



DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING SCHOOL PLAN REPORT

Officials of the postsecondary institution seeking certification to operate in Virginia must prepare and submit a School Plan report with the certification application package. The plan must provide in-depth information about the school by giving attention to the following topics:

1. Institution Objectives
2. Organization and Governance
3. Academic Programs
4. Degree Requirements
5. Admission Requirements
6. Administration
7. Faculty
8. Student Services
9. Library and Learning Resources
10. Physical Facilities
11. Financial Resources
12. Market Analysis

Other areas to be addressed in the school plan, but not included in the topical listing, should be addressed by school officials in an effort to give as clear a picture as possible of the school's anticipated operation.

Institutional Objectives

1. The institution has defined its educational mission and general purposes or goals, and has included within its "statements of purpose" such uniqueness of programming and educational philosophy as may be inherent in the proposed program offerings.
2. The institution's "statement of purpose" is readily identifiable through its course and program offerings.

Organization and Governance

1. The institution has a current written document detailing administrative responsibilities of the governing board, the chief operating officer(s), the faculty, and the students (if students participate in institutional governance).
2. The institution has an organization chart showing lines of authority and the relationship among component units and personnel.

Academic Programs

1. The educational programs and curriculum reflects the philosophy, purposes, and objectives of the institution. The courses of study conform to state, federal, trade, or manufacturing standards of training for the occupational fields in which such standards have been established or conforms to recognized training practices in those fields.
2. The institution has a written policy describing its systems for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, and the criteria for academic probation, and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.
3. The institution has written procedures for the evaluation of the quality of the programs of instruction and an explanation of the procedures for assessing the extent to which the educational goals are being achieved. The procedures should include documented use of the results of these evaluations to improve the program offerings of the institution.
4. The institution's programs of study consist of planned educational experiences to meet the stated objectives and include attention to the prerequisites, required courses, and appropriate progression.

Degree Requirements

1. The institution awards certificates, diplomas, or degrees, only upon successful completion of the courses or programs of study. Requirements for the successful completion of the certificate, diploma, or degree are specified in writing.
2. For degree granting institutions, the semester or quarter hour requirements for degree completion meet the following minimums:
 - a) Associate Degree – An Associate degree identified as an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, or Associate of Occupational Science requires a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. General education courses must compose of 15% of the total credit hours required for the Associate of Occupational Science degree. General education courses must compose of 25% of the total credit hours for the other Associate degrees.
 - b) Baccalaureate Degree – A degree requires a minimum of 120 semester or 180 quarter hours.
 - c) Master's Degree – A Master's degree shall require a minimum of 30 semester hours or 43 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate.
 - d) Doctoral Degree – A Doctoral degree shall require a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate in addition to the dissertation.
 - e) Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis for institutions using a non-traditional approach instead of semester hours to determine degree completion. Institution must justify and explain its reasoning for using a non-traditional approach.

Admission Requirements

1. The institution has a written policy defining the minimum requirements for admissions. If the institution is accredited, the policy should be consistent with criteria established by the appropriate regionally or nationally recognized accrediting agency for acceptance at the specific degree level or in to the specific degree program proposed by the institution.
2. The admission policies include attention to the standards for academic credit given for experience, and the criteria for transfer credit.
3. The institution has a written policy detailing the criteria and procedure to be followed in providing for a refund of tuition and fees that adheres to standard established by the Commonwealth of Virginia, if non-accredited, or the appropriate regionally or nationally recognized accrediting agency if accredited.

Administration

1. The school administrator is directly responsible for the operational management of the institution's academic affairs, student services, and business and administrative services.
2. The school administrator and any appointed assistants must have educational qualifications and work experience related to their areas of responsibility.
3. School maintains administrative staff in sufficient number and quality to assure:
 - a. Understanding of and identification with goals and purposes of the school and its programs.
 - b. Continuity and improvement of programs.
 - c. Effective operational management through sound business practices.
 - d. Adequate facilities and equipment to sustain competent instruction.
 - e. Adequate individual attention to students including the ability to provide reasonable support to students in academic guidance and placement assistance.

Faculty

1. Faculty members provide instruction in both on-campus and off-campus settings, possess academic, scholarly, and teaching qualifications prerequisite to their respective positions and teaching assignments.
2. The faculty is involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum for all degree programs to assure quality learning experiences are provided for all students.
3. The faculty participates in the governance of the institution and the academic programs as well as in short-term institutional planning activities.

Student Services

1. The institution has developed material describing services offered which would include, where appropriate but not be limited to, housing, counseling, placement services and extra curricular activities.
2. The institution provides for students a system of education, career, and personal advising.

Library and Learning Resources

1. The institution has written objectives for the library that are in accordance with the institution's purpose, the nature of the educational program and the projected enrollment and ensures that the students use the library and its resources as an integral part of their learning experience.
2. The institution's library contains an up-to-date collection of books, periodicals, newspapers, and other instructional materials which are readily accessible to the faculty and the students. Libraries may make instructional materials available through the utilization of network, remote access and other information technologies.
3. The library collection is sufficient in quality, level, diversity, quantity, and current to support and enrich the institution's offerings.
4. The library is staffed by professionally qualified individuals.
5. The institution has a program for continuous acquisition of library materials and for appropriate cataloging and maintenance of all library holdings.
6. A sufficient and consistent material and operational budget has been developed consistent with that of other institutions of comparable size and sufficient to meet the library needs of the institution.
7. The library is of sufficient size and design to accommodate the needs of the student body for work space and areas of listening or viewing various media materials to facilitate students study and learning.
8. If an outside library is to provide a major part of the library resources, the institution has developed a plan detailing the extent of dependence on the outside library including the nature and details of any agreements concerning availability and use by students.
9. All undergraduate programs require the use of information resources in addition to course texts and formal instruction.

Physical Facilities

1. The institution provides and maintains a physical plant with classrooms, instructional and resources facilities, and laboratories adequate for the size of the faculty and student body and adequate to support the education programs offered by the institution.
2. Physical facilities with respect to fire safety, hygiene, floor space, ventilation, heat, and light are conducive to health and safety, and conform to all governmental codes.
3. Facilities leased or rented, which house the administrative offices or instructional programs, are bound by contract or lease agreement between the institution and the owner of the facilities sufficient to assure reasonable continuity of the program for enrolled students. This contract or lease stipulates the terms, conditions of the lease, and has been officially executed by both parties. A copy of said contact or lease must be submitted with application for certification.

4. The institution should provide a plan, blueprint, diagram, or photos stating the square footage and showing the arrangement of classrooms and offices and other space in the structure and the number of individuals that each area can accommodate.

Financial Resources

The institution can document that it has the financial resources necessary to support its purposes, implement its program and maintain its continuity for a minimum of three years by completing the Projected Accounting Budget document provided in the certification package (an audited, reviewed, or compiled financial statement is preferred).

The institution must document evidence of long range financial planning and demonstrate a reasonable debt to equity ration.

Failure to accurately anticipate reasonable expenses or unrealistic revenue projections can result in denial of application.

Market Analysis

The institution can document evidence of the need for the program(s) of study in the Commonwealth of Virginia by identifying specific student, employer and state needs, and employment demand.

Student Needs. Will the program fill demonstrable student needs in the state? If so, what Virginia and/or non-Virginia market data indicate current unmet student demand for such curricula? If not, why does the institution anticipate student demand for the program? Provide an evaluation of the potential earnings of students who complete the program.

Employer Needs. Will the program fill demonstrable employer needs in the state? If so, what Virginia and/or non-Virginia market data indicate current unmet employer demand for graduates of such programs? If not, will the program fill demonstrable non-employment needs in the state?

State Needs. Will the program duplicate similar offerings in Virginia? If so, what are the needs (justifications) for the state to duplicate these efforts? Provide a list of public and private postsecondary institutions within a 25 mile radius of the location from which the school plans to offer instruction that offers the same or similar program(s) of study. Explain the unique characteristics of the program(s) it plans to offer and how it differs from existing programs.

Employment Demand. Provide evidence of employer demand for graduates, including current and future need for such graduates. Evidence of demand should include: (1) labor market information appropriate to the scope of the program (i.e., if the program is national in scope, provide national labor market data; if regional, then regional market data; if local, then local data); (2) statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor or Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Virginia Employment Commission to reflect future employment demand; (3) examples of recent position announcements from professional journals or other sources of information about jobs appropriate to the degree level. Employment advertisements must reflect information obtained within six months of submitting the proposal to SCHEV. If applicable, letters of support from prospective employers that include a statement of need for these graduates and potential employment opportunity.