

# SHEEO State Authorization Inventory

## Wyoming

**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: **Wyoming Department of Education**
- Description:  
The Wyoming Department of Education serves as the licensing and approval authority for all trade, correspondence, distance education, technical, vocational, business, or other private schools which are located within the state or have their principal place of business out-of-state but are doing business in the state. Any private degree-granting postsecondary education institution needs to be either licensed or registered with the department prior to operating.
  - Contact Information:  
Elaine Marces  
Interim Private School Program Manager  
Wyoming Department of Education  
307-777-6210  
elaine.marces@wyo.gov
  - Please state who institutions should contact if they have questions about your agency’s authority, policies, or application process?
- b. Links:  
Link to home page:  
[http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/schools/private\\_school\\_licensing.aspx](http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/schools/private_school_licensing.aspx)  
  
Link to regulations:  
<http://michie.lexisnexis.com/wyoming/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm>
- c. The following agencies also have responsibility for authorization in the state.  
None.
- d. If the division of responsibility among these agencies is not clear, please explain.  
Not applicable.

## 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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tribally-controlled institutions

Clarifying comments:

- 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.

**Institution must register name with Secretary of State.**

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

- If yes, please explain:  
**Yes – a private degree granting post secondary school is required to be accredited by an agency recognized by the USED.**
- If yes, what type of accreditation is required? Please, check all that apply as appropriate.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Regional
- X   National
- \_\_\_\_\_ Programmatic/specialized

Clarifying comments:

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

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

### 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.
    - A home-based educational program as defined by Wyo. Stat. § 12-4-1001(a)(v)
    - Aircraft flight training schools approved and authorized by the federal aviation agency of the United States of America
    - A non-degree granting school teaching techniques of outdoor recreation, leadership, ecology or conservation domiciled in the State of Wyoming.
  - 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.?

Exemption is automatic as long as it meets specified criteria.
- 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.)?

Religious institutions are required to file with the Department, annually, evidence of nonprofit religious organization status for purposes of federal taxation and organization under the laws of Wyoming in the manner and form required by the Department.
- c. Does your state constitution or do your state laws provide any exemptions for religious institutions?

Yes.

  - Are all religious institutions exempt (please describe)?
    - Any parochial, church or religious school as defined by Wyo. Statute §21-4-101(a)(iv) which is maintained by a church, religious denomination or religious organization comprised of multi-denominational members of the same recognized religion, lawfully operating the school or institution pursuant to applicable laws governing its organization and the school or institution:

- Offers elementary and secondary education programs only; or
  - Operates as a degree granting post secondary education institution, provides instruction through means not defined as distance education and:
  - Issues diplomas or degrees restricted to the beliefs and practices of the affiliated church, religious denomination or religious organization and includes a statement on the face of issued diploma or degrees and course transcripts referencing the theological or religious nature of the subject area for which any diploma or degree is awarded, clearly reflecting the nature of the diploma title as “Diploma of Religious Studies” or degree title as “Associate of Religious Studies”, “Associate of Arts of Religious Studies”, “Bachelor of Religious Studies” or Bachelor of Arts of Religious Studies”
  - Private School Religious Exemption form can be found at [http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/schools/private\\_school\\_licensing.aspx](http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/schools/private_school_licensing.aspx)
- Are religious institutions that award only religious degrees or certificates exempt (please describe)?  
Please see above.
  - Are certain religious institutions exempt that meet other criteria (please describe)?  
Please see above.

#### 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?  
Please reference Wyoming Statute §21-2-401: “...all trade, correspondence, distance education, technical, vocational, business or other private schools which are located within the state or have their principal place of business out of state but are doing business in the state, shall be licensed under this article before operating or doing business in this state.”
- b. If not, does your agency determine whether an institution must be authorized based on a physical presence or “operating” standard?

#### 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.

- 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?
    - 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 Institution needs to verify accreditation, fill out a short form, and pay a \$100 fee.**
- 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.
- c. What is the authorization duration?  
**Registration is required annually.**
- d. What does an institution need to do to maintain authorization?
- 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?  
**The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) publishes a list of registered private schools on the WDE website.**
- f. Can an institution lose its authorized status? If so, how?

- 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.
- 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)?
- j. Is your agency currently planning to amend its application process by the end of 2011?
  - o If yes, please provide a brief description of the anticipated change.
  - o 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, \$100 fee.**
- 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.)?
- c. What are the costs, if any, to renew authorization?
- d. What costs are associated with receiving a waiver or exemption to authorization?

## **8. Interstate Reciprocity**

- a. Do your state regulations explicitly allow or prohibit interstate reciprocal agreements about authorization? If so, please describe.
- 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?
  - 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.

## **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?**