



State Authorization Addressing Federal Online/Distance Education Requirements

The Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA) has statutory authority (Title 37, Chapter 101, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended) and duty to approve all colleges and universities or other entities that offer one or more postsecondary academic degrees and are domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the State of Mississippi.

All postsecondary educational institutions domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the State of Mississippi must receive MCCA authorization prior to offering postsecondary instruction in the State. Examples of triggers for “otherwise located” include, but are not limited to:

1. The institution maintains a telephone number with a Mississippi area code;
2. The institution maintains a postal address (either physical or PO Box) with a Mississippi zip code;
3. The institution maintains an Internet URL that originates in Mississippi or utilizes an ISP that is based in Mississippi;
4. The institution advertises that a future institution will be domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the State.

In the event a question arises as to whether an institution falls within the “otherwise located” category, the institution must contact MCCA and request a determination regarding same. Final decisions related to what constitutes “otherwise located” will be made by the Commission.

Institutions Engaging in NO Activities

Institutions are asked to self-assess as to whether the programming they offer entails any one or more activities that trigger presence.

Institutions Engaging in NO Activities

Institutions that engage in NO activities that trigger presence should address a letter to MCCA that states the following:

“Name of Institution located at Legal Mailing Address has reviewed the conditions which would cause it to be required by the State of Mississippi’s Commission on College Accreditation to be authorized. Resultant from this review, Name of Institution stipulates that it engages in none of the listed activities.”

The body of the letter should indicate the name and contact information for the individual to whom any return information should be directed. Also include documentation that the institution is operating lawfully in its home state, documentation of the institution's accreditation status and the institution's process for resolution of student complaints. If the institution will have experiential learning placements in Mississippi, complete and submit the Notification of Location in Mississippi forms.

The letter must be written on institutional letterhead stationery, signed by either the institution's president or legal counsel, notarized, and mailed to:

Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Having received and reviewed this letter, MCCA will return to the institution (by name) a statement indicating that no further action is needed by the institution to provide online programming to Mississippi residents under the procedures in effect as of the date of issuance of the statement. The statement will be in effect from the date of issuance or until the institution engages in any activity which would cause an authorization to be required, whichever occurs first.

Institutions Engaging in ONE or MORE Activities

Institutions that engage in activities that trigger presence should access the MCCA website (<http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/>) for information about submitting an application for authorization, and should inform MCCA in writing at the address listed above that such an application is forthcoming. Any institution required to apply must cease and desist further enrolling of any Mississippi residents as students or any student located in Mississippi while receiving instruction from the institution until authorization is issued.

Further Questions

Questions pertaining to the content of this document should be directed to Menia Dykes at mdykes@mississippi.edu or 601.432.6372.