

6E-2.0041 Delivery of Programs through Nontraditional Assessments, Modes and Methods.

(1) Introduction. In addition to its responsibility for the maintenance of high standards of quality, the Commission also serves to encourage responsible innovation in postsecondary education to meet societal needs for creatively designed programs delivered in nontraditional ways. It is the intention of the Commission that its standards and procedures shall foster the development of quality innovative programs and emerging new fields of study, and shall not unreasonably hinder educational innovation and competition.

(a) Institutions offering nontraditional programs of study shall document that the instructional methods used will lead to the achievement of stated learning objectives, and that all nontraditional instruction shall be consistent with the abilities, educational skills, experience, and needs of the students enrolled in the programs.

(b) Institutions offering nontraditional programs of study that employ innovative delivery systems or innovative methods, or that carry on research and teaching in emerging fields of study, shall demonstrate that they will achieve the intent of each of the standards contained in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., for the appropriate level of licensure and for annual reviews.

(c) In addition to providing to the Commission the documentation required for each standard contained in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., showing how the intent of each standard will be met in the nontraditional program or delivery system, the institution shall also furnish for each course to be offered:

1. An inventory of equipment and materials to be provided to each student;
2. A detailed description of how each program will be conducted, including detailed course outlines or syllabi, procedures for distribution of materials, examination and evaluation of student work, timely response to students' questions and comments, record keeping, appropriate student services, and technical support.

(d) Institutions holding accreditation as defined in Section 1005.02(1), Florida Statutes, by an accrediting agency recognized by the U. S. Department of Education to deliver nontraditional education, may substitute proof of such accreditation, in good standing, for the above requirements.

(2) Awarding of credit.

(a) Units or credits applied toward the award of a credential in nontraditional programs may be derived from a combination of any or all of the following:

1. Units or credits earned at and transferred from other postsecondary institutions, when congruent and applicable to the receiving institution's program and when validated and confirmed by the receiving institution.

2. Successful completion of challenge examinations or standardized tests demonstrating learning at the credential level in specific subject matter areas.

3. Prior learning, as validated, evaluated, and confirmed by qualified instructors at the receiving institution.

(b) Graduation requirements for nontraditional degree programs shall include provisions for general education appropriate to the type of degree, as specified in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C. The Doctor of Philosophy degree, commonly abbreviated Ph.D., shall

not be offered or awarded through distance or nontraditional learning without appropriate accreditation by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

(c) At least 25 percent of the units required in a nontraditional degree program shall be given by the institution awarding the degree, and shall not be derived from any combination of transfer, examination, or experiential learning; however, credits earned by active U.S. military members are excluded from this requirement due to the transient nature of the service. Credit awarded for prior experiential learning shall follow the requirements of Section (5) of this rule, and shall not exceed 25 percent of the units required for completion of the program.

(3) Direct contact instruction. Institutions licensed to operate in Florida and wishing to offer programs or courses through directed individual and group study using direct contact instruction shall describe the teaching-learning methodology to be used, and shall submit illustrative course outlines and competencies and all other documentation as required in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., for the appropriate level of licensure or for subsequent annual reviews.

(4) Indirect contact instruction.

(a) Institutions licensed to operate in Florida and wishing to offer programs or courses through individual and group study mediated and assisted by telecommunications, computer augmented educational services, facsimile transmission, the postal service, or another technological method, shall describe the teaching-learning methodology to be used, and shall submit illustrative course outlines,

competencies and all other documentation as required in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., for the appropriate level of licensure or for subsequent annual reviews.

(b) In addition to the other requirements of Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., an institution offering instruction by correspondence shall employ a sufficient number of qualified instructors to assure that:

1. The academic content is designed by qualified faculty; and
2. Each student lesson, project, examination, or paper is evaluated by qualified instructors, and the instructor's response to or evaluation of each is sent to the student within a reasonable time as disclosed to the student.

(c) For programs that require the development of a manual or technical skill, such as the use of equipment or tools, the institution must ensure that the student has the opportunity to gain practical hands-on experience appropriate to master the skill. This experience, wherever gained, shall be documented in the student's file and shall be done under proper supervision and with meaningful evaluation of the competency outcomes. The technical aspects must be designed by qualified technicians.

(5) Credit for prior learning. An institution may grant credit to a student for prior experiential learning only if all of the following apply:

(a) The prior learning is equivalent to the level of learning in which the student is enrolling.

(b) The prior learning is demonstrated to provide a balance between theory and practice, for academic programs; or a verifiable mastery of appropriate skills, for vocational courses or programs. For courses or programs requiring a combination of

theory and skills, the prior learning is demonstrated to provide the appropriate combination.

(c) The credit awarded for the prior learning directly relates to the student's course or program and is applied in satisfaction of some of the credential requirements.

(d) College or university level learning for which credit is sought shall be documented by the student in writing, and validated, confirmed, and evaluated by faculty qualified in that specific subject area, who shall ascertain to what college or university level learning the student's prior learning is equivalent, and how many credits toward a degree may be granted for that prior learning. The faculty evaluating the prior learning shall prepare a written report indicating all of the following, which report shall be retained by the college or university for review by visiting Commission representatives upon request:

1. The documents in the student's file on which the faculty relied in determining and confirming the nature of the student's prior learning;

2. The basis for determining that the prior learning is equivalent to college or university level learning, and demonstrates a balance between theory and practice; and

3. The basis for determining to what college or university level the prior learning is equivalent, and the proper number of credits to be awarded toward the degree, based upon that prior learning.

(e) No more than 25 percent of the units required and validated through the institution's internal review process for a degree shall be awarded for prior experiential

learning.

(6) Credits earned in a compressed time period. Institutions licensed in Florida and wishing to offer courses or programs in a compressed time period shall show evidence to the Commission that the intent of all standards for licensure, as set forth in Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., shall be met.

(7) Instructors. Institutions licensed to operate in Florida and wishing to offer nontraditional programs or courses shall employ or contract with appropriately qualified instructors sufficient in number to provide the instruction, student interaction, and learning outcomes evaluation necessary for the institution to document achievement of its stated purpose, and for students to achieve the specific learning objectives and competencies required for each program so offered. It shall be the responsibility of the licensed institution to validate each instructor-s competence to use the interactive electronic media program or distance learning program effectively, and to provide training in the use of the delivery system if needed.

(8) Library and other learning resources.

(a) Institutions licensed to operate in Florida and wishing to offer nontraditional programs or courses shall document to the Commission how they provide, ensure, and maintain access for all students to the information resources and services appropriate to support each program or course.

(b) Institutions shall document how they provide, ensure, and maintain security of examinations and papers.

(c) Institutions shall collect and use student evaluations of content, delivery, and

services.

(9) Laboratory experiences. In the case of courses in the experimental or clinical sciences, or other courses requiring hands-on experience, each licensed institution wishing to offer nontraditional programs shall document to the Commission that arrangements have been made to ensure that the requisite laboratory, field, or equivalent experience is available to and used consistently by every enrolled student. Such experience shall be documented in the student's file, and shall occur under appropriate supervision and meaningful evaluation of the competency outcomes.

(10) Catalog. Each institution licensed in Florida and wishing to offer nontraditional programs or courses shall comply with all requirements of Rules 6E-1.0032 and 2.004, F.A.C., and in addition shall publish information in the catalog, whether printed or electronic, pertaining to each of the following:

(a) The institution's policies and procedures for the award of credit for prior learning, including confirmation and validation, assessment policies and procedures, provisions for appeal of decisions, limitations on the number of credits that may be awarded in this manner, and all fees that a student may be required to pay.

(b) The institution's policies regarding the acceptance of credits earned by the student through successful completion of challenge examinations or standardized tests, acceptable scores for each, whether and how many times examinations may be repeated to achieve an acceptable score, limitations on the number of credits that may be awarded in this manner, and all fees that a student may be required to pay.

(c) If the institution offers instruction by correspondence, schedules for normal

progress or completion of the course or program, and all fees that a student may be required to pay.

(11) Student records.

(a) Institutions wishing to offer nontraditional programs or courses shall maintain a file for each student, conforming to the general requirements of Rule 6E-2.004, F.A.C., and contain the following:

1. All documents evidencing a student's prior learning upon which the instructors and the institution base the award of any credit or credential.

2. For directed individual or group contact instruction, copies of the learning agreements or learning contracts signed by the instructors and administrators who evaluated the agreements and contracts.

(b) An academic transcript shall be maintained, kept current, and retained permanently for each student. Institutions offering nontraditional courses and programs shall adopt a policy requiring that credits awarded for prior learning, including internal credit by challenge examination, shall be so identified on the student's academic transcript. Institutions shall adopt a policy regarding the length of time for retention of records documenting evaluation, assessment and awarding of nontraditional credit. Retention time shall be sufficient for reasonable future review and confirmation of student work.

(12) Fair consumer practices, as described in Sections 1005.04 and 1005.34, Florida Statutes, and Rule 6E-1.0032, F.A.C., shall be followed by the institution in all aspects of its operation.

Specific Authority 1005.22(1)(e)1., 1005.31(2), (3) 246.041(1)(e), 246.051(1), 246.071
FS. Law Implemented 1005.31 246.011(2), (4), 246.087(1), 246.095 FS. HistoryBNew
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