

Chapter SPS 411

DISTANCE LEARNING

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Note: Chapter EAB 11 was renumbered chapter SPS 411 under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 1., Stats., Register November 2017 No. 743.

SPS 411.01 Principles. (1) The department acknowledges that distance learning, especially via the Internet, presents a materially new context for the state's responsibility to protect consumers by regulating private, postsecondary schools.

(2) The department believes the following principles should guide its regulation of private, postsecondary schools offering programs primarily through distance learning:

(a) The department's regulatory process ought to encourage schools offering programs through distance learning to become approved since the department's consumer protection role works best when schools are approved.

(b) The department's regulatory process must be rigorous and standards-based so only quality schools are approved to provide options to Wisconsin residents.

(c) While the department's regulatory process must be rigorous and consistent with the basic school approval process, it should also be user-friendly to schools using distance learning and honor other rigorous state approval processes so schools do not have to duplicate effort and incur unreasonable costs.

(d) The department's regulatory process should include a fee structure that pays for itself, is fair to the other approved schools, and is not cost prohibitive to schools using distance learning.

History: CR 02-135: cr. Register April 2003 No. 568, eff. 5-1-03; corrections made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 6., Stats., Register November 2017 No. 743.

SPS 411.02 Definitions. In this chapter, "distance learning program" means that a school uses distance learning to deliver more than 50 percent of a program.

History: CR 02-135: cr. Register April 2003 No. 568, eff. 5-1-03.

SPS 411.03 Standards for distance learning programs. A private, postsecondary school delivering distance learning programs shall meet the following standards:

(1) The program shall be consistent with the school's mission.

(2) The learning outcomes promised to students shall be achievable with the technology used.

(3) The school shall use appropriate and effective instructional materials and teaching methods to ensure active student involvement.

(4) The program shall be developed by qualified faculty, administrators and technologists.

(5) Accepted students shall have the background, knowledge and technical skills needed to complete the program.

(6) The school shall provide for assessment and documentation of student achievement during the program and at its completion.

(7) The school shall ensure appropriate learning resources are available to students.

(8) The school shall provide adequate support services for students.

(9) The school shall demonstrate it has adequate financial resources to support the program.

(10) The school shall demonstrate the educational effectiveness of its programs including assessment of student learning outcomes, student retention, student completion, and student and employer satisfaction, where relevant.

History: CR 02-135: cr. Register April 2003 No. 568, eff. 5-1-03.

SPS 411.04 Application for approval. (1) Except as provided under s. 440.52 (1) (e) 8., Stats., a school that delivers a distance learning program shall apply for approval upon department forms meeting the requirements of s. SPS 404.03.

(2) If a school has approval from another state, which is substantially equivalent to the requirements of s. SPS 404.03 and meets the standards of s. SPS 411.03, the department may accept that state's approval as fulfilling all or parts of the approval process.

History: CR 02-135: cr. Register April 2003 No. 568, eff. 5-1-03; correction in (1) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., Register January 2013 No. 685; corrections made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 6. and 7., Stats., Register November 2017 No. 743; CR 20-004: am. (1) Register June 2020 No. 774, eff. 7-1-20.

SPS 411.05 Fees. (1) For a school that delivers a distance learning program, it shall pay the highest applicable fee specified in s. SPS 404.10 (1) (a) 1. to 5. and \$500 for each additional or new program.

(2) Except as provided for in sub. (1), schools approved under this section shall be subject to all other fees under s. SPS 404.10.

History: CR 02-135: cr. Register April 2003 No. 568, eff. 5-1-03; correction made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2017 No. 743.