

# SHEEO State Authorization Inventory

## Oklahoma

**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: **Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education**
  - o Description:  
The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education serves as the approval and licensing agency for public and private (not for profit/proprietary) degree-granting institutions.
  - o Contact Information:  
Ms. Gina M. Wekke  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
[gwekke@osrhe.edu](mailto:gwekke@osrhe.edu)
  - o Please state who institutions should contact if they have questions about your agency’s authority, policies, or application process?  
Same as above.
- b. Link:  
<http://www.okhighered.org/state-system/policy-procedures/part3.shtml>
- c. The following agencies also have responsibility for authorization in the state. The following two agencies have been requested to complete a survey.  
The Oklahoma Board of Private Schools  
  
Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
- d. If the division of responsibility among these agencies is not clear, please explain.

### 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 degree granting institutions
- Yes Public, out-of-state degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, in-state, not-for-profit degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, out-of-state, not-for-profit degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, in-state, for-profit degree granting institutions
- Yes Private, out-of-state, for-profit degree granting institutions
- Yes Public, in-state, non-degree granting institutions
- Yes Public, out-of-state, non-degree granting institutions
- Yes Non degree, not-for profit institutions
- Yes Non degree, for-profit institutions
- Yes Religious institutions
- Yes Tribally-controlled institutions

Clarifying comments:

Institutions that offer college level courses and/or confer college level credentials in Oklahoma must be authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Additionally, out-of-state institutions with a physical presence in Oklahoma must also be authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

- 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.

Institutions offering college level courses or degree must be authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Non-college level credentials at the certificate and diploma level must be authorized by the Oklahoma Board of Private Vocational Schools.

- c. Is accreditation required for an institution to be authorized in your state?

- o If yes, please explain:

Institutions that will establish a physical presence must seek authorization and recognition to operate in Oklahoma and must have accreditation status that details what the institution is authorized to offer as approved by one of the following three agencies:

1. A regional accrediting agency;
2. A national accrediting agency authorized to approve degree programs by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV purposes; and
3. Accreditation status with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (see attached policy).

- If yes, what type of accreditation is required? Please, check all that apply as appropriate.

Regional  
 National  
 Programmatic/specialized

Clarifying comments:

Note non-collegiate postsecondary private vocational schools that issue certificates or diplomas are licensed by the following:

Dennis Rea, Director  
Oklahoma Board of Private Vocational Schools  
3700 N. Classen Blvd., Suite 250  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-2864  
Phone: 405-528-3370  
Fax: 405-528-3366  
[drea@obpvs.ok.gov](mailto:drea@obpvs.ok.gov)

- d. Does your agency authorize specific academic programs offered by institutions or only institutions themselves?  
Both.
- e. Do programs in certain subject areas require the separate approval by another state entity; for example, a professional licensing agency?

**Education**

Oklahoma State Department of Education  
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105-4599  
Teacher Certification  
405-521-3337

**Nursing**

Oklahoma Board of Nursing  
2915 N Classen, Ste. 524  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
405-962-1800 and FAX: 405-962-1821

**3. Exemptions**

- a. Are certain institutions or programs exempt by law or policy from your state authorization requirements?  
No.

- 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?

No.

- 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)?

No.

No.

No.

#### 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?

Not at this time – the policy is under review.

- b. If not, does your agency determine whether an institution must be authorized based on a physical presence or “operating” standard?

Yes.

## 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.

To determine the extent of an institution’s physical presence for courses and/ or programs delivered exclusively online, the institution will describe any physical presence of its operations (i.e. internships, externships, clinicals, practica, etc.), administrators, students, or faculty. This includes leasing space for instruction or administrative purposes, hiring faculty that convenes students in Oklahoma, a telephone number, a post office box, servers, i.e., any action that constitutes a physical presence in the state.

- 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.**

- Permitting a student to complete an internship, externship, field experience, or clinical practicum organized by the institution?  
No – as long as these activities are arranged by an out-of-state coordinator on the students’ behalf.
- Does this apply only to distance education students or more generally?  
Yes – totally online or correspondence.
- Permitting a student to complete an internship, externship, field experience, or clinical practicum found by the student acting independently?  
No – if the onus is completely on the student for identifying, securing, and finalizing any agreement for the experiential learning activity and if all student assessment for the learning activity is conducted via the Internet.
  - Does this apply only to distance education students or more generally?  
Distance education only.
- Employing full-time faculty in the state to provide instruction via distance education programs to students in the state?  
Yes. Oklahoma residents hired as adjunct faculty may not, for any reason, convene students within the state and all student and faculty interaction will be restricted to electronic methods (i.e., internet).
  - What about adjunct faculty?  
See above.

- Employing full-time faculty in the state to provide instruction via distance education programs solely to students outside of the state?  
No, unless Oklahoma students are included.
  - What about adjunct faculty?  
See above.
- 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.)?  
Yes. This may constitute a physical presence through the contract or agreement. The institution must coordinate through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to determine the extent of physical presence, if any.
- Organized, consistent, on-the-ground recruiting of students in the state by employees or agents of the institution?  
Yes. This may constitute a physical presence. The institution must coordinate through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to determine the extent of physical presence, if any.
  - What if the agent is only recruiting students in the state on an occasional basis (i.e. at job fairs)?  
No.
- Advertising in local media sources that are largely viewed by residents of the state?  
No.
- Advertising in national media sources that can be accessed by residents of the state?  
No – unless Oklahoma residents are mentioned specifically.
- Having computer servers or other equipment located in the state?  
Yes. The institution must coordinate through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to determine whether physical presence exists.
- Hosting short term, face-to-face, seminars or conferences in the state where students meet in person?  
Yes. The institution must coordinate through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to determine the extent of physical presence, if any.
- Employing mentors, tutors, or preceptors in the state to aid students, who are residents of the state, on an individual basis?  
Yes.

- Requiring a student to take a proctored exam at a location or with an entity in the state prescribed by the institution?  
Yes. The institution must coordinate through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to determine the extent of physical presence, if any.
  - Requiring a student to take a proctored exam with an entity in the state chosen by the student but approved by the institution?  
No – if the onus is completely on the student for identifying the site and the proctor and if all student assessment is conducted via the Internet. No compensation is to be awarded to the preceptor 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?  
Yes – as described above.

## 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.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS ENTIRE PROCESS IS UNDER REVIEW AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

### Institutional Accreditation Authorization/Recognition Process

Institutions that will establish a physical presence must seek authorization and recognition to operate in Oklahoma and must have accreditation status that details what the institution is authorized to offer as approved by one of the following three agencies:

4. A regional accrediting agency;
5. A national accrediting agency authorized to approve degree programs by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV purposes; and
6. Accreditation status with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (see attached policy).

Those out-of-state institutions nationally or regionally accredited not establishing a physical presence, but offer courses and/or programs in Oklahoma via electronic media are expected to adhere to the same high standards of program delivery

described in the State Regents' *Electronically Delivered and Traditional Off-Campus Courses and Programs Policy* as Oklahoma institutions subscribe. Institutions that offer courses and/or programs completely online, with no physical presence in Oklahoma, may not fall under the jurisdiction of this policy. To determine the extent of an institution's physical presence for courses and/or programs delivered exclusively online, the institution will describe any physical presence of its operations (i.e. internships, externships, clinicals, practica, etc.), administrators, students, or faculty.

The following applies to those institutions determined to have a physical presence in Oklahoma. If an institution is approved to offer degree programs by a regional or national accrediting body, that institution must seek authorization from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as outlined below:

1. The institution's president or director must write a formal request to offer program(s) to:

Dr. Glen D. Johnson, Chancellor  
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
P.O. Box 108850  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-8850

2. The letter of request must include the following information and materials:
  - a. A letter from the institution's accrediting agency stipulating what program(s) has/have been approved;
  - b. The number of credit or clock hours that will be awarded;
  - c. All student costs/fees related to the program(s);
  - d. An accrediting agency review cycle/dates for the institution and programs requested;
  - e. A copy of the institution's last evaluation report and any subsequent action by the accrediting body of record;
  - f. The start date for the program(s);
  - g. The location and contact person for the Oklahoma location;
  - h. Catalogs, recruiting materials, brochures, web site information, etc.; and
  - i. Additional materials upon request.

For institutions with a physical presence, subsequent program(s) approved by the accrediting agency after initial State Regents recognition must be submitted in the same manner. Changes in accreditation status must be reported immediately by both the accrediting agency and the institution.

Once this information is received and reviewed by the State Regents, an appropriate response will be sent to the president or director.

- 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.  
Time range is dependent on the extent of an institutions request.
- c. What is the authorization duration?  
Continuous consistent with the institution's accrediting body.
- d. What does an institution need to do to maintain authorization?  
Maintain continuous accreditation with a nationally or regionally accrediting body. Additionally, it is required that accredited institutions report changes regarding the accreditation status or offerings (i.e., new programs, probation, special reports, etc.) in a timely manner. Institutions that do not report changes risk interrupting approval status with this agency. Copies of final accreditation reports (both focused and comprehensive visits) are required to remain in good standing with the OSRHE\ . Moreover, an annual report is expected from all institutions operating in Oklahoma. Information is provided on the annual report during the regular data collection cycle.
- 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?  
In addition to the requirement to report any and all actions by the recognized accrediting body, a separate annual report, in a defined format, is required of private and out-of-state institutions operating in Oklahoma regarding level of activity in Oklahoma.
- f. Can an institution lose its authorized status? If so, how?  
Yes, if an institution loses its nationally or regionally accredited status. Other situations may cause an institution to loose its authorized status such as failure to keep the OSRHE informed of its accreditation status, changes in the institutions' operations, adding new programs without notifying the OSRHE, etc.
- 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.  
Yes. See response to 6a above.
- h. Would multi-institution public systems be treated the same as multi-location for-profit institutions?  
Yes.
- 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)?

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

No.

- o If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.  
None available at this time.
- o If yes, when does the agency expect the change to be fully implemented?  
Tentatively late 2012.

## 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.  
Currently there are no charges associated with the authorization process.  
However, this is currently under review.
- 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.)?  
Currently there are no charges associated with the authorization process.  
However, this is currently under review.
- c. What are the costs, if any, to renew authorization?  
Currently there are no charges associated with the authorization process.  
However, this is currently under review.
- d. What costs are associated with receiving a waiver or exemption to authorization?  
Currently there are no charges associated with the authorization process.  
However, this is currently under review.

## 8. Interstate Reciprocity

- a. Do your state regulations explicitly allow or prohibit interstate reciprocal agreements about authorization? If so, please describe.  
No.
- b. What is the process, if any, to obtain a reciprocal agreement with your state?  
No.

- c. Are there any reciprocal agreements currently in place or under consideration? If so, please list those agreements.

No.

- d. If interstate reciprocal agreements are not addressed in your regulations, would your agency consider establishing such agreements? Please elaborate.

Yes, it would depend upon the terms and specifics of the agreement/s and if it meets current statute and policy.

## 9. Consumer Protection and Student Complaints

- a. Does your agency have a process for handling complaints about postsecondary institutions or programs?

Yes.

- o If yes, please describe the process or provide a web link to the material that describes the complaint process.

Current and prospective student complaints are handled through OSRHE Academic Affairs Office by reviewing the circumstances of the complaint and providing the individual with contact information for the most appropriate campus office with the authority to resolve the complaint. If the individual has exhausted the process for review and appeal at the institution and believe the complaint is unresolved, OSRHE staff requests permission to contact the institution on their behalf to identify any possible resolution. OSRHE staff remains in contact with the student to determine if their issue has been resolved or adequately addressed.

- o 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 students who live in Oklahoma are enrolled in out-of-state institution, it is required that those institutions' make available for review to any enrolled or prospective student upon request, a copy of the documents describing the institution's accreditation and its state, federal, or tribal approval or licensing. Moreover, those institutions' should provide its students or prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with its accreditor, its state approval (i.e., OSRHE) or licensing entity and any other relevant state official or agency that would appropriately handle a student's complaint. This is consistent with the United States Department of Education Code of Federal Regulations § 668.43(b).

- o If available, please provide a web link to the complaint form.

Not applicable at this time.

- Who is the contact person for receiving complaints? Please include name, title, address, phone, and email if available.

Ms. Gina M. Wekke

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

405-225-9150

- 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?  
The information pertaining to an unauthorized institution operating in the state is forwarded to the OSRHE Office of General Counsel for proper action. After review, if the institution is ineligible to operate in Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Attorney General would be formally notified.

- 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.  
Yes.

## 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?

No.

- 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?

No.

- 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?

No.

- 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?**