

WAC 250-61-050 Definitions. The definitions set forth in this section are intended to supplement the definitions in chapter 28B.85 RCW and shall apply throughout this chapter.

~~((1) "Act" means the Degree Granting Institutions Act, chapter 28B.85 RCW.~~

~~(2) "Council" means the Washington student achievement council.~~

~~(3) "Executive director" means the executive director of the council or the executive director's designee.~~

~~(4) "Accrediting association" means a national or regional accrediting association that is recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.~~

~~(5) "Degree granting institution" means an entity that offers educational credentials, instruction, or services prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.~~

~~(6) "College" means an institution which offers two year and/or four year programs culminating with associate and/or baccalaureate degrees. In some instances, a college may also offer first professional degree programs and/or graduate programs culminating with master's degrees.~~

~~(7) "University" means a multiunit institution with varied educational roles including instruction, promotion of scholarship, preservation and discovery of knowledge, research and public service. Such institutions provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate studies, programs in professional fields, and may also provide programs leading to a doctorate.~~

~~(8) "Private vocational school" means a nonpublic entity that offers postsecondary programs designed to prepare individuals with the skills and training required for employment in a specific trade, occupation, or profession related to the educational program.~~

~~(9) "Seminary" means an institution which offers one or more professional programs to candidates for the ministry, rabbinate, or priesthood.~~

~~(10) "Degree" means any designation, appellation, letters, or words including but not limited to "associate," "bachelor," "master," "doctor," or "fellow" which signify or imply satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study at the postsecondary level.~~

~~(11) "Associate degree" means a lower division undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours.~~

~~(12) "Bachelor's degree" or "baccalaureate degree" means an undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours.~~

~~(13) "Master's degree" means a graduate degree that requires no fewer than 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.~~

~~(14) "Doctor's degree" or "doctorate" means a postgraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.~~

~~(15) "False academic credential" means a document that signifies or implies satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study beyond the secondary level issued by a person or entity that:~~

~~(a) Is not accredited by a council recognized accrediting association or does not have the international equivalent to such accreditation; or~~

~~(b) Is not authorized by the council; or~~

~~(c) Has not been exempted or granted a waiver from the requirements of authorization by the council.~~

~~Additionally, it can mean a credential falsely claimed to have been earned from an institution accredited by a council recognized accrediting association; authorized by the council; or that has been exempted or granted a waiver by the council.~~

~~(16) "Program of study" means any course or grouping of courses prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.~~

~~(17) "Resident based instruction" means a course or series of courses or degree programs which are taught by faculty at a specific location where students physically attend the course or program.~~

~~(18) "Distance learning" means a form of educational instruction other than classroom instruction, to include, but not limited to, correspondence, video conferencing, television, internet transmission, or other electronic communication.~~

~~(19) "Credit" means the unit by which an institution measures its course work. The number of credit assigned to a course is generally defined by the number of hours per week in class and preparation and the number of weeks in a term. One credit is usually assigned for three hours of student work per week or its equivalent. The three hours of student work per week is usually comprised of a combination of one hour of lecture and two of homework or three hours of laboratory. Semester and quarter credits are the most common systems of measuring course work. A semester credit is generally based on at least a fifteen week calendar or 45 hours of student work. A quarter credit is generally based on at least a ten week calendar or 30 hours of student work.~~

~~(20) "Faculty" means personnel who are appointed by the institution for purposes of teaching, research, mentoring, advisory roles and/or other activities relating to the development and delivery of the instructional programs of the institution.~~

~~(21) "To operate" means but is not limited to the following:~~

~~(a) Offering courses for academic credit at any Washington location or via distance learning from a Washington location.~~

~~(b) Granting or offering to grant degrees in Washington for credit obtained within or outside the state.~~

~~(c) Maintaining or advertising a Washington location, mailing address, or telecommunications number for any purpose or any other function of a degree granting institution, other than contact with the institution's former students for any legitimate purpose related to their having attended.~~

~~(d) Advertising, promoting, publicizing, soliciting or recruiting for the institution or its offerings that is targeted specifically at Washington citizens, excluding multi institutional college fairs.~~

~~(22) "Suspend" means that, due to deficiencies, the council interrupts for a stated time the institution's authority to recruit and enroll new students, but it may continue serving currently enrolled students for the remainder of the term. Authorization or exemption may be reinstated, provided the deficiencies have been resolved to the satisfaction of the council.~~

~~(23) "Withdraw" means that, due to significant deficiencies or failure to meet the criteria of authorization or exemption, the council has withdrawn the authorization or exemption granted to an insti-~~

tion. Upon withdrawal, the institution must cease all degree granting operations immediately.

~~(24) "Accredited institution" means an institution that has been accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.~~

~~(25) "Additional program" means a degree program that:~~

~~(a) Differs in title and curriculum from any currently authorized program; or~~

~~(b) Is comprised of a curriculum that is twenty five percent or more different in content than any currently authorized program.~~

~~(26) "Additional site" means a site at which the institution will provide both administrative services as well as educational instruction.~~

~~(27) State authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA) means an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA is overseen by a national council and is administered by four regional education compacts.))~~

(1) "Accredited institution" means an institution that has been accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

(2) "Accrediting association" means a national or regional accrediting association that is recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

(3) "Act" means the Degree-Granting Institutions Act, chapter 28B.85 RCW.

(4)(a) "Administrative capability" means that both administrative services and educational instruction take place at an authorized location.

(b) "Additional site" means a site with administrative capability that is not currently authorized.

(5) "Adverse action" means a warning or other sanction issued by the institution's accrediting association, a sanction issued by the United States Department of Education, or a judgment against an institution that may impact ongoing operations.

(6) "At-risk" means a designation made by the council based on an adverse action or other findings that indicate a heightened potential of closure or other negative impacts on students.

(7) "Authorization" means the authority to operate in Washington state as a degree-granting institution.

(a) "Standard authorization" means authorization granted to institutions seeking to operate in Washington, but does not include institutions seeking field placement authorization only.

(b) "Field placement authorization" means authorization granted to institutions seeking authorization solely to offer required field placements at locations in Washington as part of distance learning programs.

(8) "Council" means the student achievement council, a Washington state agency, as established under chapter 28B.77 RCW.

(9) "Credit" generally means the unit by which an institution measures its course work. The number of credits assigned to a course is generally defined by the number of hours per week in class and preparation and the number of weeks in a term. One credit is usually assigned for three hours of student work per week or its equivalent. The three hours of student work per week is usually comprised of a combination of one hour of lecture and two of homework or three hours of laboratory. Semester and quarter credits are the most common sys-

tems of measuring course work. A semester credit is generally based on at least a fifteen week calendar or 45 hours of student work. A quarter credit is generally based on at least a ten week calendar or 30 hours of student work.

(10) "Degree" means any designation, appellation, letters, or words including, but not limited to, "associate," "bachelor," "master," "doctor," or "fellow" which signify or imply satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study at the postsecondary level.

(a) "Associate degree" means a lower division undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours.

(b) "Bachelor's degree" or "baccalaureate degree" means an undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours.

(c) "Master's degree" means a graduate degree that requires no fewer than 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.

(d) "Doctor's degree" or "doctorate" means a postgraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.

(11) "Degree-granting institution" means an entity that offers educational credentials, instruction, or services prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.

(a) "College" means an institution which offers programs culminating with associate and/or baccalaureate degrees. In some instances, a college may also offer first professional degree programs and/or graduate programs culminating with master's degrees.

(b) "University" means a multiunit institution with varied educational roles including instruction, promotion of scholarship, preservation and discovery of knowledge, research and public service. Such institutions provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate studies, programs in professional fields, and may also provide programs leading to a doctorate.

(c) "Private vocational school" means a nonpublic entity that offers postsecondary programs designed to prepare individuals with the skills and training required for employment in a specific trade, occupation, or profession related to the educational program.

(12) "Distance learning" means a form of educational instruction other than classroom instruction to include, but not limited to, correspondence, video-conferencing, television, internet transmission, or other electronic communication.

(13) "Executive director" means the executive director of the council or the executive director's designee.

(14) "Faculty" means personnel who are appointed by the institution for purposes of teaching, research, mentoring, advisory roles and/or other activities relating to the development and delivery of the instructional programs of the institution.

(15) "False academic credential" means a document that signifies or implies satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study beyond the secondary level issued by a person or entity that:

(a) Is not accredited by a council-recognized accrediting association or does not have the international equivalent to such accreditation; or

(b) Is not authorized by the council; or

(c) Has not been exempted or granted a waiver from the requirements of authorization by the council.

Additionally, it can mean a credential falsely claimed to have been earned from an institution accredited by a council-recognized accrediting association; authorized by the council; or that has been exempted or granted a waiver by the council.

(16) "Field placement" means a student learning experience comprised primarily of the practical application of previously studied theories and skills. Examples include, but are not limited to, clinicals, student teaching, and practica.

(17) "Operate" means, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Offering courses for academic credit at any Washington location or via distance learning from a Washington location.

(b) Granting or offering to grant degrees in Washington for credit obtained within or outside the state.

(c) Maintaining or advertising a Washington location, mailing address, or telecommunications number for any purpose or any other function of a degree-granting institution, other than contact with the institution's former students for any legitimate purpose related to their having attended.

(d) Advertising, promoting, publicizing, soliciting or recruiting for the institution or its offerings that is targeted specifically at Washington citizens, excluding multi-institutional college fairs.

(18)(a) "Program of study" means any course or grouping of courses prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.

(b) "Additional program" means a degree program that:

(i) Differs in title and curriculum from any currently authorized program; or

(ii) Is comprised of a curriculum that is twenty-five percent or more different in content than any currently authorized program.

(19) "Resident-based instruction" means a course or series of courses or degree programs which are taught by faculty at a specific location where students physically attend the course or program.

(20) "State authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA)" means an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA is overseen by a national council and is administered by four regional education compacts.

(21) "Suspend" means that, due to deficiencies, the council interrupts for a stated time the institution's authority to recruit and enroll new students, but it may continue serving currently enrolled students for the remainder of the term. Authorization or exemption may be reinstated, provided the deficiencies have been resolved to the satisfaction of the council.

(22) "Withdraw" means that, due to significant deficiencies or failure to meet the criteria of authorization or exemption, the council has withdrawn the authorization or exemption granted to an institution. Upon withdrawal, the institution must cease all degree-granting operations immediately.

WAC 250-61-060 Exemption criteria. No exemption from the requirements for degree authorization is considered to be permanent. The exemption granted is dependent upon the institution's maintenance of the conditions under which the exemption was granted.

Unless otherwise indicated, the provisions of this chapter do not apply to:

(1) Honorary credentials clearly designated as such on the front side of the diploma or certificate and awarded by institutions offering other educational credentials in compliance with state law.

(2) Any public college, public university, public community college, or public technical college or institute operating as part of the public higher education system of this state.

(3) Institutions that have received institutional accreditation from an association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Provided:

(a) The institution has been continuously offering degree program(s) in Washington for fifteen years or more; and

(b) The institution was established originally within the state of Washington and has operated as the same organization continuously from that date until the present. An institution is considered to have operated as the same organization continuously if it has no significant alteration of primary location, ownership, majority control, other than routine board membership turnover, or incorporation and no closure involving cessation of substantially all organized instructional and administrative activity; and

(c) The institution has been accredited as a degree-granting institution for ten years or more by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, and maintains such accreditation status; and

(d) The institution maintains eligibility to participate in Title IV financial aid programs.

(4) A branch campus, extension center, or off-campus facility operating within the state of Washington, which is affiliated with an institution domiciled outside this state, Provided:

(a) It has continuously offered degree programs in Washington for fifteen years or more; and

(b) It has held separate institutional accreditation as a free-standing institution for ten years or more by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, and maintains such accreditation status; and

(c) It maintains eligibility to participate in Title IV financial aid programs.

(5) Institutions offering instruction on a federal enclave solely to federal employees and their dependents. If the institution offers or advertises instruction for other persons, the institution shall be subject to authorization.

(6) Institutions recognized by the Washington state legislature as an accredited Washington degree-granting institution, provided the institution maintains all conditions specified in the legislation as part of the recognition.

(7) Tribally controlled Native American colleges.

(8) Institutions which offer program(s) of study whose sole stated objective is training in the religious beliefs of the controlling

religious organization and/or preparation of students for occupations that are primarily (~~church-related~~) religious organization-related, Provided:

(a) The institution's mission reflects its religious nature; and
(b) The institution's degree program(s) in title and abbreviation, curriculum content, and objectives reflect the strictly religious nature of the institution; and

(c) The institution's program(s) require a prescribed program of study, which must be successfully completed prior to the granting of a degree; and

(d) The institution's program(s) of study are represented in an accurate manner in institutional catalogs, web sites, and other official published materials; and

(e) The institution does not claim or publicize accreditation from an accrediting association that is not recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

(9) In the case of institutions which offer both religious and secular programs, the secular programs shall be subject to the requirements of chapter 28B.85 RCW.

(10) Institutions not otherwise exempt which offer only workshops and seminars and institutions offering only credit-bearing workshops or seminars lasting no longer than three calendar days.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-063 Exemption requirements. In order to apply for and maintain an exemption from the requirements for degree authorization, an institution must comply with the following:

(1) The chief academic officer of the institution shall contact council staff and arrange for a preliminary conference to discuss the exemption criteria and procedures pertaining to the request for exemption.

(2) Any institution granted exemption from the requirements for degree authorization may be subject to periodic review by the council to ensure that all criteria for the exemption continue to be met. The institution is to provide all information requested by the council to assist in making this determination.

(3) The institution shall inform the council immediately of any proposed changes within the institution and/or its offerings that may affect the exemption granted.

(4) The (~~executive-director~~) council may suspend or withdraw the exemption granted to an institution that fails to maintain the conditions under which the exemption was granted; engages in false advertising; or allows misleading representations to be made on its behalf. Suspension shall allow the institution a prescribed period of time to address the issues that may have brought the suspension. Withdrawal shall require the institution to cease all degree-granting activities immediately.

(5) In the case of religious exemption, a religious institution shall be required to place the following statement in a prominent position within any catalog, general bulletins, web sites, and course schedules: "The Washington student achievement council has determined that (name of institution) qualifies for religious exempt status from

the Degree-Granting Institutions Act for the following programs: (List). The council makes no evaluation of the administration, faculty, business practices, financial condition or quality of the offerings by this institution. Any person desiring information about the requirements of the act or the applicability of those requirements to the institution may contact the council at P.O. Box 43430, Olympia, WA 98504-3430 or by email at degreeauthorization@wsac.wa.gov."

(6) An exempt institution is required to notify the council of any adverse action within thirty days of the action being taken.

(7) In the event an exempt institution plans to discontinue operations in Washington, it is subject to closure procedures as outlined in WAC 250-61-160.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-065 Waiver of requirements. The (~~executive director or the director's designee~~) council may waive or modify the authorization requirements contained in this chapter for a particular institution if the (~~executive director or the director's designee~~) council finds that such waiver or modification will not frustrate the purposes of this chapter; and (1) that literal application of this chapter creates a manifestly unreasonable hardship on the institution; or (2) is an institution based out-of-state that provides distance learning courses and/or programs to Washington state residents under a state authorization reciprocity agreement entered into by the (~~Washington student achievement~~) council. No waiver granted under this chapter is permanent. The council will periodically review institutions granted waivers and continue the waiver only if the conditions under which the waiver was initially granted remain in effect.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-070 Applicability to private vocational schools. Degree-granting private vocational schools' programs shall be regulated pursuant to the terms of an interagency agreement between the (~~Washington student achievement~~) council and the work force training and education coordinating board. As stipulated in the interagency agreement, degree programs shall be regulated by the (~~Washington student achievement~~) council and nondegree programs shall be regulated by the work force training and education coordinating board. Copies of the agreement are available from either agency upon request.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-080 Authorization standards. These standards form the basis for the review of an institution (~~by the council staff~~) and guide the decisions of (~~the executive director and~~) the council. To receive authorization, the institution shall meet all of the specific requirements of this chapter. An institution is required to notify the council of any adverse action within thirty days of the action being taken. Failure to report an adverse action may result in suspension of the authorization granted.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-085 Accreditation requirements. An institution operating in Washington shall:

(1) Be accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; or

(2) Have applied for accreditation to an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and such application is pending before the accrediting association; or

(3) Have been granted a temporary waiver by the council of the requirement for accreditation based upon submission of a plan for accreditation as outlined in the initial authorization application; or

(4) Have been granted an exemption by the council of the requirement for accreditation based upon the following condition: The (~~school~~) institution has filed, and kept current with appropriate amendments, at the (~~Washington student achievement~~) council an affidavit by each president of two separate accredited colleges or universities accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education stating that the majority of course credits offered by the unaccredited institution are generally acceptable or transferable to the accredited college or university which each president represents.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-100 Academic requirements. (1) Educational programs. Each program shall require the completion of a prescribed program of study leading to the attainment of competence in an interdisciplinary area or specific field of study. Programs shall generally meet the guidelines or standards of an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education that accredits similar programs of study.

(a) Associate degrees:

(i) An associate degree shall require at least ninety quarter credits or sixty semester credits.

(A) An associate degree intended for occupational preparation shall require, as a minimum, general education requirements that comprise a recognizable body of instruction in three program-related areas:

- (I) Communications;
- (II) Computation; and
- (III) Human relations.

(B) The general education requirements of all other associate degrees shall be consistent with the current guidelines of (~~the Washington inter-college relations commission~~) Washington's direct transfer agreement associate degree.

(ii) The following associate degree designations shall be acceptable:

(A) The associate of arts (A.A.), and associate of science (A.S.) for programs which emphasize the liberal arts and sciences. These programs generally satisfy the general education requirements for a baccalaureate degree and are transfer oriented.

(B) The associate in applied technology (A.A.T.), associate in applied science (A.A.S.), associate of occupational science (A.O.S.) and other such applied or technology-related degree designations for programs which emphasize preparation for occupations at the technical level. These programs generally do not satisfy the general education requirements for a baccalaureate degree and are not transfer-oriented.

(b) Baccalaureate degrees: A baccalaureate degree shall require at least one hundred eighty quarter credits or one hundred twenty semester credits. The degree shall require a distinct major and, as a minimum, twenty-five percent of the program shall be in general education curricula.

(c) Master's degrees:

(i) A master's degree program shall require at least thirty-six quarter credits or twenty-four semester credits, specialization in an academic or professional area, and a demonstration of mastery.

(ii) The following master's degree designations shall be acceptable:

(A) The master of arts (M.A.) and master of science (M.S.) for programs which advance study and exploration in the discipline. The majority of credit for M.A. and M.S. degrees shall be at the graduate level in the major field.

(B) The master of business administration (M.B.A.), master of fine arts (M.F.A.), master of education (M.Ed.), etc. for programs which emphasize professional preparation.

(d) Doctoral degrees:

(i) Doctoral degree programs shall provide a broad range of advanced course offerings, faculty in ancillary and supporting fields, access to adequate laboratory and research facilities, and a wide range of current reference materials in the subject field. A doctoral degree shall require at least three full academic years of specialized postbaccalaureate study. To obtain a doctoral degree a student shall be required to demonstrate, through comprehensive examination, the ability to perform research at the level of the professional scholar or perform the work of a professional that involves the highest levels of knowledge and expertise.

(ii) The following doctoral degree designations shall be acceptable:

(A) The doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree for programs which are oriented toward original research and require a dissertation.

(B) A professional doctoral degree (J.D., Ed.D., etc.) for programs which emphasize technical knowledge and professional competence and require either a research thesis or a project involving the solution of a substantial problem of professional interest.

(e) Distance learning program(s) of study must be comparable in content, faculty, and resources to those offered in residence, and include regular student-faculty interaction by computer, telephone, mail, or face-to-face meetings.

(f) ~~((Nonecollegiate))~~ Prior experiential learning.

(i) ~~((Undergraduate))~~ Credit for ~~((nonecollegiate))~~ prior experiential learning may be awarded when validated through a portfolio or similar assessment procedure. The institution shall maintain copies of examinations, portfolios, and evaluations used in this process. ~~((Nonecollegiate learning credit shall constitute no more than twenty five percent of an undergraduate degree program.))~~

(ii) Credit awarded for ~~((nonecollegiate))~~ prior experiential learning at the undergraduate and graduate level must be consistent with the minimum standards as published by the institution's accrediting association. This subsection applies to institutions that meet WAC 250-61-085 (1), (2), or (3).

(iii) Prior experiential learning credit shall constitute no more than twenty-five percent of an undergraduate or graduate degree program. This subsection applies to institutions that meet WAC 250-61-085(4).

(2) Faculty.

(a) Faculty shall be professionally prepared and graduates of accredited institutions and, as a group, the institutions from which they earned their degrees shall be diverse.

(b) Faculty shall be sufficient in number and kind and in the proportion of full-time and part-time positions to sustain rigorous courses, programs, and services.

(c) Faculty teaching academic courses at the undergraduate degree level shall have, as a minimum, a master's degree in the assigned or related program area from an accredited institution. Faculty assigned to teach in vocational-technical subjects shall have educational credentials and experience compatible with their teaching assignment. Faculty assigned to teach general education courses within any undergraduate program shall have, as a minimum, a master's degree in a related area from an accredited institution.

(d) Faculty teaching at the master's degree level in programs which emphasize advanced study and exploration in a discipline shall have an earned doctorate in a related field from an accredited institution and experience in directing independent study and research. Faculty teaching in master's programs which emphasize professional preparation shall have, as a minimum, a master's degree from an accredited institution and documented achievement in a related field.

(e) Faculty teaching at the doctoral level shall have an earned doctorate in a related field from an accredited institution and experience in teaching and directing independent study and research.

(3) Admissions. Admission requirements shall be based on the institution's objectives and consistently applied to each program of study. Through preenrollment assessments, testing and advising, the institution shall determine the readiness and ability of each student to succeed in his/her degree program. Institutions shall use only those tests reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

High school graduation or the equivalent shall be required for undergraduate admission. A baccalaureate degree or the equivalent

shall be required for admission into graduate programs. Special undergraduate admission may be granted, based on the applicant's general educational development.

(4) Enrollment contract. If an enrollment contract is utilized, the institution shall discuss all terms and provisions of the contract with the student prior to the student's execution of the contract. The contract shall contain an acknowledgment section directly above the student's signature blank for the student to acknowledge that the institution discussed all terms and provisions of the contract with the student and that the student understands all financial obligations and responsibilities.

(5) Evaluation. The institution shall provide evidence that it has procedures for continuing evaluation and improvement of educational programs, quality of instruction, and overall operations of the institution.

(a) Student, alumni, and employer evaluations of the effectiveness of the curricula shall be considered in these evaluations.

(b) The institution's chief academic officer or designee shall periodically evaluate all areas of the institution to determine their effectiveness in fulfilling institutional objectives and meeting the standards set forth in these regulations or implied in the statute. The results of those evaluations shall be submitted to council staff upon request.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-110 Student services and instructional resources requirements. (1) Student services. The institution shall provide adequate services for students in addition to formal instruction. These services shall normally include admissions, advising and guidance, financial assistance, student records, and disability accommodation.

(a) Advising and guidance services shall be readily available to students to assist them in program planning, course selection, and other academic activities.

(b) Financial aid administration and distribution, if provided, shall be performed according to institutional, state, and federal policies.

(c) Student records shall be maintained in accordance with the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Education.

(d) Students with disabilities shall have access to, and reasonable accommodations in, all programs for which they are qualified consistent with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(e) Placement services and employment opportunities, if provided, shall be accurately described.

(2) Facilities for site-based instruction.

(a) The institution shall have adequate space, facilities and equipment, instructional materials, and staff to support quality education and services.

(b) The institution shall comply with all applicable ordinances, laws, codes, and regulations concerning the safety, health, and access of all persons on its premises.

(3) Disability accommodations. The institution shall provide reasonable accommodations for students and employees with disabilities.

To the extent practicable, the institution must consider diagnosis, assessments, and accommodation plans received from prior secondary and postsecondary educational institutions or employers. The institution shall inform students and employees of local, state, and federal laws regarding discrimination against people with disabilities.

(4) Library. The institution shall provide adequate and accessible library resources and facilities to support the educational needs of students and faculty. If the institution, educational site, or academic center does not maintain its own library on site, it must demonstrate that it can provide sufficient library resources to meet the needs of the program(s) through a written agreement with another institution or organization, or through other mechanisms.

(5) Financial resources.

(a) The institution shall have adequate financial resources necessary to sustain its purpose and commitment to students.

(b) In the case of an institution seeking initial authorization, it shall have sufficient financial resources to sustain itself for one full academic year without the assistance of revenue from tuition and fees.

(6) Financial records.

(a) The institution shall maintain financial records in conformity to generally accepted accounting principles.

(b) The institution shall be audited annually by an independent certified public accountant according to generally accepted auditing standards.

(c) Such records shall be made available to the council upon request.

(7) Recruitment and publications. All publications relating to the institution, including advertisements, catalogs, and other communications shall be accurate and not misleading. Any catalog and/or web site that is made available to students describing the educational services offered shall include the statement of authorization as provided by the council upon the granting of authorization.

Authorized institutions shall not advertise or publicize that they are approved, recommended, accredited, or otherwise endorsed by the council. Such institutions may only state that they are authorized by the council.

(8) Transcripts and academic credentials. The institution shall provide accurate and appropriate transcripts of credit for enrolled students and diplomas for graduates.

(a) For each student, the institution shall maintain and make available a transcript that specifies the name of the institution, the name of the student, all courses completed and academic credentials awarded, and an explanation of the institution's evaluation system. Each course entry shall include a title, the number of credits awarded, and a grade or written evaluation. The transcript shall distinguish credits awarded by transfer, for prior learning experience, and credit by examination.

(b) The institution shall not be required to make copies of transcripts available unless all tuition and fees and other expenses owed by the student to the institution have been paid.

(c) In addition to transcripts, the institution shall maintain records to document the performance and progress of each student, including, but not limited to: Financial transactions, admissions records, and records of interruption for unsatisfactory progress or conduct. Transcripts shall be kept permanently after a student has dis-

continued enrollment. All other records and accounts shall be kept for a minimum of six years after a student has discontinued enrollment.

(d) The institution shall maintain physical or electronic copies of all transcripts at a secure off-site facility.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-120 Catalog requirements. (1) An institution granted authorization shall publish a catalog supplemented as necessary by other published materials, providing sufficient information for students to obtain an adequate understanding of the institution, its programs, policies and procedures. Institutional catalogs shall be published at least once every two years and be provided to students at the time of their enrollment. Electronic catalogs must be archived and students must have access to the archived information.

(2) An institution granted authorization shall print a statement in a prominent position in the catalog and on its web site that reads: "(Name of institution) is authorized by the Washington student achievement council (the council) and meets the requirements and minimum educational standards established for degree-granting institutions under the Degree-Granting Institutions Act. This authorization is subject to periodic review and authorizes (name of institution) to offer specific degree programs. The council may be contacted for a list of currently authorized programs. Authorization by the council does not carry with it an endorsement by the council of the institution or its programs. Any person desiring information about the requirements of the act or the applicability of those requirements to the institution may contact the council at P.O. Box 43430, Olympia, WA 98504-3430 or by email at degreeauthorization@wsac.wa.gov."

(3) An institution granted authorization shall make the following statement regarding transferability available to all students: "The transferability of credits earned at (name of institution) is at the discretion of the receiving college, university, or other educational institution. Students considering transferring to any institution should not assume that credits earned in any program of study at (name of institution) will be accepted by the receiving institution. Similarly, the ability of a degree, certificate, diploma, or other academic credential earned at (name of institution) to satisfy an admission requirement of another institution is at the discretion of the receiving institution. Accreditation does not guarantee credentials or credits earned at (name of institution) will be accepted by or transferred to another institution. To minimize the risk of having to repeat coursework, students should contact the receiving institution in advance for evaluation and determination of transferability of credits and/or acceptability of degrees, diplomas, or certificates earned."

(4) The catalog shall include elements as required by the council in application materials such that a prospective student may become reasonably informed about the institution, its offerings, policies and procedures.

WAC 250-61-140 Security requirements. The institution is required to have on file with the council an original surety bond or other security acceptable to the council in lieu of the bond.

(1) An institution shall have a separate acceptable security for each authorized site with administrative capability.

(2) For institutions seeking initial standard authorization, the surety bond or security amount for the initial period of authorization shall be ~~((twenty-five))~~ fifty thousand dollars for each proposed Washington site with administrative capability.

(3) For institutions seeking initial field placement authorization, the surety bond or security amount for the initial period of authorization shall be twenty-five thousand dollars.

~~((2))~~ (4) For institutions seeking renewal of standard authorization, the surety bond or security amount shall be ten percent of the preceding fiscal year's total tuition and fee revenue received for educational services in Washington, but not less than ~~((twenty-five))~~ fifty thousand dollars ~~((nor more than two hundred fifty thousand dollars. For private vocational schools that offer nondegree programs as well as degree programs, the amount required shall be based only on the degree program portion of its revenue from tuition and fees))~~ for each authorized Washington site with administrative capability.

~~((3))~~ (5) For institutions seeking renewal of field placement authorization, the surety bond or security amount shall be ten percent of the preceding fiscal year's total tuition and fee revenue received for the field placement courses offered in Washington, but not less than twenty-five thousand dollars.

(6) For private vocational schools that offer nondegree programs as well as degree programs, the amount required shall be based only on the degree program portion of its revenue from tuition and fees.

(7) Release of surety bonds and other securities shall be made in compliance with chapter 28B.85 RCW.

NEW SECTION

WAC 250-61-155 At-risk institutions. (1) The council may designate an institution as at-risk based on an adverse action or other findings that indicate a heightened potential of closure or other negative impacts on students.

(2) An institution designated by the council as at-risk will be notified of deficiencies and may be subject to additional and/or more frequent reporting requirements as specified by the council.

(3) Restrictions on offering new programs may also be imposed.

(4) Security requirements may be increased at the discretion of the council consistent with the risk assessed.

(5) The council may suspend or withdraw authorization.

WAC 250-61-160 Discontinuance or closure requirements. (1) In the event an institution (~~chooses~~) plans to discontinue a program and/or site currently available to Washington residents, but maintain other operations, it shall notify the council (~~well in advance of any such proposed action~~) immediately and provide information to the council pertaining to accommodations to be made for any currently enrolled students to ensure they are provided the opportunity to complete their studies. Institutions may be subject to additional reporting requirements as specified by the council.

(2) In the event an institution (~~proposes~~) plans to discontinue all its operations in Washington, the chief administrative officer of the institution shall:

(a) Notify the (~~executive director~~) council immediately by certified mail and email; and

(b) Furnish enrolled students with a written notice explaining the reasons for closure and what procedures they are to follow to secure refunds and their official records, and what arrangements have been made for providing continuing instruction at other institutions; and

(c) The institution shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that current students are provided with alternative opportunities to complete their studies; and

(d) (~~Provide for the permanent maintenance of official records in a manner acceptable to the executive director.~~

~~In the event it appears to the executive director that the official records of an institution discontinuing its operation are in danger of being destroyed, secreted, mislaid, or otherwise made unavailable to the students and the council, the executive director may seek a court order to take possession of the records and provide for their permanent maintenance.)~~ Submit to the council the following:

(i) A timeline for the planned discontinuance of operations including the planned closure date; and

(ii) A list of all students currently enrolled in program(s) of study at the Washington locations showing student name, contact information, program name, number of credits completed, and number of credits remaining for program completion; and

(iii) The total number of students currently enrolled in each program of study for each site at which the program is offered; and

(iv) The alternative opportunities for program completion provided by the institution for students currently enrolled in programs of study; and

(v) A copy of all information regarding the closure that is provided to students, administrators, and faculty at the Washington locations; and

(vi) A copy of all documents provided by the institution's accrediting agency related to the closure; and

(vii) A copy of any signed transfer agreement; and

(viii) A copy of any signed teach-out agreement; and

(ix) Electronic copies of transcripts for all current and past students; and

(x) A plan for the maintenance of student records.

(3) Upon discontinuance of all Washington operations, the institution shall:

(a) Submit a list of all students enrolled in program(s) of study at the Washington locations showing student name, contact information, program name, number of credits completed, number of credits remaining for program completion, and the alternative opportunities selected for program completion by each student; and

(b) Provide for the permanent maintenance of official records; and submit the following:

(i) Contact information for the location where records for Washington students will be maintained; and

(ii) A description of the method and language used to inform students as to how final transcripts may be obtained.

(4) In the event it appears to the council that the official records of an institution discontinuing its operations are in danger of being destroyed, secreted, mislaid, or otherwise made unavailable to the students and the council, the council may seek a court order to take possession of the records and provide for their permanent maintenance.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-170 Application requirements. (1) Initial application.

(a) Institutions seeking initial standard authorization shall contact the council staff to arrange for a preliminary conference to discuss the authorization criteria, application procedures and the review process.

(b) An institution shall submit a fully completed application packet using forms provided by council staff. The application packet will not be considered complete until all required elements have been received by the council.

(c) For standard authorization, an initial application fee in the amount of five thousand dollars is to be submitted along with the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(d) For field placement authorization, an initial application fee in the amount of two thousand dollars is to be submitted along with the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(2) Renewal application.

(a) Authorized institutions must submit an application for renewal of authorization on a biennial basis when requested by council staff.

(b) No later than the due date provided by the council, an institution seeking renewal must submit a fully completed renewal application packet using the forms provided by council staff. Failure to provide all requested materials by the due date may result in temporary suspension of the institution's authorization.

(c) For standard authorization, a renewal application fee in the amount of two thousand five hundred dollars is to be submitted along with the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(d) For field placement authorization, a renewal application fee in the amount of one thousand dollars is to be submitted along with

the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(e) Any programs that have been authorized for at least one year prior to the authorization renewal date, but which are not yet made available to students, must be so noted in the renewal application. The authorization granted for these programs will be withdrawn at that time and the institution must seek authorization for these programs through the new program application if it wishes to offer them in the future.

(3) Additional program(s).

(a) If an institution (~~((proposes))~~) plans to offer additional program(s) of study during the current authorization period, the institution shall submit a new program application well in advance of the proposed offering.

(b) An additional program application fee in the amount of one thousand dollars per program is to be submitted along with the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(c) The program(s) of study may not be offered, advertised or promoted prior to the granting of authorization.

(d) A nonaccredited institution will be limited to no more than two additional programs per calendar year until full accreditation is received.

(4) Additional site(s).

(a) If an institution (~~((proposes))~~) plans to offer programs at a new site in Washington, the institution shall submit a new site application well in advance of the proposed start of operations at that site.

(b) An additional site application fee in the amount of five hundred dollars per site is to be submitted along with the application packet. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(c) The site may not be utilized, advertised or promoted prior to the granting of authorization.

(5) Change of ownership or control. A significant change of ownership or control of an institution shall nullify any previous authorization or exemption. The chief administrator, representing the new owner(s), shall notify the council as soon as the change is known. If the chief administrator asserts in a written statement that all conditions set forth in the act and these rules are being met or will be met before offering instruction, the (~~((executive-director))~~) council may issue a temporary certificate of authorization for a maximum of one hundred eighty days. The new ownership shall complete an application for initial authorization and submit the application to the council no later than sixty days prior to the expiration of the temporary certificate of authorization.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-180 Application review procedures. (1) Staff analysis. Following receipt of a fully completed application, council staff shall review and analyze the material submitted.

(2) Additional documentation and site visit. If council staff determines it is necessary to verify or supplement the information provided in the application, the staff may require additional written documentation and/or arrange for a site visit. The expense for any site visits shall be paid by the institution applying for authorization.

(3) External consultants. At the discretion of the (~~executive director~~) council, the expertise of other higher education experts may be used to assist in the evaluation of the documentation submitted. The cost for the services of the evaluation expert(s) shall be paid by the institution applying for authorization. The fee for such services is five hundred dollars per program per consultant, to be submitted by the institution upon request by the council during the review process. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

(4) Comment period. Upon completion of a preliminary review, the council shall post a notification of the request for authorization on its web site for a set period of time. Any persons having knowledge as to why the institution or its program(s) may not meet the requirements for degree authorization may provide comment to the council on the proposal.

(5) Staff recommendations. After the final review has been completed, council staff shall summarize its findings and develop a recommendation to the executive director regarding the application. This recommendation will take one of the following forms:

(a) That the institution be granted authorization, subject to biennial reporting and maintenance of the conditions under which authorization has been granted.

(b) That the institution be granted conditional authorization, subject to additional conditions as established by the council, and maintenance of the conditions under which authorization has been granted.

(c) That the institution be denied authorization.

(6) Notification. Following the (~~executive director's~~) council's decision to authorize or deny the institution's request, a letter signifying the action shall be sent from the (~~executive director~~) council to the chief administrative officer of the institution.

(a) The letter of authorization will serve as official authorization for the institution to operate in Washington for the specific programs and locations designated in the letter.

(b) An institution denied authorization shall be provided with an explanation as to how the institution and/or its programs failed to meet the criteria for authorization. Any institution denied standard authorization that wishes to reapply within one year of the denial date may submit a new fully completed initial application packet and pay a reapplication fee of four thousand dollars. Any institution denied field placement authorization that wishes to reapply within one year of the denial date may submit a new fully completed initial application packet and pay a reapplication fee of one thousand dollars. The check is to be made payable to the Washington student achievement council.

WAC 250-61-190 Complaints. A student with a complaint against an authorized institution concerning loss of tuition and/or fees due to unfair or deceptive business practices or other violation of the standards for authorization detailed in the act and this chapter by the institution shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the complaint directly with the institution. If a mutually satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the following procedure shall be pursued:

(1) Upon receipt of a written complaint that an institution has failed or is failing to comply with the provisions of the act or this chapter, and documentation that the student has made a reasonable effort to resolve the complaint directly with the institution, the executive director shall notify the institution ~~((by mail))~~ of the nature of the complaint and ~~((shall conduct an investigation.~~

~~(2) If preliminary findings indicate that a violation(s) may have occurred or are occurring, the executive director shall attempt, through mediation and conciliation, to effect compliance and bring about a settlement.~~

~~(3) If no agreement is reached, the executive director shall file a formal complaint with the council and notify the institution of the conduct which warrants the complaint. Final resolution of the complaint shall be subject to hearing procedures provided for in this chapter and the institution may be subject to a summary suspension of its authorization, pending further proceedings for suspension, withdrawal or other actions deemed proper after the hearing.~~

~~(4)) request appropriate information and documentation relating to the specific area(s) of the complaint.~~

(2) Within five business days, the institution must either respond with the requested information and documentation and a recommended resolution to the complaint or acknowledge receipt of the request and provide a reasonable estimate of the amount of time necessary to respond. If a recommended resolution is acceptable to the complainant, the process is completed at this point.

(3) If there is no recommended resolution or the complainant is not satisfied with a recommended resolution, the executive director will review the complaint to determine if the complaint falls within the scope of authority of the council under the act and this chapter and indicates a possible violation of the act and this chapter.

(4) If a complaint is found by council staff to be actionable, the council will negotiate with the institution to find an appropriate resolution.

(5) Council staff will then issue a final decision regarding the complaint and may require the institution to repay lost tuition and fees to the student.

(6) If the institution is unsatisfied with the final decision, the institution may request the council hold an administrative hearing as provided in WAC 250-61-210.

(7) A complainant is not bound by the council's determination of restitution and may pursue any other legal remedy.

(8) Any complaints must be filed within ~~((one))~~ two years after the student's last recorded date of attendance in order to be considered by the council, unless a school has discontinued all Washington operations, in which case, complaints must be filed within one year of discontinuance of all Washington operations. Only the student or the

student's legal guardian may file a complaint on behalf of the student.

~~((5) Complaints may also be filed with the council by an authorized staff member of the council or by the attorney general.))~~

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-200 Suspension or withdrawal of authorization. (1)

The executive director may suspend or withdraw an institution's authorization ~~((if it finds))~~ based on a finding that:

(a) Any ~~((statement))~~ information contained in the application for authorization is untrue; or

(b) The institution has failed to maintain the standards for authorization as detailed in the act and this chapter; or

(c) Advertising or representations made on behalf of, and sanctioned by, the institution is deceptive or misleading; or

(d) The institution has violated any provision of this chapter.

(2) In the case of an adverse finding the executive director shall provide the institution a notice of violation that includes details of the legal basis of the finding and the facts used to make the determination.

(3) The institution will have an opportunity to respond to the notice of violation and address deficiencies within a reasonable time period specified by the council.

(4) The executive director may designate an institution as at-risk.

(5) The executive director may suspend the institution's authorization for a period of time if, in the executive director's judgment, the deficiencies can be corrected within the given time period. Upon suspension, the institution must immediately cease the recruitment and/or enrollment of new students. The institution may continue serving currently enrolled students for the remainder of the term. Authorization may be reinstated after any deficiencies have been resolved to the satisfaction of the council.

~~((3) Authorization shall be withdrawn only after the institution has been informed in writing of its deficiencies and been given reasonable time to meet the required standards.))~~ (6) The executive director may withdraw the institution's authorization if, in the executive director's judgment, the deficiencies cannot be corrected within the given time period. Upon withdrawal, the institution must immediately cease all degree-granting operations. To seek reinstatement of authorization, the institution must apply for initial authorization.

~~((4))~~ (7) The executive director's ((and council's)) action((s are)) to suspend or withdraw authorization is subject to ((due process)) the hearing procedures ((of the Washington Administrative Procedure Act)) specified in WAC 250-61-210.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 15-02-021, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15)

WAC 250-61-210 Hearing process. (1) A party subject to the following actions may request a hearing:

(a) A denial of exemption from the Degree-Granting Institutions Act;

(b) A denial of authorization under the Degree-Granting Institutions Act;

(c) A cease and desist order issued under chapter 28B.85 RCW; or

(d) Other final action as defined in chapter 34.05 RCW, by the executive director that adversely affects the institution (~~or student~~) and which is contrary to the intent and purpose of the Degree-Granting Institutions Act or this chapter.

(2) A party must submit a request for a hearing to the executive director at the council office no later than thirty days following receipt of the notice of final agency action. In the written request, the party must identify the final action in dispute and state that a hearing is requested.

(3) Any hearing called for under the act shall be conducted in accordance with the Washington Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW, as follows:

(a) The presiding officer, who shall be the executive director or the hearing officer designated by the executive director, shall conduct the hearing under the provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW and shall enter an initial order under RCW 34.05.461 (2) through (9).

(b) The (~~council~~) executive director shall review the initial order under RCW 34.05.464 and either enter a final order or remand the matter for further proceedings under RCW 34.05.464(7).

(c) If the challenged agency action is upheld, the party that initiated the hearing process shall pay the costs of the administrative hearing within sixty days following final disposition of the matter.

(d) Any further review of final action must be taken in accordance with RCW 34.05.510 et seq.

NEW SECTION

WAC 250-61-230 Notices. All notices required under this chapter shall be sent via email to degreeauthorization@wsac.wa.gov and also via certified mail, return receipt requested to: Degree Authorization, Washington Student Achievement Council, P.O. Box 43430, Olympia, WA 98504-3430.