

6A-6.0982 Florida Approved Online Course Providers.

(1) Purpose. Section 1003.499(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.) requires the Commissioner of Education to annually publish online a list of providers approved to offer Florida approved courses.

(2) Application Form. Form VSP-03, Course Provider Approval Application is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of this rule (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-05520>), to become effective July 2015. A copy of Form VSP-03 may be obtained by contacting the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

(3) Application. The application to become an approved course provider will be available at <http://app4.fldoe.org/courseprovider/> beginning September 1st and must be accessed and submitted electronically. The deadline for filing the application is September 30th.

(a) Pursuant to Section 1003.499(3)(a)5., F.S., the applicant must possess prior, successful experience offering online courses to elementary, middle, or high school students as demonstrated by quantified student learning gains or student growth in each subject area and grade level provided for consideration as an instructional program option. Learning gains data for at least one (1) complete school year from one (1) of the following sources must be submitted for each course submitted for approval in this application:

1. Summative assessments approved to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability requirements or state-administered End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. The demonstrated gains will be sufficient if either proficiency rate or gains rate, as calculated for purposes of school grades under Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C., which is incorporated by reference herein, meet or exceed the state mean. A copy of Rule 6A-1.09981, F.A.C., may be obtained by contacting the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399. Equivalent subgroup credit recovery or remediation course data may be considered in determining the equivalency with the state mean, if provided.

For course subjects not addressed by state assessments:

2. Nationally standardized summative achievement tests or nationally standardized interim assessments with multiple assessments to measure learning gains. The demonstrated gains will be sufficient if either proficiency rate or gains rate meet or exceed the national mean. Equivalent subgroup or credit recovery or remediation course data may be considered in determining the equivalency with the national mean, if provided.

3. Proctored EOC assessments or semester examinations that assess Florida standards. Electronic proctoring with appropriately identified students is acceptable. Applicants must submit a signed assurance that non-state level EOC examinations cover Florida course benchmarks. Demonstrated gains will be sufficient if the pass rate on the proctored EOC examination meets or exceeds seventy (70%) percent.

(b) In accordance with Section 1003.499(3)(a)6., F.S., the applicant ensures instructional and curricular quality through a detailed curriculum and student performance accountability plan that addresses every subject and grade level that the applicant intends to provide. The curriculum plan must include evidence:

1. That the applicant meets the standards of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL);
2. That its courses and services are aligned to the Florida Student Performance Standards adopted in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., which is incorporated by reference herein, and measure student attainment of those standards. Each course must align to the course descriptions and benchmarks established pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09412, F.A.C., which is incorporated by reference herein, including:
 - a. Where the standard is taught in the course;
 - b. How the standard is taught; and,
 - c. How mastery is assessed.

File names for course alignment documents must include the Florida course codes and titles specified in Florida's most current Course Code Directory incorporated in Rule 6A-1.09441, F.A.C., which is incorporated by reference herein. A copy of Rules 6A-1.09401, 6A-1.09412 and 6A-1.09441, F.A.C., may be obtained by contacting the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

3. That mechanisms are in place to determine and ensure students have satisfied course requirements. Mechanisms should include:

- a. The use of formative and interim assessments;
- b. A multi-tiered system of student supports, interventions and assistance to ensure student progression toward promotion and graduation requirements;

c. Curriculum development, activities and assessments based on principles that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn, supporting flexibility in representation, expression, and engagement;

d. Electronic and information technology accessible to persons with disabilities; and,

e. Strategies to ensure comprehensible instruction for students with limited English proficiency.

Upon request, the applicant will provide access for a virtual walk-through of courses during the review phase of the application process.

(c) The applicant must disclose on a prominent place on its website the disclosure information required under Section 1003.499(3)(a)7., F.S. Average student-teacher ratios are to be calculated for each course. Teacher load (the total number of students assigned to a teacher) must also be provided. Student completion rate calculations are to include all students who are enrolled in the course for more than fourteen (14) days. Student performance accountability outcomes are to include student assessment results for all students and by the following subgroups: major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. "Major racial and ethnic groups" shall include those groups reported for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in any state or, if no such prior reporting is available, shall include, at a minimum: American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, and White. If the course has an EOC, the applicant will publish the results on the website. All disclosure of student performance data must comply with Sections 1002.22 and 1002.221, F.S., by avoiding the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. Assessment data for less than ten (10) students must be redacted to prevent disclosure of identifiable student information.

(4) The Department of Education will review each complete application and provide the applicant with a written decision regarding the approval or denial of the application no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Approved course providers will be posted to the website: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/florida-approved-online-courses.shtml>.

(5) Notice of Denial. If the application is denied, the applicant will receive written notification identifying the specific areas of deficiency. The applicant shall have thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the notice of denial to resolve any outstanding issues, and resubmit its application for reconsideration. The applicant will receive a final written notice of approval or denial. If any application is denied a second time, the department will provide a final written notice to the applicant indicating that the application has been administratively closed and that the provider may apply during the next application phase in accordance with subsection (3) of this rule.

(6) Course provider approval will be in effect for three (3) years.

(7) Revocation. The department shall revoke the approval of a course provider who fails to maintain compliance with all the requirements of Section 1003.499(3), F.S., or who fails to implement the course(s) as submitted and approved.

Rulemaking Authority 1003.499, 1008.31 FS. Law Implemented 1003.499, 1008.31 FS. History--New 12-23-14, Amended 7-28-15.