

Total Clock Hours

All hours of instruction representing the length of the full program which include lecture, laboratory and externship/internship.

Clock Hour/Credit Hour¹

Conversions from clock hours to credit hours are only permitted for programs of study that meet at least ten weeks for quarter credit-hour programs and at least fifteen weeks for semester credit-hour programs. For academic purposes, ACCET institutions must use the following Carnegie clock-to-credit hour conversions for lecture, laboratory, and externship/internship:

¹ NOTE: For purposes of Title IV Federal Financial Aid, ACCET institutions must comply with Federal requirements for clock-to-credit hour conversions which may be different from those required by ACCET for academic purposes.

<u>Lecture Hours</u>	Instructional hours consisting of theory or new principles.
<u>Lecture Credit Hours</u>	Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 15 lecture hours to award 1 semester credit hour (divide lecture hours by 15). Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 10 lecture hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide lecture hours by 10).
<u>Laboratory Hours</u>	Instructional hours consisting of <u>supervised</u> student practice of a previously introduced theory/principle during which practical skills and knowledge are developed and reinforced.
<u>Laboratory Credit Hours</u>	Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 30 laboratory hours to award 1 semester credit (divide laboratory hours by 30). Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 20 laboratory hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide laboratory hours by 20).
<u>Externship/Internship Hours</u>	Instructional hours consisting of <u>supervised</u> work experience activities related to skills/ knowledge acquired during the training program.
<u>Externship/Internship Credit Hours</u>	Semester Credits – Must teach a minimum of 45 externship hours to award 1 semester credit (divide externship/internship hours by 45). Quarter Credits – Must teach a minimum of 30 externship hours to award 1 quarter credit (divide externship/internship hours by 30).

When institutions consider which system of measurement is most appropriate for their academic offerings, it is important that the differences between the two systems be clearly understood as well as some external issues which may affect the implementation of one system over the other.

All standards for measuring satisfactory academic progress must include qualitative and quantitative standards by which student progress is evaluated. Action must be taken by the institution if students fail to meet the institution's minimum standards of progress. Clock-hour systems typically require a greater amount of emphasis on quantitative standards (i.e., attendance); and credit-hour systems typically focus more on qualitative standards (i.e., achievement).

For institutions utilizing a credit-hour measurement, ACCET requires work outside of class such as homework to be documented in the curricular materials and syllabi, including an approximation of the time required for the student to complete the assignments. Further, the evaluation of homework

or work outside of class must be identified as a grading criterion and weighted appropriately in the determination of a final grade for a course or module.

Externship/Internship

An externship/internship is defined as training-related work or practical experience which is: (1) formally part of a program; (2) based upon a preplanned outline of experience/skills to be acquired; (3) an application of previously studied knowledge and skills; (4) formalized through a signed agreement between the institution and site; (5) systematically supervised by a qualified individual at the institution and the externship site; and (6) evaluated by both the on-site supervisor and the institution's staff member based on established criteria.

Institutions offering programs of study which include an externship, internship, co-op, etc., or those wishing to implement such programs must ensure that the work experience is pre-planned, well-designed, and has written monitoring procedures. Essential elements of an externship, internship, or co-op include the following:

1. Written confirmation verifying that on-site arrangements have been made with extern providers.
2. Externship policies and procedures, including what is expected of the student.
3. Monitoring systems which must include the responsibilities of the school's field inspector and the on-site supervisor at the externship site.
4. A list of written skill expectations and the assessment of progress toward final mastery.

Occupational Associate Degrees

The following policy guidelines govern occupational associate degrees:

1. All occupational degree programs must be two academic years in length. The programs are usually measured in quarter or semester credit hours, with each degree requiring a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours. The programs are typically offered over a period of four semesters, six quarters, or equivalent.
2. All occupational degree programs must include a minimum of 70% of the coursework directly related to the specific vocational objective.
3. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours or 22.5 quarter credit hours of general education courses must be included. Examples of general education courses include Natural and Physical Sciences (Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, etc.); Social and Behavioral Sciences (Psychology, Sociology, History, Geography, Economics, etc.); Humanities and Fine Arts (English [written and oral communication], Literature, Foreign Language, etc.).

Interactive Distance Learning

Interactive Distance Learning is an alternate means of providing educational delivery which is conducted through an electronically facilitated environment, such as video conferencing and online instruction, accessible to participants who are separated by physical distance for all or part (hybrid) of the offering. Correspondence and self-study are not interactive distance learning, in that there is insufficient interaction between the instructor and student.

Interactive Distance Learning facilitates interaction to allow students to ask questions of the teacher and each other, discuss issues, and actively participate in class. By way of example, IDL may be offered via video conferencing, in which effective delivery is dependent on specialized instructional design that combines aspects of traditional classroom presentation with studio automation technology, including communication devices, dual purpose cameras, television monitors, microphones, and site controller for voice and data communications, capable of broadcasting to the remote sites. Remote classrooms are similarly equipped and have a video response system, using a range of software choices, which creates graphic displays of students' participation monitors and provides an organized view of pre-formatted questions, responses, course notes, and all available video sources.

Institutions that have never offered IDL courses/programs (defined as any course or program with at least a portion offered via IDL technology) must seek ACCET approval prior to doing so, including situations involving the application of IDL methodology to already-approved courses/programs of study. Initially, no more than 25% of the total participant clock hours in all courses/programs offered by an institution within a 12-month period may be provided via IDL. Institutions may request a waiver of this restriction on the proportion of IDL participant clock hours from the Accrediting Commission (1) not less than 12 months from the first enrollment into approved IDL course/programs, and (2) based upon submission of a comprehensive report, including a detailed analysis of completion and placement results, as applicable, demonstrating a sound track record of IDL training in accordance with the criteria established in this document.

THE APPLICATION

What application forms are to be used?

An institution must use one of the three application forms noted below to seek and obtain prior ACCET approval for a curriculum revision/addition. The requirements for an interactive distance learning program or an occupational associate degree program will vary from those of a diploma/certificate program. Select the appropriate application listed below and complete, sign, and submit to ACCET:

- Document 25.1 - Application for Curriculum Revision/Addition;
- Document 25. IDL – Application for Interactive Distance Learning Programs; or
- Document 25.OAD – Application for Occupational Associate Degrees.

What requires a complete application?

1. A *new* program of study.
2. Any revision of a currently approved program of study resulting in any increase or decrease in the total number of published/approved clock hours greater than 20%, either by itself or cumulatively with previous revisions during the preceding 12 month period.

What requires a partial application?

1. A program name change only.
 - ◆ Submit Documents 25.1, 25.6a or 25.6b, rationale/needs analysis, state approval, and appropriate processing fee.
2. A change in the instructional delivery format/methodology or an additional delivery method added to the program (e.g., change from lecture delivery and practice to self-paced instruction; addition of an externship; change or addition of an interactive distance learning component).
 - ◆ Submit Documents 25.1, 25.2, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6a or 25.6b, state approval, and appropriate processing fee.
3. An offering of an already-approved program at an additional location that is out of the general market area of those sites approved to offer the program. (e.g. different Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), city/town, or county).
 - ◆ Submit Documents 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.6a or 25.6b, the state approval, and the appropriate processing fee.
4. Any revision of a currently approved program resulting in any increase or decrease of 20% or less in the total number of published/approved clock hours during a twelve month period.
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.1, 25.6a or 25.6b for the revised program and the former program, the state approval, and the appropriate processing fee.
5. A new stand-alone course.
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.1, the course objectives (Document 25.5), the state approval (as applicable), and the appropriate processing fee.
6. A course change within an approved program.
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.1, 25.6a or 25.6b for the revised program and the former program, the state approval, if applicable, and the appropriate processing fee.

7. An offering of an already-approved program at an additional location that is within the general market area of those sites approved to offer the program (e.g. same Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), city/town, or county).
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.1, 25.6a or 25.6b, the state approval, and the appropriate processing fee.
8. A conversion from credit-to-clock hours.
 - ◆ Submit Documents 25.1, 25.4, 25.6a or 25.6b state approval, catalog addendum and appropriate processing fee.

Note: New programs or changes in instructional delivery format/methodology may require the additional submission of a narrative response with supporting documentation to field specific criteria, if available, for the new/revised program of study.

What requires a different application?

1. A conversion from clock-to-credit hour.
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.8 and appropriate processing fee.
2. A review of clock hour-to-credit hour conversion based on work outside of class.
 - ◆ Submit Document 25.9 and appropriate processing fee for a review of clock hour-to-credit hour conversion based on work outside of class such as homework for institutions seeking to measure a program for federal financial aid purposes utilizing the federal clock hour-to-credit hour conversion (30:1 semester credit or 20:1 quarter credit).

What requires no approval or processing fee?

Individual courses that are *part of a program already approved by ACCET* may be taught without prior approval or processing fee provided that:

1. The length of the course(s) does not exceed 100 clock hours;
2. Title IV funds are not used to fund students enrolled in these short courses; and
3. State approval has been granted, where required.

However, the institution must provide written notification of the course name and hours to ACCET prior to offering the course.

Note: Enrollment data for these individual short courses must be included in ACCET Document 12 - Annual Report and Enrollment Statistics.