

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Dr. Thomas A. Stith, III
President

Public Safety Memo PS21-05

March 29, 2021

To: Public Safety School Directors and Persons on Related List Servs

From: Tracy McPherson, Director, Public Safety Training Programs

RE: **Federal Rule Requiring Disclosure of Information to Students in Certification-Related Courses**

The purpose of this memo is to advise you of a federal consumer protection rule that is impacting certification-related courses and programs at post-secondary institutions in North Carolina and across the nation.

To summarize: the Higher Education Opportunity Act was amended to require Title IV institutions to provide “disclosures” to students as to whether certification-related courses or programs offered by individual colleges meet the educational requirements for professional licensure in North Carolina or other states. *Please note that the rule is more complex than this summary; consult the act and your college experts for details.*

Since public safety courses often lead to some type of industry credentialing, we wanted to provide you with information for review. Here are some things you need to know:

- This federal rule covers all college programming that is designed to lead to professional licensure/certification/credentialing, regardless of type or modality, **to include curriculum, continuing education, online, traditional classroom, etc.**
- This is a very nuanced undertaking by each college that your college’s senior administration is handling in a very systematic way with the assistance of the Community College System Office through leadership from the Virtual Learning Community (VLC) staff. *Please see attachment for more details.*
- This memo is not advising you as an individual employee to take any specific action; it is merely for general information. Any direct involvement that you may have in the distribution of required disclosure information to students on your campus will be directed by your college’s administration.
- Here is how related information is being displayed online by some (randomly selected) colleges:
 - Bladen Community College
<https://www.bladencc.edu/distance-learning/state-authorization/>
 - Craven Community College
<https://cravencc.edu/distance-learning/out-of-state-students/>
 - Surry Community College
<https://surry.edu/areas-of-study/online-learning/state-authorization>

Attached is an email with additional information that was recently sent to Senior Continuing Education Administrators as a general overview. It is shared here for your information, as well. Please contact appropriate staff at your college if you have questions about your college’s compliance protocols. Please let us know if you have general questions that we might help direct to the appropriate experts for response. Thank you.

PS21-05 Federal Disclosure Rule Attachment

From: Karen Tikkanen <tikkanenk@nccommunitycolleges.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 12:54 PM

To: CC Continuing Education Officers <cc-conedoff@nccommunitycolleges.edu>

Subject: State Authorization - Professional Licensure and Certification Disclosures

Good Afternoon WCE Folks,

On July 1, 2020 a new federal rule went into effect which requires each institution to post professional licensure and certification disclosures, both general and direct, or risk ineligibility for Title IV funding. These disclosures were originally for on-line classes only but have now extended to disclosures for all modalities. These disclosures must be made BEFORE a student commits to, pays for, and enters a class alerting them of how this course, designed or advertised to meet professional licensure or certification required for an occupation, meets or does not meet requirements in all states.

The general disclosure requirements could be fulfilled if each institution indicated one of three things on their website for each curriculum:

- Curriculum meets educational requirements
- The institution determines the curriculum does not meet educational requirements
- The institution has not made a determination at this time.

NCCCS opted for the third choice originally to meet the requirement, “the institution has not made a determination at this time” and had the individual colleges post the required disclaimer to their website. The project of determining the individualized disclosures is huge. We are fortunate that the VLC has obtained funding and taken on this huge task of determining how each designed or advertised course meets professional licensure/certification requirements in each state. Some of you may have already been involved as we have recently finished the individual disclosures for Public Safety, Cosmetology, Nurse Aide, and Phlebotomy .

NCCCS is in the forefront across the nation with this project and has invested a lot of time and money into the research needed to obtain this information so it is vital that we do not share this information outside the state with agencies except on an individual basis with the student.

Why I am bringing this to your attention is that although the VLC is doing the heavy lifting and someone at your school may or may not be doing the posting of the individual disclosures when they come available. The ultimate responsibility comes to you for your program so you need to know and understand how these disclosures work and the requirements. The question will be coming to you and your coordinators for your programs.

The VLC has a website for all information State Authorization Disclosures related. The link is [State Authorization - VLC \(nccommunitycolleges.edu\)](https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/vlc) The templates and checklists are located here. The VLC has been holding regular webinars over the past year with regard to these new requirements. Past webinars were recorded and are available on the website under on demand training. Here is the link to the March 4, recording of “State Authorization- Professional Licensure and Certification Disclosures: What is Required and How to Comply” which give you the basics you need. [State Authorization - Professional Licensure and Certification Disclosures: What is Required and How to Comply \(configio.com\)](https://www.configio.com) An upcoming webinar on April 7, 2021 at 10:00 will assist you in best practices for implementing your process. Sign up at the following link: [State Authorization - Developing a Defensible State Authorization Process \(configio.com\)](https://www.configio.com).

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the VLC, Nate, or myself.

Karen Tikkanen, Director, Training & Standards

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