



Approval and Reporting Guidelines for Off-Campus Academic Activities

Definition of “off-campus academic activities” under these guidelines:

Off-campus academic activities are instances in which UW-Madison courses or programs are offered in markets outside the UW-Madison campus in Madison such that they are intended to attract students who are located in the off-site market. Off-campus academic activities are those for which UW-Madison instructors deliver UW-Madison curricula to students who are not expected to come to Madison for instruction.

Program site: site at which 50% or more of a UW-Madison degree program is offered at an off-campus location.

Course location: site at which UW-Madison for-credit courses are offered and taught by UW-Madison faculty or staff.

These guidelines cover off-campus academic activities that students take for credit and result in the conferring of a for-credit UW-Madison credential – degree, major, certificate or other formally documented credential. As such, these guidelines do not apply to non-credit activity.

Study-abroad, field trip courses, internships, externships, or practica are not considered off-campus academic activities under this policy because they involve students who are based in Madison and faculty who are based in Madison.

Distance education is considered an off-campus academic activity. Distance education programs are also required to have governance approval, but they are covered under different policy provisions.

Context

Like many universities, UW-Madison delivers some courses and programs at off-campus sites. Faculty are creative in identifying opportunities to extend the academic programs of the University to off-site locations and often ask questions about how to develop those opportunities. These guidelines are intended to support the planning and implementation of such programs, to ensure that they are equivalent in quality to the traditionally delivered UW-Madison campus-based programs; and to comply with federal regulations.

To the extent that the same goals can be achieved other ways, program faculty should make use of alternatives to off-campus program sites and course locations if possible. For example, credit transfer agreements, field trips, internship arrangements, and study

abroad are alternatives that may be built into programs to increase the international experience of students. These strategies do not carry the same external approval and reporting requirements as does the off-campus delivery of UW-Madison programs.

It is a *federal regulatory requirement* that off-campus delivery of academic courses and programs be reported to our regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The U.S. Department of Education relies on the information reported by universities to the HLC to assure compliance with the federal financial aid regulations. Students seeking federal financial aid for off-campus programs and courses trigger a compliance check from the Department of Education, and may trigger an audit. Compliance with these regulations protects the university's federal funding. UW System Administration policy also requires that such activity be reported to them for approval.

These policies apply to instances in which UW-Madison for-credit courses or programs are offered in markets to students who aren't located here in Madison. Off-campus academic activities are those for which UW-Madison instructors deliver UW-Madison curricula to students who are not expected to come to Madison for instruction.

In summary, off-campus academic activities that result in the conferring of a for-credit UW-Madison credential – degree, major, certificate or other formally documented credential – require UAPC review and approval for implementation and prior to notifying UW System Administration, the HLC and other agencies. Off-campus academic activities fall into two general categories:

Program site – a student can complete 50% or more of a degree or certificate program at this site.

Course location – site at which UW-Madison for-credit courses are offered and taught by UW-Madison faculty or staff. A student can take up to, but not including 50% of a degree or certificate program at this site.

Off-campus academic activities that are delivered outside the State of Wisconsin will also require the approval of the agencies that govern higher education in those out-of-state jurisdictions. Off-campus academic activities that are delivered outside of the United States require additional documentation and approval steps.

Study-abroad, field trip courses, internships, externships, and practica are *not* considered off-campus academic activities under this policy because they involve students who are based in Madison and are typical residential degree-seeking students most of the time.

Distance education is considered an off-campus academic activity. Distance education programs are also required to have governance approval, but they are covered under different policy provisions (<http://apa.wisc.edu/acadprogchg.html>).

Process

The main purpose of the governance approval process is to assure good communication among the University groups and offices that need to be aware of off-campus academic

activities, to assure that the programs are appropriately administered to support student success, and to comply with federal guidelines.

The program faculty and staff should prepare a short proposal that describes the off-campus academic program using the outline below.

The proposal is to be endorsed by the school/college faculty through the Academic Planning Council or according to established school/college practice. Subsequently, the proposal should be forwarded to the provost with a supporting cover memo from the dean. If the program is a graduate-level program, the dean of the Graduate School should also be copied. The Graduate Faculty Executive Committee will be asked to consider proposals that relate to graduate programs prior to consideration by the UAPC. Proposals will be considered by the UAPC. After a proposal has been endorsed by the UAPC and supported by the provost, it will be reported to the appropriate University offices and to the necessary agencies.

Additional approvals may be required by UW System Administration, the HLC, out-of-state agencies, or international agencies. The program faculty may need to prepare additional documentation to advance those approvals. The provost's office will assist program faculty and staff with the process for working through all necessary approval and reporting requirements for these other agencies.

The sponsoring dean will be asked to initiate a program review five years after implementation.

Format for Proposals

Program faculty should prepare a short proposal that covers the follow points.

1. Identify the sponsoring unit(s) and the key faculty and their roles.
2. Provide an overview of the proposed off-campus delivered program – describe the intended site and the relationship the site will have with the University. If a separate Memo of Understanding is under development, append it.
3. Describe the curriculum delivery and how delivery will be distributed between the UW Madison locale and the program site or course location. Specifically include a description of the fraction of the program requirements that are met by delivery at the remote site. It is especially important that reviewers can explicitly understand whether or not 50% of program requirements may be earned at the remote site.
4. Describe how this program contributes to the mission of the unit(s) offering it and to the University.
5. Describe the rationale for extending delivery of the program to additional sites. Include a discussion of the need for the program. Include a discussion of benefits

to the University and to other constituencies (students; a particular group, industry or sector that may benefit from the program; general public).

6. Is this intended to be a long-term, open-ended arrangement or is it for a specific period of time? Is there contingency plan in place if the program is more or less successful than anticipated?
7. Describe how student services will be provided to assure that the services are at the same standard as services provided to on-campus students (from admissions, through enrollment, curriculum, and graduation.) Describe what resources, if any, the program will require from other academic and support units.
8. Provide anticipated or projected student enrollment.
9. Describe the instructional environment, and discuss how the instructional quality will be equivalent to the experience of students on campus. Include information on how the goals of the program are evaluated and if the evaluation of the off-campus site will be the same or if additional assessment strategies will be implemented.
10. Discuss the financial provisions needed to support the additional administrative load costs associated with the off-campus program.
11. Discuss any impact the off-campus site will have on the on-campus delivered program. Are there adequate faculty and staff to support both sites?
12. Provide evidence that any public university in the vicinity of the off-campus site has been given the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Typically, such comment will be in the form of a letter from the chief academic officer.
13. Describe how tuition and fees will be handled. If tuition and fees will be handled in other than the standard manner, consult tuition policy and make sure that all approvals are in place.
14. Review the white paper prepared by the Office of Risk Management as it relates to off-campus academic classes (http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/risk_mgt/white_paper.html) and describe how risk management concerns have been addressed. See also the related Office of the Provost guidelines (appended).

APPENDICES

Higher Learning Commission Off-Campus Activity Definitions

- **Program Site**
 - students can complete 50% or more of a degree program
 - include degree completion programs
 - *DOES NOT* have a full range of administrative and student services staffed by institution's personnel
 - administrative and student services may be provided from the home campus
 - includes sites located in U.S. territories
 - *DOES NOT include study abroad*
- **Course Location**
 - students can complete up to, but not including, 50% of a degree program
 - includes locations for dual enrollment, if applicable
 - does not include non-credit courses
 - includes course locations in U.S. territories
 - *DOES NOT include study abroad*
- **In State** - Campus/Site/Course Location is in the institution's home state
- **Out of State** - Campus/Site/Course Location is outside of institution's home state
- **Out of USA** - Campus/Site/Course Location is outside of the 50 United States

UW-Madison Approved and Reported Off-Campus Academic Activities as of January 2008

1. BS-Nursing, Gunderson Lutheran Medical Center, LaCrosse WI
HLC Category: In State, Program Site
2. MA-Library and Information Studies, Prairie Area Library System, Illinois
HLC Category: Out of State, Course Location

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<http://www.provost.wisc.edu/memos/offcampusclasses.html>

February 25, 2005

### **Guidelines for Holding Classes and Related Educational Activities Off Campus**

Off-campus classes and related educational activities fall within several categories, including field trips, practicums, internships, service learning, data collection, and classes scheduled at other locations for pedagogical reasons. Classes should be held off campus only when there is clear educational benefit in doing so. For courses that normally are held entirely on campus, approval from the school or college dean or dean's delegate is required before holding a class session or related educational activity off campus. A number of issues must be considered when holding such classes or activities off campus. These include:

Insurance for damage or injury. The University's instructors are protected for negligent acts committed while in the course and scope of their actions in conducting classes, regardless of location. These actions may include teaching, selecting the location, or arranging transportation. However, insurance coverage related to the physical surroundings may differ for on- and off-campus classes. For classes on campus, if someone is injured as the result of the University's negligence in maintaining the grounds or buildings, the University is responsible for any resulting liability claims. However, if a class is held off campus, the owner of that facility is responsible for any building and grounds issues; e.g., a broken hand railing, slippery floor, etc. This includes the homeowner or landlord if a class is held at an instructor's residence, or the owner of a restaurant or other meeting location. Instructors should consult their insurance agent for clarification if they use their own homes. Owners of other types of meeting facilities (e.g., churches or restaurants) may request information about the University's insurance. Risk Management can provide this upon request to the Director.

Accessibility. The location must be accessible to any disabled members of the class.

Transportation. Transportation to the site must be available. Putting students in the position of having to ask for a personal ride from a friend or of using their own vehicle is not appropriate. Either public transportation should be available or the department should offer transportation arranged and funded by the department.

Food and beverages. Alcohol is not appropriate, and UW (Purchasing) catering policies apply to any food service paid for with University funds.

Worker's compensation. Instructors are covered by worker's compensation in the course and scope of their teaching activities. Worker's compensation normally covers work-related injuries regardless of location. However, for injuries that occur in one's home while a class is being conducted, there may be gray areas as to whether the injury is work-related or not, depending on the specific circumstances.

Questions regarding specific issues should be directed to the Worker's Compensation Office at Employee Compensation and Benefits Services. Questions regarding other aspects of this policy may be directed to the Risk Management Office.