



Prospective Online Provider FAQ

Overview of the Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) for Prospective Providers

The Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) is a legislative initiative connecting qualified Online Providers to Utah students. The program ensures financial stability and broad enrollment access, enabling providers to prioritize instruction while maintaining academic autonomy.

Applicant Eligibility

To qualify as an SOEP Online Provider, applicants must be established legal entities with a primary mission and operational structure dedicated exclusively to delivering fully online instruction and curriculum.

Required Applicant Capabilities

Ideal applicants must demonstrate high-level expertise in four areas:

1. **Proven Track Record:** Demonstrate a verifiable, long-term history of delivering instruction to diverse secondary students (grades 6-12) in a fully virtual environment.
2. **Curriculum Expertise:** Exhibit the capacity to develop and maintain high-quality, engaging curriculum optimized for fully online instruction.
3. **Robust Infrastructure:** Maintain established technical infrastructure and mature administrative processes to ensure secure, uninterrupted, and scalable course delivery.
4. **Dedicated Student Support:** Implement systems designed to proactively guide students through the distinct requirements of a fully online learning experience.

Entity Types

Eligible organizations include:

- **Public Local Education Agencies (LEAs):** Traditional public school districts.
- **Charter LEAs:** Charter schools established for online education.
- **Higher Education Affiliated Programs:** Cognia-Accredited secondary schools/programs overseen by a Utah Public Institution of Higher Education.
- **Non-Profit Entities:** Cognia-Accredited non-profit schools/programs that meet stringent requirements for flexible, open enrollment, offer **NCAA-approved courses**, and demonstrate adequate trust services capacity.

Strategic Benefit

1. **Guaranteed Financial Security:** USBE-managed payment processes mitigate financial risk and eliminate the administrative burden of negotiating separate LEA contracts.
2. **Strategic Enrollment Growth:** Listing courses in the centralized statewide catalog provides direct access to all eligible public and home-schooled students in Utah.
3. **Preservation of Autonomy:** Online Providers retain full authority over curriculum content and delivery while maintaining compliance with USBE performance and oversight standards.

Fiscal Benefit

The SOEP framework ensures financial health through the following operational model:

- **Profitability:** Sustainability is achieved when the marginal cost of instructing an additional student remains lower than the received course fees.
- **Cross-Subsidization:** Surplus revenue from SOEP enrollment may be reinvested to support services, initiatives, or the educational experience of full-time, enrolled students. SOEP participants are classified as part-time, course-access learners.
- **Financial Mandate:** Online Providers must ensure variable costs related to SOEP participation remain below collected course fees (Revenue > Marginal Cost).

I. Infrastructure and Capacity

- **Technology:** Utilize a robust, secure, and scalable Learning Management System (LMS) that meets state requirements for data privacy, security, and WCAG accessibility.
- **Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction:** Demonstrate effectiveness in instructing and supporting diverse secondary student populations.

- **Administrative Systems:** Maintain reliable systems for student registration, progress monitoring, grade reporting, and transcript management, including integration with state student information systems.
- **Security:** Implement FERPA-compliant data protection infrastructure, including established contingency plans and vendor review criteria.
- **Financial Stability:** Demonstrate consistent fiscal responsibility and long-term operational sustainability.

II. Staffing Requirements

- **Program Administration:** Appoint a licensed school administrator and dedicated staff (minimum 0.5 FTE) to oversee operations and serve as the primary liaison with the State Education Agency.
- **Special Education Expertise (Mandatory):** Employ a licensed secondary educator with a special education endorsement to oversee the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- **Instructional Staff:** Recruit, train, and provide professional development for highly qualified, state-licensed instructors experienced in online education.

III. Readiness

- **Financial Resources:** Maintain fiscal stability and adequate reserves to mitigate unforeseen operational costs.
- **Staffing:** Confirm all critical roles are staffed or supported by fully funded hiring plans, evidenced by organizational charts and verified credentials.
- **Operational Procedures:** Establish formalized protocols covering enrollment, instruction, academic integrity, student support, and grievance management.
- **Technical Infrastructure:** Verify that all systems are fully prepared for course enrollment and state regulatory reporting prior to launch.