



Distance Education Certification Standards and Policies & Procedures

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OVERVIEW

The Association of Real Estate License Law Officials (“ARELLO”) certifies course design and delivery systems of distance education courses. Content review is the responsibility of individual jurisdictions. While ARELLO® maintains standards for the real estate industry, the International Distance Education Certification Center (“IDECC”) was formed in 2001 to help other industry regulatory groups apply the same universal distance education standards to courses taught in their particular jurisdiction.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To foster excellence in professional education by developing standards and guidelines for the evaluation of design and delivery of distance education courses, while recognizing and respecting the diversity of courses.
- To promote educational and ethical standards of professional education.
- To provide assurance that professional distance education meets established standards of acceptable quality.
- To provide guidance to providers in the continued improvement of distance education offerings.
- To ensure that the certification process evaluates the presence of essential resources and processes of providers relative to program goals and objectives.
- To encourage providers to view self-study and evaluations as a continuous obligation for improvement.
- To provide feedback that will stimulate improvement of educational offerings.
- To ensure that the evaluation, policy, and decision-making processes undertaken by the certification program reflect the interests of program stakeholders.

DISTANCE EDUCATION STANDARDS AND POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Introduction to the Standards

The ARELLO Distance Education Standards (“Standards”) are the result of years of research and application of distance education standards to providers in the United States and internationally. Both universities and proprietary schools utilize them. They represent one of the most established sets of standards for distance education that are in existence. The Standards grew from a task force organized in 1997 by ARELLO. Over the years these Standards have been applied, modified, and updated based on years of rigorous research and application. These Standards continue to be effective as they apply to both traditional and emerging technologies.

Working with the Standards

The Standards are designed to be broad in order to encompass a variety of approaches, requiring a program to define itself using a holistic approach. Individual groups, entities, or regulatory agencies

may add specific criteria or restrictions to meet their needs. Providers must conduct a self-study review of their courses and evaluate the courses on a regular basis in terms of their strengths and weaknesses in meeting the Standards.

Introduction to the Policies & Procedures

The Policies & Procedures (“P&Ps”) have been created to provide additional specificity to the Standards and pertain to the design and delivery of distance education courses. ARELLO uses these P&Ps with the Standards to measure the quality of courses submitted for certification.

All providers must meet the minimum requirements set forth in this document. Failure to comply with the responsibilities may be grounds for suspension or withdrawal of ARELLO certification. Actions taken by ARELLO to suspend, withdraw or revoke certification may be appealed under the procedures set forth in this document.

DEFINITIONS

Assessment - a process for evaluating students' knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics to make judgments about their learning progress, performance, or achievement. Assessments can take many forms, including tests, quizzes, exams, projects, presentations, portfolios, observations, interactive engagement techniques and performance-based assessments.

Asynchronous delivery – An education delivery method in which the learner completes an online course through a Learning Management System (LMS) outside of the classroom setting at their own pace.

Initial certification – A certification granted for the first course in a specific delivery method. Each new delivery method submitted for a course is considered an initial certification application.

Instructional hour – Fifty (50) minutes of instruction and ten (10) minutes of break time.

Learning Management System (LMS) – Learning management systems are software programs that allow educators and course developers to create, manage, organize and deliver learning materials in an online format.

Learning objective – A statement that articulates specific, measurable, and observable outcomes that learners are expected to achieve as a result of instruction. Learning objectives must be structured in accordance with Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Module – An organized collection of one or more units of content presented together.

Primary provider – A provider who has a proprietary interest in the course. Primary providers may develop the course or may hire someone to develop it. Primary providers may market the course themselves, have their own certified instructors deliver it, and/or may sell it to secondary providers.

Recertification – The renewal of the certification of a course that occurs every three (3) years where there have been no substantive changes.

Secondary provider – A distance education provider who obtains permission from a primary provider to offer an asynchronous course the primary provider already has certified. They must have certified instructors, monitor learner progress, verify course completion and learner identity. Secondary providers offer opportunities for interaction, support, administrative communications, and assessment or evaluation feedback. All critical components of course delivery must be measured according to the Standards.

Subsequent course certification – The certification granted for a new course in a delivery method that has been previously certified.

Substantive change – Any change of 20% or greater in material or functionality originally submitted to ARELLO is considered a substantive change which requires the submission of a new application. A substantive change in delivery method also requires the submission of a new application.

Synchronous delivery – An education delivery method in which the learner completes a live class by interacting with the instructor and other learners in real time although they may be separated by distance.

Unit – A discrete portion of education centered around a specific topic or subtopic outlined in the course syllabus, typically lasting no more than one instructional hour.

ARELLO RECOGNIZED LEARNING DELIVERY STYLES

Blended learning – A combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning where the learner completes certain portions of the course independently through an LMS as prescribed by the course provider and other scheduled portions through synchronous sessions as prescribed by the course provider.

Flexible learning – A delivery method in which each course module is available in both synchronous and asynchronous delivery methods. This method allows the learner to choose which of the delivery methods they want to use for each course module while fully completing all course modules as verified by the course provider.

Hybrid learning – A synchronous education delivery method in which some participants are present with the instructor in the classroom setting and others are separated by distance.

Mastery-based learning - An instructional approach by which learners progress from one skill or concept to another only when they have exhibited a certain threshold of competence.

I. MISSION STATEMENT

STANDARD 1.1: THE PROVIDER MISSION STATEMENT

The provider's mission statement must be appropriate for career education. It must be clearly stated, publicly available, and reviewed on a periodic basis.

This Standard requires a mission statement from the education provider that explains their purpose, goals, values, and commitments.

Typically, a mission statement should answer the following questions:

- What does the provider do and why?
- How does the provider do it?
- For whom does the provider do it?
- What value does the provider bring to learners?

For Example:

Our school offers professional education for real estate license holders seeking to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities when representing consumers of real estate services. We do this by employing skilled course developers who have a deep understanding of real estate topics and have experience teaching adult learners. Courses are designed with specific learning objectives and methods to assess learning outcomes. Our instructors provide feedback to the learners to further enhance learning outcomes.

Policy 1.1.1 - The provider's program is guided by a clear mission, appropriate for career education.

Procedures

1.1.1a - The course submission must include the provider's mission statement.

1.1.1b - The provider's mission statement must support learning at entry level, continuing career level, or both.

Policy 1.1.2 - The mission statement must be clearly stated, publicly available, and reviewed on a periodic basis.

Procedures

1.1.2a - The provider's mission statement may be posted on the provider's website or any other publicly available forum.

1.1.2b -The provider must have policies in place for periodically reviewing the mission statement and must indicate the frequency of review.

II. COURSE DESIGN

STANDARD 2.1: COURSE DESIGN CRITERIA

Course design is clearly defined, based on sound learning approaches, and instructional strategies for the delivery of distance education.

This Standard requires the provider to explain the principles and theories a course is based upon to ensure mastery of content and development of skills appropriate for professional education courses.

Policy 2.1.1 - Course design must be clearly defined and based on sound learning principles and theories.

Procedures

2.1.1a - Learning principles and theories must be clearly stated and described. The provider must describe specific learning principles and/or theories applied to course development and utilized in course design. For example, mastery-based learning is an instructional approach where learners must demonstrate mastery of one skill or concept prior to advancing to the next. Mastery may be demonstrated by successfully passing a quiz or solving a scenario-based learning exercise. Other checks for mastery may include interactive games or engagement activities.

2.1.1b - The course delivery and design must provide appropriate feedback before the learner is able to move on to the next skill or concept.

STANDARD 2.2 - MISSION GUIDED COURSE DESIGN

Content and learning activities must be consistent with the mission statement which guides the course objectives.

This Standard requires that the mission statement guides the course learning objectives, content, and activities.

Policy 2.2.1 – Learning objectives, content and activities must support the program mission statement.

Procedures

2.2.1a - Courses must be designed with clearly defined learning objectives and desired learning outcomes that align with the program mission statement.

2.2.1b – The number of learning objectives should be appropriate for the content. One learning objective should not exceed three hours of content. One to three learning objectives are considered reasonable for each major topic.

2.2.1c - Learning objectives must be written in performance terms utilizing Bloom’s Taxonomy. Learners must know what they are expected to learn, and the course design must include methods to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching tools. Learning outcomes should be specific for the different types of learning methodologies incorporated into the course design.

2.2.1d – Learning objectives must be developed to support learning outcomes using action words. The following examples illustrate measurable learning objectives:

- *Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to identify and explain the types of agency relationships.*
- *Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to describe licensing requirements for salespeople and brokers. Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to summarize the jurisdiction’s real estate laws governing real estate transactions.*

STANDARD 2.3 - INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The course must include a variety of content appropriate interactive engagement techniques to evaluate the educational effectiveness of the course based on the learning outcomes.

This Standard requires the provider to demonstrate interactive engagement techniques utilized throughout the course design and delivery. Engagement fosters active learning and enhances the degree to which the learner can achieve established learning outcomes. Three well known types of engagement include:

- Learner-to-content engagement, in which the learner interacts with the material presented in the course.
- Learner-to-instructor engagement, in which the instructor and learner interact.
- Learner-to-learner engagement, in which the learner is able to actively engage with other learners.

Policy 2.3.1 – Interactive engagement techniques are a required element of every distance education course.

Procedures

2.3.1a - All assessments are considered interactive engagement techniques, however not all interactivities are considered assessments.

2.3.1b - Each interactive learning technique employed must be an appropriate measurement tool for the learning outcome set forth in the corresponding learning objective.

2.3.1c - The course provider must submit a written rationale describing why each interactive engagement technique is an appropriate measurement tool for the corresponding learning objective.

Policy 2.3.2 – A variety of engaging interactivities appropriate for the content, the delivery method utilized, and the corresponding learning objectives must be employed throughout the course. A provider or course developer cannot utilize only one type of interactive engagement activity throughout the course. Utilizing a variety of methods to engage students fosters active learning.

Procedures

2.3.1a - Interactive engagement techniques must be appropriate for the course content and align with learning objectives. Some examples of engagement techniques that can be utilized to promote interactivity include:

- Games, quizzes, and scenario-based learning exercises.
- Videos and videoconferencing.
- Podcasts.
- Message boards and online forums.
- Chat groups and social media groups.
- Flash cards and poll questions.
- Concept maps.
- Gamification and simulations.

Other engagement techniques can be incorporated if the provider can demonstrate that the interactivity is appropriate for the content.

STANDARD 2.4: CLOCK HOUR VERIFICATION AND TIMING JUSTIFICATION

Distance education courses are required to have time tracking functionality. Clock-hours are quantitatively verified based on the type of instruction.

This Standard requires verification of the quantitative data to support the number of clock hours for which a course is certified.

Policy 2.4.1 - All courses submitted for certification are required to have quantifiable evidence of clock hour request.

Procedures

2.4.1a - Providers are required to submit written documentation of timing justification. A written rationale explaining how the amount of content in the course justifies the amount of time requested is required.

For asynchronous courses, this data may address, but is not limited to, the following course elements:

- Text / written content that is designed to be read by the students;
- Assessments;
- Diagrams;
- Forms;
- Information finding activities;
- External links;
- Video content; and
- Audio content.

For synchronous courses, a detailed timed outline is required for timing justification. Time studies are not required for synchronous.

2.4.1b - ARELLO's methods for quantifying course timing vary based on the type of instruction, as follows:

1. Text/written content that is designed to be read by the students

The course provider must submit a document or chart containing reference to the text/written content that is designed to be read by the students, quantifying the number of words included in said content.

The following measures will be used to calculate the amount of time a learner will spend reading the text/written content for comprehension:

- **BASIC LEVEL – 250 words per minute**
 - **Basic level courses provide content that is more easily understood by individuals entering the profession. An example could be an introductory course or an easier CE course.**
- **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL – 200 words per minute**
 - **Intermediate level courses provide content that builds upon prior knowledge. An example could be pre-licensing or introduction to broker responsibilities course. Most pre-licensing, post licensing or broker courses are considered intermediate level courses.**

- o **ADVANCED LEVEL – 150 words per minute**
 - **Advanced level courses provide specialized information such as mathematical concepts. An example could be the topic of Rate of Return on Investment. The provider must submit a written justification to designate a CE course as an advanced level course.**

2. Assessments

The course provider must submit a document or chart containing all assessment tools and exercises included in the course, the time dedicated to each, and the justification for the timing based on the learning outcome set forth in the corresponding learning objective.

As an example, if a provider chooses to use quizzes with multiple choice items as an assessment tool, then lower order assessment items, such as standard multiple choice, would be included at thirty seconds each, while higher order assessment items, such as questions based on case studies or multiple-choice questions with plausible distractors, are included at one minute each.

3. Diagrams, forms, contracts, or other materials used to promote practical experience, such as commission or association approved contract.

The time required to complete a mandatory follow up activity that is presented immediately after the visit to the external link is used for the timing calculation in this example, not the word count of the material on the external link.

4. Information finding activities within relevant content sources, such as a scavenger hunt for specific information or location of resources within a real estate commission website

The time required to complete a mandatory follow up activity that is presented immediately after the visit to the external link is used for the timing calculation in this example, not the word count of the external link or website(s) used.

5. External Links

The content included in the course through external links to other websites can only be counted in course timing when the course instructions require that the learner read the content and mastery of the content is included in the assessments immediately after visiting the external website. The use of external links should be carefully considered, as it is necessary that they be maintained, and they may also contain third party advertising or promotion.

6. Video and Audio Content

Videos and/or audio content featuring information that supports the course content may be quantified based on the real time duration of the video or audio files, only if they are immediately followed by an activity or assessment that requires a demonstration of content mastery. A simple recap or transcript of the video cannot be used as justification.

When video or audio content is an instructional element that is counted in the timing justification of the course, the provider is required to inactivate the fast forward functionality of the video or audio.

7. Reviews / Summaries

Duplicated content may only be included once in timing calculation. A review section that is written as a summary of previous content may be included in the timing calculation only if it is not a duplication of previous content.

8. Other Content / Activity

For any other type of content and/or activity not listed in these procedures, contact ARELLO staff for direction on the appropriate timing justification.

2.4.1c - For course certification renewal, the provider must provide data reflecting the average time spent on each exercise to justify course timing.

Policy 2.4.2 - All courses submitted for certification are required to have time tracking functionality.

Procedures

2.3.2a - ARELLO will certify courses for only a fixed number of instructional hours.

No variation or range of clock hours shall be approved.

2.4.2b - ARELLO will certify courses in only whole number and half hour increments. Courses will be rounded down to the nearest hour or half hour if submitted for partial hour increments.

2.4.2c - For asynchronous courses, providers are required to have a learning management system (LMS) or presentation platform in place that quantifies the amount of time learners spend in a course. This includes:

- time reading text / written content;
- completing all assessments; and
- participating in other instructional activities.

This requires documentation of learners' average completion in a course.

2.4.2d - All course providers will be required to show evidence that their LMS or presentation platform has time tracking and reporting capability during the initial certification and recertification reviews.

2.4.2e - Learner affidavits or “personal testimony” affirming course time are not accepted at recertification as a means of documenting that a course is taking learners the appropriate amount of time to complete.

2.4.2f - If the course is offered by a secondary provider, the secondary provider will need to quantify the time learners are spending in the course for recertification. Primary providers are required to give secondary providers access to reports in the primary provider’s LMS or presentation platform that allows them to view how long their learners are taking to complete a course. This information will be required to show evidence of this capability during the initial certification and recertification reviews.

Policy 2.4.3 - Time studies are also required to assess appropriate clock hours for asynchronous distance education courses.

Procedures

2.4.3a - There are three acceptable methods primary providers may use to meet the time study requirement.

- The provider can have ten individuals of an appropriate sample audience complete the course and fill out the required ARELLO form. Learners must complete the affidavits provided by ARELLO. Reports received in any other manner will not be accepted.
- The provider may have two qualified professionals, who are experienced with course content and instructional design, complete the course and attest to the appropriate time by completing the required ARELLO form.
- The provider can provide duration data for 50+ learner completions in jurisdictions that do NOT enforce seat time where the course has already been offered.

2.4.3b - Time studies are required for **all** primary provider submissions regardless of whether mandated seat time is used in that course.

2.4.3c - Secondary providers are not required to provide time studies.

2.4.3d - Time studies are not required for courses taught completely by synchronous delivery; however, providers will still be required to submit written documentation of timing justification.

2.4.3e - ARELLO course reviewers reserve the right to reject time studies not validated by their own time study and require a provider to resubmit new time studies.

2.4.3f - If ARELLO finds that its time study substantially differs from the one provided by the course provider, the course may be certified with a reduced number of clock hours or certification may be denied.

Policy 2.4.4 – A course must be offered for the time which is certified by ARELLO. Procedures

Procedures

2.4.4a – A detailed timed outline must be submitted for approval and certification. When courses are offered, the amount of time must be documented using start time and end time for all course offerings.

2.4.4b – Providers will be required to show evidence of start and end times for all synchronous course offerings. Evidence can include:

- Screen captures;
- Time logs;
- Chat logs; and
- Documentation from a moderator, etc.

STANDARD 2.5: REFERENCE MATERIAL

Reference material appropriate to the course is provided to the learner.

This Standard requires verification that information and support materials in the course are valid and applicable to the subject matter. Reference materials provide additional information to support learning outcomes. It is the provider’s responsibility to ensure the reference material used is up to date and that all links are functional.

Policy 2.5.1 – Reference material that is appropriate to the course is provided to the learner.

Procedures

2.5.1a – All reference material included in the course must be included in the course submission.

2.5.1b – Course links must be regularly checked and maintained to ensure accuracy, recency and safeguard against inappropriate pop-up advertisements.

III. ASSESSMENTS

STANDARD 3.1: OPTIONAL PRE-COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Pre-course assessments (pretests) are optional and may be used to set a benchmark for learner mastery when paired with a similar summative assessment.

This Standard addresses the use of optional pre-course assessments that can be used to measure a learner’s pre-existing knowledge. When paired with a summative assessment they can be a tool to gauge a learner’s mastery of course content

Policy 3.1.1 – Pretests are given prior to a learner taking the course and are used to measure the learner’s level of understanding.

Procedures

3.1.1a - Pretests are not required for certification.

3.1.1b - Pretests can serve as interactive engagement techniques that can be attributed to course design.

STANDARD 3.2: MANDATORY INCREMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

The course must incorporate incremental assessments. The course assessments use a variety of content appropriate interactive engagement techniques to evaluate the educational effectiveness of the course based on the learning outcomes.

This Standard requires the use of assessments in course design. Assessment fosters active learning and enhances the degree to which the learner comprehends the course content. A variety of assessment tools can be employed. The type of assessment tools used and how they are administered will be examined. Test banks and computer-managed assessment tools will be reviewed for operational effectiveness and security.

Policy 3.2.1 – Assessments are a required element of every distance education course.

Procedures

3.2.1a - All courses must include at least one assessment for every learning objective within the course and must be designed to properly measure whether mastery of the material has been achieved.

3.2.1b - Items asked upon reassessment may be similar but not identical to the items asked on the initial assessment.

3.2.1c - The course provider must submit a written rationale for why each assessment is an appropriate measurement tool for its corresponding learning objective.

3.2.1.d - Assessment items should be tied to course objectives using Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives for categorizing the level of cognitive skills that commonly occur in educational settings.

3.2.1e - A map of the item to objective relationships must be documented.

Policy 3.2.2 - The assessments included in the course must include a mix of interactive engagement techniques appropriate for the content, delivery method utilized, and corresponding learning objectives.

Procedures

3.2.2a - Assessments must be appropriate for the course content and align with learning objectives. Examples of assessment tools that can be utilized include:

- Multiple choice quizzes or exams;
- Matching exercises;
- Fill in the blank;
- Scenarios, podcasts or videos followed by quiz questions; ● Flash cards; and

Other assessments can be utilized if the provider can demonstrate that the assessment is appropriate for the content.

Policy 3.2.3 - For an asynchronous course, ARELLO requires incremental assessments questions and/or interactive engagement activities be incorporated for every learning objective in the course.

Procedures

3.2.3a – Pre-licensing and post-licensing courses must include at least 10 items per assessment. Continuing education courses must include at least 5 items per assessment.

STANDARD 3.3: MANDATORY ITEM BANKS

If quizzes are used as assessments, asynchronous courses are required to be developed using assessment bank systems with random item selection. Item banks must be used to ensure assessments are fair, random, and based on sound design to ensure mastery of content is achieved.

This Standard requires the use of assessment item banks as a method of ensuring fair and random assessments.

Policy 3.3.1 - Incremental (quizzes) and summative (final exam) assessments for asynchronous courses are required to be developed using assessment bank systems with random item selection.

Procedures

3.3.1a - ARELLO requires the use of a 2:1 ratio of questions stored to questions presented.

3.3.1b - ARELLO will examine the number and type of assessment items to ensure the instrument measures the course objectives.

3.3.1c - True/false questions may not be used on any assessment.

3.3.1d - Providers must ensure that each learner participates in and passes all incremental assessments.

3.3.1e - Providers must ensure that questions in the bank provide adequate distribution across objectives being measured.

3.3.1f - Providers are required to submit all assessment banks with answers to ARELLO for review.

STANDARD 3.4: REMEDIATION REQUIRED FOR ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Remediation is part of sound assessment design and is a safeguard to ensure learners correct misconceptions they have about the course content.

This Standard addresses the requirement to provide remediation within course assessments as a form of feedback and continuous learning for learners. Remediation involves providing a learner who has answered an item incorrectly with an indication of why the answer was incorrect.

Policy 3.4.1 - Asynchronous distance education courses are required to use remediation within the course design.

Procedures

3.4.1a - Remediation is required within the course and takes place during the process of an assessment.

3.4.1b - Remediation must be implemented as a part of the required incremental assessments.

3.4.1c - Remediation includes providing the learner with the correct answer and one of the following:

- An accompanying explanation of the correct answer;
- An explanation of incorrect distractors;
- A review of the content that was missed or
- Other similar elements.

STANDARD 3.5: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Summative assessments are an optional way to evaluate learner mastery of content by comparing learning achieved with the learning objectives and the pre-course assessment when one is used.

This Standard addresses the use of summative assessments within **asynchronous courses**. Summative assessments are utilized at the end of a course to ensure mastery of the overall material presented to the learner.

Policy 3.5.1 - Summative assessments are highly recommended but are not required for ARELLO® certification of asynchronous courses.

Procedures

3.5.1a - Summative assessments must be designed to prevent presentation of identical assessment items

3.5.1b - True/false questions are not allowed in summative assessments.

IV. COURSE DELIVERY

STANDARD 4.1: INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS

Course instructors must be qualified to teach the content, trained in the learning management system and have the sufficient resources necessary to instruct the course. They must be regularly evaluated by the students.

This Standard requires all instructors associated with a course to be qualified. The credentials of the instructors teaching the course must be included in the course submission and must reflect appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience related to the technologies utilized in the course.

Policy 4.1.1 - All instructors associated with an ARELLO certified course must meet minimum requirements.

Procedures

4.1.1a - A qualified instructor must hold a current Certified Distance Education Instructor (CDEI) certification.

4.1.1b - A qualified instructor must be competent to teach the material presented within the course.

4.1.1c - A qualified instructor must have sufficient time and resources to respond to learner inquiries.

4.1.1d - A qualified instructor must be proficient in the use of the provider's learning management system (LMS).

4.1.1e - Evaluation of the instructor by the learner is required for all courses.

STANDARD 4.2: LEARNER SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Learners have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support their learning, including qualified support staff.

This Standard addresses the need to ensure learners are adequately supported in their learning by individuals qualified to provide adequate and proper content and learning support.

Policy 4.2.1 - Instructors and those providing learner support must be qualified.

Procedures

4.2.1a - The CDEI™ instructor must possess the knowledge and experience necessary to teach the course for which they are approved.

4.2.1b - Providers shall provide a policy manual for instructor selection and management.

The policy must include, but is not limited to:

- Criteria for instructor selection;
- An instructor development plan;
- Training on the learning management system; and
- Instructor-to- learner response time expectations.

4.2.1c - Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) providing content support must hold a current CDEI™ designation.

4.2.1d - The course submission must include documentation of either the instructor applicant having been directly involved in the development of the course or having successfully completed the course.

4.2.1e - The instructor and those providing learner support must be trained in the use of the learning management system (LMS) or presentation platform.

Policy 4.2.2 - Accurate contact and credential information must be provided with the course application and updated as necessary.

Procedures

4.2.2a - Instructor credentials must be submitted with the application and reflect experience and expertise in the subject matter and the delivery method.

4.2.2b - If instructors change or new instructors are added, credentials must be submitted and approved by ARELLO before they can teach or instructionally support the course.

4.2.2c - Instructor contact information is required to be provided to the learner in the course orientation/syllabus and must be available throughout the course. **4.2.2d** - Learners must be able to contact the instructor for any content questions.

Policy 4.2.3 - The provider must ensure there are sufficient instructors and support staff for each course so that learners receive a response to questions within 48 hours or less.

Procedures

4.2.3a - The provider must create a policy to ensure the instructor and support staff assigned to a course is sufficient to ensure a 48 hour or less response time for each learner question. The policy must also address how the provider will handle situations when the response time goes beyond 48 hours.

4.2.3b - For synchronous learning, one moderator is required:

- For up to 50 learners in Basic Level courses – Designed for entry-level students.

- For up to 40 learners in Intermediate Level courses – Designed for students with some topic knowledge. Most post licensing and broker courses are considered intermediate level courses.
- For up to 30 learners for Advanced Level courses - Designed for students with advanced knowledge.

For synchronous learning sessions involving more than the stated number of learners, a second moderator must be utilized.

4.2.3c - Synchronous learning moderators are not required to hold a CDEI certification.

STANDARD 4.3: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PROVIDERS

Course providers develop written policies and procedures for instructors and support staff to ensure student success throughout the course. When secondary providers are used, the primary provider is responsible for providing appropriate support materials to the secondary provider.

This Standard requires the provider to have written policies and procedures for instructors and support staff. Primary providers are responsible for supplying secondary providers with instructional guides and materials.

Policy 4.3.1 - Provider support must be sufficient to ensure course objectives are met.

Procedures

4.3.1a - If a primary provider has a relationship with a secondary provider, the primary provider must supply the secondary provider with the necessary support.

4.3.1b - Primary providers must supply access to the LMS or presentation platform.

4.3.1c - All providers must ensure the approved CDEI™ instructor monitors learner progress in the course and performs appropriate follow-up when necessary.

4.3.1d - All providers must supply contact information for learner support related to content, technical support, and administrative assistance.

4.3.1e - The secondary provider will submit documentation that clearly states the responsibilities of the primary and the secondary provider at time of certification. It should be clearly documented as to which provider is responsible for providing support services to the learner.

4.3.1f - Secondary providers must supply their own course orientation that complies with the certification requirements.

Policy 4.3.2 - ARELLO requires primary providers to develop a reference manual for secondary providers.

Procedures

4.3.2a- The secondary provider's manual should contain but not be limited to:

- Instructional strategies for the secondary provider that may enhance the course;
- Information on how to access administrative features of a course used in monitoring learner progress;
- Information pertaining to course design and delivery that may be necessary for secondary providers to obtain prior to receiving ARELLO Distance Education certification;
 - For example, a manual might include comments on the course instructional design that would help secondary providers understand how to answer the necessary questions on the secondary provider application form for certification; and
- Technical support information.

Policy 4.3.3 - Secondary providers must be trained in the use of the learning management system (LMS) or presentation platform by the primary provider.

Procedures

4.3.3a - Primary providers must provide access to the LMS or presentation platform.

4.3.3b - The instructor(s) for the secondary provider must complete the course and submit the certificate of completion with the course submission.

V. COURSE MAINTENANCE

STANDARD 5.1: QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF CONTENT

Course content is accurate and timely, demonstrated by regular course review and content updates as needed.

This Standard requires the provider to perform regular course content reviews to ensure the materials remain timely and accurate. An annual review of the course content is required; however more frequent content reviews may be conducted based on learner and/or instructor feedback, regulatory changes, modifications to standard industry practice, and so forth.

Policy 5.1.1 - Course content must be timely and accurate.

Procedures

5.1.1a - Course submissions must include an attestation from the provider that all courses will have an annual review by designated qualified individuals. Such individuals can include program administrators, instructors, or a committee of subject matter experts from the industry.

5.1.1b - Changes to course content must be made as quickly as practically possible when applicable.

5.1.1c - Course recertification submissions must include documentation of the annual content review conducted on the course and the subsequent revisions made, if any.

STANDARD 5.2: SUBSTANTIVE COURSE CHANGES MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND REPORTED TO ARELLO

Substantive course changes must be documented and timely reported to ARELLO. In the case of regulated professions, such changes must be documented and reported to the appropriate regulatory agency.

This Standard requires the provider to notify the appropriate individuals when changes have been made to a course certified by ARELLO. By its very nature, distance education and technology change often. It is necessary to document and keep a record of all changes.

Policy 5.2.1 - Courses must be offered as they are certified.

Procedures

5.2.1a - Providers are prohibited from manipulating the instructional design of the course without approval by ARELLO.

Policy 5.2.2 - The provider must report any substantive change made to a course after it has been certified by ARELLO and any appropriate regulatory agencies in accordance with applicable rule and statute.

Procedures

5.2.1a - Substantive changes that must be reported include but are not limited to:

- Major content revisions such as expanded or reduced content;
- A change in the number of credit hours for which a course is certified;
- Modified learning objectives;
- Changes in delivery method;
- New administration and/or owners;
- New facilities or locations; and
- Additions, removals, or modification of course instructors.

5.2.2b - Simple updating of material is to be expected and does not constitute a significant change.

5.2.2c - When substantive changes have been reported to regulatory agencies, copies of **such documentation must accompany the recertification submission**. This provides background information in the application review process.

Policy 5.2.3 - Providers must give advance notice of substantive changes to a course.

Procedures

5.2.3a - A provider considering substantive change(s) to a course(s) must notify ARELLO in writing of any proposed changes sixty (60) days in advance of the change.

5.2.3b - ARELLO may require fulfillment of certain application requirements, depending on the nature of the change(s) to the course(s).

VI. EQUIPMENT AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

STANDARD 6.1: TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT MUST BE ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THE DISTANCE LEARNING APPROACHES UTILIZED

The provider must specify the equipment necessary for the distance delivery system, including details of reliability and selection criteria, and ensure proper technology and equipment is used by both the provider and the learners.

This Standard requires the provider to specify the necessary equipment, hardware and software specifications needed by the learner and provider for any given course, including any other requirements necessary. This Standard helps ensure that there is proper and adequate equipment for the delivery of the instruction. Back-up plans for equipment failure are also a factor covered in this Standard.

Policy 6.1.1 - The necessary and appropriate technological equipment is specified for the distance delivery system.

Procedures

6.1.1a - The provider must have adequate technology, bandwidth, and equipment necessary to support the learning approach and interactivity utilized in the course.

6.1.1b - The provider must submit documentation with their course submission outlining their:

- Equipment specifications and performance information
- Back-up systems and procedure for equipment and system failures
- Detailed delivery system information

6.1.1c - Any technology and equipment requirements must be clearly listed in the course registration materials. Specifications for learners must include:

- Equipment required by the learner;
- Software required by the learner; and
- Computer speed, memory, bandwidth, and special peripherals.

6.1.1d - The technology platform(s) utilized by the provider must support the number of learners enrolled in the course or class session.

STANDARD 6.2: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MUST BE ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THE DISTANCE LEARNING APPROACHES UTILIZED

Learning environments adequate to support the distance learning approaches utilized must be demonstrated.

This Standard requires that the learning environment, whether online or at a physical location, be appropriate to support the optimal learning experience.

Policy 6.2.1 - The provider is responsible for providing and maintaining an adequate distance learning environment for all learners.

Procedures

6.2.1a - The provider must comply with all federal law and regulations governing accessibility, including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act.

6.2.1b - The use of **synchronous courses** may require satellite locations. When utilizing these, the course submission must include the following information:

- The number of satellite locations for any given course;
- Duties and credentials of site instructors or coordinators who are utilized;
- The number and size of the monitors at satellite locations related to room size and the number of learners at each location;
- Instructions for site instructors or moderators regarding the verification of learner identity ;
- A copy of the instructions for site moderators; and
- Whether or not technicians are needed at the satellite locations and, if so, how many and a list of their qualifications.

VII. COURSE DELIVERY AND LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

STANDARD 7.1: PROVIDER POLICIES MUST BE SUPPLIED TO LEARNERS

Provider policies must be clearly stated and provided early in the course. Learner progress is monitored throughout the course.

This Standard requires that all learners receive accurate and clearly stated information about admission, progression, completion criteria, dismissal, and any applicable licensing requirements. Learners must be provided with complete information on the nature and the specifics of the distance education course or program.

The information supplied must cover all information necessary to succeed in the distance education environment. The material must address the special requirements that the distance education course may require. The availability of technical support for the learners is one of the required policies.

Policy 7.1.1 - Provider policies must be presented to the learner either before or at the beginning of every course.

Procedures

7.1.1a - The provider policies must cover the following areas:

- Registration procedures;
- All course fees, including the costs of required supplemental materials;
- Absence and completion extension policy;
- Refund, withdrawal, and cancellation procedures including information on any penalties for withdrawing/canceling after specific dates;
- Technical requirements, such as software, specialized Internet providers, etc.;
- Technology support services are available to learners, including contact information and times of availability;
- Prerequisites, if applicable;
- Instructor information;
- Clear specific information on any deadlines required in the course including any completion and assignment requirements;
- **For synchronous learning**, a class schedule and information on policies regarding make up of missed sessions, if applicable;
- Information on assignments and homework, where applicable, and all pertinent instructions;
- A clear policy regarding any form of cheating or misrepresenting learner identity;
- Final exam information, including specifics about type and delivery of exam;
- A clear policy on missed quizzes, exams, and any retake opportunities;
- Information on the procedure for requesting a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Resource information;
- Information regarding the issuance of a certificate upon completion of the course; and ● An explanation of how credit will be reported to applicable regulatory agencies.

Policy 7.1.2 - Providers are required to monitor learner progress.

Procedures

7.1.2a - Providers must monitor the qualitative characteristics of the course. This includes:

- Course completion and dropout rates;
- Remediation frequency;

- Course completion times;
- Instructor response times; and
- Interactivity.

7.1.2b - The provider must provide an explanation of how the instructor monitors learner progress throughout the course as a part of the course submission process.

7.1.2c - The provider must have policies in place for how the instructor will address learners who are not making adequate progress throughout the course, particularly for pre-license and post- license courses as they are typically longer and contain more substantive information.

7.1.2d - The provider must provide an explanation of how they will monitor learner progress as part of the course submission process.

7.1.2e - The provider must indicate average response time to learner questions in the course renewal process

STANDARD 7.2: COURSES MUST INCLUDE AN ORIENTATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE

Courses must include an orientation with the instructor or approved advisor. Mechanisms are clearly in place that allow learners an early orientation to discuss course specifics.

This Standard requires an orientation. The orientation is a method by which the learner learns additional information related to the course. It is the time when the learner is linked to the course, and expectations and contact information are clearly defined. The orientation should be provided prior to the beginning of the course. Ideally, the orientation should provide the opportunity for the learner to be introduced to the instructor assigned to this course and provide an opportunity for the learner to ask questions.

This Standard closely examines how an orientation is presented in relation to the design of the course. No matter how well course management systems are utilized in online education, there remains a need for a learner to ask an instructor a question when material is not clear to the learner. The orientation session should clearly define all important course information, as well as other important matters related to the smooth learning environment.

Policy 7.2.1 - Courses must have an orientation provided at the beginning of the course.

Procedures

7.2.1a - The orientation must clearly describe all important course information, as well as other important matters related to the learning environment. Important course information includes:

- Name and direct contact information of the instructor;
- Instructor availability and standard response time;
- Course description;
- Prerequisites for the course (if any);

- Criteria for successful completion of the course;
- Assessment information;
- Refund policies;
- Equipment and system requirements;
- Any relevant state or jurisdiction specific requirements; and
- Technical support availability and contact information.

For synchronous learning, the orientation must also include:

- Information regarding the equipment and system requirements, which must include a test and confirmation of access to a reliable internet connection and a computer with functioning video camera and audio;
- A contingency plan regarding technical issues;
- How credit will be reported to regulatory agencies, if applicable; and
- A code of conduct for the course provider and learners. The code of conduct must address:
 - The requirement for cameras to stay on at all times and learner to be visible on the screen without the use of still pictures or icons;
 - The requirement for learners to be present for the duration of the course with the only exception being a temporary loss of connection of up to fifteen concurrent minutes each contact hour;
 - The requirement for learners must behave appropriately and pay attention as if they were sitting in a classroom;
 - The requirement for learners to participate and not engage in other activities such as driving, answering or making phone calls, talking with people who are not involved in the course, or anything else unrelated to the course. Learners may not use the course chat tool to engage in general or personal conversations.

7.2.1b - The orientation should include an introduction to the instructor assigned to the course.

7.2.1c - The orientation should advise the learner of the procedure for asking questions of the instructor throughout the course.

7.2.1d - The orientation may be provided via the program in some other format in advance of the beginning of the course.

7.2.1e - Providers are required to give learners a course syllabus and/or learner manual upon registration or no later than the day preceding the course start date to ensure learners are aware of all expectations, requirements, and policies.

7.2.1f - The orientation must contain an acknowledgement by the learner that the learner has read and understands the orientation.

7.2.1g - Secondary providers must supply their own orientation.

STANDARD 7.3 FUNCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTED BY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS

Equipment and delivery for the course must be supported and maintained by qualified individuals.

This Standard requires documentation providing evidence the course is supported by individuals who are trained to handle the technical aspects of course delivery. The certification process examines technologies and strategies utilized in the delivery of the courses.

Policy 7.3.1 - Providers must identify qualified individuals responsible for maintaining the equipment and delivery systems for the course.

Procedures

7.3.1a - The provider must supply the credentials of these individuals as part of the certification process.

7.3.1b - When an education provider utilizes an outside vendor for delivery and technical support for a course, the names, credentials, and contact information of those individuals must be included with the course submission.

7.3.1c - The provider must identify the specific responsibilities of the vendor in relation to delivery of the course. This is particularly common for secondary providers who use proprietary material from a course developer.

VIII. EVALUATIONS

STANDARD 8.1: COURSE EVALUATIONS REQUIRED TO MEASURE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The course must have a mechanism to evaluate educational effectiveness and learner satisfaction.

This Standard requires the provider to develop and make available a course and instructor evaluation form to assess the achievement of learning objectives, learner comprehension and retention and instructor satisfaction. Feedback from learners should be used for the purpose of instructional and design improvement.

Policy 8.1.1 - Distance education courses are required to have evaluations of the learning experience.

Procedures

8.1.1a - All courses certified through ARELLO are required to have an evaluation of the learning experience.

8.1.1b - The evaluation must assess the effectiveness of the instructor, instructional support, course delivery, and course content.

8.1.1c - It is recommended that the questions from the standard ARELLO course evaluation instrument be used; however, the educational provider can adopt a recognized course evaluation instrument that is in general use and has been recognized as valid for evaluation of distance education courses.

8.1.1d - If the ARELLO evaluation is not used, the learner evaluation tool for the course must be submitted with the application for certification.

STANDARD 8.2: EVALUATIONS MUST BE PROVIDED TO INSTRUCTORS

Evaluation data must be made available to instructors and ARELLO.

This Standard requires providers to compile and share course evaluation information with the course instructors and to submit it to ARELLO with course recertifications. This important feedback tool allows the provider to continue their commitment to providing quality distance education.

Policy 8.2.1 - Providers are required to transmit or otherwise provide course evaluation data to instructors in a timely manner.

Procedures

8.2.1a - The provider must include a copy of the course evaluation they will use with the application for certification.

8.2.3b - The provider must have policies in place addressing how and when course evaluation data will be provided to instructors.

STANDARD 8.3: MAINTENANCE OF EVALUATION DATA

Evaluation data must be maintained in a format that allows for compilation and delivery to ARELLO for course recertification.

This Standard requires providers to compile and maintain evaluation data so that it may be submitted with course recertifications.

Policy 8.3.1 - Providers are required to compile and maintain course review data from course evaluation forms.

Procedures

8.3.1a - Learner evaluations must be compiled and maintained and made available for review upon request during the certification period.

8.3.1b - The learner evaluation data must be maintained on each course for recertification.

8.3.1c - Tabulation of the responses to each question presented in the evaluation is required for recertification of the course.

8.3.1d - All evaluation comments must be included with the course recertification application.

STANDARD 8.4: COURSE COMPLETION RATES

Completion data for each course must be maintained and made available to ARELLO.

The Standard requires data to be provided on completion rates for every course. If a course is new, there will be no data.

Policy 8.4.1 - Providers are required to compile and maintain course completion data for each course certified by ARELLO.

Procedures

8.4.1a - Learner completion data includes but is not limited to:

- Learner enrollment statistics;
- Average completion time;
- Performance data for activities; and
- Assessment scoring data.

8.4.1b - The completion data must be included with the course recertification application.

IX. DATA SECURITY AND LEARNER IDENTITY

STANDARD 9.1: SECURE AND ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNER IDENTITY

The course must provide secure and accurate documentation of the learner's identity.

This Standard addresses the required methods for documenting learner identity. The provider must demonstrate that they have a process in place to verify the learner's identity. This includes but is not limited to signed affidavits which are maintained by the provider.

Policy 9.1.1 – All courses are required to provide secure and accurate documentation of learner identity.

Procedures

9.1.1a - The provider must explain what methods and tools are utilized to ensure proper sufficient proof of learner identity.

9.1.1b - If the provider uses a signed affidavit from the learner attesting to the learner's identity and completion of the course, these records must be maintained.

X. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS SEEKING CERTIFICATION

STANDARD 10.1: COURSE CERTIFICATION

The course application and required documentation must provide evidence to support certification of the course.

This Standard addresses the course certification process for new course submissions. Each course application serves as a self-evaluation of the distance education practice of the provider for each course for which the provider is seeking certification.

Policy 10.1.1 - Effective January 1, 2025, updated changes to the standards, policies, and procedures for certification and recertification will take effect. The appropriate application must be submitted with a non-refundable course application fee and all applicable documentation. Any petitions for exceptions to the deadline for certification or recertification must be submitted in writing to the Education Certification Committee for review and approval, or applicants risk delays or ineligibility.

Procedures

10.1.1a - A properly completed primary application is required for each course. For courses utilizing a secondary provider, the secondary provider must also fill out the corresponding application.

10.1.1b - Submissions must be made online through the Course Management System. To obtain a provider profile, applicants must contact the ARELLO Director of Distance Education.

10.1.1c - Each course is reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the ARELLO Distance Education Standards, Policies, & Procedures.

10.1.1d - Applications must be complete at the time of submission. ARELLO may grant a grace period of up to thirty days to allow a provider to comply with ARELLO application requirements when good cause for incomplete submission is found. If a provider fails to submit a complete application, the application will be canceled, and fees are forfeited.

STANDARD 10.2: COURSE REVIEW

Courses submitted for certification will be reviewed for design and delivery and will be measured against the ARELLO Distance Education Standards and Policies & Procedures. Courses that do not meet the minimum standards will not be granted certification or recertification.

This Standard addresses course reviewer selection criteria, the design and delivery review process, and the grounds for course denial.

Policy 10.2.1 - Each course submitted to ARELLO for certification will undergo course review by a competent reviewer.

Procedures

10.2.1a - ARELLO Headquarters will perform a course design and delivery review for all initial synchronous distance education courses.

10.2.1b - ARELLO Headquarters engages the services of independent distance education consultants (referred to as “Reviewers”) that perform course design and delivery review for all initial asynchronous distance education courses.

10.2.1c - ARELLO Headquarters will perform a course design and delivery review for all distance education courses submitted for recertification.

10.2.1d - The reviewers and staff designated by ARELLO to perform reviews must meet established criteria.

Policy 10.2.2 - Each course submitted to ARELLO for certification must include the necessary information for a full design and delivery review to be completed.

Procedures

10.2.2a - Each course is assigned to a reviewer who may utilize the Course Management System for additional information as is deemed necessary to complete an objective evaluation. The length of the review will depend on the quality and quantity of information provided, and the speed of the provider’s return response.

10.2.2b - The provider must grant access to asynchronous distance education courses in two ways:

- Learner access will present all material and activities to the reviewer as the learner will access it and all required assessments must be set to the same pass rate as the course will require after certification.
- Reviewer access will allow the reviewer to freely move throughout the course. Learner and review access must be provided at the time of course submission.

10.2.2c - The provider must provide access to all synchronous course information and documentation which includes but is not limited to:

- The timed outline;
- Course narrative;
- Audiovisual materials, including slideshow presentations
- Planned activities and
- Any other information or material which will be used during the course delivery.

Policy 10.2.3 - ARELLO may deny certification of any course submitted by a provider.

Procedures

10.2.3a - ARELLO will deny certification to any course that does not meet the ARELLO Standards based on the review.

10.2.3b - ARELLO will deny certification for any course with deficiencies cited by the reviewer which are not remediated by the provider within the period identified for correction. If the provider has not responded timely, the application will be deemed abandoned, and fees forfeited.

10.2.3c - ARELLO will deny certification for any course submitted by a provider whose owners and/or instructors have a documentable record of breaching public trust to ensure public protection against course providers who may operate unethically. Breaching public trust may include, but is not limited to:

- Felony convictions; and
- Disciplinary action on a jurisdictional license.

ARELLO reserves the right to perform limited background checks on those owners or instructors associated with certified courses.

10.2.3d - ARELLO will deny or revoke certification for any course which is found to contain plagiarized material. Providers must follow applicable copyright law and include proper attribution for material that is the property of another.

STANDARD 10.3: CONFIDENTIALITY

Upon certification, information from the course application and submission package will be shared upon request. Pending course applications are confidential during the review process.

This Standard addresses the burden of confidentiality placed on ARELLO Headquarters and the course reviewers during the course certification process.

Policy 10.3.1 - ARELLO personnel will take appropriate steps to protect the intellectual property, copyrights, and trademarks of applicants.

Procedures

10.3.1a - During the review of an applicant's submission, access to the application and any supporting documentation submitted is restricted to ARELLO personnel involved in the certification process.

10.3.1b - Once an applicant's submission is approved and certification has been communicated to the applicant, the applicant's identity will become public record.

10.3.1c - At any point after approval, an application package may be shared, upon request, with ARELLO regulatory members. The applicant will be notified when an application package has been provided to a regulatory member.

STANDARD 10.4: COMPLIANCE AFTER CERTIFICATION

Certification guarantees that a course meets the criteria established for distance education courses and allows the provider the right to use the ARELLO logo as directed. Regular audit of courses is necessary to ensure continued compliance.

This Standard requires continued compliance throughout the certification period. ARELLO may audit courses for compliance throughout the certification period. Once a course is certified by ARELLO, the course must be maintained in compliance with the Standards. Certification may be suspended or revoked for noncompliance.

Policy 10.4.1 - Certification is granted when a submission is in compliance with the ARELLO Standards and Policies, & Procedures.

Procedures

10.4.1a - The provider will be promptly notified through the Course Management System when the course has been certified and certificates are available for download in the Course Management System.

10.4.1b - Summary certificates listing a description of certified courses will be published online as proof of certification on the ARELLO and/or IDECC website.

Policy 10.4.2 - Providers may not use the ARELLO certification logo without current certification.

Procedures

10.4.2a - Providers must use the ARELLO certification logo or “Course Design and Delivery Certified by ARELLO” on learners’ course completion certificates for courses certified by ARELLO.

10.4.2b - Providers may advertise certified courses as “Course Design and Delivery Certified by ARELLO” if certification is current and in good standing.

10.4.2c - Courses advertised as ARELLO certified must be offered in the way they are certified.

10.4.2d - Providers advertising certified courses must ensure the delivery method, course titles, and clock hours advertised are consistent with the ARELLO certification summary certificate.

10.4.2e - Secondary providers may not advertise that a course is ARELLO certified unless:

- The primary provider has submitted the course and been granted certification.
- The secondary provider has also submitted the course to ARELLO and been granted certification.

Policy 10.4.3 - Providers must notify ARELLO of any change in provider accreditation, approval, or jurisdictional licensure status.

Procedures

10.4.3a - A provider must notify ARELLO in writing within thirty days of any denial, suspension, revocation, probation, or any other final or interim adverse action by any state agency or other regulatory body affecting any accreditation status of the provider, its programs, courses, or instructors.

10.4.3b - An instructor who is convicted of or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to any crime other than a traffic violation must make a written report thereof to ARELLO within thirty days after the conviction or plea.

Policy 10.4.4 - ARELLO is authorized to perform course audits.

Procedures

10.4.4a - At any point during the time a course is certified, ARELLO may, on its own initiative, or on behalf of a stakeholder, perform the following enforcement procedures for primary and/or secondary providers that include but are not limited to:

- Anonymously audit courses;
- Randomly audit courses to ensure course design is consistent with certification;
- Request that the provider document historical information pertaining to learner completion time;
- Request documentation of evaluation data from learners that have completed the course;
- Request the provider verify course orientation;
- Request documentation of instructor interaction with learners
- Monitor the advertising regarding certified courses and
- Address concerns brought to ARELLO Headquarters by stakeholders.

STANDARD 10.5: RECERTIFICATION

The recertification process ensures a course continues to meet the requirements for certification and is required every three years.

This Standard addresses recertification requirements and the timelines associated with recertification.

Policy 10.5.1 - Providers must file an application for recertification every three (3) years.

Procedures

10.5.1a - Prior to the expiration of certification but no later than 90 days before the expiration date, the provider must file an application for recertification.

10.5.1b - A late recertification fee applies to any recertification application submitted less than 90 days prior to the expiration date.

10.5.1c - ARELLO may waive the late fee when good cause for late recertification is provided.

10.5.1d - If ARELLO needs additional time to consider and take final action on the recertification application, ARELLO may extend the current certification period for up to 120 days.

10.5.1e - The course will not be eligible for recertification after the expiration date.

STANDARD 10.6: APPEALS

Providers are entitled the right to timely appeal the decision to deny a course.

This Standard addresses the right of any provider to timely appeal decisions made by ARELLO and outlines the process for contesting an appeal decision made by the ARELLO CEO.

Policy 10.6.1 - Any stakeholder may appeal decisions made by ARELLO.

Procedures

10.6.1a - Stakeholders may dispute the decision made by ARELLO through the review appeal process.

10.6.1b - Certification or recertification decisions made by ARELLO that may be appealed are:

- Issuance;
- Denial;
- Revocation;
- Suspension; and
- Withdrawal.

10.6.1c - Appealable actions are limited to four grounds outlined below.

- ARELLO or its agents failed to consider all evidence and documentation presented in favor of a provider's application or audit documentation.
- ARELLO or its agents acted erroneously by disregarding its own Standards and Policies & Procedures.
- Bias was demonstrated by ARELLO or its agents.
- Evidence provided to the course reviewers at the time of the decision was materially in error.

10.6.1d - The appeal must relate to one of the grounds cited above and written justification must be provided with the appeal request. The request must include:

- A written appeal request stating the grounds for the appeal;
- A list of Distance Education Certification Standards and Policies & Procedures pertinent to the contested decision and appeal; and
- Supporting documentation, including any appended program responses.

Policy 10.6.2 - There is a limited timeframe for appeal of any decision referenced herein and requests for information must be handled in a timely manner.

Procedures

10.6.2a - The appellant must submit the written appeal and supporting documentation to the ARELLO CEO no later than thirty calendar days from the date of the contested decision.

10.6.2b - The appellant must provide any additional documents or records requested by ARELLO within the timeframe identified by ARELLO within the request for additional information.

Policy 10.6.3 - ARELLO will follow an established procedure for timely review of any appeal request.

Procedures

10.6.3a - After receiving the written appeal, the ARELLO CEO will review the appeal and consult with the ARELLO Distance Education Staff on the decision.

10.6.3b - ARELLO will have full access to documents and records filed during the initial certification and any recertifications, to assist in the appeal determination.

10.6.3c - The ARELLO CEO will notify the appellant in writing of the appeal decision within thirty days of receipt of the appeal.

Policy 10.6.4 - If the appellant disagrees with the decision of the CEO, they may submit a final appeal in writing to the ARELLO Education Certification Committee (ECC) for consideration in a formal hearing. Such appeals are administrative, non-judicial hearings.

Procedures

10.6.4a - The ECC may appoint a subcommittee to review the appeal.

10.6.4b - During any hearing, the appellant and ARELLO shall have the right to:

- Be represented by a representative(s) of their choice;
- Be present during any hearing and
- Present oral testimony keeping within any established time limits.

10.6.4c - If the appellant does not wish to appear, the matter will be heard and decided based on the evidence submitted

10.6.4d - The ECC or appointed subcommittee deliberations following the conclusion of any hearing and its subsequent decision process will be in closed session.

10.6.4e - ECC hearings will only be heard at scheduled meetings of the ECC.

10.6.4f - During the hearing process, the ECC or appointed subcommittee may take either of the following actions:

- Affirm the decision of the CEO or
- Overturn the decision and vote for other action.

10.6.4g – The Chair of the ECC will notify the appellant of the hearing decision in writing within forty-five (45) days following the meeting.

10.6.4h - If the ECC affirms the prior decision of the ARELLO CEO, there is no further remedy available to the appellant.

10.6.4i - The decision of the ECC will be final and binding on all parties.

STANDARD 10.7: FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Certification of courses in a language other than English can be granted.

This Standard establishes that courses may be approved in a foreign language.

Policy 10.7.1 - Courses offered in a foreign language may be submitted to ARELLO for approval as long as there is an equivalent course with the same learning platform and methodology already approved in English.

Procedures

10.7.1a - Providers may submit a course delivered in a foreign language and must sign an affidavit that the course is the same course that is approved in English with the same learning platform and methodology already approved in English.

DISTANCE EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE

TEACHING AND DESIGN TIPS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

This section is an overview of teaching tips that can enhance the delivery of distance education courses. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide tips for any given site or mix of media of any given application. The various media require careful attention to the uniqueness of the different technologies. The tips presented here are some practical approaches to distance education that will help in the delivery of most distance education courses.

Unique Characteristics of Adult Learners

- They are self-directed.
- They prefer control over their learning environment.
- Flexibility is key.
- They value using their past experience to connect to new content.
- Education should add value to their professional lives.
- They may be more resistant to change.
- Quizzes and self-mastery checks can help them maintain their motivation.
- They are highly competitive.
- Page design and layout are important in online distance education. Adult learners do not like cumbersome navigation in online courses.

Course Development

- Keep navigation simple and easy to use. Learners should be able to look at a page and know how to move around.
- Use current examples in case studies and assignments.
- Be consistent with the use of icons.
- Graphics should have an educational purpose.
- Use good judgment in the amount of material delivered in a session.
- Be concise. Keep in mind that technology linkages absorb time.
- Humanize the delivery by focusing on the learners, not the technology.
- Intersperse the course with presentations, discussions, and interactions.
- Start each session with the specific objectives for the session.
- Summarize each session before it ends.
- Be prepared for equipment failure. It will happen.
- Make the format consistent to enhance the presentation.
- Keep the format easy to read.
- Organize content well, use paragraphs, and keep things in a logical sequence.
- Consider readability.
- Use simple sentences.
- Avoid jargon and difficult words.
- Use an active voice.

- Personal pronouns can be helpful to engage the learner.
- Relevant examples are helpful to ensure understanding of a concept.
- Consider a variety of instructional techniques and interactions.

Interaction

- Know your learners including their needs, motivations, learning styles, prior knowledge, and expectations.
- Tailor your course to the experience level of your audience.
- Develop discussion questions, case studies, and exercises that get learners interacting with you and each other when the course design permits it.
- Reinforce the distance education learner by providing timely feedback.
- Define the communication policies so that the learners know the guidelines on how and when to use communication tools.
- Consider how much time can be devoted to email and discussion boards when planning the course.
- When using multiple satellite locations, include the learners from each location in your instruction.
- Know who participates and who does not. Contact those who do not.
- Provide feedback often.
- If a moderator is used at a satellite location, ensure that the person is an active facilitator of interaction.
- Alternate between instructional delivery and interaction.
- Use interactivity at regular intervals to check what learners have learned so far in the course.
For synchronous classes, ask learners at selected intervals in the class, "What have you learned?" These are important informal feedback points. Encourage learner evaluation.
- When possible, establish exercises in the course where the learners will work in small groups.

Ideas for Interactive Activities

- Structured activities
 - Matching exercises
 - Editable forms
 - Case studies
 - Demonstration
- Non-structured activities
 - Discussion boards
 - Discovery learning
 - Written responses to instructor
 - Solution to scenarios
- Group work
 - Collaborative projects
 - Small group discussions
 - Role play
- Individual work
 - Research assignments
 - Topical reports
 - Simulation problems

Instructor Preparation for Synchronous Courses

- Be prepared in advance. Distance education courses do not run well "on the fly." ● Be familiar with the content being taught and able to answer any questions.

- Be familiar with the delivery system and any peripheral technologies involved in the course delivery, and know channels for technical support.
- Be able to address any learner problems or questions in a timely manner.
- Offer flexible office hours. This includes electronic office hours so that learners can contact the instructor easily since many are working adults.
- Be familiar with the time required to effectively manage the distance education environment.
- Don't forget the print. It is still valuable and can be delivered by electronic means.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is a large and comprehensive topic in education. This section focuses on items and topics that are primarily of interest in distance education. There are two main types of evaluation. Evaluations can be a combination of both.

Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is an on-going process. The goal is to collect information for evaluation purposes frequently. Information from such feedback can help improve the course and the instructional strategies.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation gathers information for evaluation purposes at the end of the course.

What Should Be Evaluated?

Whether one uses formative or summative evaluations or a combination of both, there are some main areas of courses about which information should be gathered. Instructors and administrators should encourage evaluation; it can be the best tool to identify areas of a course that need improvement. Here are some common areas that should be evaluated:

Technology Being Used

- What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there problems?
- Is the technology familiar or unfamiliar?
- How can it be improved?

Assessments

- Are there too many or too few assessments?
- Is there adequate review before quizzes and exams? ● Is there enough time allotted?
- Is the level of difficulty appropriate?
- Is remediation available?
- Are exams graded on a timely basis and with adequate feedback?

Course Delivery

- Is the course well-structured and organized?
- Is the course content timely and relevant?
- Are there opportunities for participation?
- Do learners have the opportunity to communicate with the instructor? ● Is there a supportive atmosphere?
- Is content delivery effective?
- Are assignments relevant and useful?
- Are assignments responded to promptly?
- Are the syllabus and any workbooks adequate?

Support Services

- Is there adequate help with any technologies employed?
- Is there a qualified instructor available to answer content questions?
- Are the questions answered promptly?
- Are reference materials available?
- Are advising and help available?
- Are support services available when needed?

General Guidelines

When developing feedback tools, make sure that there are specific questions related to the technologies. Technologies have strengths and weaknesses. Design questions to see if there are any areas for improvement given the technologies employed. Ask questions related to interaction and ask if the technology was effective in the course delivery.

Include open-ended questions. Ask learners to identify course strengths and weaknesses and ask what changes they would suggest. Open-ended questions take more time to review and tend to be more subjective. However, such information may reveal problems that are difficult to expose with purely objective methods of feedback. Here are some examples:

- List three weaknesses of the course.
- If you were the instructor, what would you do differently?
- List three strengths of the course.
- Would you recommend this course to a friend? If not, why?
- Was there anything you expected would be covered in this course, but was not?
- What problems, if any, did you have with the technologies utilized in this course? How would you suggest these problems be corrected?

Feedback should come both from learners and peers. It is important when collecting feedback on courses that other instructors and administrators review the courses as well.

Sample Questions

These are samples of the types of questions that can be asked to evaluate distance education:

- Are visuals clear and easy to read?
- Did you have any technical difficulties?
- Did you receive a complete syllabus?
- Were the learning objectives provided at the beginning of each course session?
- Did the instructor allow adequate time for learners to respond?
- Did the instructor encourage learner questions?

COPYRIGHT

Copyright issues have again come into the forefront with the new distance education technologies. The Internet and multimedia presentations have raised age-old questions regarding what might be considered "fair use." To have copyright protection, a work must be original. Literature is readily copyrighted. Names, slogans, designs, lettering, and the like are not.

Copyright and intellectual property rights issues are extremely complex and are settled case by case. Very simply, the intent of the law is that the copyright holder retains rights to a work, and it may be used, sold, or given away as the copyright holder deems appropriate. In essence, the law states that the protected rights include the following:

- To reproduce the work in any format.
- To prepare derivative works.
- To display or perform the work publicly.
- To duplicate copies of the work for the public to use by sale, rent, lease, or gift.

Most jurisdictions outside the U.S. have a provision or concept similar to the United States Fair Use provision, which was established in the Copyright Act of 1976.

The most prudent thing to do is to seek permission for the use of copyrighted material. In most cases, permission will be granted. If a fee is requested, it is often subject to negotiation. Providers must follow applicable copyright.