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## **MACTE Distance Education Policy**

MACTE requires that on-site and distance education certification courses are evaluated using the same standards and competencies, and that they achieve the same outcomes.

### **Definition**

Distance education in the context of Montessori teacher education certification courses:

1. **Distance Education:** Education in which instruction is delivered to students who are separated from the instructor in a regular and substantive way, either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies used may include the Internet, audio-conferencing, one-way or two-way transmissions, or videos (if used in conjunction with any of the other listed technologies).
2. **Distance Education Institution or Program:** An institution or program, which offers the majority of its required certification courses via distance. (at least 40 clock hours of instruction) (see distance education definition above).
3. **Distance Education Certification Course:** A Montessori teacher education certification course that a student can complete primarily at a distance from the site at which the accredited institution is located.
4. **Distance Education Course Component:** A single academic course, consisting of at least 40 clock hours of instruction.
5. MACTE requires submission of a **Substantive Change in Course Delivery application** when more than two components of the certification course are offered via distance.
6. The increasing use of technology as an instructional strategy in on-site classroom instruction has blurred the distinction between on-site instruction and distance education. Hybrid or web-enhanced strategies, which combine the use of technologically delivered instruction with face-to-face interaction with faculty and other students in a classroom at the instructional site, are becoming more and more common. **Institutions are not required to apply to MACTE for approval** of hybrid or web-enhanced certification courses if the course requires regular face-to-face interaction at the instructional site throughout the term.
7. **Residency Requirement:** For all levels, at least 120 academic clock hours of instruction must be offered while the students are in residence at the institution. The on-site evaluation visit must be conducted during the residential phase of the certification course

## Review of Distance Education Certification Courses

1. Institutions must submit a **Substantive Change in Course Delivery** application when one or two components of a certification course are offered via distance.
2. An institution offering more than two course components via distance must complete a full Application/Self-Study. The on-site evaluation visit must occur during the residency phase of instruction. The institution must submit documentation of how it complies with the guidelines below:
  - a. Budgets and policy statements must reflect a commitment to the students for whom the distance education certification course is designed. There must be evidence that the course is sustainable.
  - b. The institution must ensure that students have access to adequate equipment to effectively participate in distance education.
  - c. Appropriate technical assistance must be available to students and faculty members.
  - d. Students enrolled in the distance education certification course must have access to all components, technical and pedagogical, necessary to complete the course successfully.
  - e. The institution must have effective means to monitor and evaluate the work of faculty who educate and supervise the work of distance education students.
  - f. The importance of appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students must be reflected in the design of the certification course.
  - g. Faculty members must have training appropriate to their respective roles in the distance education certification course.
  - h. The distance education certification course must facilitate development of a sense of community among the students and faculty.
  - i. The institution must have a plan for comprehensive, ongoing evaluation of the distance education certification course, and must provide documentation regarding the evaluation process. When distance education is offered, the same course content must be covered whether it is delivered in a distance education format or on the campus.
  - j. Overall effectiveness of the distance education certification course must be determined by measures such as the degree to which the course meets its intended outcomes. Program outcomes must be comparable to those of on-site certification courses, as must student and faculty satisfaction, graduation rates, and employment rates.
  - k. The institution must ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who participates in and completes the course, and receives the academic credit.

## **MACTE Staff and Board Action**

1. MACTE staff will determine whether a distance education application is substantive enough to warrant Board action, and notify the institution of the decision.
2. The MACTE Board will consider granting accreditation to an applicant distance education certification course after review of the completed application and verification by the on-site evaluation team (see OSET review document and checklist). Action can include, but is not limited to any one or a combination of the following:
  - a. Approval
  - b. Denial
  - c. Deferral
  - d. Requirement of a full or focused self-study/application or focused on-site review.
  - e. Change in the institution's accreditation status.
3. MACTE staff will monitor the distance education certification course via the annual reporting and interim reporting requirements.
4. MACTE staff will work with the Board to assess the effects of distance education on the ability of accredited institutions to meet or maintain accreditation standards and other policy/procedural requirements.

Approved 3/11