



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Police and Correctional Training Commissions

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VIRTUAL COURSE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

I. PURPOSE:

This policy establishes the process for the control and management of providers with training programs that are currently certified for In-person delivery seeking approval for virtual, live online delivery and to aid Directors and Academies ensure that officers attending these training sessions earn acceptable hours that may count towards the participants' annual in-service training credit.

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **Asynchronous Learning** – Students work at their own pace and complete assignments at dates and times of their choosing (this will be subject to our E-Learning guidelines which currently exist).
- B. **Webinar** - A webinar is a structured online training event that is primarily lecture-based with minor interaction, depending on the number of attendees. Even if a student is logged on and is listening *live*, it is difficult to ensure the student is present for the webinar. Also, many webinars are recorded, and the assurance for complete attendance is even lower. Webinars usually encompass lower-level training objectives, covered in a “general” format with the possibility of large numbers of attendees.
- C. **Distance Learning** – A formal teaching and learning system designed to be delivered remotely using electronic communication methods. This may include Webinars which do not monitor attendance and are subject to a 3 hour per course limit.
- D. **Instructional Hours** – The time in which students engage in learning activities conducted by approved training providers.
- E. **Virtual Classroom Training/ Synchronous Learning:** The officer interacts with the instructor and fellow students at set dates and times. Examples are web-conferences, live streaming conferences and classes. This training methodology occurs in real-time with all participants listening and participating synchronously. Examples of current training platforms are ZOOM, Google Meetings, and Microsoft Teams etc. Live virtual classroom training usually has well developed and higher-order learning objectives, built-in participant interaction, with smaller class sizes, to monitor full engagement. Cameras can ensure participants remain at their computers.
- F. **Hybrid Course** – A Hybrid course uses an online asynchronous format to deliver content with a scheduled in-person or live virtual event at a later time, to emphasize skills building or engage in group discussion.

III. PROCEDURE:

- A. For current certified training for a specific set number of hours with an assigned course number:
1. Providers need to submit a course addendum with the existing course number outlining **exactly** how the new course will be delivered in the virtual environment.
 - a. Explain the differences between originally submitted in-person delivery versus the virtual format.
 - b. Include the virtual schedule with an hour-by-hour breakdown with participant engagement activities included. All training sessions must be at least sixty minutes. Credit cannot be given for thirty or twenty-minute activities, etc. Include minimum log in time requirements for completion of the class.
 - c. Explain how attendance will be confirmed and monitored, to include signing in and out for each session.
 - d. Attach student engagement requirements that include mandatory use of a participant camera and documented interaction. Providers are encouraged to send messages/quizzes to students at random times during the class to confirm attendance.
 - e. Documentation of how each objective will be taught and tested.
 2. If the hours change due to delivery changes, then a new course approval should be submitted.
 3. Inform students of ethical and educational responsibilities relating to academic concerns, specifically, that dishonesty involving attendance or cheating during the class could result in a failure to obtain credit for the course and removal from the class.
- B. For *Hybrid* courses:
1. Training providers interested in certifying a hybrid course will need to Submit two programs, one for E-Learning and one for Synchronous Virtual Learning. They must meet all E-Learning guidelines and the Synchronous program must meet all Virtual Guidelines.

IV. PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Maintain accurate attendance rosters for all in-person, online, hybrid, and virtual learning classes. In order to receive in-service credit for a program, participants must be in attendance at least 90% of the online classroom hours. If a student misses more than 10% of the training, it will result in a non-completion and the student will not receive in-service credit until the lost time is made up.
2. Adhere to the submitted schedule and archive an attestation form for each participant taught using the virtual/live training event.
3. Fully engage participants with activities, quizzes, and testing to ensure content mastery.
4. Designate an individual who will work as a “class monitor” separate from the instructor to manage chats, attendance, polls, and other activities.

Best Practices ensure participants/instructor have the following information prior to the start of any course:

- Ensure the students are advised to have regular reliable access to the Internet for approximately 7-8 hours each day.
- Advise the students they should have a computer/device with a camera and microphone (if no microphone, access by telephone to listen and watch the presentation on the computer).
- Have the students provide an email account that you can access daily for the entire length of the course.
- Student should have an email so they may communicate with the Program Administrator, including notification prior to missing any part of a session.
- Instructors must be able to resolve any technology problems related to the student's computer, equipment, and Internet.
- Students and instructors should have a basic knowledge and experience with computers, Microsoft Office applications and an ability to navigate the internet.
- Both the instructors if virtual and students should find an area free/limited of distractions while the virtual classroom is in session.
- Limit distractions to other members of the class by using break times to return phone calls, text messages, etc.
- Students must be advised that they must be an active participant in online discussions.
- Students should be advised that to obtain credit they must complete all assignments by the assigned deadline.
- Students should be advised that they are expected to act with academic integrity (avoid plagiarism, all work must be your own).