



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All SCHEV-Certified Postsecondary Schools

FROM: Sylvia Rosa-Casanova, Director of Private Postsecondary Education

DATE: March 13, 2020 (Revised March 25, 2020)

SUBJECT: Guidance for Educational Adjustments Due to COVID-19
Temporary Approval of Distance Education Due to COVID-19

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is aware of the health concerns schools across the nation are facing because of the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Our assessment of the current situation indicates that certified schools may need to cease face-to-face instruction to protect the well-being of students, staff and faculty. This revised guidance document provides immediate approval for distance education through **June 1, 2020**. This coincides with the US Department of Education's (USED) announcement of an extension in the FAQ's issued March 20, 2020. We will provide instructions to request approval for continued distance education beyond that date if it becomes necessary.

If your school does not have the ability to offer distance learning options to students and deems it necessary to postpone scheduled classes, you must notify SCHEV of your plans as soon as possible. Please send a copy of your notification to students and any other pertinent information, such as programs and number of students affected, to Private Postsecondary Education staff at ppe@schev.edu.

- I. Parameters of Temporary Approval
 - a. Temporary approval applies only through **June 1, 2020**. Its purpose is to allow students already in attendance to continue their studies if a school ceases face-to-face instruction. **Additionally, in conformance with USED's latest guidance, SCHEV will also extend temporary**

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approval for distance education for programs scheduled to begin on or before June 1, 2020.

II. Definition of Distance Education

- a. "Distance education" means education that uses
 - i. the Internet;
 - ii. one-way transmission and two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communications;
 - iii. audio conferencing; or
 - iv. video cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor so long as they are used in conjunction with any technology listed in items i-iii above.

III. Parameters of Immediate Approval

- a. Postsecondary schools that are already approved for distance education via an existing Learning Management System or online platform may extend offerings to students that are currently in enrolled in face-to-face classes.
- b. **At this time, SCHEV is not approving any new Learning Management System (LMS) that the school intends to use to provide total, asynchronous, online education. However,** all postsecondary schools may use any of the following distance education methods alone or in combination:
 - i. Web services such as Google Classroom,
 - ii. Unified communication and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams,
 - iii. Video conferencing such as Google Meet, Zoom, or GoToMeeting,
 - iv. Audio conferencing

IV. Postsecondary Schools with Special Circumstances

- a. Postsecondary schools that require approval by other agencies in addition to SCHEV must ensure that they remain in compliance with the standards, regulations or rules of those approving agencies. These are:
 - i. Accrediting Agencies
 - ii. US Department of Education
 - Those schools approved for Title IV funding please see

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<https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19> and the FAQ's issued 3/20/2020.

iii. Licensing boards

- Postsecondary schools offering programs leading to licensure must ensure that the proposed method of distance education meets the standards of the licensing board.

iv. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)

- Postsecondary schools enrolling international students must ensure that moving these students to distance education meets SEVP requirements.