

DATE: July 27, 2017

SUBJECT: Off-Campus Instruction at Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(q)(3) the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at public institutions. The purpose for establishing off-campus sites and centers is to expand access to higher education for Tennesseans. Recent legislative actions, including the Focus on College and University Success (FOCUS) Act of 2016, and changes in practice have necessitated revisions of the Off-Campus Instruction Policy.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

The Off-Campus Instruction policy is recommended to be split into two policies: Off-Campus Instruction at Community Colleges and Universities and Off-Campus Instruction at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT). In cases where a TCAT is considered a part of a Community College, as is the case with TCAT Chattanooga and Chattanooga State Community College, the joint institution will be considered under the Community Colleges and Universities Policy.

THEC plans to review the off-campus location inventory every three years. It may be recommended that locations with low enrollments be inactivated.

A1.4B Off-Campus Instruction at Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology

The creation of a TCAT-specific policy will allow for the unique off-campus functions at TCATs to be recognized and will align more closely with the designations used by Council on Occupational Education, the accrediting body for twenty-six of the TCATs. There are four possible off-campus designations for TCATs: instructional service center, extension campus, branch campus, and site. This policy is specific to off-campus locations offering coursework for credit towards a diploma.

Need for the proposed location, demand, operational costs/revenues, and facilities plans will be considered as part of the review process for the instructional service center, extension campus, and branch campus locations. A modified version of this review is in place for sites. It is expected that Tennessee Board of Regents will resolve any intra-institutional conflicts prior to submission to the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

Proposed revisions to the Off-Campus Instruction policies have been reviewed by academic affairs staff, the Office of the General Counsel, and applicable stakeholders, including institutions and governing boards. The policies are recommended for approval and adoption. Proposed changes will provide needed clarity on policy expectations and will improve data collection on off-campus offerings.

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: Off-Campus Instruction – Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology
Policy Number: A 1.4B

1.4B.1A **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 public institutions, including the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs). The Commission grants the authority for review and approval to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains the discretion to refer an off-campus location to the Commission for approval.

This policy fulfills the Commission’s charge to develop policies and procedures for the purpose of reviewing and approving off-campus locations at the TCATs. This policy is specific to locations offering diploma credit. The policy will adhere to the Council on Occupational Education (COE) definitions as it relates to off-campus instruction. The COE is the accrediting body for the TCATs. In cases where a TCAT is considered a part of a Community College, as is the case with TCAT Chattanooga and Chattanooga State Community College, the joint institution will be considered under the Off-Campus Instruction - Community Colleges and Universities Policy (A 1.4A).

1.4B.2A **Definitions.**

Diploma Credit – This policy is only applicable to off-campus locations that are offering coursework for credit towards a diploma.

Instructional Service Center, as defined by COE, “is a temporary or permanent training location that serves employers and the public for the delivery of programs or portions of programs to meet a critical or sustained need. The occupational program at an instructional service center must be under the direct control of the main campus and 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 will be made accessible to participating students at the main campus”.

Extension Campus, as defined by COE, “is a subordinate site, not a main campus, and is located 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. All programs of an extension must meet the educational requirements of the main campus and comply with its operational policies”.

Branch Campus, as defined by COE, “is a subordinate site, not a main campus, operating under the supervision of a full-time, on-site, local administrator who reports to the chief administrative officer at the main campus. The branch must meet all educational requirements and comply with the operational policies of the main campus”.

Sites – An off-campus site is a physical space that is generally used to offer credit enrollment. 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.

1.4B.3A1

Locations Subject to Approval. Proposals for instructional service centers, extension campuses, branch campuses, and off-campus sites will be subject to review and approval under this policy. Proposal formats appropriate to the requested action are available on the THEC website:

- Establish an Off-Campus Instructional Service Center, Extension Campus, and/or Branch Campus.
- Establish an Off-Campus site.

1.4B.3A2

Criteria for Review of Instructional Service Center, Extension Campus, and Branch Campus. THEC considers the following criteria, in order to maximize state resources, in evaluating the establishment of an off-campus Instructional Service Center, Extension Campus and/or Branch Campus locations at TCATs:

- **Needs Assessment** – supporting documentation of need for the new off-campus location that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Sustainable Demand** – supporting documentation of anticipated enrollment in the location’s initial year and over the following four academic years.
- **Operational Costs and Revenues** – 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. In particular, facilities should meet the standards of the Council on Occupational Education, and other applicable accrediting and regulating agencies. Whenever the establishment or upgrading of a location requires substantially new facilities, which may or may not include a land purchase, the community should be willing to provide the site, the access to all necessary utilities, highways, and access roads, and make a substantial contribution towards the initial planning and construction of the location. The leasing or acquisition of space or land is subject to approval by THEC and the State Building Commission; and must comply with current State laws set forth in Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 12-1-106, -107 or 12-2-114, -115, State Building Commission policy, and THEC policy numbers F4.1 - Master Plans and F4.2 - Lease Space Funding and License Agreements.

1.4B.3A3

Criteria for Review of Off-Campus Sites. An off-campus site is a physical space that is generally used to offer credit enrollment. 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. The Commission considers the following criteria in order to maximize state resources in evaluating the creation and operation of off-campus sites:

- **Need** – supporting documentation of need for the new off-campus site that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Demand** – supporting documentation of anticipated enrollment at the location.
- **Operational Costs and External Support** – supporting documentation detailing program costs associated with the proposed location, as well as a short narrative around any shared expenses and resources.

1.4B.4A1

Review of Off-Campus Locations. THEC will monitor off-campus location enrollments every three years to determine that enrollments are continuous and to identify any potentially low-

enrollment locations.

- 1.4B.4A2** **Phase-Out and Closing of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC may recommend to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) the phase out and closure of off-campus locations that experience low enrollment over time. TBR and TCATs will have an opportunity to provide a justification for the lack of enrollment and request that the location remain active until the next review period. TBR and TCATs should notify THEC of off-campus locations requiring inactivation every three years.
- 1.4B.5A1** **No Unnecessary Duplication.** THEC will not approve the establishment of an off-campus location or site if the proposed delivery of instructional services could reasonably occur through existing TCATs or other off-campus locations.
- 1.4B.5A2** **Service Area.** If a proposed off-campus location is in the service area of another institution, it is expected that TCATs will communicate with relevant institutions to coordinate off-campus offerings. TBR will resolve any service area conflicts between TCATs and community colleges prior to submission of the off-campus location request to the Commission.
- 1.4B.6A** Policy will be reviewed every three years unless changes in off-campus location requirements are warranted.

Sources: THEC Meetings: July 27, 2017.