

SHEEO State Authorization Inventory

Mississippi

Please note: For purposes of this survey, the terms “authorize” and “authorization” are used generically to include approve, certify, license, regulate, recognize, empower, or similar actions relative to the operation, provision, or availability of postsecondary education in your state.

1. Agency and Contact Information

- a. Agency Name: **Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation**
- Description:
The Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation approves all colleges and universities or other entities that offer postsecondary academic degrees or offer instruction and are domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the state.
 - Contact Information:
**Menia Dykes
Director of Accreditation
Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39213
601-432-6372
mdykes@mississippi.edu**
 - Please state who institutions should contact if they have questions about your agency’s authority, policies, or application process?
Same as above.
- b. Links:
<http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/>
- c. The following agency also has responsibility for authorization in the state and was requested to complete this survey.
**Commission on Proprietary School and College Registration
<http://www.sbcjc.cc.ms.us/program/psDefault.aspx>**
- d. If the division of responsibility among these agencies is not clear, please explain.
CPSCR: For-profit, vocational (technical) postsecondary schools.

2. Types of Educational Providers Authorized

- a. Please indicate the types of institutions that your agency authorizes, using the list below. Please answer “yes” or “no” to each item. Feel free to provide a short explanation of any ambiguity, including any necessary clarification of “in-state,” “out of state,” or other terminology.

- Yes Public, in-state **academic** degree granting institutions
- Yes Public, out-of-state **academic** degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, in-state, not-for-profit **academic** degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, out-of-state, not-for-profit **academic** degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, in-state, for-profit **academic** degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, out-of-state, for-profit **academic** degree granting institutions
- No Public, in-state, non-degree granting institutions
- No Public, out-of-state, non-degree granting institutions
- No Non degree, not-for profit institutions
- No Non degree, for-profit institutions
- Yes Religious institutions
- ___ Tribally-controlled institutions

Clarifying comments:

Academic degree granting institutions that offer one or more postsecondary academic degrees or offer instruction that are or wish to be domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the state must be authorized by MCCA.

- b. Is an institution required to obtain approval from more than one agency to be authorized in your state (excluding purely programmatic approvals)? If so, please explain.

Note:

The Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) has approval authority for practical nursing programs offered at vocational-technical proprietary institutions. (Contact: 601-432-6518)

The Board of Trustees for State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) is empowered by the Legislature to establish rules, regulations, and standards for accreditation of schools of nursing in Mississippi (associate, baccalaureate, master’s, doctorate). (Contact State Director of Nursing Education: jmccrory@mississippi.edu)

The Mississippi Board of Nursing protects the public through the process of licensure and regulation of nursing (nurses).

- c. Is accreditation required for an institution to be authorized in your state?
- If yes, please explain:
 - If yes, what type of accreditation is required? Please, check all that apply as appropriate.

Regional
 National
 Programmatic/specialized, as applicable

Clarifying comments:

MCCA recognizes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, the Association for Biblical Higher Education accrediting commission, and the Association of Theological Schools accrediting commission; and will consider applications for MCCA authorization from out of state academic degree-granting postsecondary institutions accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies.

- d. Does your agency authorize specific academic programs offered by institutions or only institutions themselves?

Currently under review.

- e. Do programs in certain subject areas require the separate approval by another state entity; for example, a professional licensing agency?

Education

Mississippi Department of Education
601-359-3764

Nursing (See Note at 2b above)

Dr. Janette McCrory, Director of Nursing Education
MS Board of Trustees for State Institutions of Higher Learning
jmccrory@mississippi.edu

Dr. Shawn Mackey, Associate Executive Director of Workforce and Career & Technical Education

MS Community College Board
smackey@mscjc.edu

3. Exemptions

- a. Are certain institutions or programs exempt by law or policy from your state authorization requirements?

- If yes, please describe which institutions or programs the exemption applies to and how it works? If available, please provide any pertinent web links.
 - If yes, how does the institution or program claim an exemption? For example, is the exemption automatic as long as it meets specified criteria, does the institution or program notify the agency and the exemption is granted, is there an application process, etc.?
- b. If an institution or program is exempt from state authorization, are there any other state requirements that an institution would need to fulfill in order to operate in your state (e.g., providing contact information, list of programs, etc.)?
- c. Does your state constitution or do your state laws provide any exemptions for religious institutions?
- Are all religious institutions exempt (please describe)?
 - Are religious institutions that award only religious degrees or certificates exempt (please describe)?
 - Are certain religious institutions exempt that meet other criteria (please describe)?

4. Authorization of Distance Education

- a. Does your agency require purely (100%) distance education programs, including online or correspondence study programs that enroll residents of your state, to be authorized without regard to physical presence?
No. If 100% distance, and not domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the state, MCCA authorization not required.
- b. If not, does your agency determine whether an institution must be authorized based on a physical presence or “operating” standard?
Yes. If domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the state, must be authorized.

5. Physical Presence Policy – Common “Triggers”

- a. If your agency uses a physical presence standard, how does your agency define physical presence? If available, please provide a link to that policy or a citation to the relevant regulation giving that standard.
Examples of what triggers ‘otherwise located’ include, but are not limited to:

1. The institution maintains a telephone number with a Mississippi area code;
2. The institution maintains a postal address (either physical or PO Box) with a Mississippi zip code;
3. The institution maintains an Internet URL that originates in Mississippi or utilizes an ISP that is based in Mississippi;
4. The institution advertises that a future institution will be domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in the State.

In the event a question arises as to whether an institution falls within the 'otherwise located' category, the institution must contact MCCA and request a determination regarding same. Final decisions related to what constitutes 'otherwise located' will be made by MCCA.

- b. Please specify whether any of the following activities would constitute a physical presence or signify "operating" in your state, assuming that the named activity is the institution's sole activity in your state. Please answer "yes" or "no" to each question. In addition, you may provide a short explanation of any ambiguity.

Currently under review.

- Permitting a student to complete an internship, externship, field experience, or clinical practicum organized by the institution?
 - Does this apply only to distance education students or more generally?
- Permitting a student to complete an internship, externship, field experience, or clinical practicum found by the student acting independently?
 - Does this apply only to distance education students or more generally?
- Employing full-time faculty in the state to provide instruction via distance education programs to students in the state?
 - What about adjunct faculty?
- Employing full-time faculty in the state to provide instruction via distance education programs solely to students outside of the state?
 - What about adjunct faculty?
- Having a contract/agreement between the institution and in-state institutions or in-state entities to provide services for students (i.e. library, gym, computer centers, etc.)?

- Organized, consistent, on-the-ground recruiting of students in the state by employees or agents of the institution?
 - What if the agent is only recruiting students in the state on an occasional basis (i.e. at job fairs)?
 - Advertising in local media sources that are largely viewed by residents of the state?
 - Advertising in national media sources that can be accessed by residents of the state?
 - Having computer servers or other equipment located in the state?
 - Hosting short term, face-to-face, seminars or conferences in the state where students meet in person?
 - Employing mentors, tutors, or preceptors in the state to aid students, who are residents of the state, on an individual basis?
 - Requiring a student to take a proctored exam at a location or with an entity in the state prescribed by the institution?
 - Requiring a student to take a proctored exam with an entity in the state chosen by the student but approved by the institution?
 - Other [please explain]
- c. Of the activities or conditions listed above that alone would not constitute a physical presence, are there any that if combined would create a physical presence?

6. Application Process

- a. Please provide a short description of the application process to obtain state authorization. If available, please provide web links to the specific references to all applicable state laws, regulations, manuals, forms, or other pertinent documents.

The application for authorization to operate an academic degree-granting postsecondary institution in the state is not available online. To receive an application, submit a written request via regular mail. A nonrefundable fee of \$100 must be received before an application will be sent via regular mail. Submit to the commission by February 1 a complete application along with a non-refundable \$3,000 application fee. The commission reviews applications at its annual meeting (in May or June).

- b. Generally, how long does it take to approve applications (assuming that the agency has received all required information from the institution)? Please provide a typical range if appropriate.

The review process could take up to a year.

- c. What is the authorization duration?

Community, junior and senior colleges and universities, or other entities must be approved annually by the commission in order to grant diplomas of graduation, degrees or offer instruction.

- d. What does an institution need to do to maintain authorization?

Be in compliance or progressing toward compliance with State standards, regulations, provisions, procedures and policies.

- e. What kinds of information or data must an institution report to your agency as a condition for continued authorization? How frequently is this reported or updated? Is this information published or shared publicly?

See standards document. <http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/>

- f. Can an institution lose its authorized status? If so, how?

Yes, violation of MCCA standards, regulations, policies and procedures.

- g. Can a multi-institutional system or college corporation apply to your agency for authorization on behalf of all of its component institutions? If so, please describe the process.

No.

Note: MCCA does not currently regulate institutions not domiciled, incorporated or otherwise located in Mississippi offering solely online courses and program. Will respond to system office inquiries in this regard.

- h. Would multi-institution public systems be treated the same as multi-location for-profit institutions?

- i. What distinctive features in your authorization process would be useful for applicants to know (e.g., certain times during the year that you process applications for authorization, sharing of applications or information about proposed programs with institutions or other stakeholders in your state for comment)?

Reviewed annually at May or June meeting.

- j. Is your agency currently planning to amend its application process by the end of 2011?

MCCA standards and processes are under review; will not be completed by the end of 2011.

- If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.
- If yes, when does the agency expect the change to be fully implemented?

7. Fees Associated with Authorization

- a. Is there an application fee to initiate the authorization process? If so, what is the fee or fee schedule? Please provide a web link if available.
Yes. \$3,000.
- b. Are there any other costs associated with the state authorization process (e.g. site visits, hiring a reviewer, surety bond, tuition recovery fund, agent licensing, etc.)?
Evaluation team visits shall be at the expense of the institution.
- c. What are the costs, if any, to renew authorization?
Currently, there is no cost to the institution for annual renewal.
- d. What costs are associated with receiving a waiver or exemption to authorization?
Currently, there is no cost to institutions not domiciled, incorporated, or otherwise located in Mississippi offering courses and programs solely online.

8. Interstate Reciprocity

- a. Do your state regulations explicitly allow or prohibit interstate reciprocal agreements about authorization? If so, please describe.
Not currently.
- b. What is the process, if any, to obtain a reciprocal agreement with your state?
- c. Are there any reciprocal agreements currently in place or under consideration? If so, please list those agreements.
- d. If interstate reciprocal agreements are not addressed in your regulations, would your agency consider establishing such agreements? Please elaborate.

9. Consumer Protection and Student Complaints

- a. Does your agency have a process for handling complaints about postsecondary institutions or programs?
Currently under review and will be published on the web site when completed.
(<http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/>).
 - If yes, please describe the process or provide a web link to the material that describes the complaint process.

- If yes, does this complaint process extend to institutions not authorized by the agency that may enroll residents of the state (such as explicitly distance education programs with no physical presence or exempt institutions)?
 - If available, please provide a web link to the complaint form.
 - Who is the contact person for receiving complaints? Please include name, title, address, phone, and email if available.
- b. If your agency has no formal process for handling complaints related to postsecondary institutions, what state agency would handle a complaint?

10. Enforcement

- a. If your agency finds that an institution or program is operating in your state without authorization, what is the resulting warning or enforcement action?
- b. Can an institution or program appeal a warning or enforcement action? If yes, please describe the process or provide web links to the regulations/policies.
http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/downloads/Standards_MCCA.pdf

11. Legislative or Regulatory Changes

- a. Is your agency or state legislature planning to amend its regulations or alter its physical presence policy by the end of 2011?
- If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.
 - If yes, when does the agency expect the change to be fully implemented?
- b. Is your agency or state legislature making changes in your state regulations or statutes so that institutions with locations in your state would be considered legally authorized in accordance with the federal institutional eligibility regulations?
- If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.
 - If yes, when does the agency expect the change to be fully implemented?
- c. Is your agency or state legislature making any other changes in your state regulations or statutes with regard to state authorization?
- If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.

- If yes, when does the agency expect the change to be fully implemented?

12. Is there anything else about the authorization process in your state that we and others ought to know about?

Standards, regulations, policies, and procedures are currently under review, anticipate changes during 2012.