



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

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January 19, 2021

ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

██████████
College Director/VP of Operations
Culinary Institute LeNotre
7070 Allensby
Houston, Texas 77022

School #M070534

██████████:

At the November 2021 meeting, the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (“ACCSC” or “the Commission”) considered the Outcomes Report submitted by Culinary Institute LeNotre located in Houston, Texas. Upon review of the March 10, 2021 ACCSC letter and the school’s response, the Commission voted to place Culinary Institute LeNotre on **Warning** with a subsequent review scheduled for ACCSC’s May 2022 meeting. The reasons for the Commission’s decision and the Commission’s requirements for the school to demonstrate compliance are set forth below.

History of the Commission’s Review:

May 2015

The Commission considered the unannounced on-site evaluation conducted at Culinary Institute LeNotre and voted to accept the report. The Commission also voted to place the school on Outcomes Reporting for the **Culinary Arts (AAS)** program.

November 2016

The Commission voted to continue Culinary Institute LeNotre on Outcomes Reporting for the **Culinary Arts (AAS)** program.

August 2017

The Commission considered Culinary Institute LeNotre’s Application for Renewal of Accreditation and Outcomes Report and voted to grant the school renewal of accreditation for five years. The Commission also voted to continue Culinary Institute LeNotre on Outcomes Reporting for the **Culinary Arts (AAS)**, **Elite Diplome de Cuisine (Diploma)**, and **Baking and Pastry Arts (AAS)** programs and place the school on Employment Verification Reporting.

May 2018

The Commission reviewed the Outcomes and Employment Verification Reports and voted to continue Culinary Institute LeNotre on Outcomes Reporting for the **Baking and Pastry Arts (AAS)** and the **Culinary Arts (AAS)** programs and on Employment Verification Reporting.

February 2019

The Commission reviewed Culinary Institute LeNotre’s Outcomes and Employment Verification Reports and the supplemental 2018 ACCSC Annual Report student achievement information and voted to continue the school on Outcomes Reporting for the **Baking and Pastry Arts (AAS)**, **Culinary Arts (AAS)**, **Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma)**, and **Hospitality and Restaurant Management (AAS)** programs and continue the school on Employment Verification Reporting.

November 2019

The Commission voted to continue Culinary Institute LeNotre on Outcomes Reporting for the **Culinary Arts (AAS)**, **Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma)**, and **Hospitality and Restaurant Management (AAS)** programs and to accept the Employment Verification Report. The Commission also requested additional information for the **Elite Diplome in Baking & Pastry Arts (Diploma)** and **Elite Diplome in Culinary Arts (Diploma)** programs based on below-benchmark employment rates reported in the 2019 ACCSC Annual Report.

February 2021

The Commission voted again to continue Culinary Institute LeNotre on Outcomes Reporting for the **Culinary Arts (AAS)**, **Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma)**, and **Hospitality and Restaurant Management (AAS)** programs. The Commission also noted discrepancies between the student achievement rates reported in the Outcomes Report and those in the 2020 ACCSC Annual Report both using a July 2020 Report Date on the Graduation and Employment Charts.

November 2021 Meeting Review and Action:

Culinary Institute LeNotre must demonstrate successful student achievement by maintaining acceptable rates of graduate employment in the career field for which the school provided education and supporting these rates through the school’s verifiable records of initial employment of its graduates or other verifiable documentation (*Section VII (B)(1)(b), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*). In response to the March 10, 2021 ACCSC letter, the school reported the following student achievement rates using a July 2021 Report Date on the Graduation and Employment Charts:

Program (Credential)	Length in Months	CI-LeNotre Graduation Rate	ACCSC Benchmark Graduation Rate	CI-LeNotre Employment Rate	ACCSC Benchmark Employment Rate
Culinary Arts (AAS)	18	55%	47%	77%	70%
Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma)	12	67%	55%	30%	70%
Hospitality and Restaurant Management (AAS)	22	67%	43%	100%	70%

The Commission found that although Culinary Institute LeNotre reported student achievement rates for the Culinary Arts (AAS) and the Hospitality and Restaurant Management (AAS) programs that meet ACCSC’s student achievement benchmark rates, the employment rate for the Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma) program continues to fall significantly below ACCSC’s benchmark rate.¹

Culinary Institute LeNotre indicated that in an effort to improve the employment rates of its graduates, the school’s Career Services staff works with Program Directors on externship placements. The school also indicated that it conducts seminars related to interviewing and resume writing as well as two job fairs annually. Culinary Institute LeNotre noted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the restaurant and hotel industries resulting in periods of closure of the school and challenges with externship sites and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the school stated that “[d]espite these obstacles, we were able to overcome them and successfully meet/exceed Completion and Placement benchmarks” (*September 27, 2021 response, page 1*) with the exception of the employment rate for the Elite Diplome de Patisserie

¹ *Section VII (B)(1)(b)(ii), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation and Appendix VI - Student Achievement Rates.*

program. The Commission found that Culinary Institute LeNotre provided a basic list of activities conducted by Career Services staff and did not include a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of the school's activities to improve employment rates. In addition, the Commission noted that the school did not include an explanation about the low employment rates specifically related to the Elite Diplome de Patisserie program or details of initiative to improve employment rates for this program.

Moreover, the Commission also posed some questions regarding the reliability of the student achievement data provided. In the March 10, 2021 letter, ACCSC noted discrepancies between the graduation and employment data reported in the 2020 ACCSC Annual Report and the Outcomes Report reviewed at the February 2021 Commission meeting both using a July 2020 Report Date on the Graduation and Employment Charts. In response to this letter, [REDACTED], College Director/Vice President of Operations of Culinary Institute LeNotre, wrote,

As a newly arrived College Director this year with 12 years of experience as a campus president and area manager in the Houston, TX area, it was evident to me after reviewing your letter dated March 10, 2021 (attached), and research the metrics, our reports to ACCSC were inaccurately submitted (September 27, 2021 Response Document, page 1).

The school provided corrected information for the previous Graduation and Employment Charts using a July 2020 Report Date with this response, and yet the Commission again found discrepancies between the data reported on the Graduation and Employment Chart and the rosters submitted by the school to support the information on the chart for the Culinary Arts (AAS) program using a July 2021 Report Date. Specifically, while Culinary Institute LeNotre reported 33 graduates as employed in the culinary arts field on the Graduation and Employment Chart, the supporting roster shows employment information for only seven graduates. In addition, although the school reported three graduates in the "Further Education" category and one graduate in the "Unavailable for Employment" category, the supporting rosters list two graduates as Further Education and no graduates as Unavailable for Employment.

In the response, the school stated that "a complete restructuring of our organization management and process improvement plans for an individual area of opportunity has been conducted and operationalized," (September 27, 2021 Response Document, page 2). The school's ongoing inability to supply the Commission with complete and accurate information and documentation despite the new management team raises questions about the school's ability to provide consistently reliable data.

Although the school is reporting below-benchmark rates of graduate employment in just one program presently, the Commission is concerned that the Elite Diplome de Patisserie program has been subject to Outcomes Reporting almost continuously since 2017. In addition, the Culinary Arts program has been subject to Outcomes Reporting since 2015. As such, if the school cannot demonstrate the employability of graduates from these programs, then the Commission may take a programmatic action to include directing the school to cease enrollment in these programs or revoking the approval of the programs altogether.

Based on the history of Outcomes Reporting and questions about the reliability of the school's student achievement data and supporting information, the Commission voted to place Culinary Institute LeNotre on Warning and directs the school to submit the following:

- a. A detailed assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's student achievement improvement plan for its programs with specific attention paid to the Culinary Arts (AAS) and Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma) programs.

- b. A description of any modifications or improvements implemented in the school’s programs and administrative support services.
- c. An evaluation of current employment trends including an assessment as to when the programs’ student achievement rates are expected to meet ACCSC’s benchmark rates.
- d. Graduation and Employment Charts for the Culinary Arts (AAS) and Elite Diplome de Patisserie (Diploma) programs using a **January 2022 Report Date**.
- e. Summary information for the Graduation and Employment Charts organized according to the corresponding **cohort start date** reported on the chart (line #1) as follows:

i. For each student start, provide the following information:

Count	Student ID	Program	Start Date	Graduation Date	Withdrawal/Termination Date
1	12345	Cosmetology	01/10/17	06/01/2018	N/A
2	12346	Cosmetology	01/10/17	N/A	01/10/2018

ii. For each student classified as “Unavailable for Graduation” (line #6), provide the following information:

Count	Student ID	Program	Start Date	Reason Unavailable	Description of the Documentation on File
1					

iii. For each graduate classified as employed in the field² (line #14), provide the following information:

Count	Graduate ID	Program	Start Date	Employer, Contact, Address, & Ph. #	Date of Initial Employment	Descriptive Job Title and Responsibilities	Source of Verification ³ (i.e., graduate or employer)
1							

iv. From the list in (iii) above, for each graduate classified as employed in a training related field, that is “self-employed,” provide the following:

Count	Graduate ID	Program	Start Date	Description of the Documentation on File
1				

v. From the list in (iv.) above, for each graduate classified as employed in a training related field, that is “Career Advancement,” provide the following:

Count	Graduate ID	Program	Start Date	Description of the Documentation on File
1				

vi. For each graduate classified as “Graduates-Further Education” (line #11) or “Graduates-Unavailable for Employment” (line #12), provide the following information:

Count	Graduate ID	Program	Start Date	Classification on the G&E Chart	Reason	Description of the Documentation on File
1						

- f. Any additional information, to include contemporaneous retention, graduation, or employment data, that the school believes will be useful to the Commission in making a determination regarding the school’s compliance with ACCSC’s student achievement outcomes requirements.

² See Appendix VII – Guidelines for Employment Classification, Standards of Accreditation.

³ Appendix VII (4) – Guidelines for Employment Classification, Standards of Accreditation requires the school to verify the employment classification.

Please note that the Commission expects that the school will provide complete and accurate information and documentation. If the school is unable to do this, the Commission will consider further appropriate action.

2021 ACCSC Annual Report:

Culinary Institute LeNotre also submitted its 2021 ACCSC Annual Report in which the school reported the following programs with employment rates that fall below ACCSC’s benchmark rates:

Program (Credential)	Length in Months	CI-LeNotre Graduation Rate	ACCSC Benchmark Graduation Rate	CI-LeNotre Employment Rate	ACCSC Benchmark Employment Rate
Baking & Pastry Arts (AAS)	24	58%	40%	64%	70%
Elite Diplome de Cuisine (Diploma)	12	85%	55%	65%	70%
Elite Diplome in Baking & Pastry Arts (Diploma)	15	82%	50%	50%	70%
Elite Diplome in Culinary Arts (Diploma)	15	64%	50%	64%	70%

Therefore, Culinary Institute LeNotre must submit additional information for these programs to include the following:

- a. Graduation and Employment Charts for the programs in the above chart using a **January 2022 Report Date**;
- b. For any program for which the reported rates of student graduation or graduate employment do not meet the ACCSC benchmark, a description of the strategies being implemented to support student graduation or employment and an assessment of the school’s progress toward meeting the Commission’s benchmarks; and
- c. Any additional information, to include contemporaneous retention, graduation, or employment data, that the school believes will be useful to the Commission in making a determination regarding the school’s compliance with ACCSC’s student achievement outcomes requirements.

Warning Restrictions:

Pursuant to *Section VII (K)(9), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*, the Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions (i.e., separate facilities, new programs) to a school or its separate facilities while the school is under a Warning.

Notification to Students:

The Commission requires the school to inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed on Warning and to provide a summary of the reasons for the Warning Order (*Section VII (K)(8) Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*).

Response Requirements:

By applying for accreditation, a school accepts the obligation to demonstrate continuous compliance with the *Standards of Accreditation*. While the Commission employs its own methods to determine a school’s compliance with accrediting standards, the burden rests with the school to establish that it is meeting the standards. The Commission’s deliberations and decisions are made on the basis of the written record and

thus a school must supply the Commission with complete documentation of the school's compliance with accrediting standards.

Culinary Institute LeNotre must provide a response to the items expressed above that provides the information requested along with any additional information that the school believes supports a demonstration of compliance with accrediting standards.⁴ If the school's response contains documentation that includes personal or confidential student or staff information that is not required for the Commission's review (e.g., social security numbers, dates of birth, etc.), please remove or redact that information.

Culinary Institute LeNotre must upload the school's electronic response directly to ACCSC's College 360 Database. The ACCSC College 360 database can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Please note that the password utilized by the institution to access the Annual Report Portal is the same to access the School Submission section of the College 360 database. The Instructions for Electronic Submission can be found [here](#). A detailed overview on how to upload a school submission can be found [here](#).

Keep in mind, the school's response must be prepared in accordance with ACCSC's Instructions for Electronic Submission (e.g., prepared as one Portable Document Format ("PDF") file that has been prepared using Adobe Acrobat software (version 8.0 or higher) and which has a .pdf extension as part of the file name). The school will receive an e-mail confirmation that the file has been received within 24 hours of the submission.

The school's response must also include a signed certification attesting to the accuracy of the information and be received in the Commission's office **on or before March 10, 2022**. If a response, the required fee,⁵ and the certificate of attesting to the accuracy of the information is not received in the Commission's office **on or before March 10, 2022**, the Commission will consider further appropriate action.

For assistance with the password or for any other questions regarding the electronic submission requirements, please contact [REDACTED]. Please note that any password requests to access College 360 must be made by the school director, or designated member of the school's management team, via e-mail.

For further assistance or additional information, please contact [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Michale S. McComis, Ed.D.
Executive Director

⁴ ACCSC has issued two modules of the **Blueprints for Success Series** – [Organizing an Effective Electronic Submission](#) and [Preparing a Comprehensive Response for Commission Consideration](#) – which provide a framework for submitting a well-documented, organized, electronic response for Commission consideration. ACCSC encourages the school to review these modules when formulating its response to this letter. More information is available in the [Resources section](#) at www.accsc.org.

⁵ ACCSC assesses a \$500 processing fee to a school placed on Warning.