



COMMISSION ON OSTEOPATHIC COLLEGE ACCREDITATION

July 15, 2021

This guidance supplements the guidance for Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (COMs) related to the use of distance education due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic published previously on March 11, May 15, and May 21, 2020, and February 5, 2021.

As noted previously, last year the United State Department of Education waived normal requirements and allowed the use of distance education in responding to COVID-19 without going through the regular accreditation process for distance education, and the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) acted to allow such use of distance education by the COMs. The most recent extension of the waiver covered the duration of the national emergency declaration and 180 days following the date on which the COVID-19 national emergency declaration is ultimately rescinded.

On February 24, 2021, the President published a Notice in the Federal Register entitled Continuation of the National Emergency Concerning the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic. 86 Fed. Reg. 11599, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/26/2021-04173/continuation-of-the-national-emergency-concerning-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-pandemic>. In the Notice the President continues the COVID-19 national emergency, stating that “the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, and beginning March 1, 2020, must continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.” Assuming that the extended national emergency will now terminate on the anniversary of the extension, and in the absence of additional government action on the subject, the Notice extends the national emergency through March 1, 2022, and the new end date for the Department’s waiver of the distance education requirements is now August 28, 2022. The COCA’s allowance for COMs to make use of the Department waiver is likewise extended for the same time period.

If you have specific questions related to your COM, please contact the COCA staff directly at predoc@osteopathic.org or by calling (312) 202-8124.