

STATE BOARD OF CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE APPRAISERS
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education is generally defined as any educational process based on the geographical separation of student and instructor. Distance education courses may be provided in the form of synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid educational course offerings as defined below:

- ***Synchronous***—A distance education offering where the instructor and students are in separate locations but interact simultaneously using an online platform, similar to a phone call, video chat, live webinar, or other live, web-based meeting. The student can see, hear and communicate with the teacher and the teacher can simultaneously see, hear and communicate with the student. Synchronous courses provide for instruction and interaction substantially the same as in-person classroom courses.
- ***Asynchronous***— A distance education offering where the instructor and students are in separate locations and their interaction is not simultaneous. Using pre-recorded lectures, webinars or videos for instruction, students progress at their own pace and follow a structured course content and quiz/exam schedule.
- ***Hybrid***—An educational offering that uses both in-person and distance education (synchronous and/or asynchronous) instruction. Hybrid courses are also known as “blended courses.”

Currently, sections 36.11(a), 36.12(a), and 36.12a(a) of the Board regulations (regarding qualifications for certified residential and general appraisers and licensed appraiser trainees) state that distance education courses must comply with the requirements in the AQB Qualification

Criteria. Effective January 1, 2022, the AQB Qualification Criteria has implemented new requirements for distance education. See, *The Real Property Appraiser Qualification Criteria* effective January 1, 2022, pages 9 – 11. It is the intent of the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers that the distance education standards for certified real estate appraisers and licensed appraiser trainees apply uniformly to Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators.

- **Synchronous distance education courses** are now considered substantially the same as traditional, in-person classroom educational offerings. Consequently, synchronous courses are required to meet the same class hour requirements as traditional, in-person classroom courses:
 - A class hour is defined as 60 minutes, of which at least 50 minutes is active instruction attended by the student.
 - Credit for the class hour requirement must be obtained from one of the following approved providers: colleges or universities; community or junior colleges; real estate appraisal or real estate-related organizations; state or federal agencies or commissions; proprietary schools; providers approved by state certification/licensing agencies; or The Appraisal Foundation or its Boards.
- **Asynchronous distance education courses** must meet the class hour requirement as well as the following requirements for student-teacher interaction, course content approval and course delivery mechanism approval:
 - The course must provide a way for the student to interact with the teacher through verbal or written communication; and
 - Approval of course content must be obtained from one of the following sources: The AQB; a state regulatory jurisdiction; or an accredited college, community

college, or university that offers distance education programs and is approved or accredited by the Commission on Colleges, a regional or national accreditation association, or by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education; and

- Approval of the course delivery mechanism must be obtained from one of the following sources: The AQB; AQB-approved organizations providing approval of course design and delivery (such as The Appraisal Foundation or other independent approved entity); a college or university that qualifies for content approval that awards academic credit for the distance education course, or a qualifying college or university for content approval with a distance education delivery program that approves the course design and delivery that incorporates interactivity.
- **Hybrid distance education courses** are acceptable to meet class hour requirements if each of the course's component parts meet the requirements for the delivery method employed (i.e., the in-person portion of the course must meet the in-person requirements, the synchronous portion of the course must meet the synchronous requirements, and the asynchronous portion of the course must meet the asynchronous requirements.)

In addition to the aforementioned requirements, distance education courses intended for use as *qualifying education* must include a written, closed-book final examination; oral examinations are not acceptable. The examination must be proctored in person or remotely by an official approved by the college or university, or by the sponsoring organization. Bio-metric proctoring is acceptable.

USPAP courses presented in a distance education format must be designed to foster appropriate student-to-student, student-to-instructor, and student-to-material interaction.

Asynchronous distance education courses intended for use as *continuing education* must include at least one of the following:

- A written examination proctored by an official approved by the college or university, or by the sponsoring organization; oral examinations are not acceptable. Remote proctoring, including bio-metric procedures as noted in Chapter III, Section E. 7. of the AQB Criteria, is acceptable; or
- Successful completion of prescribed course mechanisms required to demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter. See, *The Real Property Appraiser Qualification Criteria* effective January 1, 2022, pages 10 – 11.