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Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4765-24-20 Online education and distance learning for fire safety inspector and instructor training courses offered through a chartered program.

Effective: November 1, 2026

(A) The executive director, with the advice and counsel of the committee, may approve a chartered program to provide fire certification training courses online or through distance learning, as defined in rule 4765-25-01 of the Administrative Code, if the chartered program meets the following requirements:

(1) The chartered program shall submit a written request to the division to offer online education or distance learning.

(a) The request shall indicate the level or levels of fire certification training proposed to be offered;

(b) The request shall include documentation of how the chartered program meets the requirements set forth in this rule.

(2) The chartered program shall submit course materials associated with the proposed course to the division for review and approval by the executive director, with advice and counsel of the committee.

(B) In addition to the requirements specified in paragraph (A) of this rule, the chartered program shall:

(1) Meet the requirements set forth in rule 4765-24-03 of the Administrative Code;

(2) Possess a charter at the classification level(s) for which the chartered program seeks to provide the online education or distance learning;

(3) Have maintained a charter at the classification level for which the chartered program seeks to provide online education or distance learning, for at least the preceding three full years from the date of application;

(4) Have completed at least one fire certification training course in the traditional classroom setting at the classification level for which the chartered program seeks to provide the online education or distance learning;

(5) Be in good standing as defined in rule 4765-25-01 of the Administrative Code;

(6) Have written policies that will be made available to each student, regarding all of the following:

(a) Admission requirements;

(b) Minimum requirements for technological needs for students enrolling in fire certification training courses utilizing online education or distance learning

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including, but not limited to, hardware, software, and internet connection speed;

(c) Technological support to be provided by the chartered program to include at a minimum the hours of support and the method(s) in which the support will be provided;

(d) A schedule identifying weekly access to the instructors while the fire certification training course is in session to allow for direct communication between instructor and students, including, but not limited to, telephone numbers, email addresses, and office hours;

(e) Security parameters protecting students' financial and personal information in accordance with state and federal laws;

(f) Online procedures for course administration and completion;

(g) Method to transition from online education and distance learning to the classroom version of the same course in order to complete the required training. This policy shall include a reasonable time frame in which the transition process must be completed.

(7) Maintain the following for all fire certification training courses utilizing online education and distance learning:

(a) A technology infrastructure that facilitates secure access, including user authentication and authorization procedures and technologies;

(b) Access control procedures and technology that supports the courses utilizing online education systems;

(c) Technological support to meet student needs;

(d) An appropriate security solution to ensure course and systems integrity, especially financial and personal information;

(e) A risk management plan to include identification of foreseen risks, continuity, disaster recovery, and incidence response;

(f) Assurance that course data is readily, securely, and reliably available by electronic or printed means to the division and the division's authorized recipients;

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(g) A means to access student and program information to facilitate state audits to verify compliance with rules approved by the executive director.

(i) If the technical support, application server host, or data storage facilities are located outside of the state of Ohio, the chartered program shall submit, upon request of the division, a report encompassing the rules of this chapter to meet the audit requirements.

(ii) The chartered program shall provide the division with an audit amendment describing any significant system changes within thirty days of enabling those changes. An enterprise shall make student records available to the division online, in a password protected environment upon request.

(8) Create and maintain a complete student course data file to demonstrate student activity and ensure that the following information, at a minimum, is collected and retained:

(a) Student's name;

(b) Dates and times of student activity in the training course and verification of the amount of total time spent utilizing the online education portion of the course;

(c) The reason a student was suspended or failed to complete the online education portion of the fire certification training course;

(d) Name or identity number of a chartered program staff member accessing or entering student records.

(9) Ensure that the fire certification training course final examinations are administered and scored in a traditional classroom setting.

(10) Ensure that each initial fire certification training course utilizing online education or distance learning meets all of the following:

(a) Obtains prior written approval of the fire certification training course content from the program director;

(b) Possesses written documentation of clear objectives, course content, and method of delivery that meets all curricula requirements as set forth in Chapter 4765-24 of the Administrative Code;

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(c) Obtains prior approval from the program director in order to utilize online education or distance learning for instruction;

(d) Is developed or approved by an instructor under the auspices of a chartered program;

(e) Ensures that the lecture portions of each fire certification training course may be taught utilizing online education, distance learning, or in the traditional classroom setting;

(f) Ensures that instruction, practice, and testing in the practical skills portion of each fire certification training course shall not be provided through online education or distance learning;

(g) Ensures that in-class public speaking presentations shall be:

(i) Completed in the traditional classroom setting;

(ii) Observed directly by an instructor trainer employed by a chartered fire training program;

(iii) Shall be dispersed throughout the course so as to foster development of public speaking ability;

(h) In-class public speaking presentations may be completed through online education or distance learning providing both of the following apply:

(i) The presentations are conducted in a virtual, instructor-led (synchronous) training environment; and

(ii) The request was approved by the division.

(11) The chartered program shall require written evaluations, completed by each student, of each fire certification training course offered through online education or distance learning. The evaluation may be in electronic or hard copy formats and include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Clarity of written policies associated with the chartered program;

(b) Course content;

(c) Means of delivery and systems availability;

(d) Availability of certified instructors.

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(C) A chartered program approved to utilize online education or distance learning may do so in conjunction with traditional classroom-based instruction.

(D) A chartered program approved to utilize online education or distance learning shall annually provide the division with information, statistics, and data specific to the fire certification training courses offered through online education or distance learning, in a manner approved by the division, as set forth in this rule and rule 4765-24-03 of the Administrative Code.

(E) Approval by the executive director to conduct fire certification training courses utilizing online education or distance learning shall be specific to the level of training and type of delivery system requested.

(F) A chartered program approved to utilize online education or distance learning shall maintain documentation that demonstrates compliance with the hours and curricula requirements set forth in this chapter of the Administrative Code.

(G) A chartered program approved to utilize online education or distance learning shall ensure contact hours or competencies in the fire certification training courses are equal to or exceed the hours or competencies in the course packets.