

WAC 250-61-050 Definitions. The definitions set forth in this section are intended to supplement the definitions in chapter 28B.85 RCW and shall apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Accredited institution" means an institution that has been accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

(2) "Accrediting association" means a national or regional accrediting association that is recognized by the council and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

(3) "Act" means the Degree-Granting Institutions Act, chapter 28B.85 RCW.

(4) (a) "Administrative capability" means that both administrative services and educational instruction take place at an authorized location.

(b) "Additional site" means a site with administrative capability that is not currently authorized.

(5) "Adverse action" means a warning or other sanction issued by the institution's accrediting association, the United States Department of Education or a state regulatory entity; a judgment against an institution that may impact ongoing operations; or any action, decision, or finding that impacts the institution's financial solvency.

(6) "At-risk" means a designation made by the council based on an adverse action or other findings that indicate a heightened potential of closure or other negative impacts on students.

(7) "Authorization" means the authority to operate in Washington state as a degree-granting institution.

(a) "Standard authorization" means authorization granted to institutions seeking to operate in Washington, but does not include institutions seeking field placement authorization only.

(b) "Field placement authorization" means authorization granted to institutions seeking authorization solely to offer required field placements at locations in Washington as part of distance learning programs.

(8) "Council" means the student achievement council, a Washington state agency, as established under chapter 28B.77 RCW.

(9) "Credit" generally means the unit by which an institution measures its course work. The number of credits assigned to a course is generally defined by the number of hours per week in class and preparation and the number of weeks in a term. One credit is usually assigned for three hours of student work per week or its equivalent. The three hours of student work per week is usually comprised of a combination of one hour of lecture and two of homework or three hours of laboratory. Semester and quarter credits are the most common systems of measuring course work. A semester credit is generally based on at least a fifteen week calendar or 45 hours of student work. A quarter credit is generally based on at least a ten week calendar or 30 hours of student work.

(10) "Degree" means any designation, appellation, letters, or words including, but not limited to, "associate," "bachelor," "master," "doctor," or "fellow" which signify or imply satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study at the postsecondary level.

(a) "Associate degree" means a lower division undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours.

(b) "Bachelor's degree" or "baccalaureate degree" means an undergraduate degree that requires no fewer than 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours.

(c) "Master's degree" means a graduate degree that requires no fewer than 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.

(d) "Doctor's degree" or "doctorate" means a postgraduate degree that requires no fewer than 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.

(11) "Degree-granting institution" means an entity that offers educational credentials, instruction, or services prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.

(a) "College" means an institution which offers programs culminating with associate and/or baccalaureate degrees. In some instances, a college may also offer first professional degree programs and/or graduate programs culminating with master's degrees.

(b) "University" means a multiunit institution with varied educational roles including instruction, promotion of scholarship, preservation and discovery of knowledge, research and public service. Such institutions provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate studies, programs in professional fields, and may also provide programs leading to a doctorate.

(c) "Private vocational school" means a nonpublic entity that offers postsecondary programs designed to prepare individuals with the skills and training required for employment in a specific trade, occupation, or profession related to the educational program.

(12) "Distance learning" means a form of educational instruction other than classroom instruction to include, but not limited to, correspondence, video-conferencing, television, internet transmission, or other electronic communication.

(13) "Executive director" means the executive director of the council or the executive director's designee.

(14) "Faculty" means personnel who are appointed by the institution for purposes of teaching, research, mentoring, advisory roles and/or other activities relating to the development and delivery of the instructional programs of the institution.

(15) "False academic credential" means a document that signifies or implies satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic program of study beyond the secondary level issued by a person or entity that:

(a) Is not accredited by a council-recognized accrediting association or does not have the international equivalent to such accreditation; or

(b) Is not authorized by the council; or

(c) Has not been exempted or granted a waiver from the requirements of authorization by the council.

Additionally, it can mean a credential falsely claimed to have been earned from an institution accredited by a council-recognized accrediting association; authorized by the council; or that has been exempted or granted a waiver by the council.

(16) "Field placement" means a student learning experience comprised primarily of the practical application of previously studied theories and skills. Examples include, but are not limited to, clinicals, student teaching, and practica.

(17) "Operate" means, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Offering courses for academic credit at any Washington location or via distance learning from a Washington location.

(b) Granting or offering to grant degrees in Washington for credit obtained within or outside the state.

(c) Maintaining or advertising a Washington location, mailing address, or telecommunications number for any purpose other than contact with the institution's former students for any legitimate purpose related to their previous attendance.

(d) Maintaining or advertising an application for enrollment or a mechanism to collect prospective student data in any advertisement, publication, website, software application, or other media, if the institution maintains a Washington location.

(e) Advertising, promoting, publicizing, soliciting or recruiting for the institution or its offerings that is targeted specifically at Washington citizens, excluding multi-institutional college fairs.

(18) "Oversight entity" includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Any federal or state entity that provides financial aid to students of the institution or approves the institution for participation in a financial aid program;

(b) Any state or federal attorney general's office or department of justice;

(c) Any regulator that approves the operation of a postsecondary degree-granting institution;

(d) The federal consumer financial protection bureau or the federal securities and exchange commission; and

(e) Any accrediting agency.

(19)(a) "Program of study" means any course or grouping of courses prerequisite to or indicative of a degree.

(b) "Additional program" means a degree program that:

(i) Differs in title and curriculum from any currently authorized program; or

(ii) Is comprised of a curriculum that is twenty-five percent or more different in content than any currently authorized program.

(20) "Resident-based instruction" means a course or series of courses or degree programs which are taught by faculty at a specific location where students physically attend the course or program.

(21) "State authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA)" means an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA is overseen by a national council and is administered by four regional education compacts.

(22) "Student loan product" means a loan or income share agreement solely for personal use to finance postsecondary education. A student loan product includes a loan made to refinance a student loan product. A student loan product does not include a payment plan or accounts receivable during the time of a student's enrollment in the degree-granting institution.

(23) "Suspend" means that, due to deficiencies, the council interrupts for a stated time the institution's authority to recruit and enroll new students, but it may continue serving currently enrolled students for the remainder of the term. Authorization or exemption may be reinstated, provided the deficiencies have been resolved to the satisfaction of the council.

(24) "Withdraw" means that, due to significant deficiencies or failure to meet the criteria of authorization or exemption, the council has withdrawn the authorization or exemption granted to an institution. Upon withdrawal, the institution must cease all degree-granting operations immediately.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.85.020. WSR 20-07-008, § 250-61-050, filed 3/5/20, effective 4/5/20. Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.120 and 28B.85.020. WSR 19-03-020, § 250-61-050, filed 1/4/19, effective 2/4/19; WSR 17-09-041, § 250-61-050, filed 4/14/17, effective 5/15/17; WSR 15-02-021, § 250-61-050, filed 12/30/14, effective 1/30/15; WSR 12-09-037, § 250-61-050, filed 4/11/12, effective 5/12/12; WSR 09-20-033, § 250-61-050, filed 9/30/09, effective 10/31/09; WSR 09-02-008, § 250-61-050, filed 12/29/08, effective 1/29/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.80.370. WSR 95-01-003, § 250-61-050, filed 12/8/94, effective 1/8/95; WSR 86-24-003 (Order 7/86, Resolution No. 87-34), § 250-61-050, filed 11/20/86.]