



Private Career Colleges Act, 2005

Fact Sheet #10

**Approval of
Distance Education Programs at
Private Career Colleges**

November 23, 2012

Introduction

This fact sheet is designed for private career college (PCC) operators and should be read in conjunction with Policy Directive #9 – Distance Education Programs at Private Career Colleges. This fact sheet contains the requirements PCCs must follow when submitting programs for approval pursuant to the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* (Act).

Policy Directive #9 contains the program standard required for vocational programs using a Distance Education (DE) training method.

PCC operators should also reference [Fact Sheet # 3: Third Party Program Assessment](#) for the description of the subject-matter, adult education and distance education requirements related to program assessments.

Approval of Distance Education Programs

Pursuant to subsection 23(1) of Act, PCCs must have their vocational programs approved by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges (Superintendent). Further, as per subsection 23 (2) of the Act, an application for program approval shall contain such information as the Superintendent may require.

Under subsection 24(1) of the Act, the Superintendent may revoke a PCC's approval to provide a specified vocational program if the Superintendent believes that the program fails to meet the conditions of the approval or the applicable standards or performance objectives set out in a policy directive or no longer offers the skills and knowledge that would enable graduates to obtain employment in the vocation that is the subject of the program.

Accelerated or Normal Program Approval

There are two paths to obtain program approval for DE programs: Accelerated and Normal. The Normal path must be followed in all cases that are not eligible for the following Accelerated path.

Accelerated program approval for DE programs is optional and available for programs that meet all of the following criteria:

- The proposed DE program's content is based entirely on an existing, approved non-DE program for that PCC, delivered in class (the "base program");
- The base program is approved under the current Act (i.e. is not a "legacy program" delivered on the basis of an approval obtained under earlier legislation);
- Students have been enrolled in the base program for the past two consecutive years; and
- The base program has been fully entered into the Registration Information for Career Colleges (RICC) database.

In addition, the PCC seeking accelerated approval must not:

- Have any unpaid, past-due financial obligations to the Ministry or the Training Completion Assurance Fund (TCAF);
- Be currently proposed for revocation (or refusal of renewal) of its registration;
- Have any unresolved compliance orders;
- Have any unresolved issues raised in inspections; and
- Have any unresolved student and/or instructor complaints.

Accelerated approval may be obtained through submission of a written Representation (see Appendix), declaring that the proposed DE program meets all of the above criteria and that the content of the currently approved program and the proposed DE program are the same. In this instance, a PCC would ultimately have two approved programs, one base program delivered in class, the other delivered through DE.

A Third Party program assessment completed by a qualified DE Expert must be submitted in order to seek approval under the Accelerated path.

Programs applying for approval under the Normal path also need to undergo assessment by an Adult Education and a Subject Matter Expert in addition to assessment by the DE Expert. Please refer to Fact Sheet #3: Third Party Program Assessment for complete information for all assessments. In addition, the general program approval process applies.

Program applications following *either* Accelerated or Normal path are to be submitted in accordance with the contents of this fact sheet and Policy Directive #9.

General Approval Considerations

All program approvals will be determined on a case-by-case basis, by analysing whether each proposed vocational program to be delivered via DE meets the requirements contained in the DE Standard in Policy Directive #9, as well as the requirements for program approval contained in the Act.

In determining whether to approve a specific vocational program, the Superintendent has statutory authority to impose additional conditions, such as a limit on enrolment, in addition to any other conditions the Superintendent may consider to be necessary. The Superintendent may also set a specified program approval duration. In any case, **complete and accurate** applications must be submitted.

Some professions are regulated by external regulatory bodies and/or have certain entry-to-practice requirements, which render them inappropriate for programs using DE as a training methodology. Other programs regulated by an external body may be subject to different or *additional* requirements contained in this package in order to satisfy any necessary entry-to-practice requirements for graduates of a program offered through a DE format.

PCCs are required to contact the relevant regulatory body to ensure they have met that regulator's requirements for DE delivery *prior* to submitting the program to the Superintendent for approval. A written statement from the regulatory body in respect of the PCC's program, attesting to the program's suitability for DE delivery, must be submitted as part of the program approval package. An Information Circular with more detailed information is also available from your Inspector.

Please note that, consistent with the approval of other vocational programs and until a full evaluation of the DE Standard implementation can be completed, **approval of DE programs remains campus specific**. This means that approval of a DE program may not be transferred from one campus to another without prior written approval of the Superintendent via the normal branch to branch program approval application.

Program Approval Revocation

If the Superintendent decides to revoke a PCC's approval to deliver a DE program due to the PCC's non-compliance with any of the above requirements or conditions, the PCC will be responsible for:

- training-out current students and immediately losing program approval;
- arranging for training completions at other institutions; and/or
- providing refunds on all fees paid by the student.

All costs related to train-outs or refunds are the responsibility of the PCC. It is the responsibility of **each** PCC to ensure that it presently has on file with the Superintendent and maintains at all times an **up-to-date Training Completion Plan**.

All PCCs seeking approval for DE programs are required to submit applications for approval as set out in this fact sheet.

Need More Information?

If you have questions about the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at:

Private Career Colleges Branch
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
77 Wellesley Street, Box 977
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Telephone: (416) 314-0500 or 1-866-330-3395 or Fax: (416) 314-0499

OR

Visit our website at:

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/schoolsprogram/pcc/>

The full text of the act and regulations can also be downloaded from the Ontario government E-Laws website at:

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

Appendix

Written Representation – Accelerated Program Approval

_____ (name of private career college) intends to submit the following vocational program application for approval to the Superintendent. The name of the proposed program to be delivered via distance education is _____.

On behalf of [name of private career college] _____ I hereby declare that the proposed program for approval is based on the following currently approved in-class program: _____. The content and learning objectives of the original, in-class program and the content and learning objectives of the proposed program for distance education delivery are **identical**.

However, in preparing my submission for approval of this distance education program, I have set up the necessary technological infrastructure and meet the requirements contained in the Distance Education Standard.

The program was *last* approved on _____ and originally approved on _____ (if different from above date). The original program is currently **fully** entered into the Registration Information for Career Colleges system.

I have read and understood the above and attest to the complete accuracy and truthfulness of this Representation.

Signature and title of PCC operator
I have the authority to bind this private career college.

Date