

Online non-credit coursework for early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont

4-1-12

History

The Vermont Child Development Division of the Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services has charged Vermont Northern Light Career Development Center to verify and approve *non-credit bearing, online* professional development training for early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont. Approved training could potentially meet requirements for: child care licensing annual training hours; required training for Northern Lights Career Level Certificates and Credentials; and training hours in the staff qualifications arena of STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System: Vermont's Program Quality Improvement System). There is already a process in place in Vermont for approving *college credit* that is offered through online classes. Therefore, Northern Lights worked to determine what documentation is needed to verify and approve *online not for credit* training.

The Process

After an extensive, statewide review process, it was determined that professional development sponsors that provide on-line non-credit training will be asked to submit a *Request for Approval* form demonstrating how they meet the approval criteria. Requests are reviewed for approval by Northern Lights staff or those designated by Northern Lights. The approved sponsors and their websites linking to the online non-credit bearing training they offer will then be posted on the Northern Lights web-site. Professionals will then be able to access these pre-approved trainings. The approval criteria, application form, and the approved organizations will be listed on the Northern Lights Website.

If individuals want to add training to the list, they may ask the sponsor of the training to submit a completed *Request for Approval* form to Northern Lights and the process will be followed.

Northern Lights CRITERIA for Approval of Sponsors of Online, Non-credit Training

In order for Northern Lights to consider including a sponsor in an annotated list of approved on-line, non-credit training, the sponsor must provide a module or session free of charge for Northern Lights to review, and meet the following criteria:

1. Training content is relevant for early childhood and/or afterschool professionals and addresses one or more of the five core knowledge areas: Child/Youth Development, Curriculum and Teaching, Health and Safety, Families and Communities, and Professionalism and Program Organization. (detailed descriptions of each knowledge area found on the Northern Lights website page: <http://northernlightscdc.org/career->

[pathways/professional-competencies-and-standards/](#) see *Core Competencies for early childhood* and *Core Competencies for afterschool professionals*)

2. Training content is grounded in evidence based research and follows developmentally appropriate practices.
3. The course has clear, measurable learning objectives that define the content and evaluation of the student's learning experience.
4. The course provides documentation to each student that includes these five criteria needed to verify all non-credit professional development: (1) logo/letterhead and name of sponsoring organization; (2) title and description of training; (3) total hours and date(s) of training; (4) name of participant; (5) signature of instructor or sponsor.
5. The course incorporates adult learning principles: the learning engages¹ the student, is individualized, requires reflection by the learner and is interactive.
6. The student's learning is evaluated and the sponsor provides clear and specific evidence of successful completion.
7. If there is an instructor directly teaching the student(s) in the online course, the sponsoring organization provides information about the instructor's qualifications to a) teach the content and b) teach online. The specific qualifications for these instructors are being determined; Vermont does have an Instructor Registry: <http://northernlightscdc.org/your-role/adult-instructors/>
8. Online training that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU's) approved by IACET, or an accredited higher education institution² are automatically approved by Vermont Northern Lights, if they meet the other criteria above.

Additional Information about the Courses or Trainings offered by the Sponsor

The sponsoring organization may also help the online student choose and successfully complete their trainings, by including the following information in their Request for Approval to Northern Lights. Once approved, the information will be included in the annotation of the sponsor/website on the Northern Lights website page.

- Work setting of the targeted student (i.e. family childcare, home visitor, school based program, early intervention, center based program, director, caring for infants, preschool, school age, etc.)
- Training/course Formats used: written words, narration, movies, graphics, etc.
- Reading level of the course or module
- Content level of training: introductory level, intermediate level, advanced level
- Education and credentials of the course content designer
- CEU's or other results issued upon completion
- Cost
- Computer operating system requirements and time (range) required to complete courses

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¹By engaged learning, we mean that all student activities involve active cognitive processes such as creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation. In addition,

students are intrinsically motivated to learn due to the meaningful nature of the learning environment and activities.

- Engagement Theory: A framework for technology-based teaching and learning; Greg Kearsley & Ben Shneiderman 1999

²Higher education institution must be currently approved to be accredited by both DOE and CHEA