

Distance Education

POLICY

The Council requires that distance education programs and courses meet the same standards and achieve the same outcomes as traditional education offerings. Programs are required to comply with the Council's approval requirements by responding to items as indicated in its approval applications.

The ~~increasing~~ use of technology as an instructional strategy in onsite classroom instruction has blurred the distinction between onsite instruction and distance education. ~~So-called h~~Hybrid or web-enhanced strategies, which combine the use of technologically delivered instruction with face-to-face interaction with faculty and other students in a classroom at the instructional site, are becoming more ~~and more~~ common. Programs are not required to apply to the COA for approval of hybrid or web-enhanced courses if the course requires regular face-to-face interaction at the program site throughout the term.

DEFINITIONS

Distance education in the context of nurse anesthesia education:

Distance education: An educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student and supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor and student-to-student interaction, either synchronously or asynchronously. The term includes courses in which 50 percent or more of instruction is provided via communication technologies, including Internet-based courses (~~both asynchronous and synchronous~~); ~~two-way and one-way interactive digital-, video-, audio-~~ conferencing; ~~and other multimedia, compact disc, video cassette, and audio tape.~~

Distance education course: A course where 50 percent or more of required activities is offered at a distance. For example a 2 credit course which is equivalent to 30 contact hours becomes a distance education course when 15 or more contact hours offered are conducted with a separation in time or place, between the instructor and/or student (see Distance Education definition above.)

Plan of study: Any curriculum plan that results in the award of a degree or certificate in nurse anesthesia.

Distance education program: A program where 50% or more of the total curriculum of any plan of study is offered via distance education and leads to the award of a degree or certificate. For example, if the curriculum of a plan of study consists of 40 credit hours and 20 or more are offered in a distance format the program is considered to be a distance education program.

Identity of a distance education student: The program has in place effective procedures that: 1) ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit; 2) make clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy; and 3) notify students at the time of registration or **enrollment** of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures.

The COA considers the following distance education curricular changes to constitute a major programmatic change:

- The first course offered by distance education to matriculated nurse anesthesia students as a part of their entry level or completion degree plan of study.
- The increase in the percentage of distance education offered reclassifies the plan of study as a distance education program (as defined above).

PROCEDURE

1. Program and institutional requirements

- a. Programs must submit the Distance Education Application and required fee before implementing a distance education course or a distance education program. The application will be made available through the program's portal on the Council's COAccess system.

2. Institutional requirements

- a. If an institution is offering postsecondary education through distance education to students in a state in which it is not physically located, document that the institution meets any state requirements for it to be legally offering postsecondary education in that state.

3. Council actions

- a. Consider the request for approval of a distance education offering at its next regularly scheduled meeting after receipt of the completed application.
- b. Determine whether the request is substantive enough to warrant Council action and notify the program of the decision.
- c. Assess the effects the addition of distance education may have on the ability of the program to meet or maintain accreditation standards and other policy/procedural requirements.
- d. Evaluate distance education offerings: at the time the program submits confidential and anonymous faculty and student evaluations at the midpoint of an accreditation cycle and prior to a scheduled onsite review; during an onsite accreditation review; as part of the Council's Annual Report process; and at other points of a program's accreditation cycle as deemed necessary.

- e. Action can include, but is not limited to any one or a combination of the following:
- 1) Approval. An accreditation decision may include approval pending Chief Executive Officer or Executive Committee review of additional information as required by the Council.
 - 2) Denial.
 - 3) Deferral of action.
 - 4) Progress report(s).
 - 5) Full or focused Self Study report.
 - 6) Full or focused onsite review. An onsite review may be conducted to a degree-granting single-purpose institution if the institution has not been reviewed and approved by a regional accrediting agency or a state agency.
 - 7) Change in accreditation status.
 - 8) Request to apply as a new program or as an experimental or innovative program.
 - 9) The Council reserves the right to have a distance education program or course undergo additional review by a consultant and to consider this evaluation in determining approval of a distance education offering.
- f. Notify the program of the Council's decision.

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