



DISTANCE EDUCATION ACCREDITING COMMISSION

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

AUGUST 30, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

In the course of both a meeting in June 2019 and a conference call in August 2019, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission considered the written comments pertaining to changes proposed to the *DEAC Accreditation Handbook* it received between February 25, 2019 and April 15, 2019. The comments were thoughtful and detailed, providing helpful insights into the process of review as well as offering practical considerations for implementation. Based upon the feedback it received during the comment period, and in coordination with DEAC's standards committee, the Commission voted to adopt certain changes to Part II – Policies and Procedures and to Part III – Accreditation Standards, *DEAC Accreditation Handbook*. The requirements set forth in Part II and Part III are effective as of the date of this notice, August 30, 2019. The Commission will require full compliance with these requirements by January 1, 2020. The revised *DEAC Accreditation Handbook*, inclusive of these changes, is now available on the DEAC website at www.deac.org. DEAC staff are working to update all of the applications, guidelines and reporting forms by January 1, 2020. If you have questions regarding these documents, please contact DEAC staff.

Some of the changes adopted by the Commission involved minor revisions or rephrasing for clarification purposes, while other changes were more substantive. Below is a list of the policies and standards that were subject to revisions and, following the comment period, were approved by the Commission. Please consult the *DEAC Accreditation Handbook* to review these policies and standards.

Part II Policies and Procedures

Policy I.C – Eligibility Requirements

Part III Accreditation Standards

Standards II.A and II.B – Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning

Standard VI.C.3 – Faculty Qualifications for Occupational/Technical Associates Degree

Standard VI.C.5 – Faculty Qualification Equivalency

Standard VIII.F – Transfer Credits for Undergraduate Degrees

Standard IX.B.1 – Student Notification of Cancellation

With respect to other standards considered for review during this comment period, the submissions provided in response to the February 25, 2019 Call for Comment raised important and appropriate questions. Some of the comments recommended less prescriptive approaches to the timing of proctored examinations and advertising content via social media. Other comments suggested that the Commission consider alternative ways of determining whether library and learning materials are appropriately sourced and curated. Still more comments advised the Commission to consider standards for university nomenclature that more closely align with

institution mission and academic rigor. The Commission considered all of these comments, received feedback from the standards committee, and drafted additional changes that were finalized during a conference call held on August 16, 2019. The Commission is now issuing another Call for Comment on these proposed changes beginning on August 30, 2019 and continuing through October 15, 2019. Please review the Call for Comment document now available on DEAC's website at www.deac.org on the [Documents Out for Public Comment](#) landing page. Provide any written comments via email to leah.matthews@deac.org with "DEAC Call for Comment Feedback" in the subject line of your email by October 15, 2019. The standards that are the subject of this additional comment period are the following:

Part III Accreditation Standards

Standard III.G – Educational Media and Learning Resources

Standard III.I.2 – Student Integrity and Academic Honesty, Degree Programs (proctored exams)

Standard VII.A – Advertising and Promotion (for social media)

Standard VII.B – Institution and Course Accredited Status (college and university nomenclature)

The standards committee is planning its agenda and presentation for the Accreditation Workshop scheduled for October 7-8, 2019 in Chicago, Illinois. The committee is continuing to review procedures for related new program applications. It is also examining the consistency of DEAC's use of first professional degree and professional doctoral degree terminology across all procedures and standards. The Commission asked the committee to undertake a study of best practices in accreditation for transfer credit acceptance into master's degree programs (Standard VIII.F). The committee welcomes your recommendations. Please be in touch with Jessica Park, chair of the standards committee via email at jpark@alu.edu.

Lastly, in accordance with new accountability standards implemented by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in its 2019 Recognition Policy, DEAC has launched a revised online Directory of Accredited Institutions that now includes an expanded profile of each institution's accreditation status. Visit www.deac.org and the [Directory of Accredited Institutions](#) landing page to view this new format and information.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah K. Matthews". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leah K. Matthews

Executive Director

Distance Education Accrediting Commission