



ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR PHARMACY EDUCATION

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March 9, 2021

Dear Pharmacy Dean,

ACPE staff have received a lot of questions regarding distance education and how distance education will be handled post-pandemic. As you are aware, the US Department of Education has provided guidance to accreditors that allows schools and colleges to continue to use distance education without the normal ACPE approval process for the duration of the national emergency declaration and 180 days following the date on which the COVID-19 national emergency declaration is rescinded. At this point, we do not know when the national emergency order will be rescinded so we do not know exactly when schools will need to seek approval if distance education is used to deliver more than 25% of the didactic courses. ACPE will be monitoring the situation and will give you notice once the emergency declaration is lifted and the final date for waivers is known.

In the meantime, ACPE staff thought it would be helpful to remind you of the steps that should be taken if you plan to offer more than 25% of your didactic courses online or if you plan to switch to or add an online option to your PharmD program. As outlined in Addendum 5 of the ACPE Policies and Procedures for ACPE Accreditation of Professional Degree Programs https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/CS_PoliciesAndProceduresJanuary2021.pdf, ACPE requires one-year advance notice for the addition of a distance campus *or the implementation of distance education* for an existing college or school. This notification is required to allow ACPE sufficient time to conduct the monitoring needed to ensure readiness and continued compliance with the accreditation standards. Failure to comply with the one-year notice requirement constitutes grounds for review and potential adverse accreditation actions.

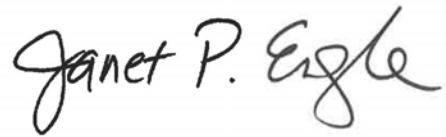
ACPE has adopted the definition of distance education developed by the United States Department of Education to be the use of one of the technologies listed below to deliver a significant portion of the didactic component of the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum to students who are geographically separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies used to support distance education may include: 1) The internet; 2) One-way and two two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; 3) Audio conferencing; or other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in (1) through (3) above.

If you plan to deliver more than 25% of your didactic curriculum after the pandemic (tentatively spring 2022 and beyond – final date to be determined after the national emergency declaration is rescinded) through distance education, please provide written notification to ACPE of this substantive change as soon as possible. A comprehensive academic plan as outlined in Addendum 5 of the policies and procedures will need to be submitted.

ACPE is the national agency for the accreditation of professional degree programs in pharmacy and providers of continuing pharmacy education. ACPE also offers evaluation and certification of professional degree programs internationally and with ASHP accredits pharmacy technician education and training programs.

If you have any questions about continuing distance education after the pandemic or the substantive change notifications required for distance education, ACPE staff will be happy to assist you. You can reach us via email at: csinfo@acpe-accredit.org or feel free to reach out to Greg Boyer, Mary Kiersma or Dawn Zarembski directly.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet P. Engle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet P. Engle, Pharm.D., Ph.D. (Hon), FAPhA, FCCP, FNAP
Executive Director
Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)

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