

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT: WESTWOOD COLLEGE –
LOS ANGELES WILSHIRE – REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION
AS A PLACE OF BUSINESS**

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends authorization as a place of business (with no instruction in Colorado) for Westwood College–Los Angeles campus to operate an administrative office in Colorado pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act. The Act sets out the terms by which the Commission may authorize properly accredited private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, and seminaries and bible colleges to offer degrees or degree credits in Colorado. Persons or organizations that violate the provisions of the statute are subject to legal penalties. These institutions must receive authorization by the Commission prior to offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services. Pursuant to state law, a private college or university requires institutional accreditation on the basis of an on-site review in Colorado by a nationally recognized regional or national accrediting association.

Pursuant to CCHE policy, Section I, Part J, the definition of the Authorization as a Place of Business (with no instruction) permits institutions to operate a place of business within Colorado but does not allow instruction from that location. The institution is still subject to the deceptive trade practices provision (C.R.S. §23-2-104). Such an institution may be exempt from administrative procedures regarding accreditation and financial integrity.

Westwood College has a campus in Colorado located at 10249 Church Ranch Way, Westminster, which it has utilized to administer fully online programs. Westwood College recently made a decision to shift away from offering fully online programs and instead use its online platform to support ground campus students who desire online education as part of their studies. Westwood College Online has suspended marketing to students who are seeking solely an online education. The Los Angeles campus of Westwood College plans to utilize the Colorado Online building as its administrative office to support its distance education offerings.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Due to a structural change, Westwood College-Los Angeles is applying for authorization to operate a place of business, in the form of an administrative office, in Colorado. Under the new structure, Westwood College-Los Angeles will maintain approval from the State of California for 100% distance education programs and enter into consortium agreements with the other Westwood campuses. All the campuses share the same curriculum and the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) separately accredits each campus. The ACICS is a U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agency.

Westwood College-Los Angeles will provide distance education using the same technology platform and the same curriculum that Westwood College Online utilizes. The support functions of Westwood College Online are located at the Colorado location. By having the administrative office for Los Angeles located in Colorado, the campuses have the opportunity to retain the personnel and expertise during the transition.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Westwood College-Los Angeles submitted information regarding the activities that now occur in its administrative office in Colorado. Department staff determined that the activities that the institution describes for the Colorado office do not necessitate the need for full authorization. The proposed activities meet the definition for the authorization of a place of business.

Pursuant to Section I, Part J, of the approved CCHE policies, institutions awarded the place of business authorization must renew annually to ensure that the activities occurring from the Colorado site do not trigger the need for full authorization.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve authorization as a place of business for Westwood College – Los Angeles.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3 (1) (a) To operate in Colorado, a private college or university shall apply for and receive authorization from the Commission. A private college or university shall obtain a separate authorization for each campus, branch, or site that is separately accredited.