

[INSTITUTION NAME] BPPE Accreditation Plan

DISTANCE EDUCATION ACCREDITING COMMISSION

In accordance with Title 5, California Code of Regulations (5, CCR) section 71105, **[Institution Name]** presents its Accreditation Plan to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.

[Institution Name] Plan

Introduction: The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1926 that operates as an institutional accreditor of distance education institutions. Accreditation by DEAC covers all distance education activities within an institution and it provides accreditation from the secondary school level through professional doctoral degree-granting institutions.

5, CCR section 71105(b)(1): **[Institution Name]** has identified DEAC as its accreditation agency.

5, CCR section 71105(b)(2): DEAC Eligibility Criteria

DEAC GENERAL MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Before the Accrediting Commission will officially accept an institution's initial Application for Accreditation, the institution must demonstrate it fully meets the eligibility criteria in the [DEAC Accreditation Handbook](#). In brief, the criteria entail the following:

- Each program offered by the institution is predominantly distance education or correspondence education (51% or more).
- The institution must be properly licensed, authorized, exempted or approved by the applicable state educational institutional authority (or its equivalent for non-U.S. institutions).
- At the time of initial application, the institution must have been enrolling students in current programs for two consecutive years under the present ownership.
- There is evidence via audited or reviewed financial statements that the institution is financially sound.
- The name being used by the institution is free from any association with any activity that could damage the reputation of the Accrediting Commission.
- The institution, its owners, governing board members, officials and administrators possess sound reputations and demonstrate a record of integrity and ethical conduct.
- The institution agrees that as part of the application process, the owners, officers and managers may be subject to a background check by DEAC.

For a complete list of the DEAC eligibility requirements, please see Part 2, Section I, Eligibility Requirements, *DEAC Accreditation Handbook*, pp. 10-11.

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5, CCR section 71105(b)(3): Outline of the process and timeline for complying within two years of provisional approval with the accrediting agency's requirements for submission of a completed application for initial accreditation with the required fee:

THE STEPS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. PREPARING FOR DEAC ACCREDITATION:

A key person enrolls in and successfully completes the *Preparing for DEAC Accreditation* tutorial to qualify as a Compliance Officer. The course is available on DEAC's website at www.deac.org. This tutorial is completed within one year prior to submitting the Application for Accreditation and before writing the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). DEAC does not accept Applications for Accreditation without a copy of the Certificate of Completion from the key person who completed the course.

2. APPLICATION

To initiate the accreditation process, the Application for Accreditation, application fee (see Accreditation Fees page), and students' names are submitted to DEAC. Acceptance of the Application for Accreditation begins the formal process. Institutions must complete all steps in the accreditation process within 12 to 18 months after the Application for Accreditation is accepted. An initial applicant institution may not refer to its accreditation status in any manner. In doing so, it could potentially mislead the public about the institution's affiliation with DEAC. When an institution applies for initial accreditation, it must certify on its Application for Accreditation that it "agrees to not make any promotional use of its application for accreditation status prior to receiving DEAC accreditation."

Note: ACCET's acceptance of the institution's Application for Accreditation and required fee satisfies BPPE's requirement for achieving *pre-accreditation or accreditation candidacy.

Submission of Student Names: The institution includes a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the names, mailing addresses, and email addresses of no more than the first 100 students consecutively enrolled within each division of the institution beginning the first day of the 18th month preceding the date of this application. As far as possible, the number of the students reflects the same proportion of the enrollments for each of the institution's major course/program offerings. If the institution has less than 100 students, submit the information for all students enrolled. Only institutions that are 100 percent correspondence may submit the names and addresses of students on self-adhesive mailing labels.

3. SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

The Compliance Officer and staff begin writing the institution's Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The SER is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the "Guide to Self-Evaluation." The SER provides data on all areas of an institution's operation, history, course offerings, student services, finances, etc. The SER includes a wide gathering and analysis of pertinent data on all aspects of the institution and its work. Institutions seeking renewal of accreditation submit their Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits to the on-site team six weeks prior to the scheduled on-site visit.

4. READINESS ASSESSMENT (INITIAL APPLICANTS ONLY)

DEAC requires all initial applicants to undergo a Readiness Assessment conducted by an independent DEAC-appointed evaluator. The Readiness Assessment allows DEAC to ascertain if the applicant's Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits provide sufficient evidence and information for a successful on-site visit.

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The Readiness Assessment provides the applicant with guidance on the actions necessary for the institution to prepare for a full accreditation review. The Readiness Assessment assures that the applicant meets a minimum level of eligibility qualification for DEAC accreditation that would justify the commitment of the institution's and DEAC's resources in administering a full accreditation review. An initial applicant submits its Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and Exhibits, accompanied by the Readiness Assessment fee (see Fees page), within 60 days of the date DEAC accepts the Application for Accreditation. The institution submits the materials in accordance with DEAC's instructions for electronic submission.

The Readiness Assessment Report is returned to the institution within 10-12 weeks. The institution is either "Deemed Ready" or "Deemed Not Ready."

- **Deemed Ready:** The institution receives a letter from DEAC indicating it is deemed ready to continue the accreditation process. To begin the curricular review process, the institution submits its curricula for review within approximately three months. The institution revises its Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits and submits the materials to the on-site evaluation team six weeks prior to the on-site visit.

- **Deemed Not Ready (2nd Submission):** The institution receives a letter from DEAC indicating it is not deemed ready to continue the accreditation process. The institution has six months to revise and submit its Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits incorporating the evaluator's comments and recommendations. If the independent DEAC-appointed evaluator subsequently deems the institution ready to continue the accreditation process the institution will begin the curricular review process and submit its curricula for review within approximately three months. The institution revises its Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits and submits the materials to the on-site evaluation team six weeks prior to the on-site visit.

- **Deemed Not Ready (3rd Submission):** If the institution is not deemed ready after the second submission, the institution has another six months to revise and submit its Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits incorporating the evaluator's comments and recommendations. Upon its third submission, a Readiness Assessment on-site visit is scheduled. The revised Self-Evaluation Report is provided to a DEAC-appointed on-site evaluation team. If the Chair's Report following the on-site visit indicates that the institution is not ready, the institution can reapply after at least one year. The decision is final and not subject to appeal or review by the Commission.

CURRICULAR REVIEW FOR INSTITUTIONS SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION

As a part of the accreditation process, the Commission engages subject specialists to conduct comprehensive evaluations of course/program materials. For substantive change applications, the curricular review takes up to six months. This includes the subject specialist search and the initial review by the subject specialist. Course materials submitted as part of an institution's application for accreditation are not returned to the institution. The institution is invoiced per subject specialist for each course/program review. The subject specialist is responsible for ascertaining whether the curricula and materials offered by the distance education institution are complete, accurate, and up-to-date in relation to stated educational outcomes.

While only representative courses are reviewed in depth, the comprehensive on-site review includes the scope and sequence of all curricula.

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DEGREE PROGRAMS

- a. Once the institution is deemed “ready” to move ahead in the accreditation process, DEAC reviews the list of programs offered at the institution and selects a sample of courses required for review. DEAC sends the institution a letter indicating the courses required for submission and the fee.
- b. For each degree program offered, 50 percent of the courses are selected by DEAC for review. The representative courses are selected based on a broad and fair representation of the curriculum for each degree program.
- c. The institution submits an Educational Offerings Report and curriculum materials for each program, including identified courses with supporting documentation, for review off site by subject specialists.

NON-DEGREE PROGRAMS

- a. Once the institution is deemed “ready” to move ahead in the accreditation process, it submits a list of all programs offered at the institution. The institution will receive an invoice for the off-site subject specialist review fee.
- b. The institution submits an Educational Offerings Report and the curriculum materials, including supporting documentation, for review off-site by subject specialists.

RESPONSE TO THE SUBJECT SPECIALIST REVIEW

All institutions that undergo the curricular review process for initial accreditation must respond to any “Partially Meets” or “Does Not Meet” findings prior to the on-site evaluation. The institutional response is sent to DEAC and the DEAC on-site evaluation team at least two weeks prior to the on-site evaluation.

5. ON-SITE EVALUATION

DEAC’s accreditation process is grounded on the fundamental principle of peer review that enables faculty and administrative staff from within higher education to make recommendations essential in assuring the quality of learning among institutions on behalf of all students. The process is guided by transparent standards that are established collaboratively by professional peers and member institutions. All members of the on-site evaluation team are subject to DEAC’s Conflict of Interest Policy located in the *DEAC Accreditation Handbook Appendix*.

Selection of On-site Team: On-site evaluations allow the on-site team to independently evaluate the information submitted in the institution’s Self-Evaluation Report and gather additional facts for DEAC. Once the evaluators are selected, their names are submitted to the institution. The institution may object, with an adequate reason, to a specific evaluator and request that another evaluator be chosen.

Function of the On-site Team: The on-site evaluation provides an opportunity for evaluators to meet with key staff members, faculty/instructors, principal managers, outside accountants, governing board members, and Advisory Council members, and it is vital that these individuals be present or available during the evaluation. The evaluators verify that the institution is meeting its mission and can demonstrate successful student achievement.

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The on-site evaluators' reports document whether the institution is meeting or exceeding all DEAC Accreditation Standards. The Chair's Report is provided to the institution for response, and both the Chair's Report and the institution's response are submitted to the Commission for review.

On-site Evaluators: In selecting evaluators for on-site evaluations, the DEAC Director of Accreditation considers the nature of the institution being reviewed for compliance with DEAC Accreditation Standards, the methods of operation unique to the institution, the nature of the program(s) offered, and the expertise and past evaluation experience of the evaluator.

The number of on-site evaluators is determined by the size of the institution, but the teams generally includes:

- a Chair;
- an education evaluator;
- a business evaluator;
- a subject specialist for each subject area;
- a DEAC staff member; and
- state or federal agency observers (invited).

Before the on-site evaluation, each evaluator develops a comprehensive picture of the institution's operations by completing a thorough review of the Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits and then answers questions on the appropriate rating form.

The Chair of the on-site team is responsible for the completion of the on-site evaluation in accordance with the Commission's processes and procedures and assures that each evaluator completes his/her tasks during the on-site evaluation.

A DEAC staff member accompanies the on-site team throughout the on-site evaluation to assure objectivity, impartiality, uniformity, interpretation of standards, and adherence to established procedures and to serve as a liaison between the on-site team and the Commission.

6. THE CHAIR'S REPORT, RESPONSE, AND THE COMMISSION'S DECISION

Following the on-site evaluation, the Chair prepares a Chair's Report and submits it to the Director of Accreditation. The Director of Accreditation sends the Chair's Report to the institution prior to submitting it to the Commission. The Chair's Report describes the findings of the on-site team and provides comments on the institution's demonstrated compliance with, or failure to demonstrate compliance with, the DEAC accreditation standards.

The institution has 30 days from the receipt of the Chair's Report to respond. In its response, the institution may add new or supporting information or correct any incorrect statements made in the Chair's Report. Regardless of its accredited status, all applicant institutions are obligated to keep the Commission informed of any changes in management, enrollments, etc., which occur subsequent to the date of the on-site evaluation.

The Commission takes action in accordance with Section VII below. Within 30 days, the Executive Director notifies the President/CEO of the institution of the Commission's decision through an Action Letter.

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The Action Letter includes a detailed written statement that identifies any deficiencies in the institution's compliance with DEAC's standards or conditions for initial or renewal of accreditation. The notification also advises the institution of its right to appeal an adverse decision of the Commission.

When the Commission withdraws the accreditation of an institution, the Commission does not make the action public until the period for requesting an appeal has expired or the appeal itself is denied.

7. COMMISSION ACTIONS ON INITIAL ACCREDITATION

The DEAC usually meets twice a year, in January and June. At its meetings, the DEAC reviews information and documentation on the applications for initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation. The Commission reviews the Application for Accreditation, Self-Evaluation Report, the Chair's Report, the institution's response to the Chair's Report, subject specialists' reports, student surveys, any complaints from the public, information gathered from other interested parties, any responses to public notices, the institution's advertisements and catalog, any communications between the institution and the Commission, and other relevant documentation. All members of the Accrediting Commission and staff are subject to DEAC's Conflict of Interest Policy located in the *DEAC Accreditation Handbook Appendix*. The Commission takes one of four courses of action:

- A. **Accredit** a new applicant institution for up to three years, or continue an institution's accredited status for up to five years. Reports of institutional enhancements of programs and services may be required.
- B. **Defer** a decision pending receipt of a Progress Report, submission of additional information, and/or the results of a follow-up on-site evaluation. The maximum deferral period is 12 months (unless the Commission extends the period for "good cause" as defined in the Handbook).

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5, CCR section 71105(b)(4) (A-D): An outline of the process and timeline whereby the institution will achieve full accreditation within five years of provisional approval:

[Institution Name] outlines the process and timeline for full accreditation by [Insert date]

(Note From The BPPE – Please Determine The Appropriate Milestones for your Institution, Based on the Institution’s Estimated Rate of Progress.)

Tasks	Jan 2019	Jul 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jul 2021	Jan 2022	May 2022	Jul 2022
Review DEAC Handbook and Complete <i>Preparing for DEAC Accreditation</i> tutorial	x							
Submit Application and Fee		x						
Submit the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)			x					
Undergo Readiness Assessment				x				
Submit Course Materials					x			
Submit Final SER						x		
Receive Subject Specialists Reports							x	
Respond to Comments from Subject Specialists								x

Tasks	Sep 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023				
Host Onsite Visit	x							
Receive Chair’s Report		x						
Respond to Chair’s Report			x					
Commission Decision				x				

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This is a sample accreditation plan. The requirements and dates for each individual plan will vary by institution.

***Note:** “Pre-accreditation” or Accreditation “Candidacy” as used in sections 94885.1 and 94885.5 of the Code means that an institution has submitted a completed application for initial accreditation with the required fee, which was accepted by the accreditor.

Notes: Public Comment area will show pending changes; accreditation actions (still under public notices) is where updates can be found.

SAMPLE