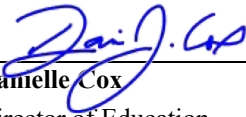

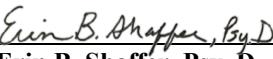





Department Directive

Title: Correspondence Courses in Correctional Facilities	Directive: OPS.135.0004
Related MD Statute/Regulations: Labor and Employment Article, §11-901-903, Annotated Code of Maryland COMAR 12.14.04.05	Rescinds and replaces: DOC.135.0004, dated June 30, 2002
Related ACA and MCCS Standards: ACA: 5-ACI-7B-01(Ref. 4-4464), 5-ACI-7B-07(Ref. 4-4472), MCCS: .05C	Approved By:  Danielle Cox
Related Directives: DOC.135.0001 – Organization of Education OPS.135.0002 - Library Services OPS.135.0005 - Advanced Education Programs	Director of Education Issued Date: February 1, 2024 Effective Date: February 1, 2024
Variance: With the approval of the Commissioner, a facility may issue a facility directive necessary to implement and comply with this directive.	Number of Pages: 5


J. Philip Morgan
 Commissioner of Correction


Erin B. Shaffer, Psy. D.
 Director of Patuxent Institution


Cleveland Friday
 Commissioner
 Pretrial and Detention Services


Carolyn J. Scruggs
 Secretary

.01 Purpose.

The purpose of this directive is to develop and maintain policy and procedures for the management of correspondence courses for incarcerated individuals within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department).

.02 Scope.

This directive applies to all units of the Department responsible for the custody and security of an incarcerated individual under the authority of the Department and all Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) Correctional Education staff.

.03 Policy.

- A. It is the policy of the Department to provide comprehensive educational programming to ensure incarcerated individuals have access to correspondence courses made available to them by participating educational organizations.

- B. Correspondence courses promote educational programming that may not otherwise be available in a correctional facility and that may assist incarcerated individuals with reintegration into society as responsible and productive citizens.

.04 Definitions.

- A. In this directive, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

- B. Terms Defined.

- (1) “Correctional facility” has the meaning stated in Correctional Services Article, §1-101, Annotated Code of Maryland: ‘Correctional facility’ means a facility that is operated for the purpose of detaining or confining adults who are charged with or found guilty of a crime.’
- (2) “Correspondence course” means an instructional class offered by an educational organization that leads to a degree or certification through the mail.
- (3) “Educational organization” means an academic institution providing educational training and instruction services to incarcerated individuals, to include, but not limited:
 - (a) Colleges;
 - (b) Universities;
 - (c) Educational trade organization; or
 - (d) Similar educational institution.
- (4) Incarcerated Individual.
 - (a) “Incarcerated individual” has the meaning stated in CSA, §1-101, Annotated Code of Maryland which states, “‘Incarcerated individual’ means an individual who is actually or constructively detained or confined in a correctional facility.”
 - (b) “Incarcerated individual” includes the term “inmate” as stated prior to October 1, 2023 CSA, §1-101, ACM
 - (c) “Incarcerated individual” includes the term incarcerated person.
- (5) “Managing official” has the meaning stated in the Correctional Services Article, §1-101, Annotated Code of Maryland: ‘Managing official means the administrator, director, warden, superintendent, sheriff, or other individual responsible for the management of a correctional facility.
- (6) “Student” means an incarcerated individual who is enrolled in a correspondence course.

- (7) "Prospective student" means an incarcerated individual who will be enrolled in a correspondence course in the near future.

.05 Responsibilities/Procedures.

A. The Evaluation and Approval Process of a Correspondence Course Application Request.

(1) A Managing Official or designee shall:

- (a) Review the *DPSCS Correspondence Course Application - OPS Form # 135-04aR - Appendix A* request submitted by the prospective student;
- (b) Ensure the prospective student meets the minimum eligibility requirements to include:
 - (i) Completed GED or high school diploma, depending on the acceptability enrollment requirements for the educational organization; and
 - (ii) Infraction free for at least six (6) months.
- (c) Notify and submit to the Director of Education the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request;
- (d) Confirm the course program is approved by the Director of Education;
- (e) Approve or deny the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request;
- (f) Ensure the course content and material does not disrupt or interfere with the safety and security of the correctional facility; and
- (g) Ensure students have access to the library in accordance with [OPS.135.0002 - Inmate Library Services](#).

(2) The Director of Education or designee shall:

- (a) Review the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request submitted by the prospective student;
- (b) Research the educational organization offering the Correspondence Course to ensure the organization is accredited, if applicable, according to the standards set forth by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the U. S. Department of Education;
- (c) Approve or deny the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request;
- (d) Return DPSCS Correspondence Course Application to the managing official for final review; and
- (e) Inform the prospective student about alternative educational programming options, if necessary.

B. Correctional Facility Program Functions.

- (1) The MD Labor principal or designee at each correctional facility shall:
 - (a) Liaison with the Director of Education, managing official or designee, and correctional staff;
 - (b) Ensure copies of the *DPSCS Correspondence Course Application - OPS Form # 135-04aR - Appendix A* are provided in each of the correctional libraries; and
 - (c) Serve as a proctor for required examinations within the approved school calendar, if necessary.
- (2) Correctional Officers shall:
 - (a) Inspect all materials associated with correspondence courses in accordance with *OPS.110.0049 - Visitor Search Protocol* and *OPS.110.0033 - Entry and Exit Procedures - Correctional Facilities*;
 - (b) Ensure the correspondence course materials and equipment are approved by the managing official or designee; and
 - (c) Deliver the correspondence course materials to the student after thorough inspection and processing.
- (3) Incarcerated Individuals shall:
 - (a) Obtain the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request from the library;
 - (b) Complete the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request and submit the completed application request to the managing official or designee;
 - (c) If the DPSCS Correspondence Course Application request is approved, contact the educational organization to complete the application for admission; and
 - (d) Once an admission application is approved through the educational organization, adhere to guidelines established by the educational organization.

C. Correspondence Course Funding.

- (1) Students are responsible for registration, tuition, materials, equipment, and other charges related to correspondence courses.
- (2) Students who choose to complete correspondence courses by mail must use funding from savings, family members, supporters, tribes, church groups, non-profit organizations, veteran's educational benefits, or similar funding.

(3) Pell Grant funding can be used for in-person, hybrid, virtual or through the mail classes provided by an educational organization that completed the application process to become an approved Prison Education Program in Maryland through the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the Maryland Advisory Committee on Prison Education Programs (MACPEP), the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

(4) Educational organizations that offer correspondence courses to a student solely through the mail using Federal Student Aid, including Pell Grants funding, must follow the Maryland Prison Education Program approval process prior to the course commencing.

D. Participation in correspondence course study is voluntary. Students may not be paid or earn diminution of confinement credits for participating in correspondence courses.

.06 Appendix.

A. DPSCS Correspondence Course Application - OPS Form # 135-04aR

.07 History.

A. This directive replaces DOC.135.0004 dated June 30, 2002 revisions of any other prior existing Department communication with which it may be in conflict.

.08 Distribution.

A

L

S - MDL Correctional Education Staff



DPSCS Correspondence Course Application

Instructions: Prior to applying for Correspondence Course study by mail with any US educational organization (college or university), all incarcerated individuals must complete the following application. The completed application must be submitted to the Managing Official or Designee. The Managing Official or Designee will submit the application to the DPSCS Director of Education who will review the request and return it to the Managing Official or Designee for final review and approval.

1. Name: _____ Date Submitted: _____
2. DOC# _____ SID# _____
3. DPSCS Facility/Location: _____
4. College/University Name, Address & Phone Number: _____

5. List the Course Name and **ALL** Materials Needed:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
6. Funding/Payment Source: _____

Approved

NOT Approved

DPSCS Director of Education - Signature

Date

Director's Comments: _____

Approved

NOT Approved

Managing Official or Designee - Signature

Date

Managing Official or Designee Comments:

