## Workshop Agenda

### TUESDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Stage for Success</td>
<td>9:00 AM – 11:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Standards of Accreditation</td>
<td>11:15 AM – 1:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting the Renewal Process</td>
<td>2:00 PM – 4:30 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WEDNESDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The On-Site Evaluation Response and Commission Actions</td>
<td>9:00 AM – 12:30 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timelines

1. Attend Accreditation Workshop
   July 25 – 26, 2023

2. Upload Application for Renewal of Accreditation
   September 11, 2023

3. Upload Self-Evaluation Report and Compile Application Updates
   January 22, 2024
Ground Rules

- Be curious and considerate
- Be flexible – the agenda is fluid
- Engage!
Standards of Accreditation

BLUEPRINTS FOR SUCCESS
The Commission’s deliberations and decisions are based on the written record.

A school must supply the Commission with complete documentation of the school’s compliance with all accrediting standards.
The burden rests with the school to establish it is meeting the standards.

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.
Fundamentals

In cases where accrediting standards and federal or state government requirements differ, the more stringent will apply.
Adequate
- As much as is good or 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
Quantitative Assessment

Qualitative Assessment
Latest and Greatest Standards

PROMULGATED JULY 1, 2023
CLICK HERE FOR THE ACCREDITATION ALERT
CLICK HERE FOR THE STANDARDS
The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamentals of leadership, management, and administrative elements essential to an institution dedicated to student success.
ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

- Well-qualified administrators engaged in continuous improvement;
- Clearly written and consistently executed policies and procedures;
- Sufficient numbers of administrators;
- Adequate financial resources for the proper operation of the school;
- Physical facilities that provide an appropriate and safe learning environment;
- Leadership that engages in ongoing assessment and improvement planning.
Section II

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to establish the fundamental requirements for the development and delivery of viable, quality programs that lead to students’ successful attainment of knowledge, skills, and vocational objectives.
A careful design process and rigorous ongoing assessment of programs;

Establishing an appropriate program length;

Furnishing detailed and organized course outlines and syllabi;

Identifying clear learning objectives; and

Resourcing the programs with adequate instructional materials, equipment, and learning resources materials.
Section III

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS
The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamentals with regard to the administration and delivery of education in a manner that maximizes the students’ ability to achieve the knowledge, skills, and vocational objectives of the program.
Well-qualified and competent educational administrators and faculty dedicated to student success and engaged in continuous improvement;

Clearly written and consistently executed educational policies and procedures;

Sufficient numbers of educational administrators and faculty to support the student body
Section IV
RECRUITMENT
The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamental elements of fair recruitment practices that ensure schools describe themselves fully and accurately to prospective students and permit prospective students to make well-informed and considered enrollment decisions without undue pressure.
The recruitment practices of accredited schools should focus not on simply obtaining student enrollment numbers, but on creating a student body of individuals who are qualified and likely to benefit from the education and training objectives and to achieve success.
The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamental elements of admissions policies and procedures that contribute to identifying prospective students that are capable of completing the training offered and achieving success.
Fair, objective, and effective admissions criteria lead to informed judgment of an applicant’s ability to succeed.
The purpose of this section is to ensure that schools remain attentive to their students’ educational and other needs.
Mechanisms for ongoing attentiveness to student needs

Directing appropriate resources to address those needs.
Support for students’ academic and nonacademic needs

Employment assistance

Availability and secure maintenance of student records.
Section VII

STUDENT LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, PROGRESS, AND ACHIEVEMENT
The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamental elements of assessing student progress and success in relation to program objectives.
These fundamental elements include establishing clear learning outcomes.

Effectively assessing satisfactory student progress through the program.

Demonstrating acceptable levels of student achievement and student success.
Section VIII
SEPARATE FACILITIES
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to set forth the requirements with regard to the operation of separate facilities: ownership/management, disclosures/advertising, programs, and resources/student services.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to ensure that schools delivering any portion of a program via distance education remain engaged with students, provide sufficient resources for students, and assess the rate at which students successfully achieve program objectives.
Proper authorization
Management
Program elements
Prospective student assessment
Faculty
Student services
Distance education facilities
Starting the Process
Process Timelines

1. Attend Accreditation Workshop
   July 25 – 26, 2023

2. Upload Application for Renewal of Accreditation
   September 11, 2023

3. Upload Self-Evaluation Report and Compile Application Updates
   January 22, 2024
Purpose of the Process
For the School

Provides an opportunity for the school to conduct a comprehensive self-evaluation and draft findings for improvement
Purpose of the Process For ACCSC

A comprehensive evaluation to:

- Verify the information provided by the school
- Assess how well the school meets its educational objectives
- Confirm compliance with the Standards of Accreditation.
Attend an accreditation workshop prior to submission of the application for accreditation

The full-time, on-site director or appropriate management team representative
Step Two - Application for Renewal of Accreditation

DUE SEPTEMBER 11, 2023
Section I – SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Address
- Contact Information
- Director
- Workshop Attendance
- Name
- Ownership
SEPARATE FACILITY INFORMATION

➤ Section II:
Information about the main campus, if the school applying for renewal of accreditation is a branch

➤ Section III:
Information about any additional locations (branch, satellite, facility expansion) associated with the school applying for renewal of accreditation
Section IV – SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- Eligibility Criteria
- State licensure
- Other accrediting body/regulatory agency
- Programmatic accreditation
Section V – SUBSTANTATIVE CHANGES

A chronological list of all substantive changes since the school’s last term of accreditation

Examples are change of ownership; change of location; change of name; addition of a new program; distance education; addition of a separate facility

Provide a copy of the approval letter from the Commission for all substantive changes
Section VI

REQUIRED EXHIBITS
Application Exhibits

1. Application Processing Fee - $2,250
2. Accreditation Workshop Certificate
3. Ownership of School (10% or More)
4. OPEID # / 3 Years of Cohort Default Rates (Campus Specific)
5. Corporate Affiliations with Other Schools
6. Current State License
7. State Program Approvals (Clock / Credit Hour)
8. Other Accreditations (Notices)
9. Programmatic or Other Regulatory Approval Required for Employment
10. State Authorization for Distance Education
11. Consortium Agreements
Program Information

12. ACCSC Program Chart

13. Allocation of Hours for Clock Hour Programs / Outline of a Non-Degree Program / Outline of a Degree Program

14. Avocational or Continuing Education List

15. Discontinued Program with Notices to ACCSC (Since Last Accreditation)
Personnel & Program Advisory Committee

16. Organization Chart (All Employees)

17. Faculty Listing by Program & Licenses, if applicable

18. Program Advisory Committee Membership
Physical Facilities

19. Fire, Safety, Sanitation Documentation

20. Certificate of Insurance
21. Student Achievement Rates Disclosure
22. PDF Cross-Referenced Catalog
23. PDF Cross-Referenced Enrollment Agreement
24. Website URL & Current Advertising
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- Go to www.accsc.org
- Click on Directory, Search for your School
- Review Institutional Contact Information
- If contact information needs to be updated, go to the ACCSC Annual Report Portal and make change or submit Change of Director Form.
- Review Program Information - Name, Clock Hours, Credit Hours
- The program listed on the website directory are pulled directly from the ACCSC program database.
- If something needs to be updated... let us know!
Section VII – DISCLOSURES AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Attestations
- “This application is submitted by the chief executive officer of the school for which renewal of accreditation is sought, and that official hereby attests to the following”
The school has every opportunity to present itself in its best light and to respond to any concerns.

The school is postsecondary with vocational objectives.

The school is voluntarily seeking accreditation.

School officials have read the standards and attended a workshop.

School officials fully accept and support the concept of accreditation.
Disclosures

Have owners or managers been directly or indirectly employed or affiliated with any school during the individual’s period of employment or affiliation?

| Lost or was denied accreditation | Closed or entered into bankruptcy | Lost or was denied eligibility to participate in Title IV Funding programs |
Is any action pending, or has action been taken by any court or administrative body with regard to any owner, manager, or any institution with which any owner/manager has been affiliated?

Has any owner or manager served in a similar capacity in any other school where either that individual or the school has been charged or indicted in a civil or criminal forum or proceeding alleging fraud, misappropriation, or any criminal act?
If the answer is “YES” to any disclosure, the school is given the opportunity to provide an explanation of the facts and circumstances surrounding the situations reported in the disclosure section.
CERTIFICATIONS

- Acknowledge that the school must be consistently described to all agencies
- Grant permission for ACCSC to contact other agencies appropriate to the review of the application
- Acknowledge the requirement for a third-party audit of employment records
- Certify that the information herein and attached hereto is correct.
Words to the Wise...
Do This

- Ensure consistency (e.g. ACCSC program approvals vs. state approvals)
- Ownership structure matches College360
- OPEID # vs. campus-specific CDR
- What’s a corporate affiliation?
- Other accreditation vs. Programmatic/ regulatory approval
- Provide links to advertising and social media
State authorization for distance education for EVERY state in which the school recruits

- Faculty licensure (current)
- Fire, Safety and Sanitation (state regs. vs occupancy permit)
- Student Achievement Disclosures
- Identify the PAC member responsible for Distance Education
Don’t Do This

• Section V: Omit the approval letters
• Assume ACCSC can cash a check from a copy included within the application
• Notify the Commission of the change of ownership through the application
• Create your own forms [Use ACCSC forms and reports]
• Omit staff names from organizational chart
• Forget to cross-reference the Enrollment Agreement and Catalog
Step Three – SELF-EVALUATION
DUE JANUARY 22, 2024
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.
Self-Evaluation Report

- Involve the Entire School
- Improvements due to internal efforts
- Significant and on-going process
Self-Evaluation Report

✓ Includes an introduction, nine sections, and three appendices

✓ The sections parallel the Standards of Accreditation.

✓ The three appendices describe additional information the school will need to prepare for the on-site evaluation.
Self-Evaluation Report

- Quantitative data, such as number of managers, faculty qualifications, student achievement rates

- Qualitative reflection: what does the data mean? Are the policies and procedures effective? Is the school successfully meeting its mission?

- External and internal validation
Do This

- Ensure consistency (e.g. narrative vs. supporting documentation)
- Involve the entire school
- External and Internal validation
- Staff and Faculty Personnel Reports
- Answer the question being asked
- Edit
Accurate reflection of daily activities/ operations

Secure third-party verifier early on

Regularly check in with third-party verifier

Use the resources available on the ACCSC website

Contact ACCSC staff with questions

Download the most recent version of the SER Form
• Print everything out and then scan it
• Include superfluous documentation
• Ramble
• Provide narrative without supporting documentation
• “We will” or “We intend to”
• Submit the same SER as last time
• Label hyperlinks with only section numbers
Sample SER Prompts
• List all individuals responsible for full-time on-site management of the school (including campus-based and corporate oversight) and include as an exhibit a Staff Personnel Report for each individual listed.

• Provide a detailed description of how each member of the management team is qualified for his or her particular role, including education, training, experience, and demonstrated ability to lead and manage a post-secondary educational institution.

Section I (A)(1)(b)
What is the average tenure (in years) of the current faculty members?

What impact has this level of tenure had on educational delivery?
Review your SER responses and ask...

- Does the response answer the question being asked?
- Is the response complete and clear?
- Does the response accurately reflect day-to-day operations?
- Is necessary documentation available to support the response?
- Is supporting documentation complete, clear, and concise?
Third Party Verification
Is this verification of our verification?

Yes.

Why?

Because...
The process provide an assessment of

The school’s compliance with Section VII (B)(1)(b), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation and whether the school has “verifiable” records of employment.

The extent to which the institution’s records can be relied upon in making decisions about a school’s compliance with the Commission’s student achievement standards.
Three circumstances in which third party verification is required:

**ACCSC engages an independent third party to verify a random sample of employment data submitted with each year’s Annual Report.**

**Initial and renewal applicants engage an independent third party to verify the school’s most recently reported employment data that will be used for the on-site evaluation process.**

**The Commission may also direct a school to undergo a Third-Party Employment Verification at any time.**
The school must engage an independent third-party to verify the employment data in the Graduation and Employment (“G&E”) Chart(s) submitted in the most recently submitted Annual Report at the time of the due date of the SER as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Application Due</th>
<th>SER Due</th>
<th>Annual Report to be Third Party Verified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2023</td>
<td>September 11, 2023</td>
<td>January 22, 2024</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step One – Choose an Independent Third Party

Is not affiliated with the school or share any part ownership in the school or its affiliated schools.

Does not provide any other services to the school.

Will only report accurate findings through work conducted in an independent manner.

Understands and applied ACCSC’s defined classifications exactly as stated.
THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION
With the SER, the school provides

- A signed attestation by the independent third-party that acknowledges the four points from the previous slide,

- A description of the methodology that the verification agency used for the selection of the 50% sample; and

- A description of the methodology that the verification agency used for the verification process.
THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION – DISCLOSURES

The same disclosures that apply to owners and managers of the school APPLY TO Owners or managers or affiliated contractors of the third-party verifier.
THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION IF THE VENDOR ANSWERS “YES”

- The vendor must provide a narrative explanation for YES answers to the questions above.
- The school must provide an explanation as to why the school chose this vendor despite the vendor’s disclosures and past records.
- The school must also articulate how this vendor can serve as a reliable source to verify the accuracy of the school’s data.
Step Two – Records

Provide employment records for each graduate reported on Line 14 in every G&E Chart submitted with the 2023 Annual Report.
THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION
Selecting the sample to verify

The independent third-party must select minimally a 50% sample of employed graduates (classified as “Graduates - Employed in the Field”) on line 14 of each G&E Chart and report the results from that sample.

Once the 50% sample has been selected by the independent third-party, for the purposes of this application, the independent third-party may not alter the sample in an effort to get better results.
THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION

Conducting the Verification

The independent third-party verifies employment records with the employer or graduate either verbally or in writing.

The independent third-party verifies the employment data in a manner independent from the school. The independent third-party conducts the verifications without assistance from the school.
Verification Categories
Verified as Correct

This happens when the third-party verifier finds:

- The same employer as listed in the school’s record;
- The start date listed in the school’s record is within 45 days of the verified start date; and
- The verified job title is substantively the same as that listed in the school’s record, using the following illustrative guidelines.
Example: Automotive Technology

**Exact** Match - The school employment record matches exactly the verified job title e.g., “Mechanic”;

**Obvious** Match - The school employment record states “Mechanic” and the verified job title of, “Auto Mechanic” is an obvious match; or

**Confirmed** Match - The school employment record states “Mechanic” but the verified job title is “Technician II” AND the employer or graduate confirm that the job responsibilities are substantively the same.
This happens when the third-party verifier finds:

- A start date that is more than 45 days different from the start date in the school’s employment record; or

- A substantively different job title from that in the school’s employment record (i.e., any job title that is verified to be different from the school’s employment record and is not an obvious match or confirmed match as described above)
Unable to Verify

This happens when the third-party verifier is:

- Unable to obtain verification of the school’s employment record from either the employer or the graduate.
- Of note, the school must use this category if the employer uses a third-party company, for example The Work Number.
Verified as not correct

This happens when:

- The graduate is not found in employer’s records;
- The graduate denies having worked in the position as stated in the school’s employment record;
- The position listed in the school’s employment record is unpaid or an intern/externship
Step Four - Report

The school must provide the full report from the independent third-party verification of employment data to the ACCSC on-site evaluation team, as directed by Appendix B of the SER.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Third-Party Initial Employment Verification</th>
<th>Reported Institutional Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report Date on Graduation and Employment Chart</td>
<td>Name of Third-Party Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Students Sampled</td>
<td>Total Number of Available Students to Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified as Correct</td>
<td>Verified but Different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE SCHOOL MUST PROVIDE THIS CHART IN THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT WITH AGGREGATE INSTITUTIONAL RESULTS ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS**
Lessons Learned
Maximize your relationship with the third party

➢ Get weekly reports while the project is underway

➢ Ask for the option to update incorrect emails or wrong telephone numbers while the project is underway

➢ Ask the third-party about the number of calls/emails and the pacing of outreach as to not frustrate your employers/graduates
Set Expectations with Students

- Help students to understand their role in the accountability framework
- Begin on the first day of Orientation and continue throughout the program
- Accreditation Resources:
  - New Student Letter (English / Spanish)
  - Graduation Letter (English / Spanish)
Set Expectations with Career Services

- Establish protocols for post-graduation activities that can be managed and tracked

  Admissions Protocols as Template

- Have students sign a release form that permits the school to obtain employment information

  Signed and dated upon graduation, not start, as frequently employers that require a signed release want it to be signed within 12 months of the request
SET EXPECTATIONS WITH CAREER SERVICES

- Complete Information!
- Use the form!

- Graduate Name
- Program Name
- Job Title
- Descriptive Job Responsibilities
- Date of Initial Employment
- Employer Email Address
- Employer Contact Person
- Employer Direct Dial
- Graduate Phone Number
- Graduate Email (not the school’s assigned email address)
The Graduate Employment Record must be consistently completed for each graduate classified as employed in field.

Problem areas include:

- Forms that are not complete
- Poor description of job duties
- Insufficient information to show the connection between the educational objectives of the program and the vocational outcomes. For example:

Pharmacy Technician!  Designated Hitter?
Set Expectations with Employers

- **Work proactively** with employers
  
  *Set expectations, get feedback*

- **Batching Verification**
  
  *For employers who hire multiple graduates, have the third-party do it as one call/email/fax rather than repeated contacts*

- **Avoid calling employers to “scrub” data in advance of the third-party verification process**
  
  *Employers and graduates get frustrated that “they just gave that information”*

- **Accreditation Resources:**
  
  *Employer Letter – (English / Spanish)*
6,683 Records

Verified as Correct
Verified But Different
Unable to Verify
Verified as not Correct
The Guidelines for Independent Third Party Verification are available online.

A live recording of the 90-minute webinar is available at: Online at ACCSC.org under Events/Webinars.

The slides from the webinar presentation are available at: Best Practices and Lessons Learned.

The Independent Third-Party Employment Verification FAQ is available for download at www.accsc.org.
THE ON-SITE EVALUATION
Purpose of the Virtual/On-Site Evaluation

**Verify**
Verify data in the school’s reports, applications, responses, and any other information.

**Develop**
Develop an understanding and perform an assessment of how well the school meets its objectives.

**Determine**
Determine the extent to which the school complies with the Standards of Accreditation.
ON-SITE EVALUATION

The school will be evaluated according to all available information, including:

- Documentation included in the school’s Application and SER;
- Information provided by the school to demonstrate compliance with accreditation standards;
- Interviews and surveys of the administration, instructors, other school employees, students, graduates, and employers of graduates;
Focus On

- Observations of classes, management, and administration of the school; and
- Documentation of the student achievement data reported to the Commission
Scheduling the Virtual/On-Site Evaluation

A Commission representative will contact you to schedule the on-site evaluation

- One to three months after SER due date
- During “normal” operations
  - Not exam week
  - Majority of students in class
  - Administrators and faculty present
# EVALUATION FEES

As of July 2021, based on the number of programs offered by the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Active Programs</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three or fewer</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to Nine</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten to Fifteen</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen to Twenty</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twenty</td>
<td>$15,000 + $500 for each additional program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutions with more than 500 students are assessed an additional $2,000.

When combined with another substantive change evaluation or an initial or renewal of accreditation evaluation, the fee for each combined substantive change evaluation is $500.

If an Occupation/Subject Matter Specialist travels more than 200 miles to participate in an evaluation, the institution will be assessed additional travel based-fees on a direct cost basis.
ADDITIONAL FEES

If an evaluation team requires more than two days at the school, then the Commission will assess an additional fee of $600 per evaluator per day.

If an evaluation requires additional evaluators based up institutional and/or programmatic circumstances the institution will be assessed an addition $2,000 per evaluator.
Composition of the Team

- Team Leader/Management Specialist
- Education Specialist
- ACCSC Staff Member
- Occupation Specialist
- Distance Education Specialist
- State Observer (invited)

Conflict of Interest – Clearing the Team
Team Leader/Management Specialist

Responsible for leading the evaluation and ensuring that each team member performs the assigned functions

- Management and Administrative Capacity
- Qualifications of Management and Administrative Personnel
- Institutional Assessment Activities
- Physical Facilities
- Evaluates the educational administration, faculty qualifications and professional development.

- Evaluates the various program elements that enable a school to meet its objectives:
  - Program Length
  - Course Outlines
  - Learning Objectives
  - Instructional Materials and Equipment
  - Availability and Integration of Learning Resource Materials
- Ensure consistency
- Provide technical assistance and interpretive guidance on accreditation standards and rules
- Serve as the liaison between the on-site evaluation team and the Commission

ACCSC Staff Member
Evaluates equipment, technology, and other resources and infrastructure associated with distance education in such areas as:

- Admissions
- Student progress
- Student achievement

Distance Education Specialist
Observers

State Licensing Agency
A person with direct interest in the licensure or accreditation of ACCSC-accredited schools is invited to accompany an evaluation team as an observer.

ACCSC Observers
ACCSC Commissioners, staff, and team members will be permitted to accompany an evaluation team as an observer for training purposes.
Occupation Specialist

- Instructional materials
- Equipment
- Learning stations
- Safety devices
- Learning resources
ACCSC on-site evaluation teams are required to include **1 Occupation Specialist** to review each training program or group of related training programs.

- Limit of 3 programs per Occupation Specialist.
- Occupational specialist required for a satellite location if more than 50% of a program is offered at that location.

**Occupation Specialist**
Occupation Specialists - Qualifications

- Must be a current working professional with 5 years of hands-on experience in the field
- Must hold the necessary required certification/license to represent the industry
- Cannot be a current or former student or employee of the school;
- Cannot be affiliated with the school and has no conflict of interest with the school (i.e., PAC)
The school completes Appendix C which provides information for 3 to 5 candidates per program (or group of related programs).

ACCSC contacts the candidates and makes a selection.
Appendix A of the SER is an instruction guide for assembling Occupation Specialist Information Packages.

Abbreviated version of the SER targeted to the areas of interest to the occupation specialist.

Provide a complete Appendix A for each distinct program or group of related programs. ACCSC will provide guidance via the Application Acceptance Letter.
PREPARATION IS KEY

Meet with all faculty and staff to explain the purpose of ACCSC’s on-site evaluation, identify the roles of the team members, and general expectations of the on-site evaluation.

Your team should be aware of ACCSC’s Standards of Accreditation, particularly as those standards pertain to their roles within the organization.

Familiarize your team with the Application for Accreditation and Self-Evaluation Report that will be the foundation of the on-site evaluation team’s review.
### Prepare a Work Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Identify a secure room that will allow a comfortable work space for the number of team members that will be reviewing your institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure</td>
<td>Ensure there are adequate outlets or power strips, and Internet access (provide required access codes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Access to basic refreshments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepare Materials

- Send Student Survey to all students
- Use Appendix B as a guide for furnishing the work room with required documentation
- Label the materials in the room in an organized and understandable fashion
Organize Documentation

- Documentation is the basis of the on-site evaluation team’s verification of the accuracy and compliance of the self-evaluation report.
- Prepare by having documentation readily available and organized in a manner that allows prompt response to team requests.
Appendix B – Upload Materials

30 Numbered Items

- Updated Items from Application Acceptance Letter
- Documentation – Fire/Safety, Emergency Preparedness Plan, PAC Minutes; LRS Orientation Materials; Current Budget; Student Complaints; Insurance; etc.
- Catalog, Enrollment Agreement, Organization Chart, Class Schedules
- Advertising
- Current Staff Listing
18 Numbered Items

- Lists – Current Students, Graduate, Withdrawals with Refunds Information, DE, LOA, ATB, Transfer Credit, Independent Study, Faculty List
- Catalog, Enrollment Agreement, Organization Chart, Class Schedules
- Annual Report Backup Documentation
- Third-Party Report
- Program Information – Curricula, Syllabi, Textbooks, etc.
- Denied Admissions Information
Appendix B – Readily Accessible Materials

- Student Files
- Faculty Files – Faculty Personnel Report
- Institutional Assessment Activities Documentation
- Staff Files – Staff Personnel Report for Management
### File Review
Current Students, Graduates, Withdrawn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation of admissions requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully executed enrollment agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory progress evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts for graduate files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refund calculations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence refunds were made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The team leader, education specialist and Commission representative will arrive at 9:00 a.m.

If parking is limited, please have spots available for the on-site evaluation team.

Have a member of the school staff at the front door ready to greet the team.

Day One
Guide the team to the room that you have set aside. They will need 5-10 minutes to set up.

Provide a **brief** tour of the school - an overview of the physical space so the team can get a feel for the location of key areas.

Identify one or two key staff members that can serve as liaisons to the on-site evaluation team. The review will go more quickly when information can be obtained efficiently.
Day One

**Team**
Team Leader conducts the entrance interview and sets expectations with the school.

**Select**
The team will select files for review from the lists of students required by Appendix B of the SER.

**Review**
Review student survey results.
Survey additional students, as necessary
Review documentation
Observe classes
Meet with staff and faculty
Verify student achievement data
Review curriculum and supporting resources
Evaluate equipment and facilities
Review all advertising
Occupation Specialists depart after the completion of their reviews.

Throughout the day, team members communicate with school officials regarding the team’s progress and potential findings.

For evening programs, the team will stay to survey students and observe the operation of the school in the evening.

At the conclusion of Day One, the Team Leader will meet with school officials to provide a “debrief” of the day’s activities and to outline areas of focus for Day Two.
The team leader, education specialist and Commission representative will return at 9:00 a.m.

Team members address outstanding issues and complete their notes and observations.

Evaluation Review Summary
At the conclusion of an evaluation, the team will convene with the school’s leadership team, and will present its PRELIMINARY findings in relation to the school’s compliance with accreditation standards.
General Tips and Tricks

- BRIEF tour rehearsal
- Parking
- Front Door address/Google Directions
- Access to potable water
- Team Room placement
- Point person/people
- Administrative access to online learning platform
- Internet monitoring
- Safety equipment for the team, if necessary
- Include team on emergency communications
- Electronic documentation (upload, flash drive, etc.)
On-Site Evaluation Report

A factual report and summary of the on-site evaluation team’s findings as to the school’s compliance with accrediting standards.

Serves as the official record of the on-site evaluation.
The On-Site Evaluation Report

- Cover letter
- On-Site Evaluation Team Record
- Informational Dashboard
- Population information
- Program approvals and G&E rates
- Third-party verification rates
- Accreditation and Substantive Change history
THE ON-SITE EVALUATION REPORT

- School Mission and History
- Reports, Heightened Monitoring, and PIEs/IEEs
- Team Observations
- Evaluation Review Notes
- Student Satisfaction Data
- Team Findings
- Additional Information Required
- Response Submission Information
Commission Review

Accreditation decisions are based on the written record.
The Written Record Consists of

- Application for accreditation,
- Self-Evaluation Report
- On-Site Evaluation Report
- School's response,
- Team Leader comments and the school's response if any,
- Additional information collected about the school, which may include reports from government and private agencies
When pieces of the picture are missing, THE SCHOOL IS GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND AND PROVIDE A COMPLETE PICTURE.
The burden rests with the school to fill in the blanks.
Responding to the OER

It is **NOT** the number of findings in the OER

It **IS** whether the response demonstrates current compliance with standards
NARRATIVE

**Explain**
Explain circumstances that impacted the school’s ability to demonstrate compliance

**Act**
Describe corrective action and provide documentation to show current compliance

**Plan**
Describe the school’s plan to ensure compliance in the future
Documentation

- Shows consistent execution of policies
- Demonstrates systematic compliance over time
Step One – Identify the Gap
Start with the Goal in Mind

- The letter or report includes a standard citation.
- Make sure you understand the requirements of that standard.
- Your presentation (response) must demonstrate that the school is operating in current compliance with this standard.
Where are we in relation to the goal?

- The letter/report should describe the team’s or Commission’s specific findings.
- It may be the truth, or the perception from the written record.
Step Two - Assessment

- How did we get here?
- How are we going to get to and/or demonstrate that we are at the goal?
Step Three - Plan of Action

MAP IT OUT BASED ON YOUR ASSESSMENT
Step Four

NOW YOU CAN PREPARE THE RESPONSE
Successful responses

- Strong narrative for every item
- Documentation to show corrective action
- Organized in an easy-to-understand manner
The Narrative

TELL THE STORY
Introductory Statement

A narrative explanation regarding the overall response

Describe the school’s process for addressing compliance findings
Comprehensive Narrative for Each Area

**Past:** Focus on the factors that contributed to the gap in compliance

**Present:** Demonstrate current compliance with standards

**Future:** Explain efforts to ensure ongoing compliance
Tips

- Stay focused, don’t let your story get derailed by extraneous information
- Don’t skip important details
Comprehensive. Precise. Documentation

- Illustrate your point
- Avoid the Avalanche
The FIX: Policy

- Updated P&P
- Revised catalog or addendum
- Memo showing distribution of new policy/effective date
- Documentation of implementation of new policy
- Oversight mechanisms to ensure consistent application of new policy
The FIX: Execution

- Training session
- Documentation of current compliance of operations
- Results of audits
- Results of performance evaluations
The FIX: Documentation

- New internal P&P
- Training Session
- Documentation of current compliance of operations
- Results of performance evaluations
- Results of audits
The FIX: Management

- Oversight mechanisms
- Results of audits
- Results of performance reviews
- Documentation of current compliance
- Results of metrics assessment
Blue Ribbon Response

Precise Documentation

Comprehensive Narrative

ACCSC Resources
Instructions For Electronic Submission

Compile into one Portable Document Format ("PDF") file

Prepared using Adobe Acrobat software (version 8.0 or higher) and which has a .pdf extension as part of the file name

Submitted via upload to the School Submission Center
Remove or redact

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.)
Include

- A cover letter identifying the institution by name, address, ACCSC school number; an explanation of the content and the title of the document(s); and a name, phone number, and e-mail address for a point of contact at the school.
- A bookmarked Table of Contents.
- A copy of the Commission letter.
- A signed Certification Statement attesting to the accuracy of the data contained in the response.
What will happen if you ask ACCSC Staff a question?
Reality...!

JUST WAITING FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HELPFUL!
Your turn

What is the standard?

What is the problem (compliance gap)?

What is the school’s response?

Are there unanswered questions?

Did the school demonstrate compliance with standards?
The Standard

The school must be able to justify the classification of each graduate as employed in a training related field. One requirement is that the employment is directly related to the program from which the individual graduated and aligns with a majority of the educational and training objectives of the program (Appendix VII Guidelines for Employment Classification, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation).
Upon review of the information submitted to support the data, the Commission noted that the response does not make clear, based on the job titles, how the following graduates are employed in a position that aligns with a majority of the educational and training objectives of the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JACK-078</td>
<td>Master Carver</td>
<td>Stem Trimmer</td>
<td>Polly's Pumpkin Patch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACK-982</td>
<td>Journeyman Carver</td>
<td>Cashier</td>
<td>Jill's JackOLantern Jackpot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACK-438</td>
<td>Journeyman Carver</td>
<td>Customer Service Representative</td>
<td>Gary’s Gourd Gallery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response #1

The school provides a narrative that explains that the pumpkin carving industry has taken a hit from the COVID-19 pandemic, as more families are carving their own Jack O’Lanterns at home rather than investing in the luxury of designer Jack O Lanterns.
The school’s narrative explains that the school has hired a new Career Service representative, who mistakenly classified the graduates as employed in field based on the place of employment.

The school has now fired the previous Career Services representative and has hired a new Career Services representative who has 15 years experience in the field, and personally knows someone who works for ACCSC. See attached resume.
The school’s narrative acknowledged that there was a lack of understanding at the leadership level, about the definition of “employed in field.” The team has written a new policy, copy attached, which includes definitions of reasonable and sustainable.

The leadership team explained the new policy at a general staff meeting on April 22, 2023 and followed up with a hands-on training with the Career Services Representative to practice application of the new policy (see minutes of both meetings attached).
The Standard

The school is attentive to its students’ educational and other needs as a means to support retention (Section VI (A)(1), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation)
The Issue

Of the students surveyed during the on-site evaluation, 48% were dissatisfied with student services; 47% were dissatisfied with the training equipment; 27% were dissatisfied with the facilities; and 50% would not recommend the school to a friend.
The school's narrative indicates that there is a group of students that are a bunch of jerks who don’t want to work hard. They don’t know what they are talking about when it comes to equipment and are never satisfied with anything. We’ve got the best equipment we can afford. Also, they expect to have their hands held every minute of the day. In order to be successful in this field, they need to get their act together and act like adults.
The school’s narrative describes how the school solicits input from students, including student surveys and a suggestion box.

As documentation, the school submits a copy of the student surveys that were conducted prior to the on-site evaluation.
The school’s narrative that the school’s leadership met to evaluate the underlying cause of student dissatisfaction. It appears that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted faculty and staff retention. There was a vacancy in the student services position, which the school attempted to fill by having the remaining staff “pitch in” to cover student services. The patchwork nature of coverage resulted in student feeling a lack of support. In addition, due to supply chain issues, the school has had difficulty getting certain supplies replenished.
The school has hired a new student services coordinator (resume attached)

The school has been able to received backordered items, and has established a new procedure for ensuring extra stock on hand (see PAC review of current equipment, and a copy of the new policy)

A re-survey of students after the on-site evaluation, showing all satisfaction levels have risen above 80% (copy of survey instrument, and survey results attached)
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 as well as acceptable pass rates on licensure/certification exams where required by governmental entities to work in a particular career field (Section VII (B)(1)(b) and Appendix VI, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation).
Expectation

- Conduct a realistic assessment of the viability of program offerings and the factors impacting student achievement.
- It is expected that a school will take appropriate and responsible action regarding any program offering that is not meeting expectations.
Student achievement context

- History
- How many programs
- How many students
- Actions taken
- Trend Data
The school reported student graduation rates in its 2022 Annual Report that do not meet ACCSC’s minimum benchmarks. Using a July 2022 Report Date, the school reported the following student achievement information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Title</th>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Reported Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Benchmark Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Pumpkin Carving</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Pumpkin Carving</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school provided a narrative indicating that the poor economy has hit the local geographic area particularly hard, resulting in several plant and company closures. The school has received an influx of students that received state funds to spend for training for new careers; however, those students don’t seem ready to take on the rigors of the school’s programs and require an inordinate amount of the faculty’s time in remediation. The school intends to hire additional recruiters to try to find cash-paying students.
The school conducted a study of student drops in the last six months and found that students do not seem adequately prepared for the rigor of the program.

The leadership team met and considered two options: increasing admissions requirements and implementing an extended orientation program to address the deficiencies in study skills, fundamental math and English, as well as create a connection to the school community (see minutes of the leadership team meeting).
The leadership team decided to implement the extended orientation program first and to assess after three starts. If retention rates do not indicate a likelihood of acceptable graduation rates, the school will implement more rigorous admissions criteria (see orientation curriculum attached, as well as documentation for the first class start to take the extended program).

A description of the school’s new peer mentor program, which pairs high-performing upper-level students with new students to facilitate integration into the student community.
Updated G&E Charts, showing the graduation rates have not improved over the benchmark (see attached, with supporting documentation).

Retention charts for the two programs, showing the most recent starts, which are indicative of an upward trend in rates of student graduation.
Commission Actions
Accredit - Maximum Grants

- Years Initial: 3
- Years for Renewal: 5
- Years for Institutions Accredited by another Accrediting Agency: 5
- Years for Institutions Recognized as an ACCSC School of Excellence: 6
Accredit with Stipulations

Stipulations are generally those questions that can be answered with documentation within a relatively short period of time, such as:

- Copy of revised catalog
- Copy of revised advertisement
- Documentation to show implementation of a compliance initiative.
All stipulations must be met before a Commission decision to grant renewal of accreditation becomes effective.
The Commission grants accreditation to a school but requires the submission of an **Interim Report** in order to demonstrate compliance with accrediting standards, such as:

- Outcomes Reporting
- Refund Reporting
- Management Retention Reporting
- Program Advisory Committee Reporting
Deferral

Additional information is required from the school to demonstrate compliance.

- Whether the necessary information for the Commission to render a decision is lacking
- The extent to which the school can make significant progress towards demonstrating compliance within a short period of time
In cases where the Commission has reason to believe that a school is not in compliance with accreditation standards and other requirements, the Commission may at its discretion, place the school on **Warning**.

A school that receives a **Warning** will be required to demonstrate corrective action and compliance with accrediting standards.

- No substantive changes while the school is under a **Warning**.
- Commission has the discretion to direct the school to notify students of **Warning** status.
In cases where the Commission has made a determination that a school is out of compliance the Commission may place a school on Probation.
The **Probation** Letter is made public in accordance with Section X, *Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.

A school subject to a **Probation** must inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed on **Probation**

The Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions to a school or its separate facilities while the school is on **Probation**.
Withdrawal of Accreditation

Following the due process required by these Rules, the Commission may withdraw the accreditation of a school any time a school fails to demonstrate compliance with accrediting standards.

This action is subject to appeal.
Recognize the Deadlines

- **Upload Application for Renewal of Accreditation**: September 11, 2023
- **Upload Self-Evaluation Report and Compile Application Updates**: January 22, 2024
- **Financial Statements and Sustaining Fees**: June 30, 2023 and December 31, 2023
Make a Realistic Plan

- Make Staff Assignments
- Establish Realistic Deadlines
- Keep the Work Moving Forward
- Take Advantage of Every Opportunity to Show Your Success
ENGAGE in the Accreditation Process

Reference the Standards of Accreditation
Use ACCSC’s Resources
Contact Your Designated Staff Liaison
Be Realistic, Be Ready
More Than Anything Else

REMEMBER THE GOOD THAT YOU DO
Did you know that the Commission regularly publishes research, brochures, and newsletters designed to support ACCSC-accredited institutions and enhance the student educational experience? These free resources are all available on the ACCSC website—click the links below for more information!

The **Blueprints for Success** series provides a framework that can help a school gain a better understanding of the expectations and rigor of the accreditation process, as well as sample documentation that a school might consider in order to demonstrate compliance with accrediting standards.

- **Module I:** Preparing a Comprehensive Response for Commission Consideration
- **Module II:** Organizing an Effective Electronic Submission
- **Module III:** Preparing for the On-Site Evaluation
- **Module IV:** The Graduation and Employment Chart

ACCSC’s **Webinars** provide an opportunity to hear updates on recent initiatives, as well as professional development opportunities for a variety of roles at high performing institutions. More webinars and several PDC Power Sessions are available on ACCSC’s [Online Training Center (OTC)](https://www.accsc.org/); visit the OTC’s [Free Resources](https://www.accsc.org/) to access Virtual Trainings and Webinars including:

- Updates to the Standards of Accreditation
- Initial Distance Education Applications
- Virtual Visits
- The Recognition of Essential Workforce Skills
- Faculty Development Series

Visit [Webinars](https://www.accsc.org/) on ACCSC’s website for more past webinars, presentations, and certificates.

The **Monograph Series** is designed to provide guidance to ACCSC-accredited schools in the cycle of continuous performance improvement, self-evaluation, and self-improvement processes and practices.

- Completing a Successful Degree Application
- Maximizing Program Advisory Committees
- Learning Resource Systems
- Faculty Improvement Planning/Implementation
- Self Evaluation Processes and Practices
- Institutional Assessment and Improvement Planning/Implementation
- **NEW** Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

The Commission has created a series of **Letters for Students, Graduates, and Employers**, designed to provide useful information regarding the role ACCSC plays in supporting and enhancing the educational experience.

- New Student ([Engl.](https://www.accsc.org/) / [Span.](https://www.accsc.org/)) - schools are encouraged to incorporate this letter with any existing orientation packet provided to new students;
- Graduation ([Engl.](https://www.accsc.org/) / [Span.](https://www.accsc.org/)) - this letter extends the Commission’s congratulations and reminds graduates to stay in touch with their school as a means to provide feedback on the program and the graduate’s success in the workplace; and
- Employer ([Engl.](https://www.accsc.org/) / [Span.](https://www.accsc.org/)) - this letter is designed to help schools partner with employers in order to assess and verify how successful students are in obtaining employment in the field of study after

The **Spotlight on Excellence** highlights innovation and best practices online being implemented by ACCSC-accredited schools to better support today’s students. Written by the schools, the Spotlight on Excellence provides an opportunity for schools to share best practices with each other in the ACCSC community as a means to support student success in the workforce.

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