

# ACCSCT Alert!

Information for  
our member schools

**To:** ACCSCT Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties  
**From:** Elise Scanlon, Executive Director  
**Date:** June 14, 2002  
**Subject:** Amendments to the Standards of Accreditation

---

The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology has reviewed all written comments submitted by accredited institutions and other interested parties regarding the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation as proposed in the Commission's December 19, 2001 Call For Comment. The Commission subsequently voted to adopt the proposed standards as indicated in the Call For Comment. These revisions to the Standards of Accreditation are effective immediately.

Accredited institutions and others maintaining complete, up-to-date copies of the Standards of Accreditation should add this notice to their current standards book under the Accreditation Alerts tab. This information can also be accessed through the ACCSCT Web Site ([www.accsct.org](http://www.accsct.org)). For additional information related to these adopted changes, please contact Michale S. McComis, Director of Accreditation at (703) 247-4520.

---

**REVISIONS TO SECTION II & SECTION V**  
**ADMISSIONS POLICIES IN THE STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION**

As part of its Systematic Program of Review, the Commission reviewed its standards concerning institutional admissions policies and procedures at its February 2002 meeting and found that revisions were in order to achieve greater clarity and reduce redundancy. The Commission combined its admissions criteria for associate and baccalaureate degrees under the general requirements for degree programs. Additionally, the Commission combined Section V(8) with Section V(2) adding language to clarify the Commission's expectation that schools ensure that each applicant admitted into its programs has the proper qualifications to complete the training.

Therefore, the Commission has made the following revisions to Section II and Section V of the Standards of Accreditation which are effective immediately (new language indicated by ***bold*** and ***italic*** print, deleted language indicated by ~~strikethrough~~):

## II. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### B. Degree Programs

#### 1. General Requirements

- c. Students admitted to associate or baccalaureate degree programs shall have earned a high school diploma or recognized equivalency certificate prior to starting class. Proof of the high school diploma or its equivalent must be received prior to the end of the first semester or quarter of attendance.

#### 3. Baccalaureate Degrees

- ~~a. Students admitted to baccalaureate degree programs shall possess a high school diploma or recognized equivalency certificate. Proof of the high school diploma or its equivalent must be received prior to the end of the first semester or quarter of attendance.~~

#### Re-letter 3 b-f to 3 a-e

## V. ADMISSION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

2. The school must consistently and fairly apply its admission standards. It must determine that applicants admitted have met such standards and are capable of benefiting from the training offered and that applicants rejected failed to did not meet such standards. ~~and would not benefit from the training offered.~~

*The school must ensure that each applicant admitted has the proper qualifications to complete the training and must secure documentation to demonstrate that each applicant meets all admissions requirements. Documentation must exist, covering the last five years, that demonstrates that admission standards have been met or explains the basis for any denial of admission.*

- ~~8. Documentation must exist, covering the last five years, that admission standards have been met or explain the basis for any denial of admission.~~

**REVISIONS TO THE ACCSCT CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**  
**SECTION I OF THE STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION**

The Commission has also reviewed Section I of the Standards of Accreditation and determined that its requirements for eligibility for accreditation, including continuous operation and adherence to standards, needed to be stated more explicitly. These revisions also seek to emphasize the importance of the institution's mission and educational objectives as they are considered in the accreditation process and expressed by the institution. The Commission's revisions are as follows and effective immediately (new language indicated by ***bold*** and ***italic*** print, deleted language indicated by ~~strikethrough~~):

**I. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This section establishes criteria which a school must meet in order to ~~be considered~~ ***apply for, obtain, and maintain accreditation.*** ~~for Commission review.~~ The Commission does not profess to have within its capability, and does not define as its purpose, the evaluation of any school that may seek accreditation. Rather, a school must fall within the Commission's scope and meet the requirements of this section before it may receive ***apply for*** consideration.

**A. ~~Eligibility Requirements~~*Commission Scope***

Only private, postsecondary career schools and colleges with trade, occupational or technical educational objectives are eligible for accreditation. The Commission may decline to consider for accreditation otherwise eligible schools if it determines that the programs offered by an applicant school fall outside of the Commission's primary scope and competence or there is a lack of standards necessary for meaningful review. Schools primarily directed toward avocational or general education objectives are ineligible ***for accreditation from the Commission.*** ~~At the time of application, the school must have been training students continuously (except for regularly scheduled vacation periods) for the preceding two consecutive years and must also have graduated students from the longest program offered by it during that two-year period.~~

**B. Eligibility Requirements**

**1. Application for Initial Accreditation**

**Before the Commission will accept a school's Application for Initial Accreditation, the school must demonstrate that it meets the following eligibility criteria:**

**(a) The school must fall within the Commission's scope as stated above.**

**(b) At the time of application, the school must have been training students continuously (except for regularly scheduled vacation periods) for the preceding two consecutive years and demonstrate that it will operate continuously thereafter.**

**(c) The school must have graduated a student from the longest program(s) offered by it during the two year period preceding its application for accreditation.**

(d) The school must have all necessary authorizations from the state(s) in which it operates and be in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

(e) The school must be financially sound with sufficient resources for the proper operation of the school and discharge of obligations to students.

(f) The school's Application for Initial Accreditation must be complete.

Should a school submit an Application for Initial Accreditation which does not minimally establish that it meets the above stated eligibility criteria, the school will be given an opportunity to submit additional information in support of its application. If the application cannot be accepted within six months of the date of initial submission, the application may be rejected without a refund of the corresponding application processing fee. A school whose application is rejected may appeal in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appeals Panel, Process and Procedures.

## 2. Application for Renewal of Accreditation

A school must submit an Application for Renewal of Accreditation on a timely basis, substantially complete, and demonstrating eligibility for accreditation. Should a school submit an Application for Renewal of Accreditation which does not minimally establish that it meets the Commission's scope requirements and that it remains eligible for accreditation, the school will be given an opportunity to submit additional information in support of its application. If the application cannot be accepted within three months of the date of initial submission, the Commission will take appropriate action which may include withdrawal of the school's accreditation. A school whose accreditation is withdrawn in the application process may appeal in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appeals Panel, Process and Procedures.

## 3. Maintaining Accreditation

In order for a school to maintain its eligibility for accreditation, it must be in continuous compliance with accrediting standards and requirements. This means, among other things, that a school must: be in continuous operation training students in accordance with its primary objective, with the exception of any regularly scheduled vacation periods or an approved change of location; fulfill all reporting requirements; maintain compliance with all applicable local, state and federal requirements; and pay all sustaining, processing, and on-site evaluation fees as required.

## C. Operational Requirements

~~—A main school or branch:~~

- ~~1. Must maintain all required administrative and support services.~~
- ~~2. Must provide resources sufficient for the management, instruction and services required for the overall operation of the school and effective delivery of educational programs and services to students.~~
- ~~3. May consist of one or more buildings or parts of buildings, situated such that students will have ready access to all services of the school.~~

4. ~~Must ensure that all required courses are available to enable students to complete their program of study. Schools may enter into consortium, contractual or partnership agreements in accordance with Section II (A)(7) of the Standards of Accreditation.~~

#### **DC. Primary Educational Objectives**

The school's primary educational objective is **must be** to prepare students for entrance or advancement in one or more occupations requiring manual, manipulative or technical competence or skills. Training, which is job oriented, provides graduates with the necessary competencies for employment in their occupational field. **A school must ensure that all required courses are available to enable students to complete their program of study. Schools may enter into consortium, contractual or partnership agreements in accordance with Section II (A)(7) of the Standards of Accreditation.**

**A school may have educational objectives other than those described above (e.g., GED preparation, refresher training, avocational courses, continuing education, etc.), however any such educational objectives may not have greater priority within the school's mission and operations than its primary educational objective. A school may not advertise these educational objectives in a manner that would represent them as within the scope of the Commission's accreditation.**

**A school may enter into contractual arrangements with business, industry, or government agencies for group training purposes. The school may represent these training programs as within the scope of the Commission's accreditation only if the programs have been recognized or approved in accordance with accrediting requirements.**

#### **BD. Legal and Disclosure Requirements**

1. A main school is a free-standing institution that is legally established as a corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship and reported as such to the appropriate state agencies, the U.S. Department of Education and other accrediting bodies, if applicable. A main school may also establish separate facilities (i.e., branch or satellite location) in accordance with Section X of the Standards of Accreditation.
2. ~~Any school seeking or holding accreditation from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agency~~ must describe and disclose itself in identical terms **consistently** to each accrediting agency, **state agency, and federal agency** with regard to identity (i.e., main school, branch, or equivalent), purpose, governance, programs, ~~degrees, diplomas, certificates~~ **credentials awarded**, personnel, finances, and constituents served, and must keep each ~~accrediting~~ agency apprised of any change in its status.
3. A school must be in compliance with **all applicable** federal, state and local government requirements. In cases where accrediting standards and state or federal requirements differ, the more stringent shall apply. If conflicts exist between state or federal requirements and accrediting standards, the state or federal requirements shall take precedence.

**CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO THE INTRODUCTION SECTION BASED UPON  
THE REVISIONS TO SECTION I OF THE STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION**

Due to the revisions stated above, the following conforming amendment is required to the **Introduction, Accreditation Reviews** section of the Standards of Accreditation (deleted language indicated by **strikethrough**):

**Program Approval**

A school may enter into contractual arrangements with business, industry, or government agencies for group training purposes ~~and shall notify the Commission of such training contracts~~. The school may represent these training programs as within the scope of the Commission's accreditation only if the programs have been recognized or approved in accordance with accrediting requirements.

**FINAL VERSION OF SECTION I WITH ALL REVISIONS INCORPORATED**

**I. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This section establishes criteria which a school must meet in order to apply for, obtain, and maintain accreditation. The Commission does not profess to have within its capability, and does not define as its purpose, the evaluation of any school that may seek accreditation. Rather, a school must fall within the Commission's scope and meet the requirements of this section before it may apply for consideration.

**A. Commission Scope**

Only private, postsecondary career schools and colleges with trade, occupational or technical educational objectives are eligible for accreditation. The Commission may decline to consider for accreditation otherwise eligible schools if it determines that the programs offered by an applicant school fall outside of the Commission's primary scope and competence or there is a lack of standards necessary for meaningful review. Schools primarily directed toward avocational or general education objectives are ineligible for accreditation from the Commission.

**B. Eligibility Requirements**

**1. Application for Initial Accreditation**

Before the Commission will accept a school's Application for Initial Accreditation, the school must demonstrate that it meets the following eligibility criteria:

- (a) The school must fall within the Commission's scope as stated above.
- (b) At the time of application, the school must have been training students continuously (except for regularly scheduled vacation periods) for the preceding two consecutive years and demonstrate that it will operate continuously thereafter.
- (c) The school must have graduated a student from the longest program(s) offered by it during the two year period preceding its application for accreditation.
- (d) The school must have all necessary authorizations from the state(s) in which it operates and be in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.
- (e) The school must be financially sound with sufficient resources for the proper operation of the school and discharge of obligations to students.
- (f) The school's Application for Initial Accreditation must be complete.

Should a school submit an Application for Initial Accreditation which does not minimally establish that it meets the above stated eligibility criteria, the school will be given an opportunity to submit additional information in support of its application. If the application cannot be accepted within six months of the date of initial submission, the application may be rejected without a refund of the corresponding application processing fee. A school whose application is rejected may appeal in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appeals Panel, Process and Procedures.

## **2. Application for Renewal of Accreditation**

A school must submit an Application for Renewal of Accreditation on a timely basis, substantially complete, and demonstrating eligibility for accreditation. Should a school submit an Application for Renewal of Accreditation which does not minimally establish that it meets the Commission's scope requirements and that it remains eligible for accreditation, the school will be given an opportunity to submit additional information in support of its application. If the application cannot be accepted within three months of the date of initial submission, the Commission will take appropriate action which may include withdrawal of the school's accreditation. A school whose accreditation is withdrawn in the application process may appeal in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appeals Panel, Process and Procedures.

## **3. Maintaining Accreditation**

In order for a school to maintain its eligibility for accreditation, it must be in continuous compliance with accrediting standards and requirements. This means, among other things, that a school must: be in continuous operation training students in accordance with its primary objective, with the exception of any regularly scheduled vacation periods or an approved change of location; fulfill all reporting requirements; maintain compliance with all applicable local, state and federal requirements; and pay all sustaining, processing, and on-site evaluation fees as required.

### **C. Educational Objectives**

The school's primary educational objective must be to prepare students for entrance or advancement in one or more occupations requiring manual, manipulative or technical competence or skills. Training, which is job oriented, provides graduates with the necessary competencies for employment in their occupational field. A school must ensure that all required courses are available to enable students to complete their program of study. Schools may enter into consortium, contractual or partnership agreements in accordance with Section II (A)(7) of the Standards of Accreditation.

A school may have educational objectives other than those described above (e.g., GED preparation, refresher training, avocational courses, continuing education, etc.), however any such educational objectives may not have greater priority within the school's mission and operations than its primary educational objective. A school may not advertise these educational objectives in a manner that would represent them as within the scope of the Commission's accreditation.

A school may enter into contractual arrangements with business, industry, or government agencies for group training purposes. The school may represent these training programs as within the scope of the Commission's accreditation only if the programs have been recognized or approved in accordance with accrediting requirements.

### **D. Legal and Disclosure Requirements**

1. A main school is a free-standing institution that is legally established as a corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship and reported as such to the appropriate state agencies, the U.S. Department of Education and other accrediting bodies, if applicable. A main school may also establish separate facilities (i.e., branch or satellite location) in accordance with Section X of the Standards of Accreditation.
2. A school must describe and disclose itself consistently to each accrediting agency, state agency, and federal agency with regard to identity (i.e., main school, branch, or equivalent), purpose, governance, programs, credentials awarded, personnel, finances, and constituents served, and must keep each agency apprised of any change in its status.
3. A school must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local government requirements. In cases where accrediting standards and state or federal requirements differ, the more stringent shall apply. If conflicts exist between state or federal requirements and accrediting standards, the state or federal requirements shall take precedence.



**REVISIONS TO THE ACCSCT  
CATALOG DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS**

Finally, the Commission reviewed its disclosure requirements for an institution's catalog as expressed in the Catalog Checklist. The following are revisions to these requirements in areas related to "level of occupation," clock hour to credit hour conversion information, course descriptions, class size, refund information, school calendar, and student complaint procedures. The Commission's revision is meant to provide consistent and clear guidelines to schools concerning catalog disclosures and to ensure that students receive clear and relevant information about a school and its programs. The following are the Commission's revisions to the Catalog Checklist which are effective July 1, 2002. Schools may achieve on-going compliance of catalogs via the use of addenda and supplements which make reference to the published catalog currently in use (new language indicated by ***bold*** and ***italic*** print, deleted language indicated by ~~strikethrough~~):

- | <b>Item #</b> | <b>Catalog Checklist Item</b>   |
|---------------|---|
| 8.            | The educational objectives of each program, including the name, nature and level of occupations <b><i>(e.g., entry-level)</i></b> for which training is provided.   |
| 11.           | Definition of clock hours and/or credit units and <b><i>the clock hour to credit hour conversion formula used by the school for academic purposes.</i></b>  |
| 13.           | <b><i>A clear description of each program offered by the school to include</i></b> <del>the title, scope, and sequence, <b><i>and course descriptions.</i></b> program offered specifying sufficiently the subjects included to clearly describe the program.</del> |
| 15.           | Maximum number of students in a <b><i>typical</i></b> classroom or laboratory <b><i>setting of instruction.</i></b>   |
| 24.           | The school's refund policy <b><i>and a statement indicating where information regarding any applicable third party funding agency refund or return of funds policies may be obtained (e.g., Title IV, Veterans Administration, WIA, etc.).</i></b>                  |
| 27.           | A calendar for the school year including <del>beginning and ending dates of classes or programs</del> <b><i>vacation periods, breaks,</i></b> holidays, etc.  |
| 29.           | <b><i>The</i></b> <del>S</del> school's complaint policy and procedures which includes, at a minimum, all items required by the Student Complaint Exhibit, <del>or a reference to where the policy and procedure can be obtained.</del>                             |

A revised Catalog Checklist is attached.

# CATALOG CHECKLIST

---

**This checklist must be cross-referenced to and accompanied by the school's catalog.**

Name of School:

School Number:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

This exhibit serves as a detailed index to aid reviewers in finding specified portions in the catalog. A copy of this checklist is to accompany each catalog copy sent to the Commission. The checklist is marked to show page numbers (or references to specific covers or supplements) on which each required item is included. The catalog is marked to correspond to the item numbers on the checklist. The catalog of an accredited school must include the following items. If any item is not included, the catalog must refer to the supplement/addendum which contains the item and the supplement/addendum must refer to the catalog. The supplement/addendum must contain the school's name and location and the effective date of the supplement/addendum.

Item Number	Catalog Checklist Item	Page Number(s)
1.	Title of publication.	
2.	Name and address of the school.	
3.	Date of publication (month/year).	
4.	A statement of the school's philosophy.	
5.	A statement of the school's history.	
6.	The admission requirements.	
7.	The admission procedures.	
8.	The educational objectives of each program, including the name, nature and level of occupations (e.g., entry-level) for which training is provided.	
9.	The number of clock hours (or credit units, if applicable) for each program.	
10.	The grading system.	
11.	Definition of clock hours and credit units and the clock hour to credit hour_conversion formula_used by the school for academic purposes.	
12.	The length of time in weeks or months normally required for completion of each program.	
13.	A clear description of each program offered by the school to include the title, scope and sequence and course descriptions.	
14.	A description of the school's general physical facilities and equipment.	
15.	Maximum number of students in typical classroom or laboratory settings of instruction.	
16.	Policy relating to attendance.	

# CATALOG CHECKLIST

---

**This checklist must be cross-referenced to and accompanied by the school's catalog.**

Name of School:

School Number:

<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Catalog Checklist Item</b>	<b>Page Number(s)</b>
17.	Policy relating to make-up work.	
18.	Policy relating to conduct.	
19.	Policy relating to termination.	
20.	The required levels of performance for graduation.	
21.	Satisfactory progress policy.	
22.	Type of document (certificate, diploma, or degree) awarded upon graduation.	
23.	Tuition and other student charges related to the enrollment, such as deposits, fees, books, supplies, tools, equipment, transportation, and any other "extras" e.g., make-up work, special testing, equipment, late charges, or other school services for which a student may be responsible.	
24.	The school's refund policy and a statement indicating where information regarding any applicable third party funding agency refund or return of funds policies (e.g., Title IV, Veterans Administration, WIA, etc.) may be obtained.	
25.	A detailed and explicit description of the extent and nature of placement assistance available to students and/or graduates.	
26.	Specifics describing the extent of other available student services, such as housing, advising, etc.	
27.	A calendar for the school year including vacation periods, breaks, holidays, etc.	
28.	List all separate facilities. If a separate catalog is used for a separate facility, it must include the name and location of the main school or branch.*	
29.	School's complaint policy and procedures which includes, at a minimum, all items required by the Student Complaint Exhibit.*	

\*Checklist Item #28-- Section X(G) of the Standards of Accreditation indicates that a branch may disclose in advertising and promotional materials its accredited status and relationship to the main school only after it has been granted accreditation by the Commission and then only in compliance with the Advertising of Accredited Status Exhibit. Schools submitting a proposed branch catalog should not include the proposed branch's affiliation to the main school until the Commission has granted an initial recognition of accreditation to the branch.

\*Checklist Item #29 -- Section IV(D)(1) and Process and Procedures, Team Summary Report, of the Standards of Accreditation, require that institutions avoid the use of ACCSCT accredited status in a false or misleading manner. Therefore, applicant schools and proposed branches should not publish Catalog Checklist Item #29 in the applicant school's or proposed branch's catalog. Rather, applicant schools and proposed branches should submit - with each copy of the school's catalog submitted for Commission review - a draft copy of Checklist Item #29 for inclusion in the school's catalog upon a grant of accreditation.