

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICY DIRECTIVE	EFFECTIVE DATE 09/19/2005	NUMBER 05.02.119
	SUBJECT CORRESPONDENCE COURSES	
SUPERSEDES 05.02.119 (03/10/97)		AUTHORITY MCL 791.203; Administrative Rule 791.6639
ACA STANDARDS 4-4464; 4-4476; 4-4477		PAGE 1 OF 3

POLICY STATEMENT:

Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) prisoners in general population or protective segregation may take correspondence courses as set forth in this policy.

RELATED POLICIES:

PD 05.02.112 Education Programs for Prisoners

POLICY:

DEFINITIONS

- A. Correspondence Course - An instructional class offered by a correspondence school.
- B. Correspondence School - A school which provides lessons and examinations to students through the mail.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- C. The Department does not endorse or approve correspondence schools or correspondence courses, nor does it guarantee the validity of test conditions.
- D. Except as necessary to comply with this policy, Department resources, including money and staff time, shall not be used to assist a prisoner with enrolling in or completing a correspondence course. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Staff shall not assist a prisoner in completing assignments or examinations. However, non-custody staff may volunteer to proctor an examination while on duty, subject to the approval of the Warden, provided the proctoring does not interfere with the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities.
 - 2. Staff shall not contact correspondence schools on behalf of a prisoner. This does not apply to staff proctoring an examination and to principals if questions arise concerning proctoring.
 - 3. Prisoners are not allowed to use any Department equipment purchased with state appropriated funds (e.g., computers, typewriters, video players, tapes) for completion of class assignments. They also are not allowed to use staff telephones to communicate with a correspondence school.
- E. This policy applies to a religious course offered through the mail only if:
 - 1. Tuition is charged to take the religious course;
 - 2. The religious course leads to a degree; or,
 - 3. Department resources are needed to assist the prisoner with enrolling in or completing the religious course (e.g., assisting with completion of an assignment; proctoring examination). For this purpose, Department resources do not include those used in the routine handling of prisoner mail.

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If none of the above apply, the prisoner does not need approval to take the religious course; however, if any of the above apply, all requirements set forth in this policy apply, including the approval process set forth below.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- F. A prisoner may enroll in a correspondence course only with approval of the Warden. Requests shall be submitted in writing to the school principal and shall include all relevant documentation regarding the course that is available to the prisoner at the time of the request, including specific information on the correspondence school offering the course and a list of required course material. The school principal shall review the request and submit a written report to the Warden or designee addressing each of the following:
1. Whether the course requirements can be completed without utilization of Department resources, except as necessary to comply with this policy.
 2. Whether the materials required for the course are authorized under PD 04.07.112 "Prisoner Property" and PD 05.03.118 "Prisoner Mail".
 3. Whether proctoring is required. If proctoring is required and the correspondence school requires the proctor to have specific qualifications (e.g., certified practicing practitioner), the availability of a qualified proctor also shall be addressed.
- G. The Warden or designee shall make the final determination whether to approve the request. The request shall be approved if the Warden or designee determines that the course requirements can be completed without utilization of Department resources that are not required to comply with this policy and that required course materials are authorized by policy. If the correspondence school requires specific qualifications for a required proctor, the request also may be denied if the availability of a qualified proctor cannot be confirmed. The potential educational value to the prisoner shall not be a factor in determining whether to approve the request.
- H. The Warden or designee shall ensure that the prisoner, the principal, and the Manager of the Educational Services Section, CFA, are notified in writing of the Warden's decision and, if the request is denied, the basis for the denial. The appropriate Business Office and Mailroom/Property Room staff also shall be notified if the request is approved.
- I. Prisoners must repeat the approval process set forth above for each semester or term in which s/he wants to enroll in a correspondence course.

PAYMENT OF TUITION/FEES/COSTS FOR APPROVED CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

- J. A prisoner must have sufficient funds in his/her institutional account to pay in full all fees and costs of the approved course, including tuition, at the time of application. Payment for the course shall be processed through the institution's Business Office in accordance with PD 04.02.105 "Prisoner Funds" and institutional operating procedures. However, if the prisoner can provide adequate documentation that all or a portion of the tuition, fees and/or costs of an approved course has been paid on his/her behalf (e.g., by Veterans Administration), the prisoner need only have sufficient funds in the account to pay the balance owed; the payment may not be from a source from which the prisoner is prohibited from receiving funds pursuant to PD 04.02.105.
- K. Funds received by a prisoner for placement in his/her institutional account which are designated for educational expenses shall be credited to the account in accordance with PD 04.02.105 "Prisoner Funds". Such funds are subject to court-ordered payments from the account as set forth in PD 04.02.105; the funds may otherwise be used by the prisoner only to pay his/her educational expenses.
- L. Tuition, fees and costs of a correspondence school paid by or on behalf of a prisoner will not be reimbursed by the Department for any reason.

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- M. The prisoner shall be responsible for all postage and other costs incurred in mailing course work, such as completed lessons and examinations, to the correspondence school.

RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSE MATERIAL

- N. All correspondence course material is to be mailed to the prisoner, except that the prisoner and principal may arrange for the correspondence school to send examinations which need proctoring to the principal or designee.
- O. Correspondence course material received in the mail is subject to search consistent with PD 05.03.118 "Prisoner Mail". Course material, even if previously reviewed, may be rejected at the time of receipt if it is determined that the material is in violation of Department policy; the cost of any course material rejected will not be reimbursed by the Department. Unless rejected, the material shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or designee for delivery to the prisoner; examinations which require proctoring shall be retained by the principal or designee until the examination is administered.
- P. A prisoner who has been approved to take a correspondence course who is subsequently placed in any form of segregation other than protective segregation shall have his/her correspondence course materials stored for his/her until release from segregation.

PROCTORING EXAMINATIONS

- Q. The school principal or other staff designated by the Warden shall be responsible for arranging for persons to proctor examinations when required. Outside volunteers serving in this capacity are subject to the requirements set forth in PD 03.02.105 "Volunteer Services and Programs".

CREDIT FOR PARTICIPATION/COMPLETION

- R. A prisoner who successfully completes a degree or certificate program through a correspondence school shall not receive credit for such completion on the Security Classification Screen-Review form (CSJ-481) or Security Classification Screen - Review - Female Prisoners Only form (CSJ-483); however, a prisoner who, prior to the effective date of this policy, was enrolled in an approved correspondence course that was part of a degree or certificate program shall receive credit for successful completion of that program if an official transcript verifying completion of the program is received by the principal directly from the correspondence school.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- S. Wardens shall ensure that procedures are developed as necessary to implement requirements set forth in this policy directive; this shall be completed within 60 calendar days after the effective date of the policy directive. This requirement includes ensuring that their existing procedures are revised or rescinded, as appropriate, if inconsistent with policy requirements or no longer needed. Facility procedures shall not conflict with procedures issued by the Director or Deputy Director.

AUDIT ELEMENTS

- T. A Primary Audit Elements List has been developed and will be provided to wardens to assist with self audit of this policy, pursuant to PD 01.05.100 "Self Audit of Policies and Procedures."

PLC:OPH:08/23/05