

Date: October 14, 2020

To: Chief Executive Officers, Accreditation Liaison Officers, and Other Interested Parties

From: Stephanie Droker, Ed.D.

Subject: RESPONSE REQUIRED: ACCJC Deadline for Spring 2021 Distance Education Program Transitions due to COVID-19

ACCJC Commissioners and staff continue to be inspired by the diligent work of staff, faculty, administrators, and students in the face of COVID-19 related challenges. We would also like to recognize and thank each institution for the timely and thoughtful responses to the request for Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 distance and correspondence education notifications.

As each member institution continues to adapt and respond to public health guidelines, it is clear that many will need to continue to provide distance and correspondence education options for students through the Spring 2021 term. To that end, ACCJC requests written notifications from member institutions utilizing these modalities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These notifications must be provided by **December 1, 2020**.

ACCJC has identified three categories of institutions based on previous distance and correspondence education approval. Below are instructions for each category.

Institutions Approved by ACCJC to Offer Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Colleges that have received a substantive change approval to offer distance and correspondence education must notify ACCJC of all programs provided through these modalities for Spring 2021. Notification can be in the form of an email with an attached list of programs.

Institutions Not Approved by ACCJC to Offer Distance Education

Institutions that have not previously received a substantive change approval from ACCJC to offer distance education and plan to do so in Spring 2021 in response to the pandemic must provide this same list of programs as mentioned above. Colleges without existing DE approval should also provide additional narrative describing how regular and effective interaction between instructors and students will be demonstrated, how the institution will ensure access to comparable student learning and support programs, and how the institution has developed the technological infrastructure to support online learning.

Institutions Not Approved by ACCJC to Offer Correspondence Education

Institutions that have not previously received a substantive change approval from ACCJC to offer correspondence education and plan to do so in Spring 2021 in response to the pandemic must

provide the list of programs, as well as supplemental narrative describing how the institution will ensure access to comparable student learning and support programs. Additionally, colleges should provide documentation as to how the institution will authenticate that the student who enrolled in the course is the same student who is completing the course.

If after the Spring 2021 term, a college wishes to continue to offer one or more programs at 50% or more distance education and/or correspondence modality, the institution must complete the ACCJC Substantive Change process as outlined in our [Substantive Change Policy](#).

Other Adaptations

ACCJC requests that any institution limiting face-to-face instruction in Spring 2021 in response to the pandemic, but not moving to distance or correspondence education modalities, write a letter describing how instruction will continue in relation to the guidelines put forth by public health officials in your county, state, or territory. Please note, any institution needing to shorten the academic calendar in response to the pandemic is required to receive approval from ACCJC and the U.S. Department of Education.

Thank you again for your flexibility and continued attention to these notifications. The mission of community and junior colleges has never been more important, and your work is deeply appreciated. Should you have any questions about this notification process or any other accreditation issues, please feel free to contact your ACCJC staff liaison.

Accreditation Liaison Officers should send their institution's notification and list of programs via email to substantivechange@accjc.org no later than December 1, 2020.