



Credible education
through accreditation

Committee on Accreditation
of Educational Programs for the
Emergency Medical Services Professions

Satellites, Sections, and Alternate Locations

New Requirements Effective January 2021

To meet the needs of students and stakeholders, accredited programs may develop alternative locations to deliver components of the course or, at times, the entire program. The distinctions and delivery modes can be confusing but are important in program operation and assessment. CAAHEP has recently revised the definition of a **satellite** which clarifies the structure.

“Off-campus location(s) that are advertised or otherwise made known to individuals outside the sponsor. The off-campus location(s) *must offer all the professional didactic (which may include any distance education delivery modality) and laboratory content of the program.* Satellites(s) are included in the CAAHEP accreditation of the sponsor and function under the direction of the Key Personnel of the program. The CoAEMSP may establish additional requirements that are consistent with CAAHEP *Standards* and policies”.

With the revised CAAHEP definition, the CoAEMSP has clarified its policy requirements for satellites, adding a definition for an **alternate location** as a ‘location that is separate from the main campus of the CAAHEP accredited Paramedic educational program where a portion of the program is conducted which may include skill practice or testing, periodic lecture or other learning activity, or other student assessments’. An alternate location is *not* a satellite.

In addition, a **section** is defined as ‘the delivery of the program to a distinct cohort of students who attend the main campus for one or more of the laboratory (or similar hands-on skills) professional course(s) of the curriculum. A cohort may be distinguished by time of day for primary completion of the curriculum (e.g., day vs evening) or by day of the week for primary completion of the curriculum (e.g., weekday vs weekend)’.

If you have questions regarding whether a proposed course or location other than the main campus meets one of the previous specifications, contact Lynn Caruthers at lynn@coaemsp.org.

As indicated, satellites *must* function under the direction of the CAAHEP accredited Paramedic program and cannot operate independently. Important changes to requirements for satellites include the following:

- Beginning January 1, 2021, programs must hold CAAHEP Accreditation and be in good standing to be eligible to request CoAEMSP approval of a satellite location. Operating a satellite involves unique challenges and the experience of conducting an ‘on-campus’ course is important as the program is established.
- Due to the distance and separation from the main campus, a Lead Instructor must be appointed and must be responsible for on-site coordination of the entire course. The Lead Instructor must meet all of the CAAHEP *Standards*. However, individuals who have been in this position with a satellite continuously from date of hire prior to the 2015 CAAHEP *Standards* who does not meet the Associate Degree requirement prescribed under the current CAAHEP *Standards* and Guidelines may continue in the role of Lead Instructor with that program, so long as the program continuously maintains CAAHEP accreditation. If there is a change in the Lead Instructor, the new Lead Instructor must meet the 2015 CAAHEP *Standards*.

- Students enrolled in a satellite Paramedic program must receive the same level of instruction and evaluation as those students enrolled in the main campus program. Therefore:
 - The curricula, syllabi, scheduled hours and sequencing, student methods of evaluation, and required competencies must be consistent with the main campus.
 - Texts, assignments, and learning management platforms must be consistent regardless of the student location.
 - Other consistencies include application of program policies and requirements for patient contacts and competencies.
 - Consistent clinical and field internship experiences include preceptor training and faculty monitoring and oversight of the clinical, field experience, and capstone field internship experiences.
- During the course, student records may be kept on-site at the satellite, however permanent student records are maintained at the main campus.
- Satellite locations that are located outside of the state in which the main campus is located are subject to additional requirements and the program must ensure that all requirements to operate are approved in advance by the State Office of EMS in which the satellite is located.
- When the satellite is in a different state from the program, the program is required to have a Medical Director that can legally provide supervision for students in that state. If the program's Medical Director or Associate Medical Director cannot provide out-of-state supervision, then the sponsor must appoint an Assistant Medical Director (CAAHEP Standard III.B.4). Assistant or Associate Medical Directors must be approved by CoAEMSP.

A completed CoAEMSP *Request for Approval of a Satellite Location* form, the annual satellite fee, and approval by the CoAEMSP Executive Office of the new satellite location are required prior to advertising or enrolling students in a satellite location. If the Program fails to do so, the graduates from the satellite will not be eligible to sit for the NREMT Paramedic credentialing examination. The form can be found at <https://coaemsp.org/resource-library>.

Students enrolled at satellite locations are identified as a separate cohort in the CoAEMSP Annual Report. An annual Resource Assessment Matrix (RAM) will be required separate from the main campus.

The satellite locations are included in CAAHEP re-accreditation review of the main campus and the site visit team will review and assess the satellites in addition to the main campus. All of the previously mentioned requirements will be evaluated.

If the program elects to discontinue a satellite location, the program must submit a completed Voluntary Withdrawal of a Satellite Location template letter for each satellite location. Reactivation of satellites at a later date requires the program's sponsor to submit a new CoAEMSP Request for Approval of a Satellite Location form.

In summary, oversight of the satellite by the Program Director and Medical Director is critical throughout the course. Any student enrolled in a CAAHEP accredited program has the right to receive the same education program as students at the main campus.