

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BRANCH CAMPUS

This policy and accompanying procedures concern the establishment of a branch campus. In keeping with Federal regulations, to which the Commission must adhere, a branch campus is defined as

Any location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program.

Federal regulations also require that institutions submit a report to the Commission prior to the initiation of the branch campus activity and that it undergo an on-site evaluation within six months of becoming operational.

This statement is not applicable to short-term, non-credit, community service courses, or to traditional courses offered on an occasional basis in response to constituency needs or interests. Any questions about the applicability of this policy to specific institutional off-campus activities should be directed to the Director of the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions.

The Commission regards branch campus programming as an integral part of the institution and not peripheral to its objectives or other programs. It encourages and supports institutional efforts to extend higher education opportunities to previously unserved populations, and this statement is not meant to inhibit such activities or to diminish creative approaches to them.

In keeping with the **Standards of Membership**, branch campus programming should be consistent with the educational objectives of the institution; be an integral part of the institution and maintain the same academic standards as courses and programs offered on campus; receive sufficient support for instructional and other needs; and have ready access to appropriate learning resources. The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of all programs and assures adequate resources to maintain quality. On-campus faculty have a substantive role in the design and implementation of off-campus programs.

All institutions that seek or have attained candidacy or accreditation assume the obligation of abiding by principles and policies of the Commission directed toward ensuring quality control of all educational offerings. Institutions with already operative branch campuses will have such activities evaluated as part of the next evaluation of the institution as a whole. However, the Commission reserves the right to review these activities at any time circumstances may require to assure their educational quality and effectiveness. Such reviews will be in accordance with the principles and procedures of this policy statement.

Newly initiated branch campuses will not be automatically included in the institution's accreditation. The following procedures must be completed before a branch campus is encompassed within the scope of its accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

ADVANCE NOTICE TO THE COMMISSION

It is the responsibility of an institution to notify the Commission about its intention to establish a branch campus before it becomes operational and to provide a report about its plans for the new activity. The following information should be included:

- a summary of the educational programming to be offered
- provisions for faculty, library, academic technological support, and student services including advising and counseling
- a description of the operation, management, and physical resources at the branch campus including, if appropriate, legal authorization to conduct the activity
- projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch campus
- copies of contractual agreements, if any, with non-regionally accredited organizations which will recruit students and/or provide instruction or otherwise provide academic services in support of the branch campus

COMMISSION REVIEW

The institution's plans will be reviewed by the Commission at the earliest possible date following their receipt. Should the Commission conclude that the plans for the new branch campus appear to fulfill the **Standards of Membership**, the projected activities will be approved and considered as encompassed within the institution's accreditation. If approval is withheld, the reasons for doing so and subsequent steps will be specified.

ON-SITE EVALUATION

As soon as possible, but within six months after it becomes operational, the Commission will undertake an on-site visit to the new branch campus. The purpose of the visit will be to assess the institution's success in implementing its plans for the new activity. For such reviews, the procedures for the focused visit will be followed.