Alabama Commission on Higher Education

GUIDELINES FOR THE DESIGNATION OF BRANCH CAMPUS STATUS

General Guideline

Establishing a branch campus includes a long-term commitment which should not be entered into lightly. Given the large number of institutions and campuses already offering a variety of educational services in Alabama, branch approval should only be given in rare instances of exceptional need and institutional and community commitment. This need and commitment must be clear and apparent and there should be no doubt that an exceptional case has been made.

Location

1. The location of a branch campus must be in compliance with the "25 mile rule" as outlined in the Commission's Guidelines for Off-Campus Instruction. *(Note: This "rule" is no longer in the Guidelines for Off-Campus Instruction adopted on 8/18/00.)*

2. The institution must have been operating successfully at the proposed branch site for a period of at least five consecutive years.

3. Brand campus approvals are facility specific. Any relocation, regardless of the distance, must first be approved by the Commission. Additionally, expansion of facilities after initial approval must be approved by the Commission.

Need

The institution must demonstrate that branch status will enable it to satisfy clearly documented needs which cannot otherwise be met.

Administration

1. The branch must be responsible to appropriate administrative officers on the main campus. It will not have a separate set of administrators, such as deans or department heads.

2. The institution must employ a full-time director for the branch who will report directly to the appropriate administrator on the main campus.

3. The branch proposal must outline the organizational structure and describe the nature of the relationship of the administrative staff of the branch to the administration on the main campus.

Approved on 3/14/97

Acad Policies/
Branch Campus Status

Student Support

The institution must provide adequate student support services at the branch including on-site registration, tuition and fee payment, textbook purchasing, academic advising, and student counseling. The proposal must provide a detailed description of how these services will be provided. The institution must also explain how branch campus students will have access to main campus events.

Curriculum

1. All off-campus programs to be offered at branch campuses must first be included in the Commission's Academic Program Inventory for the proposing institution. Any program offered exclusively at a branch is still considered a program of the sponsoring institution. Separate program inventories are not maintained for branch campuses.

2. The institution must meet all criteria for off-campus programs as outlined in the Commission's off-campus Guidelines, and a standard Off-Campus Proposal Form must be submitted for each program.

3. Expansion of the curriculum at the branch after initial approval must first be approved by the Commission.

Enrollment and Student Characteristics

1. Documentation must be presented that reveals that the prevailing student characteristics at the proposed branch prevents or seriously hampers their attendance at the main campus. Reasonable access to quality educational offerings, not mere convenience, should be the goal. The proposal must include data on student age, sex, marital status, employment status, full-time/part-time status, and student source (county/city of residence).

2. The institution must demonstrate that enrollments at the site for which branch status is sought have been stable, or preferably increasing, over the past five years.

3. Enrollment projections must be high enough to maintain the critical mass of students necessary for a vigorous academic atmosphere and to operate on a cost effective basis.

Faculty and Staff

The institution must meet all faculty criteria as outlined in the Commission's Guidelines for Off-Campus Instruction. Since at least two full academic programs will be offered, a minimum of 50% of the faculty at the branch must be employed as full-time faculty by the sponsoring institution.

Approved on 3/14/97

Facilities and Equipment

1. Facilities must meet all criteria as outlined in the Commission's Off-Campus Guidelines. A branch campus involves at least two full academic programs and a long-term commitment by the institution. Facilities must be adequate in every respect.

2. The proposal must include a detailed description of the facilities, including floor plans.

3. The proposal must include an inventory of instructional equipment available at the site. The equipment must be adequate to support the academic program.

Library Resources

The proposal must include a detailed description of the library resources and services available at the site. Library resources and services will be expected to be significantly superior to those available at most off-campus sites and must support the degree programs at the same level as that available on the main campus.

Budget

The institution must provide projected budgets for the first three years of operation of the proposed branch. The costs of operating the branch must be covered by tuition, fees, and other non-appropriated funds.

Community Support

The proposal must include tangible evidence of significant community support for the branch, including both private and public sector support.

Accreditation

The institution must provide documentation that all requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools have been met for the establishment of a branch campus.

Approved on 3/14/97

Acad Policies/
Branch Campus Status

Alabama Commission on Higher Education

COMMISSION POLICY ON OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION

CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS FOR THE REGULATION OF OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION

1. Off-Campus Instruction: A course or program taken by a student or students at a location other than a Commission-recognized main or branch campus of the sponsoring institution.   The Commission's policy on off-campus instruction applies to traditional instructional settings, i.e. face-to-face classroom instruction that occurs at a location away from the Commission-recognized main or branch campus of the institution. *

2. Service Areas: For the purposes of off-campus instruction, service areas for the two-year colleges are those determined by the State Board of Education. Service areas for senior institutions are determined by the Commission, using the following considerations: 1) proximity of the off-campus site to the sponsoring institution; 2) relationship of the off-campus site to the sponsoring institution based on student source reports that are produced using data from the Alabama Statewide Student Database; and 3) the mission of the institution.

* Adapted from a Georgia Board of Regents definition

GUIDELINES FOR THE REGULATION OF OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

1. The following sites are exempt from Commission approval:

    a. Statutory exemptions.

        1) Sites at which the Fall 1978 registrations exceeded 500 class enrollments
        2) University sites that were operated prior to 1960
        3) Sites located on military reservations
        4) Business and industry sites where only their employees are enrolled in the off-campus courses

    b. Additional exemptions approved by the Commission.

        (1) Off-campus prison sites where courses are taught exclusively for inmates and prison employees
        (2) Courses offered on an individual study basis
        (3) Study abroad
        (4) High school sites where courses are taught exclusively to high school students enrolled in early admission, accelerated or dual enrollment/dual credit programs
        (5) Two-year college sites located within their respective State Board approved service areas (refer to Attachment 1)
        (6) University sites located within their respective service areas (refer to Attachment 2)

        The following stipulations apply to exemptions b. (4), (5) and (6) above:

        *   Information items will be provided to the Commission for any **new** sites, i.e. sites that have not previously been recognized by the Commission either by formal approval or by information item.
        *   Since there are instances in which two-year colleges and universities are located within overlapping areas, care must be taken to avoid the unnecessary duplication of lower division courses. For this reason, a university shall not offer lower division courses in the home county of a two-year institution main campus that offers similar courses without the written consent of the two-year institution, while a two-year institution shall not offer courses in the home county of a university main campus which offers similar courses without the written consent of the university. This stipulation does not apply to situations in which a university and a two-year college are located in the same county. In these situations, each institution may offer courses within the shared area, but they should work together to avoid the unnecessary duplication of course offerings.
        *   A university shall not offer courses in the service area of another university that offers similar courses without the written consent of the resident university.

- All universities that are located in the same county or which share service areas may offer courses within the shared area, but they should work together and in conjunction with the Commission to avoid the unnecessary duplication of course offerings.
- It is desirable in most instances to have the closest qualified institution respond to off-campus credit course needs. *

2. All sites that are not covered by one or more of the exemption categories above are subject to regular review and approval by the Commission. For these sites, the following regulations apply:

   a) New off-campus site proposals (refer to Attachment 3) must be received by the Commission at least eight weeks in advance of the Commission meeting in which they will be considered.
   b) A list of courses from which each term's schedule will be developed will be submitted with each new site proposal.
   c) No off-campus site may be located nearer than 25 miles to a main campus of another institution that offers similar instruction without the written consent of that institution.
   d) Once an off-campus site is approved it does not require approval in subsequent years, but annual reports are required (refer to Attachment 4).

3. All sites, exempt and non-exempt, must be in full compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges, (SACS/COC) guidelines and criteria pertaining to curriculum, faculty, administration, equipment, learning resources and student services. Council on Occupational Education (COE) guidelines will apply to institutions accredited by that agency.

4. Regardless of exemption status, institutions will submit an annual follow-up report for each off-campus site by July 1 each year (refer to Attachment 4). The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education may submit a comprehensive follow-up report for its entire system. The Commission must be notified if a site is discontinued so that annual reports will not be expected.

5. Extensive course lists of upper division and graduate level courses that may constitute a program in any discipline will not be accepted. Should an institution desire to offer an extensive course list in a discipline, a proposal for an off-campus program should be submitted for Commission review and approval.

6. All proposals for off-campus courses will be subject to a twenty-day public comment period prior to action or acceptance by the Commission. Proposals must be submitted electronically by the institutions and will be posted to the Commission website for public review and comment. At the end of the twenty-day period, the Commission staff will compile the comments and send them to the applicant institution for response.

7. The Commission retains the authority to monitor compliance with the guidelines. If infractions are found, they will be referred to the appropriate governing board for corrective action.

8. Off-campus instruction should be self-supporting; i.e. costs should be covered by tuition, fees, and extramural support. The Commission will not include credit hours

and enrollment generated by off-campus instruction in its formula calculations in developing institutional budget recommendations.

* Based on a Georgia Board of Regents policy

GUIDELINES FOR THE REGULATION OF OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

In addition to all criteria stated for the approval of off-campus courses, the following additional criteria shall apply to the approval of off-campus instructional programs:

1.   Location of Programs: Complete degree programs may only be offered at Commission approved sites. Distance from the offering institution to the proposed off-campus sites will be a primary consideration in the delivery of off-campus programs, unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed program is the only one of its kind.

2.   Relationship to the Commission's Academic Program Inventory: All programs to be offered off-campus must be listed in the Commission's Academic Program Inventory for the proposing institution.

3.   Strength of the Existing On-Campus Program: Only programs which are academically strong and productive on the main campus should be offered off-campus. Information related to the main campus program must be provided. This includes: (a) headcount enrollment data for the preceding five academic years, (b) completion rates for the preceding five academic years as reported to the National Center for Educational Statistics through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and (c) current accreditation status, if programmatic accreditation is available. If graduates of the program are required to pass a certification or licensure examination, the institution must provide documentation related to the performance of its graduates on such an examination. The institution must also include data related to the placement rates of graduates of the program. Exceptions to this rule may be considered, based on 4, 5, and 6 following.

4.   Adequate Student Demand: The institution must provide documentation of strong student demand, along with graduation projections for the first five years of operation at the proposed site. Post-implementation conditions on enrollment, graduation rates and job placement similar to those placed on the approval of new academic programs will be placed on the approval of off-campus programs. If a program is to be offered on a limited one-time basis, this must be stated. In such cases, student demand, enrollment projections, and graduation projections will be applied accordingly.

5.   Need for the Program: The institution must provide documentation that there is significant unmet need (employer demand) which cannot be met by the campus-based program or by other similar programs in the State.

6.   Effect on the Existing On-Campus Program: In supporting documentation, the institution must explain potential effects of the proposed off-campus program on the resources available to and the quality of the program on the main campus. The institution must also provide documentation that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and any professional accreditation agencies, if applicable, have been notified of the institution's intent to offer the proposed program off-campus. Documentation must be provided that required clearances have been received from the appropriate accreditation agencies.

7. Clinical Sites: If the proposed program requires a clinical component (example: allied health programs), signed clinical agreements with appropriate agencies sufficient in number to accommodate the projected enrollment in the program must be provided. These agreements must indicate the total number of clinical slots that will be available at each clinical site.

8. Admission and Program Completion Requirements: Admission and program completion requirements for a proposed off-campus program must be the same as the requirements on the main campus.

9. All proposals for off-campus programs will be subject to a twenty-day public comment period prior to action or acceptance by the Commission. Proposals must be submitted electronically by the institutions and will be posted to the Commission website for public review and comment. At the end of the twenty-day period, the Commission staff will compile the comments and send them to the applicant institution for response.

10. If an institution is found to be offering an off-campus program without the approval of the Commission, the Commission staff will notify the institution in writing regarding the violation and may conduct an on-site visit to confirm the non-compliance with Commission policy, if necessary. Following this review, the Commission will take appropriate action concerning the violation.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVED SERVICE AREAS
OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES
(Boldface Counties Indicate Home Counties)

NOTE: Attachment 1 is included for informational purposes only. Service areas for Alabama public two-year colleges are determined by the Alabama Board of Education and are not subject to Commission approval. The Commission staff will alter this table as changes are received from the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education.

College	State Board Approved Service Areas
Alabama Southern Community College	- Choctaw - Marengo **Clarke** **Monroe** (all but northeastern corner) - Wilcox (shared with Reid)
Bevill State Community College	**Marion** - Lamar **Fayette** - Jefferson (shared with Lawson, Jeff State, Bessemer, and Wallace/ Hanceville) - Pickens (shared with Shelton) **Walker** - Winston (southwestern one-fourth)
Bishop State Community College	**Mobile** (shared with Enterprise-Ozark) - Washington
Calhoun State Community College	- Madison (shared with Drake) - Morgan (northern two-thirds shared with Drake) **Limestone** - Lawrence (eastern one-third shared with NW-Shoals)
Central Alabama Community College	- Clay (western one-half) **Talladega** - Coosa **Tallapoosa** (southeast corner shared with Southern Union) - Elmore (site in Tallassee) - Shelby (eastern one-half)
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	- Macon (eastern one-third) - Lee (Southeastern corner shared with Southern Union) **Russell** (southeastern one-third shared with Wallace - Dothan)
Drake State Technical College	**Madison** (shared with Calhoun) - Morgan (northern two-thirds shared with Calhoun)

Enterprise-Ozark Community College	• Pike • **Coffee** (shared with LBW) • Geneva (western two-thirds shared with LBW) • Dale (western half) • Mobile (shared with Bishop)
Faulkner State Community College	• **Baldwin**
Gadsden State Community College	• St. Clair (northeastern third) • **Etowah** • Cherokee (all but northern one-sixth) • Calhoun • Cleburne
Ingram State Technical College	• **Elmore** (statewide responsibility)
Jefferson Davis Community College	• **Escambia** (shared with Reid) • Conecuh (shared with Reid) • Monroe (northeastern corner which is shared with Reid)
Jefferson State Community College	• **Jefferson** (shared with Lawson, Bevill, and Wallace-Hanceville.) • Shelby (western one-half shared with Lawson) • St. Clair (southwestern two-thirds)
Lawson State Community College	• **Jefferson** (shared with Jefferson State, Bevill, and Wallace- Hanceville) • Shelby (site in Hoover)
L. B. Wallace State Junior College	• Butler (shared with Reid) • Coffee (shared with Enterprise-Ozark) • Crenshaw • **Covington** • Geneva (western two-thirds which is shared with Enterprise-Ozark)
Northeast Alabama Community College	• Jackson • **DeKalb** (northern half) • Cherokee (northern one-sixth)
Northwest-Shoals Community College	• Lauderdale • Lawrence (eastern one-third shared with Calhoun) • **Colbert** • **Franklin** • Winston (northwestern one-fourth)
Reid State Technical College	• Escambia (shared with Jeff Davis) • **Conecuh** (shared with Jeff Davis) • Wilcox (shared with Alabama Southern) • Monroe (northeastern corner which is shared with Jeff Davis) • Butler (shared with LBW)

Shelton State Community College	• Bibb • Hale • Greene • **Tuscaloosa** • Sumter • Pickens (shared with Bevill)
Snead State Community College	• **Marshall** • DeKalb (southern half) • Blount (eastern half)
Southern Union State Community College	• Chambers • Clay (eastern half) • **Lee** (Southeastern corner shared with Chattahoochee Valley). • **Randolph** • Tallapoosa (southeastern corner which is shared with Central) • Macon (middle one-third)
Trenholm State Technical College	• Elmore (shared with Ingram and Central) • **Montgomery** • Lowndes • Bullock (western half) • Macon (western one-third)
Wallace State Community College (Dothan)	• Henry • Dale (eastern half) • **Houston** • Geneva (eastern one-third) • Barbour • Bullock (eastern one-half) • Russell (southern one-third which is shared with Chattahoochee Valley)
Wallace State Community College (Hanceville)	• **Cullman** • Blount (western half) • Winston (eastern half) • Morgan (southern one-third) • Jefferson (northwest corner)
Wallace State Community College (Selma)	• Chilton • Autauga • Perry • **Dallas**

SERVICE AREAS OF UNIVERSITIES BY COUNTY
(Boldface Counties Indicate Home Counties)

University	Service Area
Alabama A&M University (AAM)	• **Madison** (shared with UAH) • Cullman (shared with UAH and ATSU) • Jackson (shared with UAH) • Marshall (shared with UAH) • Morgan (shared with UAH and ATSU)
Alabama State University (ASU)	• **Montgomery** (shared with AUM and TROY) • Autauga (shared with AUM and TROY) • Bullock (shared with AUM and TROY) • Crenshaw (shared with AUM and TROY) • Dallas (shared with AUM and TROY) • Elmore (shared with AUM and TROY) • Lowndes (shared with AUM and TROY) • Macon (shared with AU, AUM and TROY)
Athens State University (ATSU)	• **Limestone** • Cullman (shared with AAM and UAH) • Lawrence (shared with UNA) • Morgan (shared with AAM and UAH)
Auburn University (AU) (This institution has a constitutional statewide mission.)	• **Lee** • Chambers • Macon (shared with ASU, AUM and TROY) • Russell (shared with TROY) • Tallapoosa
Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM)	• **Montgomery** (shared with ASU and TROY) • Autauga (shared with ASU and TROY) • Bullock (shared with ASU and TROY) • Crenshaw (shared with ASU and TROY) • Dallas (shared with ASU and TROY) • Elmore (shared with ASU and TROY) • Lowndes (shared with ASU and TROY) • Macon (shared with ASU, AU and TROY)
Jacksonville State University (JSU)	• **Calhoun** • Cherokee • Clay • Cleburne • DeKalb • Etowah • Randolph • St. Clair (shared with UAB and UM) • Talladega (shared with UM)

Troy University (TROY)	• **Pike, Houston, Montgomery (shared with ASU and AUM)** • Autauga (shared with ASU and AUM) • Barbour • Bullock (shared with ASU and AUM) • Butler • Coffee • Conecuh • Covington • Crenshaw (shared with ASU and AUM) • Dale • Dallas (shared with ASU and AUM) • Elmore (shared with ASU and AUM) • Geneva • Henry • Lowndes (shared with ASU and AUM) • Macon (shared with ASU, AU and AUM) • Russell (shared with AU)
University of Alabama (UA) (This institution has a constitutional statewide mission.)	• **Tuscaloosa** • Bibb (shared with UAB and UM) • Fayette • Greene (shared with UWA) • Hale • Lamar • Pickens (shared with UWA) • Walker (shared with UAB)
University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)	• **Jefferson** • Bibb (shared with UA and UM) • Blount • St. Clair (shared with JSU and UM) • Walker (shared with UA)
University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)	• **Madison** (shared with AAM) • Cullman (shared with AAM and ATSU) • Jackson (shared with AAM) • Marshall (shared with AAM) • Morgan (shared with AAM and ATSU)
University of Montevallo (UM)	• **Shelby** • Bibb (shared with UA and UAB) • Chilton • Coosa • Talladega (shared with JSU) • St. Clair (shared with JSU and UAB)
University of North Alabama (UNA)	• **Lauderdale** • Colbert • Franklin • Lawrence (shared with ATSU) • Marion • Winston

University of South Alabama (USA)	**Mobile** - Baldwin - Clarke (shared with UWA) - Escambia - Monroe - Washington
University of West Alabama (UWA)	**Sumter** - Choctaw - Greene (shared with UA) - Marengo - Perry - Pickens (shared with UA) - Wilcox - Clarke (shared with USA)

Alabama Commission on Higher Education

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW OFF-CAMPUS SITE

SITE INFORMATION

Institution:
Administrator Responsible for Site
Name & Title:
Telephone:
Fax:
E-Mail:
Contact Person at Site If Other Than Administrator Above
Name & Title:
Telephone:
Fax:
E-Mail:
Location of Proposed Site
Facility:
Street Address:
City: **County:**
When will you begin offering instruction at this site?

Type of Site	Check One:
Non-Exempt	
Exempt from Review by Statute	
Fall 1978 registration exceeded 500.	
University operated site prior to 1960.	
Site located on military reservation.	
Business & industry site where employees only are enrolled.	
Exempt from Review by Commission Policy	
Courses delivered via distance learning technology.	
Prison site - courses delivered exclusively to inmates and prison employees.	
High school site exclusively for early admission, accelerated/dual enrollment.	
2-year college site located within SBE approved service area.	
University site located within Commission recognized off-campus service area.	

Note: Follow-up report is not required for individual study courses.

Certification

I hereby certify that if the Commission approves/accepts this proposal, the site will be in full compliance with the Commission's Guidelines for the Regulation of Off-Campus Instruction. The required annual follow-up report will be sent.

Signature of President/Chancellor:

Date:

COURSE LIST

The institution will develop its schedule at this new site each term from the following list of courses.

Courses (Include Number & Title)

Add additional rows if needed.