Welcome from the Commission

Session A
ACCSC Workshop Team

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Agenda and Workshop Materials
Review of Agenda and Workbook

**Agenda**

March 10       Sessions A – D
March 11       Sessions D - E

**Workbook**

- Tabs A - E
- Appendices
  - Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Financial Statements
  - Instructions Electronic Submission
Getting to Know You
Getting to Know ACCSC
The Accreditation Workshop is designed to provide an opportunity for participants to develop an understanding of:

- The ACCSC organization, its mission, values, and purpose
- The *Standards of Accreditation* as a set of best practices
- The importance of strong leadership in institutional effectiveness
• Eligibility criteria for initial applicants for accreditation
• The principal steps of the ACCSC accreditation process
• Institutional Success
  - Standards are a blueprint
  - Outcomes as a measure of success
  - Institutional assessment and improvement planning
The Accreditation Workshop is designed to provide an opportunity for participants to answer the following questions:

- What changes will I need to make?
- Do I have the resources to be successful?
- Is this a good fit?
What is Accreditation?

• Private, voluntary, non-governmental, peer-review process
• Assists schools and colleges to become stronger and better institutions
• Assessment and enhancement of the educational quality of an institution, ensure consistency in institutional operations, promote self-evaluation and institutional improvement, and provide for public accountability.
Authorization from the US Department of Education

• The U.S. Department of Education authorizes accrediting agencies to serve as reliable authorities as to the quality of educational institutions.

• An agency seeking national recognition must demonstrate the agency’s compliance with the federal criteria for recognition in areas such as administrative capacity, scope of standards, fairness of processes and procedures, and transparency in actions.
Scope of ACCSC Accreditation

• Accreditation of private and public postsecondary institutions
• Non-degree granting and degree granting institutions, including those granting associate, baccalaureate and master’s degrees
• Predominantly organized to educate students for occupational, trade and technical careers
• Including institutions that offer programs via distance education.
A Brief History of ACCSC

1965: founded as the Accrediting Commission of the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools (NATTS).

1967: recognized by the U.S. Department of Education,

1990: name change to the Accrediting Commission of Trade and Technical Schools (ACTTS) a part of the Career College Association
A Brief History of ACCSC

1993: separation from the trade association, creating a new wholly independent organization – the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCT).

2009: name change to the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC).
ACCSC Structure

• Organized as a 501 (c)(3)

• 13 member board/4 year terms
  – 4 public Commissioners (appointed)
  – 9 school Commissioners (elected by membership)
Commission Duties

• Make accrediting decisions
• Promulgate standards
• Monitor compliance
• Disseminate information
ACCSC Mission and Vision Statement
ACCSC’s mission is to serve as a reliable authority on educational quality and to promote enhanced opportunities for students by establishing, sustaining, and enforcing valid standards and practices which contribute to the development of a highly trained and competitive workforce through quality career oriented education.
ACCSC strives to establish and maintain high educational standards that promote ethical business practices and quality education among its accredited institutions and engages in thorough assessment practices designed to evaluate an institution’s compliance with those standards. ACCSC accreditation ensures that an institution and its educational programs meet established standards that will benefit students.
ACCSC Core Values
Integrity
Accountability
Continuous Improvement
Community
Integrity

Accomplishing our mission with a commitment to ethics, honesty, trust, consistency and fairness.
Accountability

Fulfilling our responsibilities to one another, the higher education community, and the public.
Continuous Improvement

Cultivating personal and professional growth through learning, goal setting, innovation, commitment and participation.
Community

Fostering a free and timely exchange of ideas and information in collegial environment through the establishment of strong partnerships that emphasize respect and mutual support.
Value of ACCSC Accreditation
Prospective students
Quality, focused training programs that provide a competitive edge in a demanding job market.

Employers
A highly trained and competitive workforce. Opportunities for input into the design of training programs.
Institutions seeking accreditation
Belonging to a community of schools with a shared focus: developing through quality career-oriented education.
Member Benefits of ACCSC Accreditation
Reputation

ACCSC has a reputation for being rigorous in our assessment of institutional performance and emphasizing quality by focusing on student achievement.
Service

ACCSC believes that it is critical for our member institutions to have ready access to the expertise offered by our professional staff, and employs a communication strategy to ensure our members’ needs are continually met.
Leadership

- Analysis of employment trends, technological advances, and educational innovations
- Professional development opportunities, including: the PDC, webinars, and the Accreditation Workshops
Advocacy

ACCSC actively partners with various organizations at the state and federal level regarding issues of quality assurance at our accredited member institutions. ACCSC makes a concerted effort to participate in the dialogue regarding the oversight and performance of our member institutions, and strives to be informed of policy decisions that impact our sector of education.
ACCSC Staff Listing

Executive Office
Accreditation Department
Institutional Review and Development
Operations/Records
www.accsc.org

• Forms and Reports
• Events and Press Releases
• On-Line Resources
• Publications and Research
• On-Line Directory
• Information on the Commission’s Actions
Introduction to the Standards of Accreditation / Eligibility Criteria

Session B
Standards: Blueprint for Success

• Describe the accreditation process
• The base of essentials against which a school studies and evaluates itself.
• Each school determines its own educational objectives, which must be to prepare students for entrance or advancement in one or more occupations.
• The Commission has effective mechanisms in place for evaluating the extent to which an institution successfully achieves its stated objectives
Five Sections of the Standards

• Introduction
• Chapter 1 – Rules of Process and Procedure
• Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards
• Appendices
• Bylaws
Introduction

Includes key concepts about accreditation
Introduction - Preamble

The primary purpose of the Commission is to establish and maintain **high educational standards** and **ethical business practices** among its accredited institutions.
• Accreditation serves as an indication of institutional quality by setting standards against which all private career schools and colleges can be measured.

• Participation in the process of accreditation is voluntary.
• A high level of reliance is placed upon information, data, and statements provided by the school

• The integrity and honesty of a school are fundamental and critical to the process.
Accredited schools agree to, and must meet or exceed the Standards of Accreditation throughout the accreditation period.

The burden rests with the school to establish it is meeting the standards.
• The Commission’s deliberations and decisions are made on the basis of the written record of an accreditation review.

• A school must supply the Commission with complete documentation of the school’s compliance with all accrediting standards if it is to be granted and maintain accreditation.
• A fundamental component is self-evaluation.
• Self-evaluation is an assessment of the complete school, conducted by faculty and students, as well as by the school administration.
• The process of self-evaluation is expected to be a significant and ongoing experience.
Introduction - Standards

• Each school determines its own educational objectives that are appropriate for a postsecondary-educational institution.

• The school is evaluated based on accomplishing its announced objectives, in accordance with the Commission’s standards.
• The standards and accreditation process emphasize educational quality by focusing on outcomes.

• Two important outcomes that the Commission uses in its assessment process are student graduation rates and graduate employment rates.
The Commission has the authority and responsibility to establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of private career schools and colleges.

These criteria take the form of the *Standards of Accreditation* which are under continuing review. Revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation* are made by the Commission as appropriate and required.
Call for Comment

Persons, institutions and organizations affected by, or with an interest in, the Commission’s standards and policies are advised of proposed standards and of the date they will be given consideration by the Commission.
Call for Comment

After distribution of proposed standards, interested persons, institutions and organizations are given a minimum of 30 days to file written comments with the Commission.
Call for Comment

After considering the written comments, the Commission may adopt the standard as proposed, adopt the standard with revisions, defer action for further study and consideration, or reject the proposed standard.
Accreditation Alert!
Provides guidance to accredited schools regarding the adoption of additions and revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation* and reflects the Commission’s final adoption of additions and revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation*. 
Application of Standards
Scalable Standards

**Adequate** - as much or as good as necessary for some requirement or purpose

**Sufficient** - adequate for the purpose; enough

**Appropriate** - suitable or fitting for a particular purpose

**Reasonable** - agreeable to reason or sound judgment; logical
Accountability and Assessment

Quantitative Assessment

Qualitative Assessment
Eligibility Criteria
Chapter 1 – Rules of Process and Procedure

Section I (B)(1)

I. Definitions, Accreditation Eligibility and Process, and General Instructions

   B. Institutional Eligibility Requirements

       1. Basic Information
**Scope**

ACCSC accredits private, postsecondary, non-degree-granting institutions and degree-granting institutions, including those granting associate, baccalaureate, and master’s degrees, that are predominantly organized to educate students in **career-oriented** areas of study to include institutions that offer distance education.
The Commission may decline to consider for accreditation otherwise eligible schools if it determines that the program offered by an applicant 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 by the Commission.
Educational Objectives

The school’s primary educational objective must be to prepare students for **entrance or advancement** in one or more occupations requiring technical or career oriented competencies and skills.
Educational Objectives

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 career-oriented educational objective.
Educational Objectives

A school may not advertise these educational objectives in a manner that would represent them as within the scope of the Commission’s accreditation.
Educational Objectives

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.
Legal and Disclosure Requirements

A school must describe 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.
Legal and Disclosure Requirements

A school must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local government requirements. In cases where accreditating standards and federal or state government requirements differ, the more stringent will apply. If conflicts exist between federal or state requirements and accreditating standards, the federal or state requirements will take precedence.
Chapter 1 – Rules of Process and Procedure

Section I (B)(2)

I - Definitions, Accreditation Eligibility And Process, And General Instructions

B. Institutional Eligibility Requirements

2. Institutional Eligibility Requirements – Initial Applicant
Institutional Eligibility Requirements
Initial Applicant

Before the Commission will accept a school’s Application for Initial Accreditation, the school must demonstrate that it meets the following eligibility criteria:
i. The school must fall within the Commission’s scope

ii. 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.
iii. At the time of application, the school must have been appropriately licensed by the state(s) in which it operates and training students continuously for the preceding two consecutive years (except for regularly scheduled breaks and vacation periods) and must commit to operating continuously thereafter.
iv. The school must have graduated at least one class of students from the longest program(s) offered during the two-year period preceding its application for accreditation.

Prior to a grant of initial accreditation, the school must be able to provide student achievement outcomes for its programs prepared in accordance with the Commission’s student achievement reporting requirements.
v. The school must be **financially sound** with sufficient resources for its proper operation and discharge of its obligations to students. The school must demonstrate two years of operating history through the submission of financial statements that are prepared in accordance with the Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Financial Statements and Related Information and that show that the school has met the financial tests for initial applicants included in those instructions.
Required to submit **AUDITED** financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) by an independent certified public accountant licensed by the state to perform such services.
Compiled

Reviewed

Audited
Forms and Reports

Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Financial Statements and Related Information
Provide specific requirements that institutions must meet in preparing financial statement submissions. An institution that is unable to provide financial statements in accordance with these requirements cannot provide assurance that it can fulfill its obligations to students and may cause the Commission to question the administrative capability of the institution.
The financial statements must be prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. Financial Statements prepared using the income tax or cash basis will not be accepted.
Cash Basis

Income Tax Basis

Accrual
STOP!

An Application for Initial Accreditation will not be accepted from an institution when the financial statements show any of the following:
a. Net loss for the two most recent fiscal years
b. Negative net worth for the two most recent fiscal years
c. Negative cash flow from operations for the most recent fiscal year
vi. The school must, at a minimum, offer at least one program that is 300 clock hours or longer in length.

vii. Within the six months prior to submitting an Application for Initial Accreditation, the school’s full-time on-site director or appropriate management team representative must attend an ACCSC Accreditation Workshop.
viii. The school’s Application for Initial Accreditation must be complete.
Eligibility Criteria

• Within ACCSC scope
• State authorization/compliance
• Training continuously for two years
• Graduated one class from longest program
• Financially sound
• One program of at least 300 clock hours
• Director attends an accreditation workshop
Application Process / Forms

Session C
Section I (C), Rules of Process and Procedure

I - Definitions, Accreditation Eligibility And Process, And General Instructions

C. Summary of the Accreditation Process

Section II, Rules of Process and Procedure

II – Application for Accreditation and Self-Evaluation

Section III, Rules of Process and Procedure

III – The On-Site Evaluation
Accreditation Workshop

The full-time, on-site director or appropriate management team representative of the school must attend an accreditation workshop prior to the submission of the application for accreditation.
Application for Initial Accreditation – Part I

• Submitted to the ACCSC office within six months after workshop attendance.

• Collects information about the school and its programs, and determines compliance with ACCSC eligibility criteria
Forms

- Download from the website
- Complete accurately
- Attach requested documentation
- PDF
The ACCSC Financial Review Committee will evaluate the year-end financial statements submitted with the Application for Initial Accreditation prior to the acceptance of the application.
Financial Review Committee

a. Financial statements indicate that the institution’s financial structure is sound

b. Financial statements indicate the institution may not be able to achieve financial viability

c. Financial statements indicate the institution’s financial structure is not sound
Should a school submit an Application for Initial Accreditation that does not minimally establish that it meets the ACCSC 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.
Application Acceptance Letter

• Application has been accepted, may proceed into the next part of the process
• Effective date of institution’s compliance with accrediting standards
• Recommendations and observations
Application for Initial Accreditation – Part II

- Application information provides an updated snapshot of the institution
- Longer list of attachments, providing opportunity for more in-depth analysis of the institution
- Submitted with the initial draft of the school’s Self-Evaluation Report
Self-Evaluation Report

- A narrative response to a series of questions, guiding the school through an assessment of its effectiveness in achieving educational objectives and status of compliance with accreditation standards.
- Formulates the basis of a dandy institutional assessment and improvement plan.
Forms

• Download from the website
• Complete accurately
• Attach requested documentation
• PDF
Application Expiration

An Application for Initial Accreditation will be considered expired when the Self-Evaluation Report is not submitted within six months from the date that the application is accepted.
Orientation On-site Evaluation

A consultative review conducted by an experienced accreditation staff member providing feedback regarding compliance with standards and readiness to continue through the accreditation process.

Report/revised materials
Application Expiration

An Application for Initial Accreditation will be considered expired when the school is not ready to receive an orientation on-site evaluation within 12 months from the date that the school’s application is accepted.
On-site Evaluation

A team of experienced professionals

• verify the information contained within the Self-Evaluation Report

• to develop an understanding of how well the school meets its educational objectives and the Standards of Accreditation.
Peer Review

• Team Leader
• Education Specialist
• Occupation Specialist
• Commission Representative
• State Observer
Application Expiration

An Application for Initial Accreditation will be considered expired when the school is not ready to receive a full-team on-site evaluation within 24 months from the date that the school’s application is accepted.
Team Summary Report

• Each member of the on-site evaluation team contributes to the preparation of a factual report of the school’s compliance with accreditation standards
• The written record of the team’s findings
Response to the Team Summary Report

• The school has an opportunity to file a response with supporting documentation to the on-site evaluation team’s findings cited the Team Summary Report.

• At least 30 days from the date of the Team Summary Report to submit a response unless the Commission determines that a different time frame is warranted.
Commission Review

The Commission may request and review information pertaining to a school’s eligibility for ACCSC accreditation or compliance with accrediting standards at any time during the initial application process and may take any action it deems appropriate in accordance with these Rules.
Commission Review

• The Commission reviews the written record and makes the accreditation decision

• Written records includes: the application for accreditation, the Self-Evaluation Report, the Team Summary Report, the school’s response, Team Leader comments and the school’s response if any, and any additional information collected about the school, which may include reports from government and private agencies.
Initial Accreditation

Applicants for initial accreditation that are found to be in compliance with accreditation standards and requirements of the Commission will be granted accreditation status. The term of accreditation for schools seeking an initial grant of accreditation is a maximum of three years, but may be less at the discretion of the Commission.
Maximum Grant of Initial Accreditation

The Commission has found that granting shorter periods for the first term of accreditation allows for an opportunity to identify and correct accreditation problem areas sooner as schools will have the benefit of the Commission’s Accreditation Workshop and the self-evaluation process which prepares the school for accreditation review.
Accreditation with Stipulations

• Require a school to submit a response when there are deficiencies in the school’s compliance with accreditation standards or requirements

• Can be corrected within a relatively short period of time

• Must be met before the Commission’s decision becomes effective
Accreditation with Reporting

- Interim monitoring of ongoing compliance over a longer period of time
- Financial, refund, graduation and employment
Deferral of Action

• Additional information is required for the school to demonstrate compliance with the Standards of Accreditation or other accreditation requirements

• The Commission will consider the extent to which the school can make significant progress toward accreditation within a short period of time
Denial of Accreditation

A denial of accreditation will apply when the Commission determines from the record of an applicant for initial accreditation that the school does not meet the requirements specified in the Standards of Accreditation or other accreditation requirements and therefore addition to the list of accredited schools is not warranted.
Appeals

A school may appeal the adverse action decision if it has reason to believe the Commission’s decision was arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise in substantial disregard of the criteria or procedures of the Commission, or not supported by substantial evidence in the record on which the Commission took action.
Timeline
MAXIMUM TIMEFRAMES

Attend Accreditation Workshop:
March 2014

Submit Application for Initial Accreditation - Part I:
September 2014

Application Acceptance Letter:
March 2015
Application for Initial Accreditation - Part II and SER:
September 2015

Orientation Evaluation:
November 2015 (estimated)

Revised Application for Initial Accreditation - Part II and Final SER:
January 2016 (estimated)
Full Team On-Site Evaluation:
Estimated March/April 2016

Commission Review:
Estimated August 2016
That seems like a long time!!
Forms!
Appendix II
Applications, Reports, And Forms

• The reports, forms and exhibits that schools must submit to inform the Commission of any changes which affect the educational purposes, programs, administrative functions, or management of the school

• These reports are critical to the Commission’s ability to determine compliance with accrediting standards
Appendix II
Applications, Reports, And Forms

- The school is responsible for monitoring when appropriate reports need to be filed
- The Commission is no longer able to accept information presented in any language other than English.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Application - Part I Fee:</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Application - Part II Fee:</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Evaluation Fee</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Evaluation Fee</td>
<td>$6,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,450</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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* Based on the inclusion of one local occupation specialist; non-local occupation specialists are an additional
On-Site Fees

• Team Leader, Education Specialist, and Commission Representative: $1,400 per evaluator for the first day and $400 per evaluator for each day thereafter.

• Occupation/Subject Matter Specialist:
  • Local: $150 per day.
  • Non-local: $1,400 for the first day and $400 per day thereafter.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Management and Administrative Capacity
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section I – Management and Administrative Operations
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that accredited schools have the capability to meet and exceed accrediting standards on an ongoing basis.
Statement of Purpose

A school that lacks adequate management; sufficient administrative capacity; financial resources and physical facilities; or that fails to plan for future improvement cannot provide assurance that it will operate in compliance with accrediting standards, meet its objectives, and fulfill its obligations to students.
Management and Administrative Capacity

1. The school must have adequate management and administrative capacity in place that includes:

   a. Full-time on-site supervision by an individual or team with the appropriate combination of education, experience, and demonstrated ability to lead and manage a post-secondary educational institution;
Management and Administrative Capacity

b. Owners, members of school management, and administrative employees who are **qualified** for their particular roles and who possess the appropriate education, training, and experience commensurate with the level of their responsibilities;
Management and Administrative Capacity

c. A sufficient **number** of managers and administrative employees necessary to support the school’s operations, student services, and educational programs
Management and Administrative Capacity

d. Appropriate administrative and operational policies and procedures to which the school adheres and reviews and updates as needed.
Management and Administrative Capacity

2. All owners, members of school management, and administrative employees must have past records of integrity that would ensure compliance with accrediting standards and applicable federal, state, and local requirements.
Management and Administrative Capacity

The Commission will consider an individual’s affiliation with a school that has lost or been denied accreditation, entered into bankruptcy, or closed; as well as an individual’s involvement in criminal proceedings and any pending or past action in a court or administrative body.
Management and Administrative Capacity

3. Members of school management and administrative employees must participate in ongoing development and training activities that support their particular roles in the school.

4. The continuity of management and administrative capacity is ensured through the reasonable retention of management and administrative staff.
B. Institutional Assessment and Improvement

1. The school must demonstrate that it engages in ongoing institutional assessment and improvement activities and planning appropriate to the size and scale of the school’s operations.
Institutional Assessment and Improvement

Planning is essential to achieving sustained excellence. Ongoing assessment enables an institution to evaluate its own objectives and internal processes as well as external factors and to use that assessment to set effective and efficient goals for maximizing the school’s success in achieving its objectives.
Institutional Assessment and Improvement

A thorough assessment analyzes the effectiveness of each area of current school operations. This can be accomplished by responding to a series of questions that encourage reflection about the school’s performance, such as “what is our current process, why are we doing it this way, has it been successful, and what would make this better?”
Institutional Assessment and Improvement

ACCSC’s Self-Evaluation Report is a tool that can be used to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the school. This analysis provides the school with a comprehensive understanding that serves as a basis for decision-making relative to future improvements.
Institutional Assessment and Improvement

• Based on internal and external feedback
• Validate the school’s practices
• Significant and ongoing
Key Concepts - Ongoing

A process that is an integral part of the culture of the institution, rather than a perfunctory compliance task
B. Institutional Assessment and Improvement

2. The school must demonstrate
   • Goal setting
   • Benchmarking
   • Implementation activities
Key Concept - Goal Setting

With the understanding that results from a thorough assessment, the school can then move forward to setting meaningful goals in each area that are appropriate of the size and scale of the school’s operations.

For example, if by examining its annual report outcomes data, the school finds that its graduation rates for this year are lower than last year, this year’s institutional assessment and improvement plan can include a goal to improve retention rates.
Goal Setting

The school will include short-range goals that address immediate needs and also long-range goals relative to future development.

There should be a logical relationship between the goals of the plan, and the assessment of the school operations.
Goal Development – Get Specific

Once a goal is established, the school develops a detailed course of action for achieving the goal.

This step is critical to ensuring the school’s strategy for implementing its plan will be successful.
Key Concept - Evaluate Achievement of the Goal with Benchmarks

Having established a set of goals and an improvement process, the school can now develop its method for measuring success in achieving those goals.
Evaluate Achievement of the Goal with Benchmarks

For example, if the school has a goal to increase student retention through a more rigorous admission process, success could be measured through evaluating the academic progress of students who were admitted under the new criteria to find out if the new strategies are effective in achieving the stated goals.
Evaluate Achievement of the Goal with Benchmarks

Evaluating the successful implementation of each goal allows the school to make the necessary adjustments to ensure that its resources are expended on the most effective strategies.
In the areas of

• management
• fiscal condition and budget
• administrative policies and practices
• student support services
• faculty and staff development
• educational program curricula
• learning resource system, equipment, and supporting materials
• facilities
• student achievement outcomes
Documented Results

Maintaining documentation of the overall institutional assessment and improvement planning process creates a historic record of the success of this process.

This record provides valuable insight for future managers that will enhance the effectiveness of future planning efforts.
C. Financial Stability and Responsibility

1. The financial structure of the school is sound, with resources sufficient for the proper operation of the school and the discharge of obligations to its students.
Financial statements must be prepared in accordance with generally acceptable accounting principles, the ACCSC Instructions for the Submission of Financial Statements and Financial Reporting, and all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.
Financial Stability and Responsibility

2. The school prepares a financial budget for each fiscal year that allocates working capital for expenditures required to ensure the proper operation of the school and the discharge of its obligations to students as well as for institutional improvement and faculty development activities.

The school monitors its budgetary projections in relation to actual income and expenses on a regular basis throughout the fiscal year.
Financial Stability and Responsibility

3. The school has insurance to provide adequate protection to the school, employees, and students.
D. Tuition Policies

1. Tuition costs and charges, tuition discounts, and all costs incidental to training are disclosed to the prospective student before enrollment.

Tuition discounts offered to prospective students must be bona fide (i.e., represent actual reductions in the tuition that would otherwise be charged) and must be fairly applied.
D. Tuition Policies

2. A scholarship is a bona fide financial grant-in-aid to a qualified student that is issued for recognized and acceptable purposes that include specified criteria that a student must meet in order to be eligible for and receive the scholarship.
D. Tuition Policies

3. Tuition changes in programs are bona fide and effective on specific dates.

Tuition for students currently in school is changed only if authorized in the enrollment agreement and only if reasonable advance notice is provided.
5. Each school must have and apply a fair and equitable refund policy in compliance with state or third-party requirements, or in the absence of such requirements, in accordance with generally accepted practices. In all instances, a school’s refund policy must contain minimally the following elements: how refunds are calculated (e.g., pro rata, percentile, etc.); the date from which refunds will be calculated; and the time frame within which refunds will be made.
D. Tuition Policies

Written notification of withdrawal from the student shall not be required for refund payment and in no instance may a school make required refunds in excess of 90 days from the student’s withdrawal or termination date. In instances where state or third-party requirements and accrediting requirements conflict, the more stringent requirement shall apply.
D. Tuition Policies

6. The refund policy must be disclosed consistently in the catalog and enrollment agreement.

7. If promissory notes or contracts for tuition are sold or discounted to third parties, either the student signing such note, or the financial sponsor who signed the note, must sign a statement authorizing such sales.

8. Methods used by a school in requesting or demanding payment are in good taste and follow sound and ethical business practices.
E. Student Loan Repayment

Accredited schools have an obligation to encourage and facilitate repayment of financial obligations, including guaranteed loans, used to finance students’ education and training. This has a potential impact upon the school’s financial stability and, consequently, its educational effectiveness and accredited status.
E. Student Loan Repayment

Accredited schools can address two major factors affecting student loan repayment: willingness to pay and ability to pay.

Schools can influence willingness to pay by providing information and advice and also develop an ability to pay by providing training and skills that enhance the value of their graduates to employers.
1. The school must engage in ongoing efforts to promote student loan repayment. To improve students’ propensity to meet loan obligations, the school shall adopt a written comprehensive program, addressing such areas as student loan information, advising and monitoring, cooperation with lenders, and collection of information to facilitate location of borrowers. The school must document implementation of the program and conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the school’s efforts.
E. Student Loan Repayment

2. The Commission will review the annual cohort student loan default rates of its accredited institutions to determine if those rates are at a high level or have increased significantly in relation to standards established by law or regulation. If it is found that a school’s annual cohort student loan default rates are at a high level or have increased significantly in relation to standards established by law or regulation, the Commission will review available information to determine whether the school is in compliance with accrediting standards.
F. **Physical Facilities**

1. All facilities owned or controlled for administrative, instructional, and housing purposes must meet fire, safety, and sanitation standards required by appropriate regulatory authorities.

2. The school’s physical facilities must be sufficient in size to create an effective and suitable learning environment.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Program Requirements
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section II – Program Requirements
Statement of Purpose

This section identifies various program elements that enable a school to meet its objectives and, thus, achieve and maintain accreditation. Such elements include appropriate program length; comprehensive course outlines; learning objectives; instructional materials and equipment; the availability, accessibility and integration of adequate learning resource materials; and processes that prepare students for employment.
A. General Requirements

1. Program Design and Development

The school has an established process for the design and development of appropriate education and training programs and ensures that appropriate elements are included in the program curriculum.
2. Program Organization and Length

a. For every program, there are detailed and organized instructional outlines and course syllabi showing a scope and sequence of subject matter sufficient to achieve the program objectives and to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies. All course and program design and credit awards must conform to generally accepted practices in higher education.
2. Program Organization and Length

b. Programs include the appropriate number of didactic hours and, as applicable, the appropriate number of supervised laboratory and/or other hours (e.g., outside work/preparation, externship, etc.) necessary to achieve the program objectives.

c. The length of each program offered by the school is appropriate to enable students to achieve the program objectives and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for initial employment in the field for which training is provided.
2. Program Organization and Length 
d. Generally, the Commission measures program length based on clock hours and/or credit hours as follows:
  i. A clock hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction in a 60 minute period of time.
  ii. A credit hour is defined as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement for academic activities as established by the institution comprised of the following units: didactic learning environment; supervised laboratory setting of instruction; externship; and/or out-of-class work/preparation.
3. Program Evaluation

a. Systematic and evidence-based
b. Comprehensive and conducted by administrative and instructional staff
c. Uses evidence obtained both internally and externally
d. Ongoing at set intervals
4. Instructional Materials and Equipment

a. Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive and reflect current occupational knowledge and practice.

b. Instructional equipment is similar to that found in common occupational practice and includes teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids appropriate to the subject.
4. Instructional Materials and Equipment

c. Sufficient equipment and learning stations are provided to allow each student adequate scheduled time for practice.

d. All machinery and equipment is properly maintained and provided with proper safety devices, which are in working order and used whenever the machinery and equipment is operated.
5. Program Advisory Committee

Each school has an independent Program Advisory Committee for each occupational program or each group of related occupational programs.
5. Program Advisory Committee
The purpose of the Program Advisory Committee is to review the established curricula of the program, instructional-related program materials, equipment and facilities, and student achievement outcomes as a means to provide the school with an external review of its programs. Program Advisory Committees must be comprised of appropriately qualified representatives external to the institution (i.e., non-school employees) who can provide a meaningful review of the school’s programs and supporting resources and materials.
5. Program Advisory Committee

a. For each non-degree program area, the school must have a diverse Program Advisory Committee that includes representatives from the employment community, practitioners, and others from the field of education, regulators, etc. as appropriate.
5. Program Advisory Committee

In all instances, Program Advisory Committee meetings must include at least **three** members in attendance that represent the employment community and/or practitioners from the program area.
5. Program Advisory Committee

b. For each undergraduate degree program area, the school must have a diverse Program Advisory Committee that includes qualified representatives from the employment community, practitioners, and others from the field of education, regulators, etc. as appropriate.
5. Program Advisory Committee

In all instances, Program Advisory Committee meetings must include at least three members in attendance that represent the employment community and/or practitioners from the program area and at least one individual qualified to review and comment on the program’s applied general education or general education component.
5. Program Advisory Committee

d. At least two regularly scheduled meetings must be conducted annually, one of which must be held at the school. Written and detailed minutes of each meeting must be maintained and include a description of all members in attendance (i.e., titles and affiliations); the date, time, and location of the meeting; and a comprehensive and clear description of the review of and commentary made by the school representatives and the Program Advisory Committee members.
5. Program Advisory Committee

e. Program Advisory Committee review and comment activities must include:

   i. Review, at least annually, the established curriculum of the program and comment as to the appropriateness and adequacy of the program objectives, program length, curriculum content, learning resources, and the adequacy of facilities and equipment.
5. Program Advisory Committee

ii. Review and comment, at least annually, on student graduation, graduate employment, and where required, state licensing examination outcomes of each program.

iii. Review and comment on each new program including the appropriateness of curriculum objectives, program length, and curriculum content prior to the Commission’s approval of the new program.
5. Program Advisory Committee

f. The school must provide evidence that it gives consideration to Program Advisory Committee input.

Evidence can take many forms, one such being the disclosure of the school’s consideration recorded in Program Advisory Committee meeting minutes, whereby a school describes whether recommendations were implemented or not and explains the school’s decisions.
5. Program Advisory Committee

g. Multiple affiliated schools may use a single Program Advisory Committee to review the same established curricula of a program area and student achievement outcomes across the system of schools, however, the physical review of a school’s learning resources, facilities, and equipment must be fulfilled via an on-site review at each individual campus.
5. Program Advisory Committee

h. Program Advisory Committees for programs or courses offered via distance education must include at least one additional individual with experience in the delivery and administration of distance education programs who can review and comment on the school’s distance education platform, methods, processes, procedures, and infrastructure in the context of the program/course content and objectives.
6. Learning Resource System

A learning resource system includes all materials that support a student’s educational experience and enhance a school’s educational program such as libraries; texts; electronic resources; learning resource laboratories and centers; library consortia and interlibrary loan agreements; computers; internet access; research databases; and other similar resources and equipment.
6. Learning Resource System

The learning resource system can be centralized or decentralized in organization but resources must be easily and readily accessible to students and faculty during and beyond classroom hours, regardless of location or means of delivery. Other necessary elements of a school’s learning resource system follow.
6. Learning Resource System

a. A school’s learning resource system must include materials commensurate with the level of education provided and appropriate to the courses of study in sufficient quantity and scope to meet the educational objectives of each program and include such elements as: relevant and current texts and periodicals; research journals and databases; standard works of reference; multi-media and/or electronic resources; electronic library resource technologies; and other resource materials necessary to adequately serve the student body.
6. Learning Resource System

b. Use of the learning resource system materials must be integrated into a school’s curriculum and program requirements as a mechanism to enhance the educational process and to facilitate positive learning outcomes for students.
6. Learning Resource System

c. A school’s learning resource system must be managed by qualified school personnel with sufficient experience to provide oversight and supervision. Schools that offer a baccalaureate degree or higher must have a learning resource system coordinated by an individual holding a Master of Library Science credential or with equivalent education and experience.
6. Learning Resource System

d. Qualified school personnel orient, train, and assist students and faculty in the use of the learning resource system in a manner that supports learning objectives.

e. A school must have written policies and procedures for the ongoing development of its learning resource system as part of its institutional improvement program. A school must demonstrate sufficient support and budgetary allocations for the learning resource system.
f. In any case, it remains the responsibility of the school to ensure that its student body is adequately served and has ready access to sufficient and appropriate learning resource materials in compliance with these standards.
7. Externships

a. An externship is a component of a program that is offered in a bona fide occupational setting for which training and education are provided. This standard applies to externships, internships and other similar occupational activities for which educational credit is awarded.
7. Externships

When used, an externship may occur throughout the course of a program or as a capstone requirement. The objectives and goals of an externship must be to allow students to apply practically the theory and skills taught in classroom and laboratory settings of instruction.
7. Externships

b. Externships must be based on a written training plan that specifies the goals, educational objectives, and specific experiences and applications to be accomplished. The written training plan must identify required educational resources, established timelines for the externship, and the evaluation process, and criteria to be used that appropriately and fairly measure demonstrated competency and skill attainment.
7. Externships

c. Individual student externships must be supervised by a designated school employee who has the appropriate practical work experience qualifications for instructors as follows:

i. For externships in a non-degree or in an occupational associate degree program, instructor practical work experience means three years of related practical work experience in the occupational field associated with the training provided.
7. Externships

ii. For externships in an academic degree program, instructor practical work experience means four years of related practical work experience in the occupational field associated with the training provided and an earned related degree at least at the same degree level as the program for which the externship is a component.
7. Externships
d. The training plan must designate an on-site supervisor from the occupational setting who will guide and oversee the student learning experience and participate in student evaluations. School personnel must orient the on-site supervisor to evaluation processes and criteria in order to ensure the appropriate and fair measurement of demonstrated competency and skill attainment.
7. Externships

e. Schools are expected to maintain an appropriate balance among didactic, supervised laboratory, outside work/preparation, and externship activities as applicable within the program, as evidenced by the course outline. Any externship that is greater than one-third of the total length of the program requires review and approval by the Commission.
7. Externships

f. If an externship is part of the program completion requirements, students may not be considered as graduates or issued a graduation credential until the requirements of the externship have been satisfactorily completed.
8. Consortium, Partnership, or Contractual Arrangements

a. In any instance where a portion of a program is offered by an entity other than the ACCSC-accredited institution via any consortium, partnership, or contractual arrangement the school must submit documentation that demonstrates that the program portion is approved by another United States Department of Education recognized accrediting agency. In lieu of this documentation, the school must submit the Consortium/Partnership Report.
8. Consortium, Partnership, or Contractual Arrangements

In all instances, the school must submit a copy of consortium, partnership, or contractual arrangement to the Commission. Additionally, the school must submit a statement indicating that it retains responsibility for the quality of the courses of study and programs offered as well as the achievement of expected and acceptable outcomes irrespective of any contractual arrangement, partnership, or consortium entered into with third parties for the provision of components of a program or course of study.
8. **Consortium, Partnership, or Contractual Arrangements**

b. A school that allows a portion of a program to be offered by an entity other than the ACCSC-accredited institution via consortium, partnership, or contractual arrangement using a distance education delivery method, may be required to receive an on-site evaluation in accordance with prescribed accrediting policies and procedures.
8. **Consortium, Partnership, or Contractual Arrangements**

c. Regardless of any consortium, partnership, or contractual arrangements, at a minimum, 25% of the required curriculum must be completed at the school awarding the credential upon graduation.
9. Independent Study

a. Self-directed learning only for credit hour programs

b. Credit hour award rationales align with the expectations set forth in ACCSC’s Definition of a Credit Hour – Appendix III appropriate to the credential offered

c. No more than 10% of any program may be offered via independent study.
10. **Transfer of Credit**

a. May accept transfer credit for a course completed in other postsecondary institutions when comparable

b. Principles and practices

c. Document the student’s record
10. Transfer of Credit

d. 25% of credit for degree and non-degree programs must be completed at the school awarding

e. Majority of graduate credits must be completed at the school awarding the degree
B. Degree Programs

Degree programs represent a significant, additional educational commitment by a school and must be consistent with the school’s mission.
C. Secondary Educational Objectives

1. Continuing Education Courses and Avocational Courses
   a. In order to be included: more than 300 clock hours/related to other offerings
   b. Advertising
   c. Consumer protection/educational quality/institutional assessment and improvement
   d. Written disclosure (“catalog”)
   e. Enrollment agreement
C. Secondary Educational Objectives
1. Continuing Education Courses and Avocational Courses
f. Complaint process
g. Enrollment data to demonstrate secondary objectives
h. Record keeping requirements
2. English as a Second Language Programs

English as a Second Language (ESL) courses must be successfully articulated with and support the school’s career-oriented vocational program(s), have objectives related to occupational training and concepts, and provide students with adequate linguistic proficiency for obtaining employment in the field for which they are or will be trained. ESL courses are secondary objectives of the school.
1. Types of ESL Programs

a. Front-loaded

b. Integrated
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Educational Administration and Faculty Qualifications
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section III – Educational Administration and Faculty Qualifications
Statement of Purpose

The success of a school is directly related to the quality of its faculty. This section addresses the requirements a school must meet in regard to its faculty. The purpose of this section is to require schools to retain a strong and experienced faculty that is continually attentive to the needs of the students, interested in strengthening the curricula, and obligated to continued self-improvement.
Statement of Purpose

A school must ensure that its faculty are appropriate, suitable and sufficient in number for the instructional programs offered by the school. By hiring and retaining qualified faculty, a school is able to strengthen the quality of its training program.
A. Educational Administration

1. The school must have sufficient educational administration to support the program(s) offered as follows:

   a. The school must have educational administrative staff and operational policies necessary to adequately support educational programs and faculty.
b. At least one on-site person at the school, usually a director of education, must have appropriate educational administration experience and competence necessary to lead and manage the school’s instructional program(s) and overall educational experience in such areas as: curriculum development; educational effectiveness assessment and improvement; and faculty development and performance appraisals.
i. For non-degree granting institutions, the director of education must have an educational background equal to or exceeding the maximum credential offered by the school.

ii. For degree granting institutions, the director of education must have an earned degree at least one level higher than the highest degree offered by the school.
c. Each distinct occupational area that leads to an occupational or academic degree must have a program head on-site at the school (e.g., lead faculty, department chair, dean, etc.) who possesses an educational background equal to or exceeding the maximum credential offered in that program area, the requisite qualifications for technical faculty teaching in a degree program, and an ability to administer the occupational components of the program.
For schools that only offer a program or group of programs in one distinct occupational area, a single individual may fulfill both the director of education and the program head requirements as long as the individual possesses the requisite qualifications for each position.
2. The school must demonstrate that it engages in ongoing faculty improvement activities that are: appropriate to the size and scope of the school’s educational programs; support the quality of education provided; and enhance student learning and achievement.
• Continuing education in the subject taught
• Teaching skill development
• Instructional methodology development
• Membership in trade and professional organizations
Resource!

ACCSC Monograph Series

Faculty Improvement Planning and Implementation
3. The school must ensure the continuity of instruction by the reasonable retention of the educational administrative staff and faculty.

4. The school must verify prior work experience and maintain documentation of academic credentials of all faculty members and administrators, as required, to demonstrate compliance with applicable *Standards of Accreditation*. 
B. Faculty Qualifications

1. The faculty must be sufficient in number to serve the number of students enrolled and must maintain a satisfactory working relationship with students.

2. Faculty members must be certified or licensed where required by law.
3. Faculty members must have appropriate qualifications and be able to teach in a manner that permits announced educational objectives to be achieved. All faculty must be able to demonstrate a command of theory and practice, contemporary knowledge, and continuing study in their field.
4. Faculty members must be trained in instructional methods and teaching skills.

The school should hire faculty members who have received training in instructional methods and teaching skills or who are experienced teachers.
Should a school hire a faculty member without prior training or experience, the school must provide training before the faculty member assumes primary instructional responsibilities in any classroom, curriculum, laboratory, or program related training. A school’s faculty must engage in ongoing development of teaching skills as part of its plan for faculty improvement.
The school may provide its own faculty training using in-house resources or utilize resources outside the institution. In either case, teacher training shall include such elements as: formal education; workshops/seminars presented by an appropriate individual focusing on areas related to instructional methods and teaching skill development; or formal in-house mentoring programs with appropriately qualified and experienced faculty.
Technical and Occupationally Related Courses

5. Faculty teaching technical and occupationally related courses in either non-degree or occupational associate degree programs must have a minimum of three years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught.
Applied General Education

6. Faculty teaching applied general education courses in an occupational associate degree program must have a baccalaureate degree with appropriate coursework in the subject area(s) taught or three years related practical work experience and college level coursework in the subject area(s) taught.
Appendix III
Interpretive Guidance

The Commission has determined that “appropriate coursework” and “college level coursework” in Section III (B)(6) means a minimum of 15 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) in related subject areas that support the curriculum content.
Technical and Occupationally Related Courses

7. Faculty teaching technical and occupationally related courses in an academic associate or baccalaureate degree program must have a minimum of four years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught and possess a related degree at least at the same level of the course the faculty member is teaching.
In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field of study may be substituted for a formal degree. In such instances, the faculty member must possess a minimum of eight years of related practical work experience and the school must justify and document on an individual basis the outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field.
General Education

8. Faculty teaching general education courses in an academic degree program must have, at a minimum, a master’s degree with appropriate academic coursework and preparation in the subject area(s) taught.
Appendix III
Interpretive Guidance

The Commission has determined that “appropriate academic coursework and preparation” in Section III (B)(8) means a minimum of 15 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) in related subject areas that support the curriculum content.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Student Recruitment
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section IV – Student Recruitment
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to require schools to describe themselves to prospective students fully and accurately and to follow practices that permit prospective students to make informed and considered enrollment decisions without undue pressure.
The school’s recruitment efforts must attract students who are qualified and likely to complete and benefit from the education and training provided by the school and not simply to obtain enrollments.
Recruitment means engaging in activities or using promotional materials or presentations to attract and enroll students. These standards apply to school personnel primarily involved in any way in those activities.
Schools must observe ethical practices and procedures in the recruitment of students. Ethical practices and procedures include, at a minimum, the following:

1. A school’s recruitment efforts focus on attracting students who are qualified and likely to complete and benefit from the education and training provided by the school and not simply obtaining enrollments.
2. A school’s recruitment efforts describe the school to prospective students fully and accurately and follow practices that permit prospective students to make informed and considered enrollment decisions without undue pressure.
3. A school only uses its own employees to conduct student recruiting activities and is prohibited from engaging employment agencies to recruit prospective students. Schools under common ownership may employ a single recruiter.
4. A school is responsible to its students and prospective students for the actions and representations of its recruiters and representatives and, therefore, selects these individuals with the utmost care and provides adequate training and proper supervision.
A school has and enforces an acceptable code of conduct for all school personnel whose primary responsibilities are to engage in recruiting and admissions functions prior to and during admission and matriculation. The school’s code of conduct is in writing, includes, minimally, all elements set forth in Appendix V, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation, is signed and dated by the individual employee, and a copy of which is maintained in the individual’s personnel file.
5. A school’s personnel are trained and qualified to engage in recruiting activities and may only use a title that accurately represents the individual’s primary duties.

6. A school complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to student recruitment.
7. A school approves all promotional materials used by school personnel in advance and accepts full responsibility for the materials used.
8. A school has in place policies and procedures and takes reasonable steps to ensure that its personnel do not make false, exaggerated, or misleading statements about the school, its personnel, its training, its services, or its accredited status and to ensure that its personnel do not make explicit or implicit promises of employment or salary prospects to prospective students.
9. A school internally reviews and evaluates its recruiting policies and procedures and the performance of personnel involved in recruiting activities for compliance with accrediting standards and applicable law and regulation at least once annually, and maintains documentation of the review and evaluation.
The Commission, at its discretion, may require a school to audit its recruiting activities for compliance with accreditation standards or applicable law and regulation using a qualified independent third-party that is approved by the Commission prior to the verification review being conducted.
10. A school shall not permit its personnel to engage in recruiting activities in settings where prospective students cannot reasonably be expected to make informed and considered enrollment decisions such as in or near welfare offices, unemployment lines, food stamp centers, homeless shelters, or other similar settings.
A school may, however, engage in recruiting activities at employment opportunity centers operated under government auspices, provided that the school has permission to do so and that all other recruitment and admissions requirements are met.
11. A school shall not permit the payment of cash or other similar consideration to any prospective student as an inducement to enroll.

12. A school shall not permit its personnel whose primary responsibilities include recruiting and admissions activities to assist prospective students in completing application forms for financial aid.
13. A school shall not permit personnel whose primary responsibilities include recruiting and admissions activities to become involved in admission testing or admission decisions, including signing and accepting the enrollment agreement.
14. A school clearly identifies itself in all advertising, promotional materials, and contacts made with prospective students.
15. Cancellation Policies:

a. Applicants who have not visited the school prior to enrollment will have the opportunity to withdraw without penalty within three business days following either the regularly scheduled orientation procedures or following a tour of the school facilities and inspection of equipment where training and services are provided.
15. Cancellation Policies (continued):

b. All monies paid by an applicant must be refunded if requested *within three days after signing* an enrollment agreement and making an initial payment. An applicant requesting cancellation *more than three days after signing* an enrollment agreement and making an initial payment, but prior to entering the school, is entitled to a refund of all monies paid minus a registration fee of 15% of the contract price of the program, but in no event may the school retain more than $150.
16. A school must provide the applicant with a receipt for any money collected.

17. School personnel do not discredit other schools or influence any student to leave another school by: falsely imputing to another school dishonorable conduct, inability to perform contracts, or questionable credit standing; making other false representations; falsely disparaging the character, nature, quality, value, or scope of another school’s program of instruction or services; or demeaning another school’s students.
B. Advertising and Promotion

Each school observes ethical practices and procedures in advertising and promotion that include, at a minimum, the following:

1. A school’s advertising and promotional materials are truthful and accurate and avoid leaving any false, misleading, or exaggerated impressions with respect to the school, its location, its name, its personnel, its training, its services, and its accredited status.
2. A school’s advertising and promotional materials clearly indicate that education, and not employment, is being offered. No overt or implied claim or guarantee of individual employment is made at any time and any references to employment or salary prospects must be accurate and sourced.
3. A school may use the term “University” in its name only when such use has been approved by the Commission and appropriate state authorities.

4. A school may not use the Employment or Help Wanted classifieds for any form of student recruitment.
5. A school may only use endorsements in school catalogs, literature, or advertising with the written consent of the authors, which is kept on file and subject to inspection. Any such endorsement is to be a bona fide expression of the author’s opinions, strictly factual, and a portrayal of currently correct conditions or facts. Under no circumstances may currently enrolled students provide endorsements on behalf of a school.
6. School personnel, advertisements, and promotional materials may only provide information pertaining to potential salary that accurately portrays the normal range and starting salaries in the occupation for which training is provided. Salary information must also include the source of the information, which is valid.
7. A school may only use the term “accredited” if it indicates by what agency or organization it is accredited. Publication of accreditation must comply with the Advertising of Accredited Status form.
8. Advertising of financial aid and scholarships includes an eligibility phrase (e.g., financial aid available for those who qualify).

9. A school may not describe in its catalog, advertise, or promote new programs, substantive changes, or degree programs prior to receiving written Commission approval.
C. Disclosures

A school makes accurate disclosures to students as follows:

1. Catalog

   a. A school publishes a catalog that accurately portrays the school; its educational programs, resources and facilities; and policies and procedures and that includes, at a minimum, all items listed on the ACCSC Catalog Checklist. (*See also Section I (D)(6), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation.*)
b. A school’s catalog is designed and written in such a manner so as to convey an accurate, comprehensive, and dignified impression of the school. The catalog’s narrative and any illustrations and photos pertain directly to the school and sources of illustrations and photos are clearly identified.
c. A school provides each applicant with a current and complete catalog and an opportunity to review the catalog prior to signing the enrollment agreement so that each potential student may make an informed decision relative to the school’s educational programs, institutional policies, and procedures.
A school may provide either a printed and bound copy of the catalog or a read-only format electronic copy that cannot be altered (e.g., portable document format (PDF), etc.). In either case, all versions of the catalog are identical and students that receive an electronic copy of the catalog are able to receive a printed and bound copy of the catalog upon request.
2. Enrollment Agreement

a. A school utilizes an enrollment agreement that includes, at a minimum, all required items listed on the ACCSC Enrollment Agreement Checklist and that clearly states the obligations of both the student and school. *(See also Section I (D)(6), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation.)*
b. A school executes an enrollment agreement for all enrolled students.

c. A school ensures that each applicant has an opportunity to review the enrollment agreement and is fully informed of the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of both the student and the school under the enrollment agreement before it is signed by the applicant.
d. A school furnishes a copy of the enrollment agreement to the applicant at the time the applicant signs. A school must furnish to the student prior to the student starting class a final copy of the enrollment agreement signed by both parties.

e. No enrollment agreement is binding until it has been signed by the student and accepted by the appropriate school official.
3. Graduate Employment

A school discloses, minimally, the graduate employment rate as last reported to the Commission. The public notice of a graduate employment rate is accurate, not intended to mislead, and includes the school’s graduate population base and time frame upon which the rate is based.
4. Accreditation and Approval

a. A school discloses its ACCSC institutional accreditation and the Commission’s contact information (i.e., address, phone number, and website address).

b. In accordance with Section VII (L)(8), Rules of Process and Procedures, a school subject to a Probation Order must inform current and prospective students that the school has been placed on probation and that additional information regarding that action can be obtained from the Commission’s website.
c. Where a program requires accreditation (institutional or programmatic) and/or approval by a third-party regulatory agency (e.g., state agency, licensing agency, oversight board, national certification entity, etc.), for the purpose of licensure, certification, or employment, a school discloses to students whether such accreditation and/or third-party recognition has been achieved and is in good standing.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Admission Policies and Practices
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section V – Admission Policies and Practices
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that schools only admit those students who are capable of successfully completing the training offered. Admission decisions are based on fair, effective, and consistently applied criteria that enable the school to make an informed judgment as to an applicant’s ability to achieve the program’s objectives.
A. General Requirements

1. A school develops admissions criteria that are designed to admit only those students who are reasonably capable of successfully completing and benefiting from the training offered.
A. General Requirements

2. A school publishes in its catalog and informs, prior to admission, each applicant for enrollment of the program’s admission requirements, process, and procedures; the nature of the training and education provided; and the program’s responsibilities and demands.

3. A school consistently and fairly applies its admission requirements.
A. General Requirements

4. Prior to enrollment a school:
   a. Determines that an applicant meets the school’s admissions requirements;
   b. Secures documentation to demonstrate that each applicant meets all admission requirements;
   c. Documents that applicants rejected did not meet admissions requirements;
A. General Requirements

5. A school maintains documentation covering the last five years that demonstrates that admission requirements have been met or that explains the basis for any denial of admission.
A. General Requirements

6. A school neither denies admission nor discriminates against students enrolled at the school on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, disability, or national origin. Schools must reasonably accommodate applicants and students with disabilities to the extent required by applicable law.
A. General Requirements

7. A school may not enroll or admit any person of compulsory school age or any person attending a school at the secondary level, unless the school has established through contact with properly responsible parties that pursuit of the training will not be detrimental to the student’s regular school work.
A. General Requirements

8. The Commission, at its discretion, may require a school to conduct a study to document the effectiveness of its admission requirements for all students.
B. Non-Degree Programs

If the school enrolls a person who does not possess a high school diploma or recognized equivalency certificate (non-degree programs only)
1. The determination of the applicant’s ability to benefit from the training offered must be confirmed by documentation of the applicant’s achievement of an approved score on a test or tests that have been reviewed by a qualified, independent third party for appropriateness of the instrument and specific score levels required for admission.
2. The acceptable score ensures that students will benefit from the training provided and that a substantial number of students will complete the training and be employed in the field for which training was provided.
Appendix VI

Admissions Documentation
Section V (A)(4)(b), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation requires that a school “secures documentation to demonstrate that each applicant meets all admission requirements.” Because of the importance of admissions requirements and the role those requirements play in allowing schools to make informed admissions decisions, the Commission believes that a school’s diligence in requiring documentation is a key component to institutional success.
Therefore, the Commission does not consider a self-certification by a student that he or she has a high school diploma or equivalent to be “documentation” that the student has met this admissions requirement. The standard contemplates that a school will support its admissions decisions with independent documentation such as transcripts and copies of diplomas or other documentation of equivalency.
Admissions documentation for students from foreign countries is to be translated and certified to be at least equivalent to the credential required by the school in its admissions criteria (e.g., a U.S. high school diploma). In all cases, it is the responsibility of the school to determine whether the credential is appropriate and meets the school’s admissions criteria.
For those ACCSC-accredited institutions that require that an applicant must possess a high school diploma or its equivalent for admission, the Commission recognizes that in rare instances students may not be able to provide documentation required by a school’s admissions criteria due to issues beyond their control (e.g., loss of records due to fire or flood, inability to obtain records, home schooled students, etc.). In these rare cases, a school may use an admissions test in lieu of documentation of a high school diploma or its equivalent.
Under these circumstances, the student must sign a statement attesting that he or she in fact obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent and state the reason(s) why documentation of the earned credential cannot be provided. The admissions test used under these circumstances must be reviewed by a qualified, independent, third party and certified as to the appropriateness of the instrument and required score levels (i.e., equivalent to a high school diploma). If a school chooses to use such a test for these unusual circumstances, this should be stated in the school’s admissions policies.
The admissions test used under these circumstances must be reviewed by a qualified, independent, third party and certified as to the appropriateness of the instrument and required score levels (i.e., equivalent to a high school diploma). If a school chooses to use such a test for these unusual circumstances, this should be stated in the school’s admissions policies.
The Commission understands that other regulatory agencies may have different requirements. Please be advised that in instances where these differences exist, the more stringent requirements shall apply (Section I (B)(1)(e)(iii), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation).
C. Degree Programs - Undergraduate

The school must use appropriate techniques to assess whether applicants have the skills and competencies to benefit from the training provided at the undergraduate level. Students admitted to associate or baccalaureate degree programs must have earned at least a high school diploma or recognized equivalency certificate prior to starting class.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Student Services
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section VI – Student Services
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that schools remain attentive to their students’ educational and other needs. This section requires that schools meet minimum requirements in regard to advising and counseling, record maintenance, graduate employment assistance, and procedures for handling student complaints.
A. Advising and Counseling

1. The school maintains written policies and procedures addressing student services.

2. The school maintains adequate student services and resources that support its students in maintaining satisfactory progress, achieving successful educational and student achievement outcomes (i.e., knowledge and skill attainment, retention, graduation, and employment), and making informed decisions concerning training and employment.
3. The school maintains a student services program that takes into account the number of programs, and size and mix of the student body and that responds to individual student needs. These services must be coordinated by an individual with appropriate professional and educational qualifications and must minimally encompass relevant coping skills (e.g., life, career development, budget, and personal financial planning skills); general development appropriate to higher education students; student retention strategies suited to the school’s programs; academic advising; testing and tutoring services; supervision and monitoring of attendance records and leaves of absence; graduate employment assistance; and information concerning housing, transportation, and child care.
4. For schools that enroll ability-to-benefit students, student services include individual counseling. An individual providing counseling services must have an appropriate license, credential, or training and work experience in the area of counseling. A school may contract with or refer students to an individual or service that is able to provide such counseling services. Unless so qualified, an advisor may not perform the functions of a counselor and may not be referred to as a counselor.
5. The school maintains comprehensive documentation of student advising sessions.

6. The school continually monitors and addresses the students’ needs for services as a means to assist students achieve successful educational and student achievement outcomes.
B. Student Records

1. The school maintains a permanent educational record for all currently enrolled students that consists of all admissions, academic, and financial records and information upon which a student’s enrollment is based. These records (physical or electronic) must be securely maintained and protected against damage or loss (e.g., fire, water, theft, tampering, etc.).
B. Student Records

2. The school maintains an official transcript for all formerly enrolled students (i.e., graduates and terminated or withdrawn students). The transcript must include, at a minimum, the program of study; the date of program entry; the date of graduation, termination or withdrawal; and the clock or credit hours and grades earned. An official transcript must be made available to students upon request and in accordance with the school’s policies. This transcript (physical or electronic) must be securely maintained indefinitely and protected against damage or loss (e.g., fire, water, theft, tampering, etc.).
B. Student Records

3. The school maintains student financial records related to financial aid, tuition and fee payments, and tuition refunds for a minimum of five years. (State or federal regulation or law may require these records to be maintained for a longer period of time.)
C. Graduate Employment Assistance and Records

1. The school makes graduate employment assistance available to students and the extent and nature of employment assistance services provided aligns with any claims made by the school with regard to those services.
C. Graduate Employment Assistance and Records

2. The school maintains verifiable records of each graduate’s initial employment for five years. Any statement regarding the percentage of graduate employment, e.g., annual employment rates of graduates, must be based upon these verifiable records.
D. Student Complaints

1. The school utilizes a policy and procedure for handling student complaints and inform students in writing of the policy and procedure. The school’s complaint policy and procedure must be published in the school’s catalog and include a reference to the school official(s) responsible for the complaint policy and procedure.
D. Student Complaints

2. The school publishes in its catalog the ACCSC Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure contained in the ACCSC Complaint Review Process Form.

3. The school maintains a complete record of all written student complaints for at least the last five years.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Student Services
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Student Services
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section VI – Student Services
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that schools remain attentive to their students’ educational and other needs. This section requires that schools meet minimum requirements in regard to advising and counseling, record maintenance, graduate employment assistance, and procedures for handling student complaints.
A. Advising and Counseling

1. The school maintains written policies and procedures addressing student services.

2. The school maintains adequate student services and resources that support its students in maintaining satisfactory progress, achieving successful educational and student achievement outcomes (i.e., knowledge and skill attainment, retention, graduation, and employment), and making informed decisions concerning training and employment.
3. The school maintains a student services program that takes into account the number of programs, and size and mix of the student body and that responds to individual student needs. These services must be coordinated by an individual with appropriate professional and educational qualifications and must minimally encompass relevant coping skills (e.g., life, career development, budget, and personal financial planning skills); general development appropriate to higher education students; student retention strategies suited to the school’s programs; academic advising; testing and tutoring services; supervision and monitoring of attendance records and leaves of absence; graduate employment assistance; and information concerning housing, transportation, and child care.
4. For schools that enroll ability-to-benefit students, student services include individual counseling. An individual providing counseling services must have an appropriate license, credential, or training and work experience in the area of counseling. A school may contract with or refer students to an individual or service that is able to provide such counseling services. Unless so qualified, an advisor may not perform the functions of a counselor and may not be referred to as a counselor.
5. The school maintains comprehensive documentation of student advising sessions.

6. The school continually monitors and addresses the students’ needs for services as a means to assist students achieve successful educational and student achievement outcomes.
B. Student Records

1. The school maintains a permanent educational record for all currently enrolled students that consists of all admissions, academic, and financial records and information upon which a student’s enrollment is based. These records (physical or electronic) must be securely maintained and protected against damage or loss (e.g., fire, water, theft, tampering, etc.).
B. Student Records

2. The school maintains an official transcript for all formerly enrolled students (i.e., graduates and terminated or withdrawn students). The transcript must include, at a minimum, the program of study; the date of program entry; the date of graduation, termination or withdrawal; and the clock or credit hours and grades earned. An official transcript must be made available to students upon request and in accordance with the school’s policies. This transcript (physical or electronic) must be securely maintained indefinitely and protected against damage or loss (e.g., fire, water, theft, tampering, etc.).
B. Student Records

3. The school maintains student financial records related to financial aid, tuition and fee payments, and tuition refunds for a minimum of five years. (State or federal regulation or law may require these records to be maintained for a longer period of time.)
C. Graduate Employment Assistance and Records

1. The school makes graduate employment assistance available to students and the extent and nature of employment assistance services provided aligns with any claims made by the school with regard to those services.
C. Graduate Employment Assistance and Records

2. The school maintains verifiable records of each graduate’s initial employment for five years. Any statement regarding the percentage of graduate employment, e.g., annual employment rates of graduates, must be based upon these verifiable records.
D. Student Complaints

1. The school utilizes a policy and procedure for handling student complaints and inform students in writing of the policy and procedure. The school’s complaint policy and procedure must be published in the school’s catalog and include a reference to the school official(s) responsible for the complaint policy and procedure.
D. Student Complaints

2. The school publishes in its catalog the ACCSC Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure contained in the ACCSC Complaint Review Process Form.

3. The school maintains a complete record of all written student complaints for at least the last five years.
Standards of Accreditation

Session D

Student Progress
Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

Section VII – Student Progress
Statement of Purpose

A school must establish processes, policies, and procedures in the areas of student assessment and achievement and demonstrate that a high proportion of its students attend class, successfully progress through and complete their program of study, and obtain employment in the field for which trained. A school must establish and consistently apply criteria that provide an objective evaluation of the student’s learning and progress toward attaining the program’s specific educational objectives.
A. Student Learning, Assessment, and Satisfactory Progress

1. Student Learning

   a. Student learning outcomes for each program are consistent with the program objectives defined by the institution’s program design and development process and meet any relevant academic, occupational, or regulatory requirements.
b. Student learning outcomes for each program are aligned with the program’s objectives, the occupational area of study, and with the level of education intended (e.g., non-degree, degree, degree level).

c. Student learning outcomes for each program reflect the necessary occupational and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies as applicable.
2. Student Assessment

a. The school has a developed and structured process to assess and evaluate the defined student learning outcomes of the education

b. Student assessment approaches must be documented and included in institutional assessment and improvement planning
c. The school establishes criteria to assess a student’s academic progress through the program. At a minimum, the school reports academic progress to students at regular intervals (e.g., phase, module, mid-term, term, quarter, semester, etc.) and evaluates the minimum grade point average that students must attain at those intervals.
d. The school provides students with learning outcomes for each course and publishes in its catalog a written policy for assessing satisfactory student progress through the program. The school measures grades, projects, portfolios, externships, or other assessments against stated educational objectives that the school explains clearly to students. This policy must address performance standards and grading and be applied consistently.
3. Student Satisfactory Progress

a. The school establishes a policy and process to assess student academic progress throughout the program and to inform students of their academic progress at established and specific intervals.
i. The school establishes cumulative grade point average requirements at specific intervals through the program and requires that students attain minimally a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in order to be eligible for graduation. At each interval specified, the school determines the likelihood that the student will be able to attain the minimum cumulative grade point average required for graduation.
ii. In those instances when the school determines that a student has not met minimum cumulative grade point average requirements, the school places the student on academic probation or terminates the student, based on the school’s established policies.
iii. If the school uses a grading scale other than the traditional 4.0 scale (e.g., letter grades, percentages, pass/fail) the school establishes comparable progress standards and publishes the grade conversion scale in its catalog.
b. The school publishes in its catalog and enforces a policy of acceptable student attendance. The policy must promote sufficient levels of student attendance such that the required knowledge, skills, and competencies can be reasonably achieved.
c. If the school allows students to take a leave of absence, the school defines and publishes in its catalog the leave of absence policy to include the process to have a leave of absence approved, the allowable leave of absence period, and the consequences of a student’s failure to return from an approved leave of absence.
The period of the leave of absence may not begin until the student has submitted and the school has approved a written and signed request for an approved leave of absence. A leave of absence period may not exceed 180 days within any 12-month period.
A school may grant more than one leave of absence in the event that unforeseen circumstances arise, such as medical reasons affecting the student or a member of student’s immediate family, military service requirements, or jury duty, provided that the combined leaves of absence do not exceed 180 days within the 12-month period.
If the student does not return following the leave of absence, the school must terminate the student and apply the school’s refund policy in accordance with applicable and published requirements.
d. The school publishes in its catalog the normal duration of each program based on regular and required course loads and schedules, the maximum timeframe within which a student is expected to complete the program, and the implications when a student does not complete the program within the maximum timeframe (e.g., loss of financial aid eligibility and program enrollment termination).
For a clock hour program, the maximum time frame shall not exceed 1.5 times the normal duration of the program. For a credit hour program, the credit hours attempted cannot exceed 1.5 times the credit hours required to complete the program.
The school is not required to terminate the enrollment of a student who is unable to complete the program within the maximum timeframe unless the school has determined that the student has failed to meet school policies that would otherwise warrant termination (e.g., academic progress or attendance policies).
For the purposes of reporting student achievement, the school may not classify students who do not complete the program within the maximum timeframe as graduates.
e. The school has probation and termination policies that are defined and published in its catalog. These policies must include specific warning procedures to notify the student in writing that continued unsatisfactory academic progress or a failure to meet attendance requirements will result in termination.
The school shows that the student receives the notification or in the case of absenteeism that the school made an attempt to notify the student that continued failure to attend classes will result in termination. The school maintains documentation of the notification and the terms of the probation or termination in the student’s file.
f. The school terminates any student who does not satisfactorily acquire the minimum knowledge, skills, and competencies required by the program objectives based on the school’s assessment criteria and satisfactory progress policy. The school publishes its policies and procedures for a student to request reinstatement after being terminated.
g. The school publishes policies that define the effect of course incompletion, course withdrawal, course repetitions, and, if offered, policies that define the requirements for noncredit remedial courses.
h. Successful program completion is based upon satisfactory achievement of the knowledge, skills, and competencies required by the program objectives and is confirmed by an appropriate credential (e.g., certificate, diploma, degree), which correctly identifies the school’s name, location, program of study, and date of graduation.
i. The Commission will review student achievement for each program offered at an institution and will consider not only the rates at which students graduate from a training program and attain employment in a training related field, but also other factors that are reasonably related to student achievement as a measure of educational quality and institutional effectiveness.
The Graduation and Employment Chart is the Commission’s mechanism for collecting student achievement data and schools must provide this information in accordance with the prescribed requirements and instructions.
Appendix VIII
Guidelines for Employment Classification
1. The employment classification is appropriate and reasonable based on the educational objectives of the program.

2. The employment is for a reasonable period of time, is based on program objectives, and can be considered sustainable (e.g., not a single day of employment).
3. The employment is directly related to the program from which the individual graduated, aligns with a majority of the educational and training objectives of the program, and is a paid position.
4. The employment classification is verified by the school as follows

a. Regular Employment
   i. The school secures written documentation from the employer verifying the employment; or
   ii. The school secures written documentation from the graduate verifying the employment; or
iii. In cases where a school can show diligent efforts have been made to secure such documentation without success, employment verification records that include a) the graduate’s and employer’s name and contact information, b) a signature of school staff attesting to verbal employment verification with the employer and the graduate, and c) the date(s) of verification are acceptable.
b. Self-Employment:

i. The self-employed graduate signs a statement – which includes the graduate’s name and contact information – acknowledging that the self-employment is aligned with the individual’s employment goals, is vocational, is based on the education and training received, and that the graduate is earning training related income; and
ii. The school secures some form of verifiable documentation to demonstrate that the self-employment is valid.
c. Career Advancement:

Students that are already employed in a training related field at the time of graduation can be considered employed when completing the program of study as follows:
i. The school shows with written documentation from the employer or the graduate that the training allowed the graduate to maintain the employment position due to the training provided by the school; or

ii. The school shows with written documentation from the employer or the graduate that the training supported the graduate’s ability to be eligible or qualified for advancement due to the training provided by the school.
In addition to these guidelines, the Commission expects that schools will regularly gather information from employers as a means to assess the preparedness of graduates for employment and make program modifications as may be necessary based on that feedback.
Section VII (B)(1)(b)(ii), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation

A school demonstrates successful student achievement when graduation and employment rates meet or exceed the established benchmarks. The Commission determines a school’s graduation and employment rates to be acceptable when:
a. The graduation rate for each program is not less than one (1) standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs.

b. The employment rate for each program is not less than one (1) standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs.

See Appendix VI – Student Achievement Rates
ii. The Commission establishes and publishes the benchmark graduation and employment rates from information submitted in the Annual Reports of accredited schools.
## Established Benchmark Graduation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rates of Graduation Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Established Benchmark Graduation Rates*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Benchmark Employment Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rate of Employment Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Benchmark Employment Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Programs</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iii. For any program that has a graduation or employment rate that is lower than the Commission’s established benchmark rates, a school may still demonstrate with supporting documentation the successful achievement of its students in that program by providing other reliable indicators of successful student learning...
...and by showing that factors such as economic conditions, state and national trends, location, student population served, length of program, students who withdraw from training but still obtain employment, state requirements, or other external or mitigating factors reasonably related to student achievement are adversely impacting the school’s ability to meet the Commission’s established benchmark rates.
iv. Upon presentation by a school, the Commission may consider an aggregated institutional rate of graduation or employment attainment in determining whether to take a programmatic or institutional action related to student achievement.
2. Student Achievement Outcomes Monitoring and Reporting

For any program that has a graduation or employment rate that falls below the Commission’s established benchmark rate, the Commission will require a school to submit to heightened monitoring or reporting of student achievement outcomes as directed or take other action as deemed appropriate unless the school can otherwise demonstrate successful student achievement as described in Section VII (C)(1)(b)(iii), Substantive Standards above.
Cohort (Group) Reporting

• Groups are based on start date

• Report includes all students who start in a year

• The year is determined by the length of the program
Establish the Cohort (Group)  
Determine the Reporting Periods

End Date of the Reporting Period
The most recent starting class that has had time to graduate and be employed in the field.

Start Date of the Reporting Period
12 months before the end date.
Start Date of the Reporting Period

Start with the most recent starting class that has had time to graduate and be employed in the field.

Time to graduate: Multiply Program Length by 1.5 times

+ 

Time for employment: Three months allowance

From the Report Date, count BACKWARD that number of months, and you will have the END of the Reporting Period.
End Date of the Reporting Period

12 months before the end date
Example

Report Date: December 2013
Program Length: 12-month program

Multiply Length by 1.5 times = 18 months
Add Three Months for Employment = 21 months

End of Reporting Period:
12/13 minus 21 months = 02/12
Example

Start of Reporting Period:
02/12 minus 12 months = 03/11

In this example, the school reports those students who started the program between March 2011 and February 2012.
Very Good News...

The chart calculates this automatically!
Tracking Students within the Cohort on an Individual Basis
Line by Line Instructions
Line 1 – Class Start Date

If more than one (1) class starts each month, report on the total number of students starting in each of the 12 months of the reporting period.
Line 2

Number Started = The number of students who started in the program for each start date in the period, including students entering with advanced placement.
Start: Students are considered to have been in attendance for reporting purposes (Start) if, as a result of their attendance, they incur a tuition/fee or other financial obligation as specified by the institution’s refund policy. Fees or other obligations (i.e., uniforms, tools, etc.) are only those associated with actual attendance; not those considered part of the application for admission or enrollment process. In any event, any student enrolled 15 days from the scheduled start date of the program must be classified as a “start” for the purpose of reporting students on the Graduation and Employment Chart.
Example: 10 students who started the Cake Decorating program in April 2011
The total number of students who transferred out of this program and into another program at the school.
Example: 1 student transferred from the Cake Decorating Program to the Dental Assistant program offered at the school
Line 4: Transfers from Another Program

The total number of students who transferred into this program from another program at the school, and whose progress is concurrent with the students in this class start date.
Example: 1 student transferred from the Gunsmithing program offered at the school into the Cake Decorating Program.
Line 5: Total Starts Plus/Minus Transfers

The total number of students who started, minus those who transferred out, plus those who transferred in. This is the total number of students on which graduation will be based.

Very good news

This is automatically calculated by the chart
Unavailable for Graduation

This category removes from the graduation rate calculation students who fall into one of the following classifications: death, incarceration, active military service deployment, or the onset of a medical condition that prevents continued enrollment.
Supporting Documentation
Unavailable for Graduation

**Deceased:** Copy of death record.

**Incarcerated:** This information is public record; therefore, a copy of the arrest record, police report or booking/intake documentation should be submitted for students who meet this criterion.

**Active Military Service:** Copy of military orders.
Supporting Documentation
Unavailable for Graduation

Medical Conditions: Must include a copy of medical documentation from the graduate's physician that demonstrates that the graduate cannot work due to a medical condition.
Example: 1 student was called into active military service
Line 7: Available for Graduation

The total number of students who available for graduation from the program

Very good news

*This is automatically calculated by the chart*
Line 8: Withdrawn/Terminated Students

The number of students who withdrew or were terminated, within 150% of the program length, from the program. This number does not include the students classified as “Unavailable for Graduation.”
Example: 2 students withdrew or were terminated
Line 9: Graduates within 150% of Program Length

The number of students who graduated from the program within 150% of the stated program length.
Example: 7 students graduated within 150% of the program length
Line 10: Graduation Rate

The school’s official graduation rate for each cohort and for the program for the reporting period.
Example: Graduation Rate = 78%
Line 11: Graduates – Further Education

The number of graduates that continue on with education in an accredited institution of higher education (postsecondary) on at least a half-time basis.
Line 11

Example: 1 graduate went on for further education
Supporting Documentation
Graduates - Further Education

The school must have supporting documentation which demonstrates that graduates continue on with education in an accredited institution of higher education (postsecondary) on at least a half-time basis. Such documentation includes a signed enrollment agreement or a letter from the registrar.
Line 12: Graduates-Unavailable for Employment

This category removes from the employment rate calculation graduates who fall into one of the following categories: death, incarceration, active military service deployment, the onset of a medical condition that prevents employment, or international students who have returned to their country of origin.
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

Deceased: Copy of death record.

Incarcerated: This information is public record; therefore, a copy of the arrest record, police report or booking/intake documentation should be submitted for students who meet this criterion.

Active Military Service: Copy of military orders.
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

**Medical Conditions:** Must include a copy of medical documentation from the graduate's physician that demonstrates that the graduate cannot work due to a medical condition.
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

International Students who have left the country: Documentation to include: admissions/enrollment paperwork that demonstrates the student is not a U.S. citizen and any supporting documentation that demonstrates they have not maintained U.S. residence status following graduation.
Example: 1 student was incarcerated
The total number of students available for employment.
Line 14: Graduates – Employed in Field

The number of graduates employed in jobs for which the program trained them.
Line 15: Employment Rate

The school’s official rate of graduate job attainment for each cohort and for the reporting period.
Line 15

Example: 80% Employment Rate
Line 16: Graduates in Unrelated Occupations

The number of graduates employed in jobs not related to the training obtained from the school’s program.
Line 16

Example: 1 graduates in an unrelated occupation
Line 17: Graduates Unemployed

The number of unemployed graduates.
Line 18: Graduates Unknown

The number of graduates for which no information about employment or unemployment is available.
Line 19: Non-Graduated Students Who Obtained Training-Related Employment

The number of withdrawn/terminated students from Line 8 who obtain employment in a field related to the program in which the student was enrolled and based upon the training provided by the school.
Line 20: Employment Rate with Non-Graduated Students Who Obtained Training-Related Employment

The school’s supplemental employment rate which calculates the total number of graduated and non-graduated students who obtained training related employment.
B. Student Achievement

1. Student Achievement

a. The school demonstrates successful student achievement by documenting through its assessment practices that students are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and competencies intended by the program objectives.
b. The school demonstrates successful student achievement by maintaining acceptable rates of student graduation and employment in the career field for which the school provided education. The school supports these rates through student transcripts, the school’s verifiable records of initial employment of its graduates, or other verifiable documentation.
i. The Commission will review student achievement for each program offered at an institution and will consider not only the rates at which students graduate from a training program and attain employment in a training related field, but also other factors that are reasonably related to student achievement as a measure of educational quality and institutional effectiveness.
ii. The Commission establishes and publishes the benchmark graduation and employment rates from information submitted in the Annual Reports of accredited schools.
The Graduation and Employment Chart is the Commission’s mechanism for collecting student achievement data and schools must provide this information in accordance with the prescribed requirements and instructions.
Cohort (Group) Reporting

• Groups are based on start date

• Report includes all students who start in a year

• The year is determined by the length of the program
Establish the Cohort (Group)
Determine the Reporting Periods

End Date of the Reporting Period
The most recent starting class that has had
time to graduate and be employed in the field.

Start Date of the Reporting Period
12 months before the end date.
Start Date of the Reporting Period

Start with the most recent starting class that has had time to graduate and be employed in the field.

\[
\text{Time to graduate: Multiply Program Length by 1.5 times} + \\
\text{Time for employment: Three months allowance}
\]

From the Report Date, count BACKWARD that number of months, and you will have the END of the Reporting Period.
End Date of the Reporting Period

12 months before the end date
Example

Report Date: December 2010
Program Length: 12-month program
  Multiply Length by 1.5 times = 18 months
  Add Three Months for Employment = 21 months

End of Reporting Period:
  12/10 minus 21 months = 02/09
Example

Start of Reporting Period:
02/09 minus 12 months = 03/08

In this example, the school reports those students who started the program between March 2008 and February 2009.
Very Good News...

The chart calculates this automatically!
Tracking Students within the Cohort on an Individual Basis
Line by Line Instructions
Line 1 – Class Start Date

If more than one (1) class starts each month, report on the total number of students starting in each of the 12 months of the reporting period.
Line 2

Number Started = The number of students who started in the program for each start date in the period, including students entering with advanced placement.
Start: Students are considered to have been in attendance for reporting purposes (Start) if, as a result of their attendance, they incur a tuition/fee or other financial obligation as specified by the institution’s refund policy. Fees or other obligations (i.e., uniforms, tools, etc.) are only those associated with actual attendance; not those considered part of the application for admission or enrollment process. In any event, any student enrolled 15 days from the scheduled start date of the program must be classified as a “start” for the purpose of reporting students on the Graduation and Employment Chart.
Example: 10 students who started the Cake Decorating program in April 2007
Line 3: Transfers to Another Program

The total number of students who transferred out of this program and into another program at the school.
Example: 1 student transferred from the Cake Decorating Program to the Dental Assistant program offered at the school
Line 4: Transfers from Another Program

The total number of students who transferred into this program from another program at the school, and whose progress is concurrent with the students in this class start date.
Example: 1 student transferred from the Gunsmithing program offered at the school into the Cake Decorating Program.
Line 5: Total Starts Plus/Minus Transfers

The total number of students who started, minus those who transferred out, plus those who transferred in. This is the total number of students on which graduation will be based.

Very good news

*This is automatically calculated by the chart*
Line 6: Unavailable for Graduation

This category removes from the graduation rate calculation students who fall into one of the following classifications: death, incarceration, active military service deployment, or the onset of a medical condition that prevents continued enrollment.
Supporting Documentation
Unavailable for Graduation

**Deceased:** Copy of death record.

**Incarcerated:** This information is public record; therefore, a copy of the arrest record, police report or booking/intake documentation should be submitted for students who meet this criterion.

**Active Military Service:** Copy of military orders.
Supporting Documentation
Unavailable for Graduation

**Medical Conditions:** Must include a copy of medical documentation from the graduate's physician that demonstrates that the graduate cannot work due to a medical condition (this category includes pregnancy as a medical condition).
Example: 1 student was called into active military service
Line 7: Available for Graduation

The total number of students who available for graduation from the program

Very good news

This is automatically calculated by the chart
Line 8: Withdrawn/Terminated Students

The number of students who withdrew or were terminated, within 150% of the program length, from the program. This number does not include the students classified as “Unavailable for Graduation.”
Example: 2 students withdrew or were terminated
Line 9: Graduates within 150% of Program Length

The number of students who graduated from the program within 150% of the stated program length.
Example: 7 students graduated within 150% of the program length
Line 10: Graduation Rate

The school’s official graduation rate for each cohort and for the program for the reporting period.
Line 10

Example: Graduation Rate = 78%
Line 11: Graduates – Further Education

The number of graduates that continue on with education in an accredited institution of higher education (postsecondary) on at least a half-time basis.
Example: 1 graduate went on for further education
Supporting Documentation
Graduates - Further Education

The school must have supporting documentation which demonstrates that graduates continue on with education in an accredited institution of higher education (postsecondary) on at least a half-time basis. Such documentation includes a signed enrollment agreement or a letter from the registrar.
Line 12: Graduates-Unavailable for Employment

This category removes from the employment rate calculation graduates who fall into one of the following categories: death, incarceration, active military service deployment, the onset of a medical condition that prevents employment, or international students who have returned to their country of origin.
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

**Deceased:** Copy of death record.

**Incarcerated:** This information is public record; therefore, a copy of the arrest record, police report or booking/intake documentation should be submitted for students who meet this criterion.

**Active Military Service:** Copy of military orders.
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

**Medical Conditions:** Must include a copy of medical documentation from the graduate's physician that demonstrates that the graduate cannot work due to a medical condition (this category includes pregnancy as a medical condition).
Supporting Documentation
Graduates Unavailable for Employment

International Students who have left the country: Documentation to include: admissions/enrollment paperwork that demonstrates the student is not a U.S. citizen and any supporting documentation that demonstrates they have not maintained U.S. residence status following graduation.
Example: 1 student was incarcerated
The total number of students available for employment.
Line 14: Graduates – Employed in Field

The number of graduates employed in jobs for which the program trained them.
Appendix VIII
Guidelines for Employment Classification
1. The employment classification is appropriate and reasonable based on the educational objectives of the program.

2. The employment is for a reasonable period of time, is based on program objectives, and can be considered sustainable (e.g., not a single day of employment).
3. The employment is directly related to the program from which the individual graduated, aligns with a majority of the educational and training objectives of the program, and is a paid position.
4. The employment classification is verified by the school as follows

a. Regular Employment
   i. The school secures written documentation from the employer verifying the employment; or
   ii. The school secures written documentation from the graduate verifying the employment; or
iii. In cases where a school can show diligent efforts have been made to secure such documentation without success, employment verification records that include a) the graduate’s and employer’s name and contact information, b) a signature of school staff attesting to verbal employment verification with the employer and the graduate, and c) the date(s) of verification are acceptable.
b. Self-Employment:

i. The self-employed graduate signs a statement – which includes the graduate’s name and contact information – acknowledging that the self-employment is aligned with the individual’s employment goals, is vocational, is based on the education and training received, and that the graduate is earning training related income; and
ii. The school secures some form of verifiable documentation to demonstrate that the self-employment is valid.
c. Career Advancement:

Students that are already employed in a training related field at the time of graduation can be considered employed when completing the program of study as follows:
i. The school shows with written documentation from the employer or the graduate that the training allowed the graduate to maintain the employment position due to the training provided by the school; or

ii. The school shows with written documentation from the employer or the graduate that the training supported the graduate’s ability to be eligible or qualified for advancement due to the training provided by the school.
In addition to these guidelines, the Commission expects that schools will regularly gather information from employers as a means to assess the preparedness of graduates for employment and make program modifications as may be necessary based on that feedback.
Line 15: Employment Rate

The school’s official rate of graduate job attainment for each cohort and for the reporting period.
Line 15

Example: 80% Employment Rate
Line 16: Graduates in Unrelated Occupations

The number of graduates employed in jobs not related to the training obtained from the school’s program.
Example: 1 graduates in an unrelated occupation
Line 17: Graduates Unemployed

The number of unemployed graduates.
Line 18: Graduates Unknown

The number of graduates for which no information about employment or unemployment is available.
Line 19: Non-Graduated Students Who Obtained Training-Related Employment

The number of withdrawn/terminated students from Line 8 who obtain employment in a field related to the program in which the student was enrolled and based upon the training provided by the school.
Line 20: Employment Rate with Non-Graduated Students Who Obtained Training-Related Employment

The school’s supplemental employment rate which calculates the total number of graduated and non-graduated students who obtained training related employment.
Section VII (B)(1)(b)(ii), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation

A school demonstrates successful student achievement when graduation and employment rates meet or exceed the established benchmarks. The Commission determines a school’s graduation and employment rates to be acceptable when:
a. The graduation rate for each program is not less than one (1) standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs.

b. The employment rate for each program is not less than one (1) standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs.

*See Appendix VI – Student Achievement Rates*
# Established Benchmark Graduation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rates of Graduation Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Established Benchmark Graduation Rates*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Benchmark Employment Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rate of Employment Demonstrates Acceptable Student Achievement</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Benchmark Employment Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Programs</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iii. For any program that has a graduation or employment rate that is lower than the Commission’s established benchmark rates, a school may still demonstrate with supporting documentation the successful achievement of its students in that program by providing other reliable indicators of successful student learning...
...and by showing that factors such as economic conditions, state and national trends, location, student population served, length of program, students who withdraw from training but still obtain employment, state requirements, or other external or mitigating factors reasonably related to student achievement are adversely impacting the school’s ability to meet the Commission’s established benchmark rates.
iv. Upon presentation by a school, the Commission may consider an aggregated institutional rate of graduation or employment attainment in determining whether to take a programmatic or institutional action related to student achievement.
2. Student Achievement Outcomes Monitoring and Reporting

For any program that has a graduation or employment rate that falls below the Commission’s established benchmark rate, the Commission will require a school to submit to heightened monitoring or reporting of student achievement outcomes as directed or take other action as deemed appropriate unless the school can otherwise demonstrate successful student achievement as described in Section VII (C)(1)(b)(iii), Substantive Standards above.
Session E

The Big Finish!
Toolkit

• Website
• Brochures
• ACCSC Staff
Key Concepts

Standards = Best Practices
Ongoing Assessment
Comprehensive Planning
Strong Infrastructure/Resources
Continuous Improvement
From Challenges to Plan of Action

Assessment – where are we?

Goal - where do we want to be?

How are we going to get there?

Benchmarks – how are we going to measure success?

Timelines – when?
Parting Thoughts

If you could say one thing to a school considering ACCSC accreditation, what would it be?
Ask yourself – why do we want to be accredited?

Be prepared to constantly use the system
Focus on Excellence

Rather than just barely meeting the standard, understand the “spirit” of the standard
Transformation

Understand that accreditation involves a transformation from the business model to the accredited school model
Use the Tools

Set up infrastructure, management, cross train
Don’t Guess!

Pick up the phone... or keyboard
Read the Standards

Everyone at the school needs to be knowledgeable about the standards
Assessment/Comparison

Look to external sources for information and guidance
Don’t Focus on the Passing Grade

Learn how to grow through the process of accreditation
SLOW DOWN!
It is not about US,

It is about YOU
Building the Airplane...

In the Air
Questions from Day One

What changes will I need to make?

Do I have the resources to be successful?

Is this a good fit?