



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Office of Academic Policy and Authorization

Office of Degree Authorization

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www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

GUIDANCE FOR OREGON BASED DEGREE GRANTING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

MARCH 21 – APRIL 28 2020

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-09

Governor Kate Brown's [Executive Order 20-09](#) was issued March 18, 2020 and applies to all public and private degree granting institutions within the state of Oregon. Schools regulated by HECC ODA, statutorily HECC-exempt, and religiously-exempt schools **are not exempt** from this Order. The mandates include:

- Move all instruction online from March 21, 2020 through April 28, 2020 (paragraph 2). Exceptions to this Order are as follows:
 - clinical, laboratory, or other in-person instruction associated with courses required for the completion of a health care-related certificate, license, or degree, or other certificates, licenses, or degrees that are essential to emergency response and resiliency efforts, where no remote or online alternative is practicable
- Limit on-campus operations only to critical functions [during the effective period] and shall employ social distancing measures, consistent with guidance from the Oregon Health Authority, for all on-campus employees and residents. Critical functions may include, but are not limited to, the operation of dormitories, dining services, general administrative services, safety programs, childcare centers, research, medical facilities, and other activities critical to emergency response and resiliency efforts.

In an effort to provide timely guidance and support during the COVID-19 outbreak, HECC Office of Degree Authorization is presenting this updated advice and guidance to private colleges and universities (Schools), which supersedes that issued on March 13, 2020. This guidance is especially directed toward fields that have high-contact instruction and practice. This guidance is effective immediately. Please advise HECC ODA of any action taken.

- All schools may choose to close or suspend all educational operations for the duration of the Order, March 21-April 28, 2020. Schools may also move all instruction online for the duration of the Order without specific approval from this agency. (Note: moving instruction online is not "closing" or "suspending operations").
- Guidance for high-contact professions and programs such as Nursing
 - Move theory instruction online as much as possible. Limit in person instruction consistent with social distancing guidelines. Re-sequence topics so that online/theory can be done before any in person practical operations.
- Student Guidance
 - Students should not be required to attend in person high-contact/high-risk class procedures. Students shall be given the presumptive right to refuse to participate with in-person, high-contact instruction without any penalties and should be allowed to make up any missed work or granted a possible leave of absence during this time.
 - We strongly encourage the Schools to work with all students to ensure the safety for the students, school, and the general public.

Summary and General Guidance

- Oregon private colleges and universities **are not** exempt from the Governor's Executive Order. This guidance is meant to supersede HECC ODA guidance issued on March 13, 2020. Oregon private colleges are strongly urged to follow the Executive Order issued March 18, 2020 to the best of their ability.
- Follow the guidance you receive from your accreditor, US Department of Education, Oregon Health Authority, and other regulatory agencies as applicable.
- HECC ODA will carry out our regulatory functions as normally as possible and within the Governor's guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, sending out and processing authorization renewals, faculty and administrator approvals, responding to schools and students, etc. **Should your authorization require renewal during COVID-19 interruptions and you need to request a delay or extension of fee payment, HECC ODA will grant those on a case by case basis. Schools may also request division of fees into as many as three installments.** Again, this will be granted on request on a case by case basis.
- Those programs that are high-risk or high-contact are strongly urged to cease all in person teaching and procedures that require person to person contact.

If you need to evaluate whether to continue to teach in person, we suggest the following test, adapted from *HECC Guidance for Face-to-Face Program Offerings at Colleges and Universities during the COVID-19 Outbreak*:

If you cannot answer "yes" to the questions below, the program should not be offered face to face.

1. Are skilled workers in the field essential to maintaining the health and safety of Oregonians? In addition to the provision of direct health services, are skilled workers in this field providing direct support to individual Oregonians or businesses to help people meet essential needs such as food, shelter, access to medical or other critical supplies?
2. Is the program in a high demand field with an immediate or projected need in your region for graduates between today and July 31, 2020? Have you identified and documented the need with support letters from employers, local or state workforce boards, guidance from state agencies, other?¹
3. Many testing centers are closed. Are the certification exams required to enter employment available for students?
4. If you are enrolling new students, can you ensure they will complete their credential by July 31, 2020?
5. Are you able to provide face-to-face training that conforms to guidelines from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) around mitigation and social distancing?

The safety of students and instructors and reduction of COVID-19 transmission are of paramount importance. No program should operate that cannot ensure the safety of students and instructors.

Please continue to monitor the [HECC COVID-19 web site](#) for further updates and information.

Thank you for continuing to offer education to Oregonians.

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¹ The Oregon Employment Department is identifying in-demand jobs and that list will be made available as soon as possible and updated as new information is available.