

## COMMISSION FOR TEACHER PREPARATION AND LICENSING

1020 O STREET  
SACRAMENTO 95814

(916) 445-0184

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TO: Presidents and Deans or Heads of Education  
FROM: Peter L. LoPresti, Executive Secretary  
SUBJECT: Policy and Procedures for Off-Campus Credential Programs

Background

Since early in 1976 the Commission has worked to develop policy which would relate to the approval and evaluation of off-campus credential programs. On May 12, 1976, the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing sponsored a one-day workshop to determine the extent to which off-campus programs should adhere to the same Commission-adopted guidelines that are presently used in developing and approving on-campus credential programs.

Subsequently, the Commission staff has consulted with other accrediting agencies, classroom teachers, school administrators and representatives from higher education to identify the concerns associated with this issue, and develop policy and procedures for addressing these concerns. The chief concern seems to be the inability of the education community to distinguish between quality programs that are responding to an expressed need and those that exist for motives that are questionable.

The Commission intends to permit and encourage flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness to needs in the development and implementation of professional preparation programs for all credential authorizations. The intent of this policy is to achieve these objectives while maintaining quality of program standards and assuring fair and equitable relationships with credential candidates. For this reason, the verification by the Chief Executive Officer and the Dean or Chairperson of Education that the program elements of the off-campus programs are equivalent to the program elements of the on-campus programs is essential. The concern for the on-going involvement in program design and implementation by constituents from the specific geographic area in which the program is offered is considered vital by the Commission. Also, the notification to the Commission sixty days prior to the operation of an off-campus program is important in order for the Commission staff to analyze the program and make appropriate recommendations to the Commission, or discuss implications of the proposal with the institution of higher education, before the program commences.

On October 7, 1977, the Commission adopted the following policy and procedures for operating off-campus credential programs:

Policy

The Commission regards off-campus educational programs as integral parts of the institution and not peripheral to its purposes or other programs. The intent of off-campus programs should be to extend the institution's educational services within the institution's purposes and objectives. These programs should receive appropriate institutional recognition and support; involve in their development appropriate members of the staff and faculty; be of comparable quality with other programs in the institution; and be under the full control of the Dean or Head of Education of the institution.

A Procedures for Operating Off-Campus Credential Programs:

- A. The institution will be required to notify the Commission of its intent to operate an off-campus program at least sixty days before the activities are to become operational.
- B. The Chief Executive Officer of the institution will verify to the Commission that the institutional support and commitment to the off-campus program is equivalent to the support and commitment given to other credential programs.
- C. The Dean or Chairperson of Education will verify to the Commission that program elements (courses) of the off-campus program are comparable to the program elements in the institution's approved credential program.
- D. The institution will describe the provisions of contractual arrangements, with any and all agencies external to the institution, which are or will be operating all or part of an off-campus credential program.
- E. The institution will describe the provisions for ensuring on-going involvement in program design and implementation of representatives from school districts, appropriate practitioners, community groups and credential candidates who are identified with the specific geographic area in which the program is offered.

The above policy and procedures apply to credential programs that meet any one of the following criteria:

1. A credential program offered at a particular site because the principle campus is not reasonably accessible to students under normal commuting conditions.

2. A credential program offered outside the defined geographic service area of the institution. (State colleges and universities only)
3. A credential program that is different from the on-campus program approved by the Commission in terms of staffing patterns or any other equally significant component of the program.

In the event an institution is offering an off-campus credential program and/or is considering the development of an off-campus program that does not seem to fit the above criteria, I would encourage the institution's representative to discuss this matter with the Commission consultant assigned to the institution.