



Commission on English Language Program Accreditation CEA Statement on COVID-19

The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) is a specialized accreditation agency which accredits post-secondary English language programs and institutions. CEA's scope provides for accreditation of programs within accredited host institutions as well as stand-alone institutions in the US, and several types of schools outside the US.

We know many CEA-accredited sites in the US and worldwide have already taken, or shortly will take, temporary measures to deal with program delivery and student services in response to COVID-19 or the novel coronavirus. We have been informed by sites of both voluntary temporary measures and involuntary ones, such as closures related to national or state government announcements.

While considering options available at this time to CEA-accredited sites, please note the following:

- CEA's existing policies allow sites flexibility in delivery of classes or operations within limited timeframes. CEA's eligibility requirements include a requirement that a site must offer the program at least 8 months of the year; thus, an accredited site can take a break of no longer than 4 months without endangering eligibility. CEA must be notified in writing of the temporary change. Please send a message to CEA with your School Name and Site ID (<https://cea-accredit.org/accredited-sites>) in the subject line, and a brief statement of any temporary changes to operations in response to COVID-19 by email to compliance@cea-accredit.org
- In certain cases, CEA's policies allow for the executive director to approve a hiatus of operations due to extenuating circumstances. To obtain review of a prospective hiatus, contact CEA's executive director in writing.

Educational programs and institutions are announcing moves to online or distance delivery of courses at this time. Regarding use of this modality by CEA sites, two matters pertain.

- The US Department of Education has issued broad permission for schools to use online technologies to accommodate students on a temporary basis and allowing accreditors to waive their distance education review requirements for institutions "working to accommodate students whose enrollment is otherwise interrupted as a result of COVID-19" <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19> CEA's scope of accreditation does not include distance education, but the broad permission granted by the USDE in this case allows sites accredited by CEA to deliver classes online on a temporary basis.
- CEA does not require schools to be certified by SEVP, although most of our US-based schools are SEVP-certified and CEA standards require all sites to be in compliance with state, local and federal regulations as well as institutional policies, if applicable (Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 8). SEVP regulations prohibit student on F visas for English language training to meet their full course of study requirements via online courses. However, on March 9, 2020, SEVP issued a broadcast message <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm2003-01.pdf> which allows for certain flexibilities, including temporary closures or online course delivery, at this time. SEVP requires sites to report certain operational changes to SEVP within 10 days. Any CEA site which files such a request with SEVP must send a copy of the message sent to SEVP to CEA at compliance@cea-accredit.org, noting the School Name and Site ID (<https://cea-accredit.org/accredited-sites>)

Based on *CEA Policies and Procedures* and guidance from federal agencies, beyond the required notifications above, CEA is not requiring substantive change reporting regarding temporary changes to operations at this time. However, accredited sites must continue to notify CEA of substantive changes that are not temporary in nature or related to COVID-19.

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