

ACCSC ACCREDITATION ALERT

To: ACCSC-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
From: Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director
Date: July 1, 2010
Subject: Revisions to the ACCSC *Standards of Accreditation*

The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (“ACCSC”) has made revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation* in the following areas:

Rules of Process and Procedure:

- *Section IV (E)(7) & (F), Rules of Process and Procedure – Teach-out Plan and Teach-out Agreement*
- *Section V (B)(6), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Annual Report*
- *Section VI, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Complaint Procedures*
- *Section VIII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Appeal of Commission Decisions*
- *Section X (C)(6), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Notification and Information Sharing*
- *Section X (C)(1) and (D)(1), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Notification and Disclosure of Commission Actions*

Substantive Standards:

- *Section I (B), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Institutional Assessment and Improvement*
- *Section I (G), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Teach-out Plan and Teach-out Agreement*
- *Section III (A)(2), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Educational Administration*
- *Section V (A)(1), Admission Policies and Practices – Technical Revision*
- *Section IX (A)(5), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Distance Education*
- *Appendix IV, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Student Achievement Rates*

The revisions are effective as of July 1, 2010. A revised version of the ACCSC *Standards of Accreditation* dated July 1, 2010 is available on the Commission’s website at www.accsc.org.

For additional information related to this *Accreditation Alert*, please contact Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director, at 703.247.4520 or via e-mail at mccomis@accsc.org.

Revisions to the Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation
Effective July 1, 2010

Section IV (E)(7) & (F), Rules of Process and Procedure – Teach-out Plan and Teach-out Agreement

As proposed in the December 18, 2009 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised this section of the *Rules of Process and Procedure* to comply with provisions within the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the ensuing regulations effective July 1, 2010. The revisions largely align to the language presented in the Call for Comment; however, they are reorganized to reflect differences between a teach-out plan and a teach-out agreement (defined as a substantive change). The new *Section IV (F), Rules of Process and Procedures* covering teach-out plans also sets forth requirements for both institutional and programmatic teach-out plans (pgs. 30-31).

Section V (B)(6), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Annual Report

As proposed in the March 30, 2010 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised this section of the *Rules of Process and Procedure* to align with the provisions within the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the ensuing regulations effective July 1, 2010 that set forth requirements for accrediting agencies regarding monitoring enrollment growth (pg. 33).

Section VI, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Complaint Procedures

As proposed in the December 18, 2009 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised its complaint procedures to clarify the Commission's requirements for filing a complaint and the Commission's processes and procedures for reviewing complaints. A primary aspect of the Commission's complaint process is that although the Commission reviews all complaints, only those complaints that reasonably suggest that a school may not be in compliance with ACCSC standards or requirements are processed (pgs. 35-37).

Section VIII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Appeal of Commission Decisions

As proposed in the December 18, 2009 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised this section of the *Rules of Process and Procedure* to align to the provisions within the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the ensuing regulations effective July 1, 2010 that change the requirements for accrediting agencies regarding due process. The Commission's new *Rules of Process and Procedure* provide an allowance for new financial information to be submitted during the appeal process, set forth a requirement for a teach-out plan, and address the specific range of actions available to the Appeals Panel as required by the new federal regulations (pgs. 47-50).

Section X (C)(6), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Notification and Information Sharing

As proposed in the December 18, 2009 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised this section of the *Rules of Process and Procedure* to align to the provisions within the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the ensuing regulations effective July 1, 2010 regarding the confidentiality of information shared between the Commission and the United States Department of Education (pg. 54).

Section X (C)(1) and (D)(1), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation – Notification and Disclosure of Commission Actions

As proposed in the March 30, 2010 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised this section as a means to gain greater flexibility and to be timelier in sending initial accreditation and renewal of

accreditation decision letters to schools while at the same time maintaining compliance with applicable federal requirements for recognized accrediting agencies (pg. 54).

Revisions to the Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation
Effective July 1, 2010

Section I (B), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Institutional Assessment and Improvement

As proposed in the March 30, 2010 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised its standard pertaining to institutional improvement in a manner that places greater emphasis on the activities related to assessment, improvement, and planning and provides greater flexibility regarding how schools choose to engage in these activities and how schools choose to present this information for review (pgs. 60-61).

Section I (G), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Teach-out Plan and Teach-out Agreement

Given the revisions made to *Section IV (E)(7) & (F), Rules of Process and Procedure*, this section became redundant and thus has been deleted from the *Substantive Standards* (pg. 62).

Section III (A)(2), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Educational Administration

As proposed in the March 30, 2010 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised the faculty development standard in a manner that places greater emphasis on the activities related to faculty development and provides greater flexibility regarding how schools choose to engage in these activities with their faculty and how schools choose to present this information for review (pgs.74-75).

Section V (A)(1), Admission Policies and Practices – Technical Revision

A technical revision has been made to *Section V (A)(1), Substantive Standards* to create better alignment with the language used throughout *Section V* as well as the requirements set forth in the ACCSC Catalog Checklist (pg. 80).

Section IX (A)(5), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Distance Education

As proposed in the December 18, 2009 Call for Comment, the Commission has added this section to comply with the provisions within the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the ensuing regulations effective July 1, 2010. The newly adopted standard sets forth requirements regarding identity verification for students enrolled in distance education programs (pg. 92).

Appendix IV, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation – Student Achievement Rates

As set forth in the May 21, 2010 Dear Colleague Letter from ACCSC, the Commission has revised *Appendix IV, Substantive Standards*, to include the new graduation and employment rate benchmarks effective for all Graduation and Employment Charts that use a Report Date of July 1, 2010 and later (pg. 99).