

SECTION IV

Statewide Extended Studies

1.00 Introduction

Statewide Extended Studies includes all on- and off-campus instruction offered through a continuing education or extended studies unit, instruction delivered away from a four-year institution's home campus in Colorado, and on-campus cash funded programs. Instruction delivered by Statewide Extended Studies is cash funded unless otherwise approved by the Commission. Any Regional Education Provider activity that falls into the category of cash-funded or off-campus is considered part of Statewide Extended Studies. Extended Studies programs shall conduct themselves in accordance with their governing board's policies, other CCHE policies, and state law in regard to (but not limited to) tuition, student fees, new program approval, record keeping, and academic credit for third party courses.

2.00 Statutory Authority

The Commission's Statewide Extended Studies policy is based on section 23-1-109 C.R.S. that states:

(1)...state-supported institutions of higher education may engage in instruction off the geographic boundaries of their campuses... (2) The commission shall define, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, the geographic and programmatic service areas of each state-supported institution of higher education... (3) ...instruction at two-year institutions, including the first two years of instruction at Adams state university and Colorado Mesa university, shall be funded throughout the institutions' commission-approved service areas on the same basis as on-campus instruction. (4) ...All instruction offered outside the geographic boundaries of the campus, including instruction delivered by television or other technological means, shall be a part of this program unless exempted by policy and action of the commission... [and] (5) The commission shall set policies, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, which define which courses and programs taught outside the geographic boundaries of the campus may be eligible for general fund support. The commission may include funding for those courses and programs in its systemwide funding recommendations to the general assembly.

3.00 Definitions

“Extended studies unit” refers to any department or division at a public four-year Colorado institution of higher education that offers extended studies instruction as defined in section 5.00 of this policy.

“Department” refers to Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE).

“Commission” refers to Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE).

“Space Available Program” is a program that allows institutions to enroll students in on-campus resident classes after regular registration when institutional class enrollments have been met but when space for additional enrollment remains. Students enrolling in Space Available Programs are not FTE-generating resident students.

4.00 Duties of Designated Officers and Coordination with Colorado Department of Higher Education

4.1 Designated Officer

To ensure effective coordination and communication among the various programs offered by the Extended Studies units, each higher education institution shall designate an administrative officer as the primary liaison to the Department. All institutions shall ensure that the designated officer is notified of all instruction that falls under Extended Studies. The designated officers shall guarantee Extended Studies units’ instruction has comparable quality and accessibility as regularly offered main campus instruction.

4.2 Required Registration and Record Keeping

The designated officer shall ensure that all persons who participate in instruction offered by an extended studies unit shall be registered and shall pay all required tuition and fees. Records of all students registered for extended studies instruction must be on file in accordance with the sponsoring institution’s policies.

4.3 Student Fees

While only an institution’s governing board is authorized to set student fees, it has been Extended Studies historical practice to charge fees only for services and resources from which the Extended Studies student can benefit. Student activity, athletic, or health services are examples of fees that have not been charged to Extended Studies students historically.

4.4 Academic Credit for Third Party Courses

Academic credit for third party course offerings shall be consistent in quality with all other institutional offerings.

5.00 The Four Components of Statewide Extended Studies

5.1 Extended Studies Instruction

Extended Studies instruction includes credit and noncredit cash-funded instruction, including instruction delivered at an off-campus physical location, cash-funded instruction that is delivered by an institution's Extended Studies unit to an audience on the sponsoring institution's campus, including space available programs and non-credit instruction. The following types of programs and courses are exempt from the Extended Studies policy:

- Internships, cooperative education experiences, and student teaching;
- Class excursions of a temporary nature which are provided to supplement the institution's regular curriculum and are offered solely for the benefit of regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students of the sponsoring institution; and
- Credit courses that are part of the regular curriculum that cannot be taught without specific equipment or instructional material and that are available only at an off-campus site or field experience.
- Concurrent Enrollment courses pursuant to Title 22, Article 35, Colorado Revised Statutes.

5.2 Off-Campus State-Funded Instruction

Graduate level off-campus programs may be eligible for state funding through the normal fee-for-service budgeting process per C.R.S. §23-5-130(2). College Opportunity Fund (COF) eligibility for off-campus undergraduate programs may be approved by the Commission per C.R.S. §23-1-109(5) and §23-18-202(5)(d)(I)(f). Up to one-half of one percent of the total estimated state eligible credit hours will be allocated to off-campus programs.

5.2.1 Requesting Approval for a New Program

Programs approved to collect COF stipends must adhere to COF Guidelines. Department staff will collect proposals from Extended Studies units and select programs to recommend to the Commission for approval in consultation with the designated officers. The Department will recommend Commission approval only for programs that result in the completion of a degree or other credential, such as an educator licensure sequence.

The proposal for a new COF-eligible program must contain the following elements:

- A brief description of the program;
- The location of instruction;
- Amount of COF FTE requested;
- Amount of COF eligible FTE used in the prior fiscal year by the institution's Extended Studies unit (if any);
- Statement that the program has been approved for delivery in accordance with CCHE policy Section I, Part V: Policy and Procedures for the Approval of New Academic Programs in Public Institutions of Higher Education in Colorado Operating under a Performance Contract;
- Statement of how the program will help meet the State of Colorado's workforce development needs;
- Extent to which the program is directed at underserved populations;
- Justification of any duplication of a similar program offered by another institution in the same geographic area;
- Extent to which program addresses space constraints on the main campus; and
- Institutional approval for requested state funding.

5.2.2 Requesting Ongoing Approval for Continuing Programs

Requests for ongoing approval of programs previously approved should include the name of the program, the location, and the amount of COF-eligible FTE requested. If the amount of FTE requested is higher than the original approved amount, the higher amount should be justified.

Proposals for new COF eligible programs and requests to continue previously approved programs must be received by March 1st for consideration of funding in the following academic year. The Department will review proposals in consultation with designated officers and make a recommendation to the Commission within thirty days of the submission deadline.

5.3 Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Instruction

The Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Instruction component of Statewide Extended Studies is authorized by C.R.S. §23-5-116 and includes all instruction that takes place outside of the state of Colorado, including that offered outside of the country, with the following exceptions:

- Out-of-state class excursions (field trips) that are scheduled parts of regular classes, including those that are state-funded courses or cash-funded courses;
- Correspondence courses and instruction delivered at a distance by any means;
- Internships, cooperative education experiences arranged for sites outside of Colorado that are offered to regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students; and

- Institution-sponsored (faculty led) state funded study-abroad courses that are administered on-campus and offered primarily for the benefit of regularly enrolled degree-seeking students.

5.4 Cash Funded Instruction Delivered at a Distance

Instruction that is delivered at a distance (not in a physical location) on a cash funded basis, by any means, will be considered Extended Studies instruction.

6.00 Regional Education Provider (REP)

As regional education providers, Adams State University, Fort Lewis College, Colorado Mesa University and Western State Colorado University may meet regional needs through extension of existing programs, per C.R.S. §23-1-127(2)(a) and 23-52-101(2)(a).

Each regional education provider is encouraged to seek the advice of stakeholders from its region. Each regional education provider shall develop a plan to assess the undergraduate and graduate and other educational needs of its service area.

Each regional provider will develop a public information strategy that effectively communicates within the designated region the availability of increased access to college programs. Minimally, institutions should indicate REP programs in their class schedules and should include REP information, where appropriate, in its publications. If an institution feels that its statutory role and mission is being constrained by the academic programs developed by a regional education provider, the institution may request a review by the commission.

6.1 Sustainable Funding Options

Regional education providers need to consider the full range of funding options, recognizing that the primary goal is to provide affordable educational opportunities while also recovering expenses associated with the delivery of the program and to be able to assure students that if they begin a program that they will be able to complete the program within a reasonable period of time. The regional education provider may use three available options to sustain its proposed programs:

1. The regional education provider may offer COF eligible courses in any of its approved programs, certificates of completion or discrete courses offered to matriculated students within their defined geographical region.
2. The regional education provider may offer programs on a cash-funded basis, establishing tuition levels in accordance with its governing board's policies.
3. If a regional education provider invites another state supported institution to deliver an academic program within its region, the guest institution may offer COF eligible courses.

6.2 Determining Regional Education Provider Geographical Boundaries

Regional education providers and the other appropriate public higher education institutions in collaboration with the Commission will define an appropriate geographical region to be served (Appendix N). It is understood that the geographical area defined for a regional provider will not supplant the service area for two-year colleges and postsecondary schools offering vocational programs. To avoid program duplication and to maximize access, regional providers will work collaboratively with the two-year institutions whose service areas overlap the geographical boundaries of the regional provider. Subject to Commission approval, four-year institutions with a statewide mission shall not be precluded from offering COF eligible programs in any service area, so long as the provider institution works collaboratively with the appropriate REP. Similarly, the designation of regional education provider does not authorize an institution to restrict another public institution from offering a Commission approved program on a cash-funded basis or a Commission approved off-campus state-funded program, but the offering institutions shall notify the regional education provider in a timely manner as specified below.

6.02.01 Framework for Geographical Boundaries

The four public institutions designated to be regional educational providers (Adams State University, Fort Lewis College, Colorado Mesa University and Western State Colorado University) will meet with commission staff to suggest the boundaries for their respective geographical regions. The Commission in conjunction with appropriate public higher education institutions will determine the geographical regions by considering the regional origin of institutional enrollments; political and economic regions as defined by existing governmental entities; “common sense” boundaries that reflect tradition, geography, and distance; and the current capacity and past performance of institutions to serve off-campus constituents in a given area. The purpose of these boundaries is threefold: to assign primary responsibility to a particular REP to survey the educational needs of an area and, where feasible, to meet those needs through its own programs or with the programs of other appropriate public institutions; to eliminate unnecessary educational duplication; and to assist the interested public in identifying which REP it should approach to communicate its educational needs or concerns.

The Commission, working collaboratively with the REPs, may, where prudent, permit some flexibility and overlap in boundaries to enhance the likelihood that the educational needs of Colorado citizens are met.

In addition, the delineation of boundaries does not necessarily “close” the region to another public institution that wishes to offer a program on a cash-funded basis, or a Commission approved off-campus state-funded program. A public institution that exercises that cash-funded option will be required to notify the Commission. The Commission shall resolve disputes over boundaries and conflicts resulting from cash-funded initiatives.

6.3 Brokering Programs

When the regional education provider does not offer the desired or needed four-year or advanced degree, the regional provider shall broker with another Colorado public or in-state accredited private institution to provide the program. The most effective delivery method (i.e., site based, web-based) may be used to accommodate student need.

When the regional provider determines that a two-year or less advanced program is needed or desired, the regional provider shall direct that request to a community college within its defined region, an area vocational school or to the Colorado Community College System. If it is not possible to meet the need, then the regional provider shall consult with department staff to determine how to meet the need.

7.1 Annual Report

The Department may collect data on an as needed basis. At a minimum, each extended studies unit shall provide an annual report to the department that contains:

- An Out-of-State and Out-of-Country report which is a description of all courses offered outside the boundaries of the state of Colorado, including a statement of need for the instruction and confirmation that no state funds were used in connection with the out-of-state courses, as identified in section 5.03 of this policy [per C.R.S. §23-5-116(6)]; and
- Enrollment in non-credit bearing coursework and other educational activities that is not already reported in the enrollment file in SURDS.
- The financial report it generates for its own institution or a comparable report that has been approved by the institution's chief financial officer.

HISTORY: CCHE Agenda Item II, M – September 9, 2012; CCHE Agenda Item III, B – June 7, 2012; CCHE Agenda Item II, A – April 3, 2020