

**THE ACCREDITATION  
OF  
CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY  
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**Approval, Evaluation, and Accreditation for  
Technology Centers**

To be Approved by

**THE OKLAHOMA STATE BOARD  
OF  
CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

January 16, 2014

## FOREWORD

The Oklahoma State Board of Career and Technology Education is recognized by the United States Department of Education as the “authority for the approval of public postsecondary vocational education programs and courses offered at vocational-technical education institutions that are not offered for college credit.” This recognition establishes the State Board as the accrediting body for the technology centers in Oklahoma. It further requires the State Board to establish policies and standards pertaining to the accreditation process.

The policies set forth by the State Board are published in *Rules for Career and Technology Education*, which is available through the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. However, the purpose of this publication is to outline the procedures and standards for those institutions desiring postsecondary accreditation by the State Board. The instructional support and program standards have been developed in an effort to promote a high commitment to excellence and continued improvement of career and technology education in Oklahoma.

**THE ACCREDITATION OF CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS**

**Authority: 70 O.S. 2001, Sections 14-108**

**Approval, Evaluation, and Accreditation for Technology Centers**

**STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR  
POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION**

**SECTION I – PROCEDURES**

This document reflects the procedures and standards to be utilized by the State Board in accrediting vocational training institutions in Oklahoma.

**A. Definition of Vocational Training Institutions Eligible for Accreditation**

Vocational training institutions are defined as public vocational schools under the legal jurisdiction of the Oklahoma State Board of Career and Technology Education that are organized for the central purpose of providing occupational skills training. In order to be eligible for accreditation by the State Board, these institutions (hereinafter called technology centers) must provide training programs for full-time postsecondary students and maintain specified standards of quality. The skills training provided by these institutions shall not be offered for college credit by the technology center or fall under the jurisdiction of the State Regents of Higher Education.

**B. Rationale of Institutional Accreditation**

A technology center shall be accredited on the basis of its ability to meet the procedures and standards of the State Board that are designed to ensure quality education and training for CareerTech students. Accreditation approval by the State Board is one of the eligibility requirements necessary for an institution to gain federal financial assistance for qualified postsecondary students.

**C. Application Procedures**

The following initial procedures are required for technology centers that desire to become accredited by the State Board:

1. The institution's chief administrative officer submits a formal written request to the state director.
2. The state director shall, in turn, issue a written statement to the local institution recognizing the candidacy status of the institution. Candidacy status is normally granted for a period of one year but may be extended for an

additional year at the discretion of the State Board. A formal request must be submitted to and approved by the state director in order to get an extension.

3. Candidacy status means that the institution is making progress toward meeting all of the accreditation standards but does not imply that accreditation will be granted.

During candidacy status, the institution undergoes a self-study and is scheduled into the evaluation cycle so that an on-site review can be conducted. Candidacy status is not equivalent to accreditation status, and it should be noted that the U.S. Department of Education does not recognize candidacy status in regard to meeting eligibility requirements for student financial assistance.

#### **D. Period of Accreditation**

Accreditation is extended for one year at a time and may be dropped or withdrawn at the conclusion of each fiscal year. However, the institution's Certificate of Accreditation is valid as long as the school continues to satisfy the conditions for accreditation as established by the State Board, not to exceed a five-year time period. Supervisory visits and monitoring of reports will be conducted on an annual basis. Accredited status may be renewed through re-evaluation prior to the expiration of the accreditation certificate.

#### **E. Evaluation and Review Procedures**

The information gathered from these activities is utilized to promote the quality of institutional and program operations and to ensure the maintenance of standards. In order to assist in the maintenance of standards, an accredited institution is required to report (within 30 days) any program or institutional change that might adversely affect its accreditation status.

Technology center evaluations are conducted in accordance with procedural guidelines as established by the State Board. These guidelines may vary from time to time as efforts are made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation process. However, the essential elements of a comprehensive evaluation, including a self-study and on-site review, are consistent parts of the evaluation process.

##### **1. Self-Evaluations**

Self-evaluations are conducted by each member of the teaching faculty and by members of the administration and support services areas. Input should also be gathered from a representative group of current and/or former students, including nontraditional students; local board of education; advisory committees; minority groups; individuals with disabilities; agency partners; and others. These self-evaluations should be comprehensive in nature and

seek to identify specific areas of strengths and needed improvements. The state agency staff, with input from other sources, designs the evaluation instruments utilized in the self-study in accordance with established standards. Self-evaluations are completed in advance of each on-site evaluation. Instructions for conducting the self-evaluation are contained in the respective summary evaluation questionnaires. Additional instructions and clarifications are provided by the state coordinator of accreditation coordinator in a meeting with technology center administration and/or staff prior to conducting the self-evaluation. This meeting is designed to review the self-evaluation requirements and to prepare for the arrival of the evaluation team.

## **2. On-Site Evaluations**

### **a. Review of Administration and Personnel Services**

The on-site evaluation team is comprised of such individuals as administrators, counselors, curriculum specialists, communications and marketing officers, financial aid administrators, compliance coordinators, business and industry services directors, and adult education specialists from other technology centers as well as Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education staff. The visiting team is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the institution's self-study, interviewing school personnel, completing the appropriate evaluation instruments, and writing a narrative summary of the evaluation findings and conclusions. This narrative summation includes the commendations and strengths, specific recommendations for improvement for any standards that were not met, and general suggestions for improvement as related to the established standards. An oral report of the evaluation team's findings is presented to the institution's administrative staff, with time allowed for discussion of the findings.

### **b. Program Reviews**

The on-site evaluation team consists of such individuals as visiting teachers with expertise in the program area, program specialists from the respective occupational divisions of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, and business and industry representatives from outside of the technology center district when possible. If a program being evaluated is unique and there are no instructors of similar programs within the state, the state coordinator of accreditation will invite a person to serve on the team who is working within the occupation but is not associated with the technology center being evaluated. The responsibility of the team is to review the program's self-study, complete the appropriate evaluation instruments, and write a narrative summary of the evaluation findings and

conclusions. This narrative summation includes the commendations and strengths of the programs, specific recommendations for improvement for any standards that were not met, and general suggestions for improvement as related to the program minimum standards. An oral report of the evaluation team's findings is presented to the institution's administrative staff, with time allowed for discussion of the findings.

Through the input of industry review boards, the evaluation and accreditation process has been modified to accept in part the accreditation or certification conferred by such bodies on specific occupational training programs. The results of evaluations by entities such as the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation/Automotive Service Excellence are reviewed for information relevant to the State Board's accreditation standards and policies and procedures.

### **Accreditation Standards**

Accreditation status is determined after the self-evaluation is conducted and the on-site visit has concluded. The following standards established by the State Board (discussed in greater detail in Section II of this document) form the basis upon which the accreditation status is determined.

- (1) Institutional Purpose
- (2) Administration and Support Services
- (3) Quality Program Operations
  - (a) Instructional Planning and Organization
  - (b) Instructional Materials Utilization
  - (c) Qualified Instructional Personnel
  - (d) Enrollment and Student/Teacher Ratio
  - (e) Equipment and Supplies
  - (f) Instructional Facilities
  - (g) Safety Training and Practices
  - (h) Advisory Committee and Community Relations
  - (i) Leadership Development
  - (j) Coordination Activities
  - (k) Student Accounting and Reports
- (4) Guidance and Training Assistance
- (5) Placement Assistance
- (6) Academic Integration
- (7) Business and Industry Relationships
- (8) Professional Development
- (9) Adult Training and Development
- (10) Educational Equity/Nondiscrimination

- (11) Innovative Programs
- (12) Adherence to Policies and Procedures
- (13) Communications and Marketing

### **Distance Education Standards**

- 1 – Program Objectives
- 2 – Resources and Technology
- 3 – Learning Development and Instruction
- 4 – Skill Attainment and Assessment
- 5 – Student Support and Services
- 6 – Relationship Management
- 7 – Student Engagement and Satisfaction
- 8 – Program Effectiveness and Improvement

### **3. Evaluation Report Preparation**

The accreditation unit of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education prepares an evaluation report based on the team’s findings. This report is forwarded to the institution’s chief executive officer for review and comment within four weeks of the on-site review. The local institution may, within 30 days, file a written response to the report and provide supportive materials that are pertinent to the facts and conclusions drawn in the report. The written response is included in the final report and may result in changes in concluding statements. Barring a written response within the allotted timeframe, the report will become final.

### **4. Receipt and Approval of Plan of Action**

A plan of action addressing any standards that were not met must be submitted by the school’s administration within 60 days of receipt of the final report. The plan of action must be approved by the state coordinator of accreditation prior to a recommendation for accreditation status being submitted to the State Board.

### **5. State Board Approval**

The State Board shall not take action on the final report before an opportunity has been granted for review and comment and a plan of action has been approved, if applicable. Upon approval of the State Board, a letter is sent to the superintendent of the technology center stating the accreditation status of the institution and listing the approved programs. A certificate of accreditation is also provided.

### **6. Followup (as applicable)**

State agency staff shall visit the institution during the school year immediately following the on-site review to ensure that the institution's plan of action is being followed and to provide appropriate technical assistance.

## **F. Selection and Training of Evaluation Team Members**

### **1. Selection of Evaluation Team Members**

Evaluation team members are selected by the state coordinator of accreditation based on their experience and training. No person is excluded from participation or subject to discrimination on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, or disability. Non state staff personnel serving on the evaluation team are asked to sign a conflict-of-interest statement verifying that they are not employed by the institution being evaluated and would not in any way benefit from the institution's accreditation or lack thereof.

In addition, the following criteria is considered during selection of non state staff personnel:

- Minimum of 5 years of experience in related content
- Good communication skills and rapport with peers
- Approval by their State Program Administrator, if applicable
- Approved by their local administrator

### **2. Training of Evaluation Team Members**

Training manuals and evaluation instruments are distributed to team members 30 days prior to the on-site review. In addition, an orientation is provided by the team chairpersons at the onset of the evaluation to acquaint team members with the overall evaluation process, the evaluation instrument and rating system, the standards being addressed, the role of the evaluation team members, format of report, and the exit interview with the school administration.

### **3. Training of Decision-Making Body (State Board Members)**

A presentation is made to the members of the State Board of Career and Technology Education at least once each year to review the accreditation process, policies, and standards and to explain the board's role in that process. Newly appointed board members receive an orientation on the accreditation process and standards during their initial training session as required by state law.

## **G. Categories of Accreditation Status**

The accreditation status of technology centers is reviewed annually. The annual review consists of student follow-up data, supervisory visitation reports, financial audits, and other reports required by the state agency. Based on the evaluation findings and annual review, the institution is classified into one of the following categories:

**1. Full Accreditation**

In order to achieve full accreditation status, local institutions must have successfully completed the application procedures, a formal self-study, and an on-site evaluation. Based on the results of the evaluation, the State Board may issue a certificate of accreditation that is applicable for a period of five years, contingent upon the successful completion of an annual review. A local institution is classified as fully accredited when: (a) it meets all the requirements of the standards; or, (b) when, in the opinion of the State Board, it fails to meet one or more of the standards, but the resulting deficiencies do not detract to a serious degree from the quality of the educational program or institutional support services.

**2. Probational Accreditation**

An institution is classified as being on probational accreditation status when in the judgment of the State Board: (a) it fails to meet one or more of the standards and the resulting deficiency seriously detracts from the quality of the educational program; (b) it consistently fails to remove or make substantial progress toward removing all deficiencies previously noted; or, (c) it deliberately and unnecessarily violates one or more of the standards.

Probational accreditation is extended for a period of one year. If the noted deficiencies have not been corrected at the end of the one-year time period, the institution's accreditation will be dropped. Under extraordinary circumstances, application may be made to the State Board for an additional one-year probationary status. This application must be accompanied by a detailed plan to correct all deficiencies and receive unanimous approval by the State Board before the extension will be granted.

Institutions that have been placed on probational accreditation status may be approved for listing only those programs that meet minimum standards. Programs not meeting minimum standards will be re-evaluated within one year to determine compliance with approved standards.

**3. Accreditation Dropped**

An institution that finds it impossible to meet the standards, or refuses to do so in successive years, may be dropped from accredited status. In no case will

accreditation be terminated during the year of probational accreditation status or within the time required for the disposition of an appeal.

**4. Accreditation Reinstated**

A dropped institution may seek reinstatement within one year of receiving the dropped status. After one year, the dropped institution must reapply and follow the same procedures as new institutions.

**5. Candidacy Status**

Candidacy status is achieved by submission of a request to be accredited by the State Board (see Section I, Part C - Application Procedures, p.1). Candidacy status is not equivalent to accreditation and will normally be granted for a period of only one year.

**H. Review of Accreditation Standards and Procedures**

The state agency staff confers regularly with counterpart agencies that have similar responsibilities in other states about methods and techniques that may be used to meet the responsibilities of a state approval agency. These contacts are made through telephone conversations and written correspondence and through attendance at national conferences and workshops. Staff members also confer with national and regional accrediting agencies as well as industry program certification and licensing entities.

The Oklahoma CareerTech Advisory Council provides advice to the state agency relating to the development of standards, operating procedures, and policy and also assists in interpreting educational needs and manpower projections of Oklahoma's public postsecondary career and technology education system. The Council is comprised of representatives from public employment services, employers, employees, postsecondary career and technology educators, students, and members of the general public, including minority groups. Input from the Council will be considered when determining the agency's priorities.

## SECTION II – STANDARDS

The standards established by the State Board are designed to promote the quality of vocational training institutions and programs. Each standard describes a qualitative principle and the provisions to be made to ensure the maintenance of the standard. Accredited institutions are expected to incorporate these standards into their working operations.

Standards will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Accreditation Advisory Committee. These meetings are open to the public. Feedback will be solicited through electronic means via the ODCTE website for a minimum of 30 days before recommendations are sent on to the Oklahoma Board of Career and Technology Education for approval. Changes in standards will take effect during the following school year after approval is granted.

The specific requirements and minimal levels of acceptable performance for each standard are judged within the context of the institutional setting and the purposes to be achieved.

### **A. Institutional Purpose**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall have an established institutional purpose. The institutional purpose should be embodied in the technology center's mission and vision statements, goals, and objectives and should express the scope of responsibilities to the students whom it seeks to serve and the outcomes to be attained.

### **B. Administration and Support Services**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall provide sufficient administrative and support services to plan and conduct quality occupational training programs. The administrative staff shall hold appropriate credentials and be of sufficient strength to carry out its responsibilities.

### **C. Quality Program Operations**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall ensure that its career pathways/majors are designed to provide the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills necessary for employment. Approved career majors within accredited institutions shall meet or exceed all established standards for quality operations. In addition, all approved career majors shall be conducted in accordance with state standards, policies, and operational procedures. The following is a listing of minimum standards for the approval of career and technology education programs within accredited institutions:

#### **1. Instructional Planning and Organization**

The instructional program should be designed to impart knowledge and develop skills that are essential for success in meeting the students' career

objectives. There should be evidence that each instructional unit has been properly planned and organized and is being implemented in a sequential manner. The program should implement a fairly administered grading system based upon identified criteria.

The course of study for each career major shall include both theory and skill lessons along with other supplemental learning activities that will help guide the student toward desirable learning outcomes. In addition, the course of study shall be integrated and organized in such a manner as to effect a well-balanced program of instruction.

## **2. Instructional Materials Utilization**

The availability and proper utilization of instructional materials is considered essential to conducting quality training. Schools shall ensure that adequate amounts of such materials, including state-approved instructional materials, multi-media, reference texts, competency profiles, etc., are made available for instructional purposes. Career and technology education teachers shall utilize a variety of instructional materials and delivery methods in accordance with student needs and the goals and objectives of the training programs.

## **3. Qualified Instructional Personnel**

Selecting, developing, and retaining instructional staff who are competent to meet the needs of career and technology education is vital to the success of the educational experience. Realizing that occupational instruction is unique in education, all instructors shall have an adequate general education along with recent work experience that will enable them to relate their instruction to business or industrial methodology. As evidence of proper preparation, all career and technology instructors shall meet or exceed state certification requirements and will hold a current teaching certificate or credential appropriate to their subject area. In addition to these minimums, all instructors should continuously strive to upgrade their skills and knowledge by meeting recertification requirements and attending professional improvement meetings, state conferences, etc.

## **4. Enrollment and Student/Teacher Ratio**

The teaching load (student/teacher ratio) will vary, contingent upon the number and types of students to be served, the specific skills to be taught, the size of the facility, safety factors, and the methods of instruction to be used. However, reasonable enrollment limits must be maintained in order to ensure that institutional objectives may be met in an efficient and effective manner. Unless otherwise specified, enrollment limits shall be maintained in each program in accordance with the state operations and procedures requirements.

**5. Equipment and Supplies**

Proper equipment and adequate supplies must be made available. Schools offering career and technology education shall provide funds for equipment and supplies in accordance with acceptable standards and at a level to ensure quality. Equipment selected should be representative of the grade and type used by business and industry and must meet or exceed all appropriate safety standards.

**6. Instructional Facilities**

Physical facilities for career and technology education shall include adequate space and utilities in classrooms, laboratories, and shop areas that provide for safe and orderly quality instruction to meet the instructional objectives. Both instructional and non-instructional areas, including storage areas, restrooms, and offices, shall be adequate for the number of students and staff using such areas. Special consideration shall be given to meeting the needs of students with disabilities as well as providing for the special needs of co-educational classes.

**7. Safety Training and Practices**

Due to the nature of career and technology training and related employment, student safety and safety training are considered essential. Schools shall ensure that safety features in the instructional facilities and equipment are properly implemented and maintained. In addition, adequate lighting, temperature, and ventilation shall be provided to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards shall be used to guide the implementation of environmental health and safety features.

Instructors shall model correct safety practices and ensure that safety training is incorporated into the instructional content. Student safety practices shall also be encouraged and continuously monitored by the instructor.

**8. Advisory Committee and Community Relations**

An effective and continuous program of community relations is necessary to maintain a close working relationship with the business and industry sector as well as other organizations and individuals and to ensure that career and technology education is relevant to the needs of students. The purpose of a community relations effort is to inform the public of the program's operations and capabilities and to generate active participation in the development and implementation of the program's goals.

The instructor should actively strive to encourage community involvement and to promote a greater understanding of the career pathways/majors and the students' needs and accomplishments. In addition, each career pathway must have a formally organized advisory committee that is broadly representative of the school and community and of the business and industry community it serves. A list of the names and occupations of the advisory committee members and the minutes of each meeting must be kept on file.

## **9. Leadership Development**

Student leadership development activities are considered an integral part of the instruction. Each student shall be afforded the opportunity to become an active member of an appropriate career and technology student organization. The leadership development activities associated with the student organization shall be directed and supervised by the local teacher with guidance from the local school administration and the state advisory staff for that particular student organization. Appropriate career and technology student associations include SkillsUSA, FFA, BPA, DECA, HOSA, TSA, and FCCLA.

## **10. Coordination Activities**

Cooperative education is uniquely designed to meet students' career objectives through supervised on-the-job training or other supervised occupational experiences, coupled with regular classroom instruction. Each student participating in cooperative training should be placed in a job related to his/her training objective. The instructor should ensure that each student's cooperative training provides experiences that allow the student to meet the goals and objectives of the career major or pathway.

The instructor or other appropriate personnel should ensure that students are legally employed if their cooperative training involves working for pay. As a condition of their employment, a "Memorandum of Training" shall be signed by the employer, student, and teacher-coordinator and shall be maintained on file. In addition, a training plan outlining the on-the-job training activities for each student shall be completed and maintained on file.

## **11. Student Accounting and Reports**

Recognizing that the major objective of career and technology education is the gainful employment of the student, a systematic program of job placement and follow-up is essential. As evidence of efforts to achieve this objective, each local educational institution shall maintain student enrollment, placement, and follow-up records on all students who have enrolled. These records must be maintained in accordance with divisional requirements and reported as requested to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

Each instructor purporting to train students for gainful employment shall assist career major completers in job placement and maintain placement records.

In exploratory educational experiences where students move from one career major to another, completers should be assisted in continuing their occupational education or assisted in job placement. Enrollment, placement, continuing education, and follow-up records should be maintained.

**D. Guidance and Training Assistance**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board will provide all students information on career options, advise them on appropriate educational paths to meet career goals, and provide students with the necessary support for success in their career programs.

**E. Placement Assistance**

All students in accredited technology center programs must receive assistance in developing transition, employability, and job search skills prior to completing their career major. Every technology center must provide instruction on strategies that help the student get and maintain a training-related job.

**F. Academic Integration**

The purpose of essential skills and education enhancement is to provide integrated academic instruction based on documented goals for students in the context of skills needed for occupational competency, computer familiarity, and other cognitive skills.

**G. Business and Industry Relationships**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall ensure that its training programs are related to the employment needs of business and industry. In order to help fulfill this responsibility, accredited institutions shall regularly meet with representatives of local business and industry for advice in guiding program and institutional operations.

**H. Professional Development**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall have defined procedures for the continuous assessment of its professional staff. These assessments shall be used as a basis for identifying the professional growth needs of individual staff members. Efforts shall be made to ensure that in-service and/or upgrade training is provided in accordance with identified needs and current state and federal guidelines.

**I. Adult Training and Development**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall provide for the training and retraining needs of adults in the district. Training programs and seminars shall be provided at times most convenient for adults.

**J. Educational Equity/Nondiscrimination**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall ensure that career and technology training opportunities are provided to all qualified students who seek such training. Recruitment and admission policies and hiring practices shall be nondiscriminatory, and physical facilities shall be constructed and/or modified to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.

**K. Innovative Programs**

It is the policy of the State Board to encourage innovative teaching methods and training that serve the needs of individual students. To the extent possible, career majors/pathways are designed to train for present and future labor market needs and to incorporate new techniques.

**L. Adherence to Policies and Procedures**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall conduct its operations in a fair and ethical manner, with particular attention to those factors affecting students and employees. Board policies and procedures shall be effectively communicated to constituents and administered in a manner that maintains the public's trust in the integrity of the institution. An accredited institution shall review periodically its policies, directives, and practices to ensure that they reflect the requirements of applicable laws and regulations and do not unfairly or negatively impact those the institution serves or seeks to serve.

**M. Communications and Marketing**

Each technology center accredited by the State Board shall maintain a program of communications and marketing that will seek to maintain an engaged and well-informed public. Each institution shall develop and maintain a communications and marketing plan to guide the effort. Printed materials and other media used for communication shall be presented in an accurate and ethical manner.

**Distance Education Standards**

**Standard 1 – Program Objectives**

1.1 Describe the objective of the distance education program. Outline the expectations of the program and potential outcomes.

Objectives of the distance education program are clearly defined, stated and are measurable. A course overview is included and provides an in-depth understanding of why the course is important. A course syllabus is included and presented at the beginning of the course.

Expectations and potential outcomes of the program are clearly defined. Expectations are aligned with state and/or national standards.

1.2 What type of delivery model is used in the distance education program? Is a hybrid model or a fully digital delivery model used?

Thorough description of the delivery model used. The model chosen has been researched thoroughly to determine effectiveness of instructional delivery and identify potential challenges.

## **Standard 2 – Resources and Technology**

2.1 What resources are required by students to successfully participate in the program?

Hardware, web browser and software requirements are specified. Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified. Appropriate content-specific tools and software are utilized.

2.2 What resources do you have available to administer distance education? What tools and media do you use to deliver distance education? Describe the educational platform/delivery system you use in delivering distance education.

Resources at the site to administer distance education are described. Tools and media used are identified. The educational platform used is described in full detail. The user interface is easy to navigate. The online platform used is effective in instructional delivery. The teacher can add content, activities, and assessments using the delivery system with relative ease.

2.3 How do the resources and technology you have available to students support learning objectives in the program?

A description is provided on how resources and technology are used to accomplish learning objectives. Sufficient learning resources and materials are available to students to increase student success and are available to students when the course begins.

## **Standard 3 – Learning Development and Instruction**

3.1 Describe the learning objectives for the program. Identify which objectives use distance education and which areas use other delivery methods for instruction.

Learning objectives are consistent with program objectives and are clearly stated. Learning objectives represent the scope of the course and are clearly stated.

The delivery method used for each learning objective is clearly stated.

3.2 Describe the instructional design, strategies, and activities that are used in the program.

The course is organized into units and lessons. Units are described in full detail to students. Lessons for each unit are clearly stated. Activities, assignments, and assessments are described. Each lesson is described in full detail to students. Activities, assignments, and assessments for each unit are clearly stated and described in full detail.

Instruction is designed to ensure concepts and skills will be retained by students over time. Multiple learning paths are used to help student's master program content. Learning activities address a variety of learning styles and preferences. Instruction adapts learning activities to accommodate students' needs.

### 3.3 How are critical thinking and technical skills developed in the program?

Content, assignments, and assessments are of sufficient rigor, depth, and breadth to teach the learning objectives being addressed. The program provides opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways. Literacy and numeracy are incorporated into the curriculum when appropriate. Readability, written language and mathematical requirement levels are appropriate for the program.

### 3.4 How are learning objectives for the program met by students in a timely manner?

Policies and procedures regarding the length of time to accomplish learning objectives are clearly stated. Policies regarding the violation of incomplete and missing assignments, activities, and assessments are clearly stated. Accomplishment of learning objectives, units, lessons, activities, assignments, and assessments are able to be completed in an adequate amount of time. Data is provided on cycle time (the average amount of time it takes for a student to complete the course).

## **Standard 4 – Skill Attainment and Assessment**

4.1 How are the learning objectives measured to monitor student performance? What methods do you use to measure skill and knowledge attainment? How do the assessments align with the learning objectives? How do the assignments and skill practices align with the assessments and the learning objectives?

Student assessments and skills checks align with program goals and learning objectives are clearly stated. Student assessments and skills checks align with required local, state, and national assessments associated with the program. Adequate and appropriate methods and procedures are used to ensure students' mastery of content and technical skills. Assessments and technical skill attainment are conducted frequently to verify the student's readiness for the next learning objective.

Instructors have flexibility in assessing students' mastery of course content and skill attainment. Grading policies, rubrics, practices and procedures are easy to understand. When applicable, data is provided showing student performance on state and national certification examinations.

## **Standard 5 – Student Support and Services**

5.1 What support and services are available to students enrolled in distance education programs? Is technical support provided to students?

Orientation training is provided by the course provider. Technical assistance and support is provided to program teachers and students.

5.2 How are student disability and accessibility guidelines articulated effectively to students? What alternative resources and materials are available for visually-impaired or auditory-impaired students to receive equivalent learning and training?

Student with disability and accessibility guidelines are articulated effectively at the beginning of the course. The course meets universal design principles, Section 508 standards and W3C guidelines to ensure access to all students.

Online textbooks used meet nationally endorsed standards (NIMAS) for publishers to ensure distribution of accessible, alternative versions of textbooks and other instructional materials.

## **Standard 6 – Relationship Management**

6.1 How are new students acquired? How have you marketed the program?

Recruitment procedures for the program are outlined. The marketing process for the program is outlined. Data is provided on the demographic groups using the program and the effectiveness of the marketing strategy.

6.2 How do you build and manage relationships with students? How do you ensure the instructor is actively engaged with students?

Information is provided to students on how to communicate with the teacher, including information on the process for these communications.

Opportunities for appropriate instructor-student and student-student interactions takes place, including feedback about student progress from the instructor. Interaction is monitored online. Interaction shows mastery and application of the material.

## **Standard 7 – Student Engagement and Satisfaction**

7.1 How do you assess student engagement? What formal and informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine student engagement and student satisfaction/dissatisfaction? How do you use student retention, productivity, participation and grievances to assess and improve student engagement? How do you increase student engagement in the program?

Student engagement and satisfaction is monitored throughout the program. Student evaluation for satisfaction/dissatisfaction and engagement in the program is performed, suggestions are taken into consideration, and strategies to improve the program are implemented.

Data is provided to show student engagement and satisfaction in the program. Data is provided on student retention/completion, productivity (cycle time, program performance), number of complaints, and rate of participation.

## **Standard 8 – Program Effectiveness and Improvement**

8.1 How do you evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the program? What are your current levels and trends in the effectiveness and performance of the program?

Peer reviews and student evaluations are performed on the program annually. Multiple methods are used to assess program effectiveness. The program is evaluated annually for effectiveness.

Data is provided on program evaluations by peers and students. Results of program effectiveness are provided.

8.2 What methods do you use to ensure students will not be academically dishonest in the distance education program?

Academic integrity and internet etiquette expectations regarding less activities, discussions, email communications and plagiarism are clearly stated to students at the beginning of the program. Processes are in place to ensure academic dishonesty is minimized. Assessments used ensure and verify effectiveness of student academic and technical skill performance and academic honesty. Data is provided to show student attainment of academic and technical skills.

8.3 Outline methods you use to ensure student information remains confidential?

Methods outlined ensure that student information remains confidential. Privacy policies are clearly stated. Data is provided to show how many times confidential information has been obtained by non-authorized users.

## **SECTION III – APPEAL PROCEDURES**

### **A. Appealing Accreditation Status**

Accredited institutions and those seeking accreditation by the State Board have the right to appear before the State Board to contest any recommendation or decision that might adversely affect the institution's accredited status. A decision by the State Board not to accredit, to terminate the accreditation, or to reduce the accreditation status of a local institution may be appealed to the State Board. For this purpose, the State Board will recognize the right of appeal from representatives of the local institution, members of the local community, students or prospective students, and other interested parties or individuals. The State Board shall give reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing prior to directing action that might adversely affect the institution's accreditation status.

The procedure for providing notice and an opportunity for such hearing is as follows:

1. Local institutions will be notified in writing of decision(s) made by the State Board that affects their accreditation status within ten working days of such decision(s). This notification will be accompanied by a written statement setting forth the basis for such decision(s).
2. An individual(s) or party(s) who is not satisfied with the explanation and/or who seeks to change the decision will be given an opportunity to discuss the decision with the state director or such person(s) as he/she may designate. A request for such action must be submitted to the state director's office within 60 days of the notification.
3. If the dissatisfied party(s) or individual(s) is not satisfied with the explanation given for the decision rendered, he/she may request in writing a hearing before the State Board. This request must be submitted to the state director's office at least ten working days prior to the date of the next regularly scheduled State Board meeting.
4. The chairperson of the State Board or person whom he/she may designate shall preside and direct the proceedings of such hearing. Transcripts of the review, which provided the basis for the original decision, will be an integral part of the hearing. A written transcript of the hearing and the decision rendered will be maintained.
5. The appealing party(s) or individual(s) will be notified in writing of the decision reached at the hearing and the reason thereof within 30 days of the hearing.

6. If the appealing party(s) or individual(s) is dissatisfied with the final action of the State Board with respect to the decision rendered at the hearing, a petition for review of that action may be filed in the appeals court system. Barring such appeal, the decision of the State Board will stand as rendered. The accreditation status of the institution shall not change during the time that an appeal is under consideration.

**B. Procedures for Review of Complaints**

The State Board recognizes the need for the appropriate and timely review of complaints pertaining to institutional or program quality. All such complaints shall be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and in accordance with the following procedures:

1. All complaints (either verbal or written) concerning institutional or program quality shall be initially referred to the chief executive officer of the institution for which the complaint has been registered. This referral shall occur within five working days of the registering of the complaint.
2. The chief executive officer or his/her designee shall contact the complainant within five working days to ascertain the nature of the complaint. The complainant shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with the institutional representative(s) and to formally present his/her complaint.
3. If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may request a hearing before the institution's governing board. Such requests should be submitted in writing at least ten working days in advance of a regularly scheduled board meeting and must contain the nature of the complaint.
4. Complaints that cannot be resolved by the local administration or governing board may be referred to the State Board for final disposition. A request to appear before the State Board must be received in writing at least ten working days in advance of the next regularly scheduled board meeting.
5. Written disposition of the complaint will be provided to the complainant, the institution, and other interested parties within ten working days of the final decision.