

Guidelines for Preparing Reports on the Establishment of Off-Campus Programming: Branch Campus or Additional Instructional Location

To assist institutions in preparing reports in advance of establishing a Branch Campus or an Additional Instructional Location, the following guidelines have been developed. (See “Policy on the Review of Off-Campus Programming” for more details.)

Length: Reports are typically 25-30 single-spaced pages in length, exclusive of appendices.

Format of the report:

Cover Page: The Cover Page for Substantive Change Requests (signed by the institution’s CEO) should be included. The form is available on the Commission website.

Cover Sheet: Include the institution’s name, the date, and a notation of the location, type (Branch Campus or Additional Instructional Location), and proposed starting date of the off-campus programming under consideration, along with the degree(s) to be offered.

Institutional Overview: Provide an overview of the institution, including its purpose, setting, and any special circumstances that would help the reader understand its nature and scope. In addition, a brief rationale for undertaking the off-campus programming should be articulated. Enough information should be provided so that a reader unfamiliar with the institution will have a basic understanding of how its off-campus programming is related to the function of the institution as a whole.

Contractual Relationships: Describe the contractual arrangements, if any, that the institution has made for the offering of its off-campus programming. The institution should ensure that programs offered at its off-campus locations fulfill the Commission’s *Standards for Accreditation* with regard to any contractual agreements with non-regionally accredited organizations which will recruit students and/or provide instruction or otherwise provide academic services in support of the off-campus programming. (Institutions establishing off-campus programming through a contractual relationship should refer in their reports to the Commission’s statement on “Good Practices in Contractual Arrangements Involving Courses and Programs.”) Include a copy of the contract as an appendix to the report. Where contractual relationships are involved, the report may exceed the above-suggested page limits.

Standards for Accreditation: Describe how, through the proposed location(s), the institution will continue to fulfill each of the nine Standards:

1. Mission and Purposes: Provide evidence that the off-campus programming is consistent and compatible with the institution's mission and purposes. Include a statement on the objectives of the proposed off-campus programming. (Note Standards 1.1, 1.4)

2. Planning and Evaluation: Describe the institution's planning for the off-campus programming, including how the administration, faculty, governing board and, as appropriate, external groups such as advisory boards, were involved. Describe the provisions the institution has in place to assure the evaluation and improvement of its off-campus activities. (Note Standards 2.1, 2.7)

3. Organization and Governance: Describe how the off-campus programming will be situated in the institution's organization and how the governance system will accommodate – or be changed to accommodate – the new location(s). Discuss how the institution's academic unit will exercise appropriate oversight over the off-campus location(s), ensuring both the rigor of the program and the quality of the instruction. (Note Standard 3.14)

4. The Academic Program: Provide a description of the programming to be offered at the off-campus location(s) and indicate how the institution will ensure that the programs and instruction offered at the location(s) maintain the same academic standards as those offered on the main campus and that student achievement will be equivalent to that on the main campus. Describe the role of faculty in the institution's oversight of academic programs offered at the off-campus location(s) and indicate how students at the location(s) will have sufficient opportunities to interact with faculty. Provide evidence that the institution has sufficient resources to sustain and improve the proposed location(s). (Note Standards 4.5, 4.8, 4.10, 4.46, 4.47).

5. Students: Describe the student body the institution intends to serve at the new location(s) and how students will be recruited and considered for admission. Provide evidence of the institution's capacity to assure that students enrolled at the off-campus location(s) will have adequate access to student services appropriate to support the off-campus programs, including financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, placement and counseling. (Note Standards 5.3, 5.9)

6. Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship: Describe the institution's plans to assure that it has sufficient faculty, with appropriate qualifications, to offer the off-campus programming. Include a list of faculty, including their qualifications, for the proposed location(s) and/or institutional criteria for faculty qualifications and methods of recruitment and appointment. Discuss the effect of the new location(s) on the current allocation of faculty time and how the institution will continue to assure the quality of programs currently taught by faculty who will be assigned to the new location(s). Describe the institution's plans to assure that it has sufficient academic staff to support its off-campus location(s). Describe how students at the off-campus location(s) will receive academic advising. (Note Standards 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.13, 6.19)

7. Institutional Resources: Provide evidence of the institution's financial capacity to operate the proposed location(s). Include multi-year enrollment projections and revenue and expense budgets, including indirect costs, for the new location(s). Discuss how the institution's governing board has considered the financial aspects of the planned location(s). Describe the institution's plans to ensure that students at the new location(s) have access to and effectively use library and information resources as appropriate to the programming offered, including any plans to increase staffing. Indicate how students will receive library services, including appropriate training and support. Include budget projections for the resources that will be needed. Describe the physical facilities and technological resources available at the new location(s) and discuss how they are sufficient to support the programs that will be offered at the location(s). Indicate whether the institution will own or lease the facilities. If the former, describe how the institution will secure funding; if the latter, include details about the lease arrangements. (Note Standards 7.6, 7.13, 7.15, 7.21, 7.22)

8. Educational Effectiveness: Discuss how the institution will assess student learning at the off-campus location(s). Describe the mission-appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures of student success (including retention and graduation rates) that have been identified for the program(s) offered at the location(s) and how the institution will use assessment results for improvement. (Note Standards 8.2, 8.3, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8)

9. Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure: Discuss how the institution has reviewed the Commission's standards on integrity and its own policies and procedures on integrity to ensure the appropriate consideration of any relevant issues. Provide evidence that the institution has obtained any necessary state approval and other legal operating authority for its off-campus programming activities. Include a copy of the approval as an appendix. Provide information about how the proposed location(s) will be described in official institutional print and electronic publications. Discuss how the institution will ensure that students and prospective students understand the learning opportunities available at the new location(s). (Note Standards 9.4, 9.12, 9.20)

An electronic copy (single, searchable pdf file) of the report should be submitted to the Commission through the NECHE Institution Portal.

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