

## Substantive Change – Approval of Distance Education

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The decision to offer some or all professional courses within an existing nuclear medicine technology program using distance education is a significant step in a program's evolution. Thorough and on-going needs assessment, program planning, resource allocation and evaluation must be instituted to ensure development of a successful program that is sustainable and meets JRCNMT accreditation standards.

Distance education, also known as online education, uses technology to deliver instruction to students and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies used may include the Internet and various methods of one-way and two-way electronic transmissions such as video and audio conferencing.

When an accredited nuclear medicine technology program seeks to deliver 50% or more of the professional curriculum by distance education, it is a substantive change and must be reported to the JRCNMT at least six months prior to the implementation date. (Refer to Policy 3.400 Substantive Change in the JRCNMT Policy and Procedure Manual).

The Executive Officers of the JRCNMT will review the documentation and make a decision within 30 business days of its receipt. If there are significant complexities to the request the issue may require consideration by the JRCNMT Board of Directors at their next regular meeting. In some instances, a site visit may be required as part of the approval process.

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A formal application for approval must be submitted to the JRCNMT for review prior to making the distance education track available to students. The application must include responses for each item listed below and the necessary supporting documentation.

1. Explain the program's purpose for expanding into distance education and how the purpose ties to the institution and program's educational mission.
2. Provide evidence that the institution's regional/institutional accreditor and the appropriate state agency have approved the institution to deliver distance education.
3. Provide evidence that the appropriate educational agency in states where the program will be marketed has approved its delivery in that state, when such approval is required.
4. Identify the courses within the professional curriculum that will be offered by distance/online education (i.e. all courses or list of those moving to an electronic format).
5. Describe the technology (electronic devices), course management systems and software that will be used to deliver the program or identified courses.
6. Describe the financial resources to support the program for sustained distance education delivery.
7. Will faculty or staff be added to support this change? If so, in what capacities (e.g. clinical coordination, teaching, distance education or IT expert, etc.)? If none are being added describe why additional faculty/staff is unnecessary.
8. Describe how students will access the coursework.
9. Describe the frequency and methods of faculty/student interactions.
10. How and where will student testing occur? Proctoring of tests is necessary.
11. Describe the support services available to students who encounter technical difficulties accessing courses.

12. Describe the methods that will be used to ensure that a student enrolling in a course is the same student who participates in, completes and receives academic credit for the course.
13. Will students be required to come to the campus for any courses, laboratories or other activities? If so please describe.
14. Explain the plans for clinical education of the distance students. Provide complete affiliate applications for any new clinical sites being added.
15. Other than content delivery, describe any other ways in which the distance education program will differ from the on-site program offered.
16. What additional fees or tuition will students be charged to access the program via distance education and how will they be informed of the additional costs?
17. Describe how the program will ensure that distance students receive equivalent didactic, laboratory and clinical education to what the on-site students receive.