

**RCW 28B.85.020 Council's duties—Rule-making authority.** (1) The council:

(a) Shall adopt by rule, in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW, minimum standards for degree-granting institutions concerning granting of degrees, quality of education, unfair business practices, financial stability, and other necessary measures to protect citizens of this state against substandard, fraudulent, or deceptive practices. The rules shall require that an institution operating in Washington:

(i) Be accredited;

(ii) Have applied for accreditation and such application is pending before the accrediting agency;

(iii) Have been granted a waiver by the council waiving the requirement of accreditation; or

(iv) Have been granted an exemption by the council from the requirements of this subsection (1)(a);

(b) May investigate any entity the council reasonably believes to be subject to the jurisdiction of this chapter. In connection with the investigation, the council may administer oaths and affirmations, issue subpoenas and compel attendance, take evidence, and require the production of any books, papers, correspondence, memorandums, or other records which the council deems relevant or material to the investigation. The council, including its staff and any other authorized persons, may conduct site inspections, the cost of which shall be borne by the institution, and examine records of all institutions subject to this chapter;

(c) May negotiate and enter into interstate reciprocity agreements with other state or multistate entities if the agreements are consistent with the purposes in this chapter as determined by the council;

(d) May enter into agreements with degree-granting institutions of higher education based in this state, that are otherwise exempt under the provisions of subsection (1)(a) of this section, for the purpose of ensuring consistent consumer protection in interstate distance delivery of higher education;

(e) Shall develop an interagency agreement with the workforce training and education coordinating board to regulate degree-granting private vocational schools with respect to degree and nondegree programs; and

(f) Shall develop and disseminate information to the public about entities that sell or award degrees without requiring appropriate academic achievement at the postsecondary level, including but not limited to, a description of the substandard and potentially fraudulent practices of these entities, and advice about how the public can recognize and avoid the entities. To the extent feasible, the information shall include links to additional resources that may assist the public in identifying specific institutions offering substandard or fraudulent degree programs.

(2) Financial disclosures provided to the council by degree-granting private vocational schools are not subject to public disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW. [2013 c 218 s 3; 2012 c 229 s 543; 2006 c 234 s 3; 2005 c 274 s 246; 2004 c 96 s 1; 1996 c 305 s 1; 1994 c 38 s 1; 1986 c 136 s 2.]

**Effective date—2012 c 229 ss 101, 117, 401, 402, 501 through 594, 601 through 609, 701 through 708, 801 through 821, 902, and 904: See note following RCW 28B.77.005.**

**Severability—1996 c 305:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1996 c 305 s 5.]