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BILL LEE  
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### **Memorandum**

**To:** Regularly Authorized Postsecondary Educational Institutions with Residential Programs

**From:** Stephanie Bellard Chase, Associate Executive Director  
Division of Postsecondary State Authorization  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Date:** March 13, 2020

**Re:** DPSSA Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) Update

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As a result of the recent news concerning Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) in Tennessee, postsecondary educational institutions authorized by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) have contacted the Division of Postsecondary State Authorization (DPSA) seeking guidance as to how residential programs can be altered to allow for distance learning alternatives. As a result, DPSA advised THEC's Executive Director, Mike Krause, that a first step to providing such guidance is to temporarily waive Rule 1540-01-02-.07(5)(c).

Currently, Rule 1540-01-02-.07(5)(c) provides in relevant part: "When an institution revises an approved program, then the institution must seek approval from Commission staff by submitting a Program Revision Notification at least thirty (30) days prior to implementing the revision. If . . . Commission staff determines a significant revision has occurred, then the institution must submit a New Program Application prior to implementing the revision." This rule applies to institutions with regular authorization.

DPSA has consistently determined that a change of delivery mode from residential to distance learning or blended is a significant revision requiring the institution to file an Application for New Program. Mr. Krause accepted DPSA's recommendation and issued a memorandum on March 13, 2020 temporarily waiving the rule. His memorandum states in pertinent part:

In accordance with Rule 1540-01-02-.02(2)(c) and through this memorandum, this temporary waiver will allow institutions to offer their programs that are approved as residential in a distance learning or blended format without filing a new program application, paying the requisite fee, or receiving commission approval of the delivery mode change. Instead, by filing a notice and providing information as dictated by the Division of Postsecondary State Authorization, institutions will be able to alter the delivery mode of a program and offer the program as altered through November 30, 2020.

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This waiver shall remain in effect until November 30, 2020. An institution that wishes to continue to offer a program as blended that was previously approved as residential after November 30, 2020 should file an Application for New Program by July 17, 2020.

Based on the foregoing, a regularly authorized institution can change the delivery mode of a residential program to blended by submitting a Delivery Mode Change Notice within five (5) business days of implementing a delivery mode change. Once DPSA receives the notice and answers to any follow-up questions, DPSA will acknowledge receipt of the notice.

Questions concerning this memorandum should be sent to [thec.dpsa-application@tn.gov](mailto:thec.dpsa-application@tn.gov) with "Delivery Mode Change Notice " in the subject line. To download the Delivery Mode Change Notice [Click Here](#).