POLICY & PROCEDURES
ACC-08 – DISTRIBUTED EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

Developments in education and in technology have created new options for student learning. By using technology and other strategies students can participate in a formal education program and be separated from instructors and each other. One mechanism used by universities and colleges to provide enhanced educational opportunities is distributed education programs. It is one of the responsibilities of the accreditation process to ensure that students participating in distributed education learning opportunities are provided with an educational experience substantially equivalent to their peers participating in a more traditional learning environment.

Definitions:

Distributed Education is a broad concept that includes both education delivered wholly off-campus and elements of traditional education made available remotely. The distributed education model can be used in combination with traditional classroom-based courses, with traditional distance learning experiences, or it can be used to create wholly virtual classrooms.

Examples of options for distributed education include:

   i. establishment of satellite/extension education programs;
  ii. online instructional modules that supplement or replace in-person instruction in a course or multiple courses;
 iii. videoconferencing or teleconferencing for instruction where students are located at dispersed clinical sites or a branch campus; and
  iv. online instruction to replace other instructional methods for individual students who are dispersed regionally, nationally, or internationally, as part of a "virtual" education program.

Distance learning is considered to be a subset of distributed education. In occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant education programs distance learning is defined as a structured educational process in which students and instructors are separated by geographic distance or time, and which is supported by communications technology such as online delivery or synchronous videoconferencing. Examples ii), iii) and iv) above are also examples of distance learning.

Assumptions:

It is assumed, for accreditation purposes, that all new or existing occupational therapist assistant / physiotherapist assistant education programs are separate education programs, subject to the full Candidacy Status fee and/or annual accreditation fee (whichever is applicable)

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unless the program meets the required conditions, described below, for eligibility for consideration as a distributed education site of an existing program.

1.0 POLICY

1.1 The OTA & PTA EAP defines the conditions which must be met for an education program to be considered eligible to be a distributed education site of an existing program with candidacy status or accreditation status.

1.2 The following conditions are used by the Joint Accreditation Committee (JAC) of the OTA & PTA EAP as guidelines to determine eligibility as a distributed education site. If the JAC determines ineligibility, the distributed education site will be considered a stand-alone education program for accreditation purposes.

Condition	Relevant Accreditation Standard
The parent education program must hold Candidacy Status, or Accreditation Status, Fully or Partially Compliant. Education programs holding Probationary Accreditation Status will not be eligible to add a distributed site to their accreditation status.	
The following guidelines are used to determine eligibility as a distributed education site. The distributed program should: • be within the same provincial or territorial jurisdiction as the parent program • demonstrate substantially equivalent governance as that of the parent program • award a degree from the same educational institution as the parent program • provide instruction in the same language as the parent program • demonstrate that responsibility for the administration and operation lies with the Program Coordinator of the parent program • consider faculty teaching in the distributed education site as faculty of the parent program, with all faculty subject to the same policies and procedures • demonstrate that faculty in the distributed program report to the Program Coordinator (of the parent program) • be under the budgetary control of the parent program • have a designated program faculty member at the distributed site (if a physical site exists) to serve as the official contact person and to provide leadership. • demonstrate a substantially equivalent mission, philosophy, and curriculum design and learning objectives as the parent program • demonstrate substantially equivalent education for students in	1.1 1.4 Standard 2 1.4 1.5 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 Standard 3

each program (eg. comparable educational experiences, equivalent access to human and site resources, equivalent methods of assessment and determination of grades, etc.)	

1.3   Candidacy Status

    1.3.1   All programs applying for Candidacy Status will be required to apply as a stand-alone education program and pay the required Candidacy Status application fee.

    1.3.2   An education program with Candidacy Status may submit a Report of Substantive Change (see Policy ACC-07 Substantive Change) to identify an associated distributed education site (see table above) for review by the Joint Accreditation Committee (JAC).

    1.3.3   A distributed education site of a program with Candidacy Status must meet
        i)   OTA & PTA EAP Candidacy Status criteria
        ii)   OTA & PTA EAP Distributed Education conditions
in order to be eligible to be added to the parent program's Candidacy Status.

    1.3.4   If a distributed education site of a parent program is found to be eligible to be added to the parent program's candidacy status, the parent program will then be required to pay the distributed education site Candidacy Status fee (40% of the full application fee, as per GUIDE-03 Fee Schedule).

    1.3.5   Decisions made regarding the candidacy status of a program will apply to both the parent program and to any associated distributed education sites (for example, should candidacy status be revoked from a program due to lack of payment of fees, both the parent program and any associated distributed program will no longer have candidacy status).

    1.3.6   If a distributed education site is found to be ineligible to be added to the parent program's candidacy status, the distributed education site will be considered a stand-alone program for accreditation purposes. To pursue accreditation status, the program must apply independently for candidacy status.

    1.3.7   Students at the distributed site will not be considered graduates of a program with candidacy status until JAC has completed the review of the Report of Substantive Change, and a decision has been made to allow the parent program to add the distributed site to its candidacy status.

1.4   Accreditation Status

    1.4.1   An education program with accreditation status (full or partial) may submit a Report of Substantive change (see Policy ACC-07 Substantive Change) to identify an associated distributed education site for review by the JAC.

    1.4.2   A distributed education site of a program with accreditation status must meet
        i)   OTA & PTA EAP Accreditation Standards
        ii)   OTA & PTA EAP Distributed Education conditions
in order to be eligible to be added to the parent program's accreditation status.

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1.4.3   If a distributed education site of a parent program is found to be eligible to be added to the parent program's accreditation status, the parent program will then be required to pay the distributed education site annual accreditation fee (40% of the full annual fee, as per GUIDE-03 Fee Schedule).

1.4.4   Decisions made regarding the accreditation status of a program will apply to the program and any associated distributed education sites. (For example if accreditation status of a program is moved from partially compliant to probationary, the decision will apply to both the parent program and all associated distributed education sites)

1.4.5   If a distributed education site is found to be ineligible to be added to the parent program's accreditation status, the distributed education site will be considered a stand-alone program for accreditation purposes. To pursue accreditation status, the program must apply independently for Candidacy Status.

1.4.6   An onsite accreditation review of the program at the distributed education site must be conducted prior to the distributed site being added to the parent program's accreditation status.

1.4.7   Students at the distributed site will not be considered graduates of an accredited program until the onsite review is complete and a decision has been made to allow the parent program to add the distributed site to its accreditation status.

1.4.8   The education program will be responsible to pay the costs for a Peer Review Team to conduct the onsite review of the distributed education site (see Fee Schedule)

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2.0   PROCEDURES

2.1   An existing education program with candidacy status or accreditation status (full or partial) completes a Report of Substantive Change (see Policy ACC-07) to describe the distributed education site. In the Report, evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the distributed site meets the conditions required to be eligible to be added to the parent education program's candidacy or accreditation status.

2.2   If the existing accredited education program is developing a new distributed education site, and would like students at the new site to graduate from an accredited program, the following steps must take place:

> i.   Submission of a Report of Substantive Change <u>12 months prior to implementation </u>of the new distributed site for review by the JAC
>
> ii.   Decision by the JAC regarding eligibility to be added to the parent education program's candidacy or accreditation status.
>
> iii.   If eligible, an onsite accreditation review completed and an accreditation status decision made prior to graduation of the first cohort of students.

2.3   Upon receipt of a Report of Substantive Change regarding a distributed education site, the Program Manager will forward the Report for consideration by the JAC at the next JAC meeting following the submission and will advise the program that:

Candidacy Status:

    i.   the report provides the necessary information regarding the distributed education site and the distributed site is not eligible to be added to the program's Candidacy Status,

OR

    ii.   the report provides the necessary information regarding the distributed education site and the distributed site is eligible to be added to the program's Candidacy Status,

OR

    iii.   further information is required within a specified period,

Accreditation Status:

    i.   the report provides the necessary information regarding the distributed education site and the distributed site is not eligible to be added to the program's Accreditation Status,

OR

    ii.   the report provides the necessary information regarding the distributed education site and the distributed site is eligible to be added to the program's Accreditation Status, pending an onsite accreditation review,

OR

    iii.   further information is required within a specified period,

2.4   Once eligibility has been established for distributed education sites of programs with accreditation status, the Program Manager will make arrangements for an onsite accreditation visit and recruit Peer Review Team members to conduct the review.

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Date of last revision	Associated documents
June 2013	ACC-07 Substantive Change
	Program Accreditation Handbook
	GUIDE-03 Fee Schedule