



MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

STUDENT SUCCESS WITH LESS DEBT

Academic Affairs Division: Career & Workforce Education *Private Career Schools*

This process is intended to evaluate and determine if an entity requires approval to operate in Maryland. The approval process is a multi-step process to determine an entity's administrative capabilities, financial and educational soundness. I have summarized the application process and included the bifurcated process if an education program requires additional state approval by a Maryland licensing board.

We encourage all prospective applicants to fully review the [Code of Maryland Regulations 13B.01.01 - Minimum Requirements for Private Career Schools](#). This process can be very challenging for individuals if they are not fully versed in the process and regulatory requirements, especially for those that do not have extensive experience as an administrator and/or certified instructor of a regulated post-secondary institution.

The following explains the initial steps to our process. This information and a full list of details can be found on our website - [Approval to Operate a Private Career School in Maryland](#)

Step 1: [Training Provider Questionnaire \("TPQ"\)](#). This form is mandatory for all entities conducting any post-secondary training

This is not the application. It is the first step to determine the type of training and the required next steps. The Secretary of Higher Education will provide entities with a determination if the training requires full approval, is exempt from our approval or is not regulated by MHEC.

Step 2: Applicant is required to have approval to operate as a Private Career School.

The applicant will receive a "Not Exempt" determination letter in response to the submitted TPQ

This determination allows a prospective applicant to attend one of our quarterly mandatory two-hour New Applicant Workshops which explains the process and allows individuals to ask questions as time permits.

Step 3: Initial Application - Part 1

- After 30 days from the New Applicant Workshop, an application may be submitted with all required documentation for Part 1

Staff will evaluate the **completeness of the application documents**, request further information and/or determine the application contains all required documents.

A formal completeness check letter is sent notifying the applicant of each component and any outstanding requirements.

- Staff will review the application submission three times before rendering a final decision on the application's compliance with the regulations.

Step 4: Curriculum Review (if applicable)

- If the proposed training leads to licensure and requires approval by another state agency/licensing board. The applicant must contact the agency/licensing board to ensure their curriculum is approved before moving on to Part 2.

Step 5: The applicant is notified they may submit the next stage of the application -- Initial Application - Part 2

- Staff will fully evaluate each component of the application documents for completeness, determine if the documents are educationally and financially sound, demonstrate the institution's ability to operate the proposed training and the student policies are legally sound. Again, the staff will review the application three times before rendering a final decision on the application's compliance with the regulations.
- Applicants are advised they are not required to secure a facility until they are ready to submit their Part 2 application.

Step 5: On-Site Inspection Visit

- After the Analysts has conducted a thorough review and determined the application is complete, an on-site visit to the training location(s) will be conducted.

Step 6: Final Recommendation to the Secretary of Higher Education

- The final analysis and staff recommendation is completed and presented to the Secretary of Higher Education's final decision and signature.

This process generally takes 6-12 months based on volume within the agency, the completeness of the application and the applicant's ability to demonstrate full compliance with the minimum regulatory requirements through their application submissions. If any part of the original application changes, the applicant may be required to repeat one or all parts of the application process.

Our staff will assist applicants on general questions pertaining to COMAR and our application process. The staff is not able to serve as consultants, complete forms and/or student documents for a prospective entity. In addition to our New Applicant Workshop, we provide a full list of requirements, templates and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website. Please visit our [website - Approval to Operate a Private Career School in Maryland](#) - and see some recommended additional state resources below.

Prospective entities are requesting to start a business as well as provide educational instruction. As such they may be required to adhere to additional sections of COMAR. It is the entity's responsibility to contact each agency to determine your requirements prior to recruiting, advertising and/or structuring your new post-secondary education institution.