



## Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Section Title:** Academic Policies  
**Policy Title:** Off-Campus Instruction  
**Policy Number:** A 1.4

**1.4.1** **Scope and Purpose.** Pursuant to T.C.A. §49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at all public institutions including universities, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology.

The Commission delegates the authority for review and approval of off-campus locations to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains the discretion to refer an off-campus location to the Commission for approval. Students may not enroll in any new off-campus location, nor may any off-campus location be advertised by any public institution prior to THEC approval.

**1.4.2** **Locations Subject to Approval.**

**Branch Campus:** A branch campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology and is operated under the supervision of a full-time, on-site, local administrator who reports to the chief administrative officer at the main campus.

**Extension Campus:** An extension campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology within a fifty-mile radius of the main campus. Direct supervision and control are provided from the main campus, and the staff is limited primarily to instructors and support staff.

**Instructional Service Center:** An instructional service center is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology that serves employers and the public for the delivery of programs or portions of programs to meet a workforce need. An instructional service center must be a joint venture between the institution and an employer or another educational agency and must be located within the geographic service area designated by the governing board of the institution. Appropriate student services must be available on-site, and the full range of services must be made accessible to participating students at the main campus.

**Off-Campus Center:** An off-campus center is a location affiliated with a public community college, or university that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete at least one academic program. There must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.

**Off-Campus Site:** An off-campus site is a physical space affiliated with a university, community college, or college of applied technology that is used to offer credit enrollment geographically apart from the main campus. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs.

#### 1.4.3

**No Unnecessary Duplication.** THEC will not approve the establishment of an off-campus location if the proposed delivery of instructional services could reasonably occur through existing institutions or other off-campus locations. It is expected that institutions and/or systems will resolve any conflicts between the institutions impacted by the proposed off-campus location submission prior to submission of the off-campus location request to THEC.

An institution contemplating the creation of an off-campus location must review the THEC off-campus inventory to avoid duplication. The institution must communicate its proposal to the impacted institution(s) in writing prior to the submission of the proposal to THEC. Impacted institutions will have 10 business days to review and provide feedback to the requesting institution. Requesting institutions shall document any communications and agreements with impacted institutions in the off-campus request to THEC. Impacted institutions should also submit any unresolved objections to the proposed off-campus location to the THEC Executive Director.

#### 1.4.4

**Exclusions to the Off-Campus Instruction Policy.** The following offerings and/or locations are excluded from this off-campus location policy:

- Clinical training sites with no didactic instruction
- Continuing education coursework
- Non-credit coursework, including non-degree apprenticeship
- Online offerings, unless the student is required to be at the location (synchronously or asynchronously) to receive instruction
- Study abroad coursework
- Student teaching locations and degree apprenticeship locations with no instruction on-site

#### 1.4.5

**Criteria for Review for Branch Campuses, Extension Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, Off-Campus Centers, and Off-Campus Sites**

- **Justification of Need** – The proposal must include an explanation of the need for the new off-campus location that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Enrollment** – The proposal must include anticipated enrollment in the location's initial year for short-term approvals and over the following four (4) academic years for long-term approvals.
- **Faculty and Staff** – The proposal must include anticipated faculty and staff support required to operate the new off-campus location.
- **Operational Costs and Revenues** – Proposal must include supporting documentation detailing program costs and revenues associated with the

proposed location. Projected costs include but are not limited to items such as leasing agreements, square footage and renovated space, equipment, utilities, instructional resources, faculty salaries, and all other items deemed necessary by the Commission. Revenues include but are not limited to items such as tuition and fees, state appropriations, and sales and services.

- **Facilities** – Facilities planned or in place for the off-campus location should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of programs offered.
- **Administration** – For off-campus locations that require an administrative presence, an explanation of the plans for administration of the off-campus location must be provided and should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of the academic programming offered.

**1.4.6 Off-Campus Locations Outside of Tennessee.** If the new location will create or expand a physical presence out of state, the higher education institution shall, through its governing board, file with the commission a notice of intent to initiate out-of-state instructional activity prior to the development of the proposal.

**1.4.7 Letter of Notification for a Facilities Acquisition.** A Letter of Notification (LON) informing THEC of a proposal to establish a new off-campus location is required prior to any facilities acquisition, including lease execution and/or presentation to the State Building Commission or State Architect.

The LON must include signatures and approvals from the President of the institution and a system representative (where applicable). The establishment of off-campus locations must be consistent with and reference the most recently approved campus master plan and institutional mission profile approved by THEC. Upon review and approval by the Executive Director, the institution and system can move forward with the proposed off-campus location request.

**1.4.8 Changes to Off-Campus Locations.** Institutions must notify THEC of any changes to the academic program offerings at an off-campus location prior to the implementation of a change. Changes include:

- Adding or terminating academic programs
- Changing the type of off-campus location for an approved off-campus location (e.g., from an off-campus site to an off-campus center)
- Inactivating, phasing-out, and closing of off-campus locations

**1.4.8 Review of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC will monitor off-campus location enrollments to determine that enrollments are continuous.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; November 14, 2002; July 26, 2007; July 27, 2017, January 28, 2022, and May 15, 2025.