COMTA® COMMISSION ON MASSAGE THERAPY
ACCREDITATION

July 2015

DIRECTIONS: Upload this document and accompanying documentation into the EDvera system, using "Interim Report Document."

APPLICATION FOR ADDING A DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE

Name of Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Person requesting change_____ Title___ _____
(Print Name)

Name of person to whom COMTA mailings/correspondence should be directed:

_____

Email address of that person: _____

Type of Accreditation (mark one):   *Programmatic* or *Institutional*

Name(s) of Program(s) (**list all programs within the institution that are part of your accreditation**)

_____

_____

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THE APPLICATION

— Notify COMTA in writing of the proposed change and the evidence that the institution has the recognition of the appropriate jurisdictional authority to administer the program.

— Indicate whether the distance education course has been approved by another accreditor or at another campus

— Indicate any/all school locations where the program will be administered

— Outline in writing how this change will impact on the other program(s) within the institution that is part of the current original accreditation action.

— Submit abbreviated SSR to detail how the school complies with Standard X (see below)

— Budget (to include resource allocations for the new course)

— Business plan including enrollment projections and revenue projections

— Submit appropriate fee for the change, payable to COMTA (See appendix A.3).

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

— Schools must submit all documents electronically in EDvera System, using Interim Report Document

THIS DISTANCE EDUCTAION APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTEED BY:

_____
(Signature) – School Owner or School/Program Director (not-profit)

_____
(Type name)

Date_____

COMTA DISTANCE EDUCATION STANDARDS & ABBREVIATED SELF-STUDY REPORT REQUIREMENTS

X. Distance Education

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Distance education (both fully online and hybrid courses) utilizes technology to create enriching virtual classroom experiences. Distance education must meet the criteria of supporting regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor. (Independent study or correspondence courses do not meet that criterion.) The Commission acknowledges that there are some competencies within a massage/bodywork or esthetics program that may be taught through distance education. These competencies typically do not involve hands-on work or require instant oversight or feedback. Programs using distance education must demonstrate continued compliance with these and other applicable standards. (See COMTA's Distance Education Guidelines for additional information.)

A. Basic Approvals
1. Courses that utilize distance education are reviewed and approved by COMTA before being offered (not for initial applicants).

1. Hours awarded for distance education constitute no more than 49 percent of the program clock hours or credits (whichever is less). This includes any general education hours that may be included in a degree program.

2. Institutions and programs must be approved to offer distance education for both in-state and out-of-state students where applicable.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the process the institution or program used to design and launch distance education courses.

2. Explain all state regulations and approvals necessary for offering distance education. This should include in-state regulations as well as any other state regulation that is applicable for the state in which the program is intended to prepare graduates for professional practice.

3. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of state approval to offer distance education courses.

B. Curriculum and Instruction
1. Course content does not require on-site, hands-on, or immediate monitoring of student work.
   a. If any COMTA Competencies are taught or assessed via distance education, methods appropriate to the language of the Competency are used.

2. Hours or credits awarded for distance education courses are comparable to those offered for similar amount of content in classroom courses.

3. Distance education courses are designed to provide regular, meaningful, effective, and timely interaction between students and faculty.

4. The program maintains control over the curriculum within the distance education courses and can make revisions as needed. The program must be able to adjust course delivery as needed to meet student needs.

5. Faculty teaching distance education courses are experienced and/or trained in distance education methods.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the use of distance education in the program, including which courses are offered through distance learning. Are the courses fully online or offered as hybrid courses with only part of the course online? Are the courses offered solely online or are students given a choice of formats? Explain the reasoning for using distance education.

2. Explain how the institution or program determines that the clock hours/credits for online or hybrid courses are comparable to face-to-face clock hours or credits.

3. Does the program use its own faculty or contract with a third-party for instruction?

   a. [IF Third-Party:] Describe how the program maintains control over the course content and can adjust delivery to meet student needs and UPLOAD evidence of third party contracts.

   b. [IF Faculty:] Describe how faculty members are trained in distance education methods and provide a list of the faculty teaching distance education courses and include their qualifications for doing so.

4. Describe the methods used to ensure regular, meaningful, effective, and timely contact between instructors and students, as well as between students and students.

5. UPLOAD: Provide evidence of two specific examples of such regular, meaningful, effective, and timely contact between instructors and students, as well as between students and students.

6. For Onsite Review: Provide reviewers log-in access to the courses from the instructor point of view.

C. Security and Assessment
  1. Distance education course information for students and faculty is private and secure via log-in username and password.

  2. Distance education courses are designed to provide effective assessment of student learning.

  3. Programs and distance education course faculty employ methods to assure student identity and academic integrity in coursework, including assessments.

     a. Such methods may include, as appropriate, a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, or other technologies and/or practices that are effective in verifying each student's identity.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the methods used to maintain student and faculty security in distance education courses.

2. Describe the methods used to assess student learning in each distance education course and whether these differ in face-to-face course offerings. If different, explain the rationale for the assessments used specifically for distance learning.

3. Describe how the program and faculty ensure student identity and academic integrity in completing coursework, including assessments and assignments. (This may include proctored assessments, secure log-ins, timed examination, anti-plagiarism submission tools, and other accepted practices.)

4. For Onsite Review: Provide access to course materials for confirmation.

D. Student Support (<u>For Institutional Accreditation Only</u>)
   1. Admissions and marketing materials inform prospective students of courses only offered via the distance education format.

   2. Students are oriented to the process of distance education teaching and learning, and/or are assessed to determine preparedness for success in distance learning environments.

   3. Student support services are available for students while taking online courses.

   4. Courses that utilize distance education formats must meet ADA standards.

<u>SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits (Institutional Accreditation Only):</u>

1. Explain how students are informed of distance education requirements and formats prior to program admission.

2. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of all admissions and marketing information clearly disclosing distance education courses and requirements.

3. Describe how student orientation is conducted to ensure students have the knowledge and skills to succeed in a distance learning environment.

4. Are there any instances when students would be completing portions of the program without attending classes on campus?

   o [If yes], describe how student advising, tutoring, career guidance, library resources and other student services are offered to students taking distance education courses.

E. Distance Education Infrastructure and Support (<u>For Institutional Accreditation Only</u>)
   1. Distance education courses use a learning management system (LMS) or similar platform to facilitate interaction and accountability that is appropriate to the scale of the distance education program.

   2. The institution has personnel capable of supporting the distance education hardware/software onsite infrastructure or interface with outside hosts

   3. The institution ensures effective and timely support for hardware and software needs of faculty and students.

   4. The institution ensures sufficient bandwidth to provide distance education courses.

   5. Distance education course content and activity are backed up daily.

<u>SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits (Institutional Accreditation Only):</u>

1. Describe the platform or Learning Management System (LMS) that the institution or program uses for distance education courses. Is this the same for all courses?

2. Explain how technical support is provided for students and/or faculty.