

## GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A SCHOOL CATALOG

The following guide is designed to assist with the preparation of a school catalog and should be used in conjunction with the “*Catalog Checklist for a Private Career School*”. The catalog must fully and accurately describe the programs and policies of the school. Be certain that the school catalog addresses all elements on the “*Catalog Checklist*”, particularly items with multiple components. The numbers identified in parentheses below correspond to the item numbers on the “*Catalog Checklist*”.

**Please note that this guide does not address every item on the “*Catalog Checklist*”.**

Historically, applicants have required additional explanation regarding certain catalog items. Background and explanatory material are provided for these items.

**Statement of Ownership (Item #3 of the “*Catalog Checklist*”):** Describe who or what owns and controls the school. If the ownership is a corporation, the description must include the names of the corporate officers.

**Academic Calendar (Item #8a of the “*Catalog Checklist*”):** Provide an academic calendar that identifies for each program all the scheduled training start dates and end dates.

**Program Overview (Item #12 of the “*Catalog Checklist*”):** The program offerings are the cornerstone of the school. Describe each program and ensure that each element of the “*Catalog Checklist*” is included. Identified below is information pertaining to only some of the elements listed in Item #12.

- **Program Title and Length:** Choose a program title that accurately represents the subject matter content and use it consistently throughout the application. Do not embellish or inflate the title.
- **Vocational Objectives:** Limit the list to entry-level positions for which the average graduate without other training or experience would qualify.
- **Entrance Requirements:** In accordance with Maryland regulations:
  - a) Establish entrance criteria so that the applicant meeting these standards will have a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the program. To accomplish this:
    - i) Develop entrance requirements consistent with the reading level of the textbook and materials used for the program.
    - ii) If the school proposes to enroll non-high school graduates, utilize a nationally recognized standardized test to evaluate the ability of non-high school graduates to benefit from training. (The application requires information regarding the selection and administration of such a standardized test.)
  - b) State clearly that proof of entrance requirements must be met prior to the start of training.

For example, sample language for the catalog might read:

*To be admitted to the ABC Program, the prospective student must provide evidence that he/she meets the following entrance requirements prior to the start of training:*

- i) High school graduation as documented by a diploma, certified transcript, or GED Certificate.*
- ii) If the applicant does not have or cannot provide the above documentation, he/she must achieve minimum passing scores on the following two sections of the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test: Verbal = 200 and Quantitative = 210.*

**Description of Individual Courses or Subjects (Item #12e of the “Catalog Checklist”):**

Prepare a detailed description for each course or subject. (Note: A list of chapter titles or a copy of the table of contents from the text is insufficient.)

**Graduation Requirements (Item #12i of the “Catalog Checklist”):** Specify what the student must accomplish to complete the program satisfactorily.

For example, sample language for the catalog might read:

*In order to be graduated from the ABC Program, the student must:*

- i) Achieve an overall 80% attendance rate.*
- ii) Achieve a cumulative grade of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.*
- iii) Satisfy all financial obligations to the school.*

**Attendance Policy Requirements (Item #15 of the “Catalog Checklist”):** In accordance with Maryland regulations, “A student shall have a minimum attendance rate of 80% of the total program to be graduated”:

- Absences (Item #15a of the “Catalog Checklist”): An absence is an absence. No distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences.
- Attendance Evaluation Points (Item #15c of the “Catalog Checklist”): Include sufficient monitoring and enforcement so that the student has a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the program.

For example, sample language for the catalog for a 190-hour program might read:

*Attendance is monitored daily and evaluated weekly. Failure to maintain an 80% attendance rate for any week will result in a probationary status for the week immediately following. By the end of the probationary week, the probationary status will be lifted if the student has improved his/her attendance and achieved an overall rate of 80%. If the student improves his/her attendance during the probationary week, but does not achieve an overall rate of 80%, the probationary period may be extended by one additional week. At the end of the second probationary week, the student will be dismissed if he/she has not achieved an overall 80% attendance rate.*

- 80% Attendance Rate (Item #15g of the “Catalog Checklist”): Ensure that the student meets the minimum requirement of an 80% attendance rate so that he/she can be graduated from the program.

**Standards of Academic Progress (Item #17 of the “Catalog Checklist”)**

- Minimum Grades Considered Satisfactory (Item #17b of the “Catalog Checklist”): Establish a reasonable grading scale.

For example, sample language for the catalog might read:

*Identified below is the grading scale for the ABC program. The minimum passing score is 70.*

<i>A = 90-100</i>	<i>C = 70-79</i>
<i>B = 80-89</i>	<i>F = 69 or below</i>

- Description of Early and Frequent Evaluation Points (Item #17d of the “Catalog Checklist”): Evaluate the student’s progress early in the program and at frequent intervals. Establish minimum required standards at each evaluation point sufficient to assure that the student will have a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the program.
- Failure to Achieve the Minimum Academic Standards (Item #17e of the “Catalog Checklist”): Specify what action the school will take (i.e. probation and/or dismissal) if the student does not achieve the minimum academic standards.
- Academic Probation (Item #17f of the “Catalog Checklist”): Ensure that any probationary policy be realistic with respect to the overall length of the program.

**The Refund Policy (Item #18 of the “Catalog Checklist”)**. The refund policy must appear in the catalog exactly as it does in the enrollment agreement. The language from the “Catalog Checklist” is consistent with the minimum requirements of the regulations. It is recommended that the text from the “Catalog Checklist” be copied unless the school’s proposed refund policy would exceed the minimum standards and be more generous to students.