

Constitution and Bylaws



2004 Edition



Distance Education and Training Council

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Distance Education and Training Council

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DETC Constitution and Bylaws

Article I - Name

The name of this organization is the Distance Education and Training Council (hereinafter referred to as the **Council** or **DETC**).

Article II - Mission and Goals

The mission of the Council is to promote, by means of standard-setting, evaluation, and consultation processes, the development and maintenance of high educational and ethical standards in education and training programs delivered through distance learning. The Council establishes and operates an educational accrediting association, the DETC Accrediting Commission. The Council elects representatives from its membership to this Commission. The DETC Accrediting Commission receives applications from distance education and training institutions and accredits them if they have attained and maintained the standards deemed necessary to operate at a basic level of quality. The Commission also fosters institutional self-improvement. Its goal is to be the premier accreditor of distance education and training institutions and programs worldwide.

Article III - Administration of the Council

Responsibility for the governance of the Council shall be vested in the DETC Accrediting Commission. The management of the Council's affairs and related administrative duties shall be the responsibility of the Commission's Executive Director.

Article IV - Membership

Section 4.1 - Qualifications

Membership in the Council shall be limited to institutions that offer instruction, assessment, and student services in the distance education field and are accredited by the DETC Accrediting Commission. The DETC Accrediting Commission may also accredit independent learning institutions and establish associate membership category groups.

Section 4.2 - Voting

Each member of the Council shall have one vote. Only a bona fide executive of a member institution may cast the vote for that member institution. Proxies shall not be permitted for any vote.

Section 4.3 - Directory

A directory containing the names, addresses, and other information of all member institutions shall be published annually or as determined by the Accrediting Commission.

Section 4.4 - Membership Liability

No member of the Council shall be liable for the debts of the Council in any amount in excess of the membership fees required of such member for the year in which the indebtedness is legally established, together with such voluntary subscriptions as such member may have made to the Council.

Article V - Meetings

Section 5.1 - Annual Meeting

The Council shall meet annually to elect Commissioners from its membership to receive annual

reports, and to transact other business. Notice of the time and place of such meeting, signed by the Secretary, shall be sent to the last recorded address of each member at least thirty (30) days before the scheduled meeting.

Section 5.2 - Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Council shall be held at the call of the Chair of the Commission or shall be called by the Secretary upon the written request of 25 percent of the members of the Council. The Secretary shall send notice of the time and place of such meeting to each member of the Council not less than fifteen (15) days prior thereto, unless such notice is waived by consent of the members of the Council in assembly with a quorum present.

Section 5.3 - Quorum

At least one-fourth of the members qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at the annual or a special meeting of the Council. If there is fewer than this number, the presiding officer may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present.

Article VI - The Commission

Section 6.1 - Name

The institutional accrediting functions of the Council will be performed by the DETC Accrediting Commission (hereinafter referred to as the **Commission**).

Section 6.2 - Powers and Responsibilities of the Commission

The Commission shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

- 6.2.a Establish and promulgate standards reflecting the qualities of sound and reputable distance education and training and determine procedures for evaluating distance education and independent learning organizations for accreditation. For this purpose, the standards shall include, but not be limited to, information and investigation within the following areas:
- (1) Institutional mission and objectives;
 - (2) Instructional objectives and materials;
 - (3) Educational services;
 - (4) Student services;
 - (5) Student success, satisfaction and attainment of learning outcomes;
 - (6) Qualifications of principals, faculty and staff;
 - (7) Admission practices and enrollment agreements;
 - (8) Advertising and promotional literature/recruitment personnel;
 - (9) Financial responsibility;
 - (10) Tuition policies, collection procedures and refunds;
 - (11) Plant, equipment and record protection; and
 - (12) Research and self-improvement
- 6.2.b Develop annually a budget and provide for a schedule of reasonable dues and fees which will ensure the financial stability of the DETC.
- 6.2.c Receive applications for accreditation from distance education and training institutions

and independent learning organizations desiring accreditation.

- 6.2.d Appoint qualified evaluators and provide for a comprehensive evaluation procedure.
- 6.2.e Review the reports of evaluators and all other pertinent material and accredit or withhold accreditation from applicant institutions. In cases where accreditation is withheld or denied, the applicant will be given the reasons for the decision and the opportunity to have its case reconsidered or appealed at its option.
- 6.2.f Re-evaluate at reasonable intervals the accredited institutions.
- 6.2.g Exercise such other powers as are necessary to carry out the functions of an accrediting association.

Section 6.3 - Selection of Commissioners

- 6.3.a The Accrediting Commissioner shall be comprised of nine (9) members: seven (5) members (two academics and three bona fide executive officers from DETC-accredited institutions) elected by the Council and four (4) members elected by the Commission to represent the public. The public members of the Commission shall be diversified to include, insofar as practical, representatives from government, industry, business, training and education.
- 6.3.b At its annual meeting, the Distance Education and Training Council shall elect Commissioners from the ranks of accredited members to replace those whose terms of office expire that year. Public members shall be appointed by the Accrediting Com-

mission to replace public members of the Commission whose terms expire.

- 6.3.c Commissioners from the distance education field shall be currently active academic or administrative personnel from member institutions that do not have a representative currently serving on the Accrediting Commission.
- 6.3.d When an unexpected vacancy occurs by reason of resignation or otherwise, or when a Commission member from the distance education field is no longer currently active in academic or administrative functions, the Chair of the Commission will declare the position vacant and the Chair will appoint a qualified individual to fill the remainder of the term.

Section 6.4 - Terms of Office

The Commissioners shall serve the following terms:

- 6.4.a Commissioners shall serve for three year terms or until their successors are elected.
- 6.4.b Each newly elected Commissioner shall take office at the first meeting of the Commission following election.
- 6.4.c The five (5) Commissioners from DETC-accredited institutions shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Public Commissioners from outside the distance education field shall not serve more than three consecutive terms.
- 6.4.d Insofar as possible, the expiring terms of office shall be staggered so that only a portion of terms will expire in any one year.

- 6.4.e In the event that a Commission member is absent from two consecutive meetings, the Commission may immediately declare that Commission member's position vacant, and may immediately fill the vacancy as described in Article 6.3.d.

Section 6.5 - Duties of Commissioners

- 6.5.a The Commissioners shall have the power to engage the Executive Director and to perform such duties as, in the judgment of the Commission, may be necessary or desirable.
- 6.5.b The Commissioners shall devise and carry out such other measures, as they deem proper and expedient for fulfilling the mission and attaining the objectives of the Commission.

Article VII - Officers

Section 7.1 - Election of Officers

The officers of the DETC Accrediting Commission shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, an Executive Director and a Treasurer, to be elected by the Commission annually. The Chair and Vice Chair must be serving Commissioners. The Executive Director may also serve as Secretary.

Section 7.2 - Duties of Officers

The duties and powers of the officers of this Commission shall be as follows:

CHAIR - The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Commission.

VICE CHAIR - In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside.

SECRETARY - The Secretary (or the Executive Director) shall issue notices of all meetings. He/she shall also keep a full and complete record of all business conducted during the meetings and performs other duties as are incidental to the office or as may be required by the Chair of the Accrediting Commission.

TREASURER - The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds and securities of the Commission, shall deposit the same in the name of the Commission in such financial institutions or instruments as the Commission may approve, and shall direct the disbursement of the funds of the Commission in accordance with the will of the Commission. He/she shall at all reasonable times exhibit his/her books or accounts to any Commissioner or member of the Commission, except such information contained therein which relates to the dues paid or payable by an individual member. He/she shall keep a full and complete record of all monies received and all monies paid. He/she need not be a member of the Commission.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - the DETC Accrediting Commission will choose the Executive Director. He/she will serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Council. The Commission shall fix the amount of his/her compensation. He/she shall keep the Chair, other officers and Commissioners informed of the affairs of the Commission and of the Council. He/she shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the Chair.

Section 7.3 - Vacancies

The Chair may fill unexpected vacancies in any office.

Article VIII - Committees

Section 8.1 - Appointment of Committees

The Chair of the Commission, with the Commission's consent and approval, shall, unless otherwise provided, appoint all standing committees, special committees, and their chairs. In appointing standing committees, the Chair may appoint members of the Distance Education and Training Council to serve as chairs or members. All committees shall make reports in writing to the Commission as it may require.

Section 8.2 - Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Chair and the five Commissioners from the distance education field. It shall possess and exercise the powers and responsibilities of the Commission in the intervals between regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission and keep the members of the Commission advised of its activities.

Section 8.3 - Standards Committee

This committee is charged with the duty to investigate educational problems unique to distance education and training fields, to survey the efficiency and effectiveness of instructional methods and procedures and to recommend to the Commission policies, standards and practices to govern the members of the Council. This committee shall also seek to further the observance by the members of the Council of ethical practices and business standards, and it shall investigate and make recommendations on the standards of ethical conduct to the Commission. The committee shall be composed of not fewer than five members, at least two of whom must be Commissioners.

Section 8.4 - Awards and Recognition Committee

The duties of this committee shall be to determine the individual or individuals who shall receive awards or other recognition of distinguished service to the distance education and training fields. The Commission shall determine which awards or other recognition of distinguished service shall be given; however, the selection of the award recipients shall be the sole responsibility of the committee.

Section 8.5 - Finance, Budget and Audit Committee

The duties of this committee shall be to study and recommend methods of determining equitable dues and fees. The committee shall also have the responsibility of preparing an annual budget for approval by the Commission and presentation to the Council at the annual meeting. It shall be comprised of the Treasurer acting as Chair and not fewer than three members, at least two of whom must be Commissioners.

Section 8.6 - Nominating Committee

The Chair of the Commission will appoint a committee charged with nominating members to the Accrediting Commission. Public members of the Commission and the Commission's officers will be elected by the Commission itself and Commissioners from DETC-accredited institutions will be elected by members of the Council.

Section 8.7 - Committee Meetings

Committees may hold meetings at such times and places as in the judgment of the respective committee Chair. In the event a member of any committee

is unable to attend a committee meeting to perform the duties of this membership, that member's institution may designate a substitute.

Article IX - Compensation

Any member of the Council, including members of the Commission, with the approval of the Accrediting Commission, may be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the performance of delegated duties.

Article X - Dues and Assessments

Section 10.1 - Budget

At each annual meeting, the Commission shall have approved and present to the members of the Council a budget of expenditures necessary to carry out the approved activities of the Commission during the coming year.

Section 10.2 - Fiscal Year and Payment of Dues

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be from April 1 through March 31. Annual dues and fees for each member shall be payable in advance within thirty days of billing. In the event that dues are not paid within thirty days of billing, the member will be classified as delinquent. The Commission shall be empowered to take adverse action against any accredited institution whose dues are delinquent.

Article XI - Referendum Vote

Referendum and Initiative

Policy matters of major importance (including amendments to the *DETC Constitution and By-laws*) may be submitted by a mail referendum vote to the membership of the Council for decision. Such referendum may be initiated by the Commission or upon the written request of one-quarter of the Council members in good standing. Two-thirds vote of the membership voting in the mail referendum shall be necessary in order to pass any of the policy matters or amendments to the *DETC Constitution and Bylaws*.

Article XII - Miscellaneous Provisions

Section 12.1 - Dissolution

Upon dissolution of this Council or this Commission, any sums remaining in the Treasury, after satisfaction of all debts and claims against the Council, shall be given to a nonprofit charitable organization selected by the Commission.

Section 12.2 - Interpretation and Appeal

Any member may make appeals to the Accrediting Commission from any interpretation of these By-laws and all other rules and regulations of the Commission. A decision of a majority of the Commission, acting upon such appeal, shall be final. Any suit at law challenging a decision of the Commission must be filed in the judicial district of the Commission's headquarters, the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia.

Article XIII - Amendments and Rules of Orders

Section 13.1 - Amendments

The *DETC Constitution and Bylaws* may be amended, repealed, or altered, either in whole or in part, by two-thirds vote of members present and voting at any duly organized meeting of the Council, regular or special, provided the proposed change will have been filed with the Secretary or Executive Director at least forty-five (45) days in advance of the meeting date, and a notice of such proposed amendment, with a copy thereof, shall have been mailed to the entire membership of the Council not less than thirty days (30) in advance of such meeting which is to consider the change.

Section 13.2 - Rules of Order

Roberts Rules of Order shall apply to all matters not specifically covered by the *DETC Constitution and Bylaws*.

Article XIV - Adoption

The *Constitution and Bylaws* were duly adopted by vote of the members of the Council on May 11, 1960 and amended May 3, 1962; April 26, 1965; April 29, 1968; April 25, 1972; March 18, 1975; April 26, 1977; March 6, 1978; March 12, 1984; April 15, 1985; April 19, 1989; April 10, 1991; April 6, 1992, March 14, 1994; April 10, 2000, April 15, 2002, and April 19, 2004.



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