

# ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF CERTIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR THE EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

This document outlines the major elements to be considered when reviewing or evaluating distance education. General guidance criteria have been provided so that it can be expanded or modified to meet the needs of individual certification programs. An evaluation form template developed to assist distance education course sponsors in providing information about their ability to meet the minimum criteria is included.

## Course Development

- ❑ Delivery format or media is identified.
- ❑ Intended audience is identified.
- ❑ Course is developed by instructional design experts.
- ❑ Course is developed based on needs analysis and is relevant for intended audience.
- ❑ Learning objectives are clearly stated.
- ❑ Content developed by qualified subject matter experts.
- ❑ No product or service endorsements.

## Beta Testing

- ❑ Course is beta tested (field tested) for content and length of time necessary to complete by individuals representing the intended audience.
- ❑ Beta-test results are evaluated and revisions implemented.

## Accreditation

- ❑ Average completion length is determined based on standard industry formulas\* and beta testing results.
- ❑ Credit/CEU\*\* is awarded by course sponsor or other organization responsible for evaluating training, and is based on national accrediting standards.

*\*Sample Accrediting Formula for Correspondence, On-Line, or CD-ROM based training programs:*

*1 page of text or for each screen viewed = 2 minutes of student time*

*1 practice problem or interactive exercise = 1 minute of student time*

*1 quiz/exam question = 1 minute of student time*

*NOTE: For video tape based training programs, substitute actual number of minutes of instructional video for text/screen based student time.*

*Results of beta-testing may be used in conjunction with a formula to determine average student time for accreditation purposes.*

*\*\*CEU is awarded based on guidelines established by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET).*

## Examination

- ❑ Criteria for successful course completion are identified.
- ❑ Question item bank is sufficient to randomly generate multiple exam versions (a minimum of three item bank questions for every one exam question generated is recommended).
- ❑ Quizzes or other forms of review and feedback are included in the course.
- ❑ A final comprehensive examination with a minimum score of 70% is required for successful completion.
- ❑ Opportunity to pass a final comprehensive examination is limited to three attempts per course enrollment.

## Administration

- ❑ Course sponsor can demonstrate knowledge and expertise in developing and delivering distance education.
  - Company biography
  - Organizational goals
  - History of activity in distance education field
- ❑ Instructor/developer credentials are available for review.
- ❑ Course curriculum and reference materials are available for review.
- ❑ Course sponsor can document an ongoing course feedback, evaluation and review process.
- ❑ Course sponsor has adequate technology and staff resources to administer the training and maintain student records (a minimum of seven years is recommended).
- ❑ A certificate of completion or attendance report documenting credit/CEU awarded is provided upon successful course completion.

## Technical Support

- ❑ Students have access to instructions regarding computer system hardware and software specifications.
- ❑ Students have access to instructions about program installation, use and assistance.
- ❑ Timely availability of both technical and content-related instructional support is provided.

## Security

- ❑ Course sponsor is able to document security aspects of all transactions:
  - Student identity/passwords
  - Verification of attendance
  - Examinations
  - Authenticity of certificates of completion
- ❑ Course sponsor has the ability to provide, upon request by a certifying authority, attendance, completion, or other student reports.

***NOTE: It is recommended that CD-ROM, Video, and Correspondence based distance education be administered and/or proctored by a supervisor or other on-site administrator assigned to monitor a students' progress throughout the course.***