## Workshop Agenda

### Day 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session time (Eastern Standard!)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am - 10:15 am</td>
<td>Welcome from the Commission</td>
<td>Michale McComis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Lisa Miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 am - 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Application Process and Forms</td>
<td>Theresa Miulli-Hotham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm - 12:45 pm</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 pm - 2:00pm</td>
<td>Management Standards</td>
<td>Alicia DeMartini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Program Standards</td>
<td>Sarah Havlicek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45pm - 4:30pm</td>
<td>Faculty Qualifications</td>
<td>Theresa Miulli-Hotham</td>
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</table>
## Workshop Agenda
### Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session time (Eastern Standard!)</th>
<th>Session Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 9:45 am</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Lisa Miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 am – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Theresa Miulli-Hotham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Student Achievement and Third-Party Verification</td>
<td>Sean Forman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm – 12:45 pm</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>Lisa Miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 pm – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Lisa Miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 pm – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>On-site Evaluation &amp; Commission Review</td>
<td>Theresa Miulli-Hotham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 pm – 3:45 pm</td>
<td>Parting Thoughts and Starting Shots</td>
<td>Lisa &amp; Theresa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome from the Commission

Michale McComis
Executive Director

Alicia DeMartini
Director, Accreditation

Karen Marcinski
Director, Commission Affairs

Maurya Scanlon
Manager, Accreditation
Introductions

Theresa Miulli-Hotham
Accreditation Coordinator

Sean Forman
Senior Analyst, IRD

Sarah Havlicek
Analyst, IRD

Lisa J. Miles
Special Projects
Ground Rules

- Agenda – Fluid!
- Ground Rules – Be Curious and Considerate!
- Instructional Materials
Getting to Know You

• Who are you?
• Where are you from?
• What is your school?
• What are your programs?
• How many students?
• Why are you here?
ACCSC's mission is to ensure quality education that enhances Student Success in the workforce.
Fundamental Components

- Self-Evaluation
- Continuous Improvement
- Quality Standards
- Accountability
Key Concepts

✓ Standards are Best Practices
  - Meet Minimally
  - Exceed Where Possible
✓ Quality Matters
Key Concepts

✓ Use Self-Evaluation to Thoughtfully Assess

✓ Burden to Demonstrate Compliance is on the School
  - Subjective and Objective Evidence
Key Concepts

✓ Institute Continuous Improvement Efforts
✓ Be Student Centric
Key Concepts

- Diversity of Membership
- Diversity of Methods
- Scalability
- Subjective v. Objective
INTO THE WEEDS...
Workshop Objectives

- ACCSC mission and values (check)
- Principle steps in the accreditation process (up next)
- Institutional Success
  - Standards are a blueprint
  - Outcomes measure success
  - Strong leadership is critical
  - Assessment and Improvement... to infinity and beyond!
Face to Name
The Who

The Commission
- 13-member board
- School members
- Public Members
- Decision makers
- Promulgate standards

The Staff
- Carry out the work of the Commission
- Process applications
- Write letters
- Facilitate on-site evaluations
- Provide guidance
Purpose

- Establish high educational standards
- Ethical business practices
- Assess compliance
Scope

- Private and public postsecondary institutions
- Non-degree and degree granting institutions - associate, baccalaureate and master’s
- Occupational, trade and technical career education
- Distance education
Institutional Accreditation
Programs and Scope

All Programs Within the Commission’s scope

Must be approved by the Commission
Educational Objectives

What the learner will know or be able to do as a result of having attended an educational program
Primary Educational Objectives and Scope

To prepare students for entrance or advancement in one or more occupations requiring technical or career-oriented competencies and skills.
Limitations of Scope

Schools primarily directed toward AVOCATIONAL OR GENERAL EDUCATION objectives are ineligible for ACCSC accreditation.
Secondary Objectives

A school may have secondary educational objectives (e.g., a GED preparation course, refresher training course, avocational courses, continuing education courses, etc.)
Priority Must be Vocational Objectives

Secondary educational objectives may not have greater priority within the school’s mission and operations than its career-oriented educational objective.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Fall within the Commission’s scope
- Meet the Educational Objectives
- Have necessary authorizations from the state
Two Years Continuous Operation

- Operating without cessation -
- With the exception of regularly scheduled breaks, vacation periods, or an approved change of location
- Providing education and training to students in accordance with its primary educational objective(s)
- And with continuous licensure by the state granting approval to do so.
Minimum Clock Hours

Must offer at least one program is 300 clock hours or longer in length
Graduated at least one class of students from the longest program(s) offered during the two-year period preceding its application for accreditation.

Provide student achievement outcomes for its programs prepared in accordance with the Commission’s student achievement reporting requirements.
Financial Soundness

✓ Sufficient resources for its proper operation and discharge of its obligations to students.

✓ 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

✓ Show that the school has met the financial tests for initial applicants included in those instructions
Presentation of Financial Statements

- 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
Application Will NOT be Accepted

- Net loss for the two most recent fiscal years;
- Negative net worth for the two most recent fiscal years; or
- Negative cash flow from operations for the most recent fiscal year.
Questions to Consider

- Is ACCSC a good fit for my school?
- Am I prepared to make changes at my school in order to meet accrediting standards?
- Do I have the resources to be successful in the accreditation process?
ACCSC
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

Starting the Process
How Long and How Much?
Process Overview – First Leg

- **December 2023**: Workshop
- **June 2024**: Application Part I
- **December 2024**: Application Acceptance Letter
- **June 2025**: Self-Evaluation Report + Application Part II
- **September 2025**: Orientation Evaluation
- **October 2025**: Orientation Report
Process Overview – Crossing the Finish Line

December 2025
Final Materials for the On-Site Evaluation (revised Application Part II and Self-Evaluation Report)

February 2026
On-Site Evaluation

April 2026
On-Site Evaluation Report

August 2026
Commission Review

September 2026
School Action Letter
Plan for 18-33 months in the process
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Workshop Application</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>$650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application for Initial Accreditation - Part I</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of University in Name (as applicable)</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application for Initial Application - Part II</td>
<td>$2,250 + Program Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Type</td>
<td># of Active Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Degree Programs</strong></td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 to 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10 to 15</td>
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<td>16 to 20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Programs –</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Associate,</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
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<td>Academic Associate, and</td>
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<td>Baccalaureate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16 to 20</td>
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<td><strong>Master’s Degree</strong></td>
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<td>Each Program will require a separate</td>
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<td>Application for Approval of a Master’s</td>
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<td>Degree Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation Evaluation</td>
<td>$2000</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td><strong>On-Site Evaluation</strong></td>
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<td>Institutions with three or fewer active programs</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions with four to nine active programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions with ten to fifteen active programs</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions with sixteen to twenty active programs</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions with greater than twenty active programs</td>
<td>$15,000 and $500 for each additional program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions with more than 500 students</td>
<td>Additional $2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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.
How much is this going to cost me?

- The total process for a single program school would be a minimum of $13,300 in Commission-related fees.
- This total does not account for any fees charged by other parties such as any financial institutions which audit the school’s financial statements or fees associated with employment verification.
First Steps

Growing in the Process
Workshop

The individual or team with authority to make changes at the institution

Attend an accreditation workshop prior to submission of the application for accreditation
Within Six Months…
Application for Initial Accreditation – Part I

Collects information about the school and its programs, and determines compliance with ACCSC eligibility criteria.
Section I – SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Address
- Contact Information
- Director
- Workshop Attendance
- Name
- Ownership
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
REQUIRED EXHIBITS
Application Exhibits

1. Application Processing Fee - $2,250
2. Additional information If the school’s name includes the term University
3. Accreditation Workshop
4. Ownership of the School and list of current owners
5. Outline all changes of control in the previous two years
6. Three Years of Cohort Default Rates (Campus Specific)
7. Corporate Affiliations with Other Schools
8. Current Organizational Chart
9. Current state license
10. State Program Approvals (Clock / Credit Hour)
11. State Authorization for Distance Education
Program Information

12. Other Accreditations (Notices)

13. Programmatic or Other Regulatory Approval Required for Employment

14. ACCSC Program Chart

15. Avocational or Continuing Education List
Personnel & Program Advisory Committee

16. Application for a Satellite Location (if applicable)

17. Financial Statements
Section VII – DISCLOSURES AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Attestations

“This application is submitted by the chief executive officer of the school for which accreditation is sought, and that official hereby attests to the following”
Sample attestations

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lost or was denied accreditation</th>
<th>Closed or entered into bankruptcy</th>
<th>Lost or was denied eligibility to participate in Title IV Funding programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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.
The ACCSC Financial Review Committee evaluates the financial statements submitted with Applications for Initial Accreditation to determine whether the school has sufficient resources.
Financial Review Committee

Red:
• Financial statements indicate the institution’s financial structure is not sound

Yellow:
• Financial statements may not provide sufficient information to demonstrate financial viability

Green:
• Financial statements indicate that the institution’s financial structure is sound
Within Six Months
Application Acceptance Letter

Application has been accepted, school may proceed into the next part of the process.

Effective date of institution's compliance with accrediting standards

Recommendations and observations
Within Six Months
Application Part II

✓ Updated snapshot of the institution
✓ Longer list of attachments, providing opportunity for more in-depth analysis of the institution
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
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
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?
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.
Good to Go...

- Update processes
- Implement new procedures
- Secure documentation
- Revised Materials
Standards of Accreditation

BLUEPRINTS FOR SUCCESS
Introduction
Rules
Substantive
Appendices
By-Laws
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

Interested parties are advised of proposed standards

A minimum of 30 days to file written comments
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.
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.
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.
In cases where accrediting standards and federal or state government requirements differ, the more stringent will apply.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adequate</strong></td>
<td>As much as is good or necessary for some requirement or purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sufficient</strong></td>
<td>Adequate for the purpose; enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate</strong></td>
<td>Suitable or fitting for a particular purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasonable</strong></td>
<td>Agreeable to reason or sound judgment; logical</td>
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</table>
Quantitative Assessment

Qualitative Assessment
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe the fundamentals of leadership, management, and administrative elements essential to an institution dedicated to student success.
Statement of Purpose

These fundamentals provide assurance that the school will be focused on providing quality education to students, engage in ethical, fair, and honest practices, and comply with accrediting standards.
OWNERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT,
AND
ADMINISTRATIVE
CAPACITY

Section I (A)
What is adequate management?

**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 in compliance with accrediting standards.
Qualified for their particular roles and who possess the appropriate education, training, and experience commensurate with the level of their responsibilities

Sufficient number necessary to support the school’s operations, student services, and educational programs

Appropriate administrative and operational policies and procedures to which the school adheres and reviews and updates
Past Records that Show Commitment to:

- Providing quality education to students;
- Ethical, fair, and honest practice; and
- Compliance with accrediting standards and applicable federal, state, and local requirements.
Considerations

Affiliation with a school that has lost or been denied accreditation, entered into bankruptcy, or closed;

Involvement in criminal proceedings and any pending or past action in a judicial, law enforcement, or administrative body

Any other information related to the performance of or commitment to providing quality education to students; ethical, fair and honest practice; and compliance with accrediting standards and applicable federal, state, and local requirements
Management Matters

- Ongoing development and training activities
- Continuity of Management through Reasonable retention
Section I (B)
Key Concepts

- Significant
- Ongoing
- Appropriate to the size and scale of the school operations
Analyze the Effectiveness and Compliance of Each Area of School Operation

ACCSC Self Evaluation Report

Ask what is our current process, is it working, do we need to change anything?
With the understanding that results from a thorough assessment, the school can then move forward with improvement activities.
Best Practices Footnote

**OBTAIN INFORMATION INTERNALLY** (e.g., staff and faculty development and planning, and student input and feedback)

**OBTAIN INFORMATION EXTERNALLY** (e.g., Program Advisory Committees, employers, community involvement, school graduates, etc.)

**ASSESSMENT** validates the school’s educational and administrative practices and documents/improves student learning and achievement.

**PLANNING** that includes goal setting, establishing timelines, and benchmarking is a useful practice in institutional assessment and improvement activities and is encouraged.
By examining its annual report outcomes data, the school finds that its graduation rates for this year are lower than last year. The school then engages in assessment and improvement activities designed to improve retention rates.
**Assessment:** The school conducts a study of the reasons for student withdrawals and finds that most students drop due to academic reasons.

**Strategy:** The school decides to implement more rigorous admissions criteria in order to identify applicants that are more academically capable of being successful.
Measuring Effectiveness

- Comparing the academic progress of students who were admitted under the old and new criteria.
- Over time, the school can also use retention data to determine the effectiveness of the new admissions criteria.
Documenting the Process

Helps the school make the necessary adjustments to ensure that its resources are expended on the most effective strategies.

Creates a historic record that provides valuable insight for future managers.

Demonstrates compliance with ACCSC standards.
Documenting the Example

- Graduation data showing the lower rate
- A copy of the “reason for withdrawal” study
- Minutes of the meetings in which the new admissions policy was proposed, discussed, and developed
- A copy of the new policy in the school’s policies and procedures manual
- Admissions documentation in each new student’s file
- Comparison of academic success between previous admissions criteria and new admissions criteria
- Retention data for students admitted under the new criteria
What are the Required Areas of Assessment?

- Management
- Fiscal condition and budget
- Administrative policies and practices
- Emergency preparedness
- Student support services
- Faculty and staff development
- Educational program curricula
- Learning resource system, equipment, and supporting materials
- Facilities
- Student achievement outcomes
Section I (C)
Key Requirements

- 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 prepared in accordance with ACCSC’s instructions.
- Financial budget for each fiscal year AND monitors budgetary projections in relation to actual income and expenses.
- Insurance that provides adequate protection.
Section I (D)

TUITION CANCELLATION REFUND PAYMENT
Tuition Policies

All charges must be as published in the catalog, enrollment agreement, and accompanying addendum(a).

All costs must be fully, clearly, and accurately described.

All costs must be fairly applied.

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.
Discounts and Scholarships

**TUITION DISCOUNT**
Must be a bona fide reduction in the tuition that would otherwise be charged.

**GRANT OR SCHOLARSHIP**
- Funds are applied toward a qualified student’s costs
- Be issued for recognized and acceptable purposes
- Include specified criteria that a student must meet in order to be eligible for and receive the grant or scholarship
Cancellation Policies - Before Class Start

If applicant has not visited the school prior to enrollment, **within three days** following a tour of facilities and inspection of equipment = return all monies paid

**Within three days** of signing the enrollment agreement = return all monies paid

**More than three days** after signing the enrollment agreement and **before school starts** = return 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
REFUND POLICY

Determines how much tuition to charge when a student ceases enrollment before completing a program or payment period.

The school may be required to follow a policy that complies with state or third-party requirements.

In the absence of such requirements, the school must follow a policy that aligns with generally accepted practices.
REFUND POLICY ELEMENTS

- How refunds are calculated (e.g., pro rata);
- The date from which refunds will be calculated; and
- The time frame within which refunds will be made.
Written notification of withdrawal from the student shall not be required for refund payment.

A school may not 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.

The refund policy must be disclosed consistently in the catalog and enrollment agreement.
Requirements for student tuition and fee payments must be as described;

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; and

Methods used by a school in requesting or demanding payment are in good taste and follow sound and ethical business practices.
Section I (E)
What’s the Why?

Accredited schools have an obligation to encourage and facilitate repayment of financial obligations, including guaranteed loans, used to finance students’ education and training.
Factors Schools CAN address

- Willingness to pay - provide information and advice
- Ability to pay - provide training and skills that enhance the value of their graduates to employers.
Written Comprehensive Program

The program must address areas such 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.
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 this is the case, the Commission will review available information to determine whether the school is in compliance with accrediting standards.
Use of “University” in the School Name

- At least one graduate-level degree program
- Can show successful student achievement in graduate level programs
- Diverse programs of study with a comprehensive learning resource system
- Comparable to other schools with University status
- An established professoriate with a commitment to scholarship
Section I (G)

PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
Physical Facilities

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

The school’s physical facilities must be sufficient in size to create an effective and suitable learning environment.
Emergency Preparedness Plan

- Emergency scenario identification and concordant action plans;
- Evacuation and lockdown procedures;
- Communication protocols for sharing information with appropriate parties during and following an incident;
- Orientation for students; and
- Regular training for staff and faculty.
Statement of Purpose

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.
Programs v. Courses
Careful Design

Clear learning objectives

Appropriate program length

Detailed and organized course outlines and syllabi

Adequate instructional materials, equipment, and learning resources materials

Rigorous ongoing assessment of programs
General Program Requirements

SECTION II (A)
Program Design and Development

- Supports articulation opportunities with other schools
- Address instructional and teaching methods
- Involve administrative and instructional staff, students, and graduates
The school has an established process:

To **design** and **develop** courses, course learning materials and resources, curricula, student learning outcomes and competencies, and student assessment.

To determine the **need** and **viability** of the program based on input from appropriate internal and external resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Organization &amp; Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed and organized instructional outlines and course syllabi showing a scope and sequence of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter must be sufficient to achieve the program objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The name accurately aligns with stated objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program length conforms to regulatory requirements or state, federal, or national standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program length is aligned with the program objectives and neither too short nor too long in relation to those objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The estimated number of hours (clock or credit) awarded per course must conform to generally accepted practice in higher education.

Schools that have or apply for programs that appear to be significantly shorter or longer in clock or credit hours than comparable programs (i.e., within the same field of study) will be required to justify the appropriateness of the program length.
Program Length is Generally Measured in Clock and/or Credit Hours
Clock Hours

A CLOCK HOUR IS DEFINED AS 50 MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION IN A 60-MINUTE PERIOD OF TIME.
A credit hour is defined as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes comprised of the following units:

| Didactic learning environment | Supervised laboratory setting of instruction | Externship | Out-of-class work/preparation |
Program Composition

- Technical and Occupationally Related Courses:
- Applied General Education Courses:
- Academic General Education Courses
- Other types of courses that support a student’s educational experience such as orientation, career services, health and wellness, and life skills
Program Evaluation

- Evaluate: Evaluate curriculum and course content
- Assess: Assess the adequacy of program equipment and supporting resource materials
- Assess: Assess student achievement outcomes and program viability
- Make: Make revisions to the curriculum as deemed necessary
Program Evaluation

Comprehensive & Regular

Conducted by faculty and educational administrators

Uses input from internal and external sources
Sources of Input

- Program Advisory Committee
- Student and alumni input
- Other external sources
Program Advisory Committee

An independent and diverse Program Advisory Committee for each program area

Review the established curricula of the program/program area, instructional-related program materials, equipment and facilities, and student achievement outcomes

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
Appendix III - PAC Meetings

• School must conduct at least one meeting of each PAC annually
• At least three members must be in attendance
• Written and detailed minutes must be maintained
  ✓ Description of all members in attendance
  ✓ Date, time, and location of the meeting
  ✓ Comprehensive and clear description of the review of and commentary
Other PAC Requirements

- PAC review and comment on new programs
- Provide a detailed description and virtual tour of the equipment and facilities for meetings that are not at the physical facility
- The school must provide evidence that it gives consideration to Program Advisory Committee input
More (!) PAC Requirements

- Distance Education
- Master’s Degrees
- Multiple Affiliated Schools
Instructional Materials and Equipment

- Sufficiently comprehensive and reflect current occupational knowledge and practice
- Similar to what is found in common occupational practice
- Sufficient equipment and learning stations are provided to allow each student adequate scheduled time for practice
- 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.
Learning Resource System (Library)
Materials that Support Education

- Texts
- Electronic resources
- Learning resource laboratories and centers
- Library consortia and interlibrary loan agreements
- Computers
- Internet access
- Research databases
LRS Elements

• Materials commensurate with the level of education provided and appropriate to the courses of study
• Sufficient quantity and scope
• Easily and readily accessible to students and faculty during and beyond classroom hours
• Integrated into a school’s curriculum
LRS Elements

• Managed by qualified personnel
• Orient, train, and assist students and faculty
• Ongoing development
• Sufficient allocations and budgetary support
Externships

- Component of a program offered in an occupational setting
- Written training plan
- Supervised by a designated school employee
- An on-site supervisor from the occupational setting
- Appropriate balance among didactic, supervised laboratory, outside work/preparation, and externship activities
Consortium/Partnership Agreements

The school retains responsibility for the quality of education.

A school may not award more than 50% of the total number of clock or credit hours required in a program via a consortium, partnership, or contractual agreement.
Independent Study

- Self-directed learning
  - Limited to 10% of the program

- Credit hour programs only
  - May not be offered to students transferring in 75% of the program
Transfer of Credit

- Comparable in scope and content to the school’s own coursework.
- Appropriate criteria (e.g., comparability, applicability, source, and age of the previously earned credit; academic preparedness of the student at the time of credit transfer; grade earned for the credit to be transferred; etc.)
- Process for determining whether to accept credit earned
- Document in the student record from what school and on what basis transfer credit was accepted.
Prior Learning Experience

Award credit based on an assessment of experience acquired outside of educational settings.

Settings such as service in the armed forces, employment and on-the-job training, apprenticeships, or similar.

No more than 50% of the total number of clock or credit hours.
Non-Degree Composition

At least 80% technical and occupationally related courses.

The remainder may be a combination of applied general education, general education, or other courses.
Degree Programs

Course numbering system that differentiates between lower-level courses, upper-level courses, and graduate level courses.

Measured in semester credit hours or quarter hours.
Associate Degrees

- Minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours
- Two classifications of associate degree programs - occupational and academic.
Occupational Associate Degree

9 semester hours or 13.5 quarter hours in academic or applied general education courses

45 semester hours or 67.5 quarter hours in technical and occupationally
Academic Associate Degree

15 semester hours or 22.5 quarter hours in academic general education

30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours in the technical field
Baccalaureate Degrees

- 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours.
- 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours in academic general education courses.
- 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours that represent courses in the occupational field.
- May offer concentrations.
Master’s Degrees

- Place emphasis on higher-level course work, including research and analytical skills, and independent and critical thinking skills.
- 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours
- At least 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours must be in the technical field
- May offer concentrations
Other Program Types

Avocational

English-as-Second-Language
Standards of Accreditation

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.
Statement of Purpose

These elements include 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; and sufficient numbers of educational administrators and faculty to support the student body.
Director of Education

- At least one person on-site at the school
- Manages the school’s instructional programs
- Educational administration experience and competence to manage
- Non-degree granting: educational background equal to or exceeding
- Degree-granting: earned degree at least one level higher than the highest credential
Director of Education

- Overall educational experience in such areas as:
  - Curriculum development
  - Educational effectiveness assessment and improvement
  - Faculty development and performance appraisals
Program Head

- For each program or group of related programs
- Manages the occupational elements
- Educational background equal to or exceeding the maximum credential offered in that program area
- Qualifications for technical faculty teaching in a degree program
Graduate Level Education

Supervised and coordinated by an individual with an earned doctorate degree.

Director of graduate level education has the experience and competence to manage the instructional program.

Each master’s degree program must be appropriately managed by an individual with a minimum of a graduate degree in the same field for which training is provided.
Faculty Assessment and Development Activities

- Appropriate to the size and scope of the school’s educational programs
- Professional development activities include elements such as
  - Teaching skill development
  - Instructional methodology development
  - Continuing education in the subject area(s) taught
  - Membership in trade and professional organizations
Reasonable Retention

The school must ensure the continuity of instruction by the reasonable retention of the educational administrative staff and faculty.
The faculty must be sufficient in number to serve the number of students enrolled.

Must maintain a satisfactory working relationship with students.

Faculty members must be certified or licensed where required by law.
Faculty members must have prior training or receive training before assuming 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.
Teacher Training

- Formal education
- Workshops/seminars presented by an appropriate individual focusing on areas related to instructional methods and teaching skill development
- Formal in-house mentoring programs with appropriately qualified and experienced faculty.
## Technical and Occupationally Related Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Technical/ Occupationally Related Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Degree (Certificate or Diploma)</td>
<td>Three years practical work experience in a related field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Associates Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Associates Degree</td>
<td>Four years of practical experience AND a related degree* at the same level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field of study may be substituted for a formal degree.

The faculty member must possess a minimum of eight years of related practical work experience.

Justify and document on an individual basis the outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type of Course Applied General Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Degree (Certificate or Diploma)</td>
<td>• Three years practical experience OR&lt;br&gt;• College-level coursework* OR&lt;br&gt;• Appropriate mix of experience and coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Associates Degree</td>
<td>• Baccalaureate degree with appropriate coursework* OR&lt;br&gt;• Eight years practical experience and college-level coursework*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Associates Degree</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Appropriate coursework and preparation,” “college-level coursework,” and “appropriate academic coursework and preparation”

A minimum of 15 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) in related subject areas that support the curriculum content.
## Master’s Degree Programs

| At least 50% of graduate level courses taught by faculty with | • A minimum of four years of related practical work experience, and  
• An earned doctorate degree or other terminal degree in a related field of study |
| --- | --- |
| Remaining courses taught by faculty with | • Four years of related practical work experience and a master’s degree in a related field of study or  
• A master’s degree in an unrelated with 18 semester credit hours or 27 quarter credit hours of graduate level education in the subject area taught |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type of Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Non-Degree (Certificate or Diploma) | • For terminal non-degree programs: a baccalaureate degree with appropriate academic coursework and preparation in the subject(s) taught.  
• For non-degree programs that articulate into degree programs, see requirements for degree programs below |
| Occupational Associates Degree | Master’s degree with appropriate academic coursework and preparation in the subject area(s) taught. |
| Academic Associates Degree    |                                                                                  |
| Baccalaureate Degree         |                                                                                  |
Exceptional Cases

Outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field of study may be substituted for a formal degree.

The faculty member must possess a minimum of eight years of related practical work experience.

Justify and document on an individual basis the outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field.
Other Courses and ESL

Faculty teaching other courses (e.g., electives, orientation, career services, health and wellness, and life skills, etc.) must be appropriately qualified based upon the type of course content offered.

Faculty teaching ESL courses must have appropriate experience and educational background including state or equivalent credentials in Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
The terms “verify prior work experience” and “maintain documentation of academic credentials” mean:

- When prior work experience is a qualification, obtain written or verbal verification from previous employers, and/or
- When an academic credential is a qualification requirement, obtain academic transcripts.
Standards of Accreditation

SECTION IV RECRUITMENT
Statement of Purpose

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.
Statement of Purpose

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.
WHAT DOES RECRUITMENT MEAN?

ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES OR USING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS OR PRESENTATIONS TO ATTRACT AND ENROLL STUDENTS.
ETHICAL RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Do’s

Don’ts
• Focus on attracting students who are qualified and likely to complete and benefit from the training provided by the school

• Permit prospective students to make informed and considered enrollment decisions without undue pressure

• Use the school’s employees to conduct student recruiting activities
Select recruiters and representatives with the utmost care

Provide adequate training

Maintain proper supervision
Code of Conduct

In writing
Includes all elements in Appendix IV
Signed and dated by the employee
Maintained in the individual’s personnel file
May only use a title that accurately represents the individual's primary duties.

Comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

School is responsible for actions of and materials used by recruiters.
Clearly identified in all advertising, promotional materials, and contacts made with prospective students.

Provide the applicant with a receipt for any money collected.
NOT TO DO LIST
• Use employment agencies to recruit prospective students
• Create undue pressure
• Focus on simply obtaining enrollments
• Make false, exaggerated, or misleading statements
• Make explicit or implicit promises of employment or salary prospects
• Discredit other schools or influence any student to leave another school
• Not permit the payment of cash or other similar consideration to any prospective student as an inducement to enroll
• Permit its personnel to engage in recruiting activities in settings where prospective students cannot reasonably be expected to make informed and considered enrollment decisions
• Except employment opportunity centers operated under government auspices
Recruiters cannot:

- Assist prospective students in completing application forms for financial aid.
- Become involved in admission testing or admission decisions, including signing and accepting the enrollment agreement.
Annual Review

Evaluate recruiting policies and procedures and the performance of personnel involved in recruiting activities.
The Commission 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 approved by the Commission.
Truthful and Accurate

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.
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.

References to employment or salary prospects must be accurate and sourced.

May not use the Employment or Help Wanted classifieds for any form of student recruitment.
Salary Information

Information pertaining to potential salary 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.
ACCREDITED STATUS

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.
The school discloses to students whether such accreditation and/or third-party recognition has been achieved and is in good standing.
Accreditation and Approvals

A school discloses its ACCSC institutional accreditation and the Commission's contact information (i.e., address, phone number, and website address).
Advertising of financial aid and scholarships includes an eligibility phrase (e.g., financial aid available for those who qualify).
ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICLY SHARED MEDIA
Item #12

Distinction between “endorsements” and “publicly shared media” is origination
ENDORSEMENT

If a school solicits an endorsement for its advertising and the endorser gives such written or verbal statements...
Endorsements

Only use endorsements with the written consent of the authors.

Must be a bona fide expression of the author’s opinions, strictly factual, and a portrayal of currently correct conditions or facts.

May not use endorsements from currently enrolled students.
If “an individual” – including current students – chooses of their own volition to post a comment using publicly shared media (e.g., a social media site), then the school can use/share that post in its own social media and advertising.
The media must originate with the individual and is bona fide.

The media is actually and contextually accurate, and unadulterated.

Schools may not compensate or provide any other consideration for such use.
APPENDIX IV – Guidelines for Advertising

- Maintain documentation of the content used as a means to demonstrate context and accuracy
- Ensure social media posts reflect current conditions at the school
- Remove/discontinue use of the content at the author’s request
Scenarios
**Scenario:** A school wishes to post/use in advertising a video it has created of students in action. No comments from students or graduates are shared, only the narrator describing the school’s programs and equipment.

**Guidance:** Pursuant to Section IV (B)(4)(b), the school would need to obtain written consent from the students allowing the school to share their images.
Scenario: A school wishes to post/use in advertising a video it has created of students in action that includes current and former student/graduates providing statements about their positive experience at the school and after graduation working in their chosen field.

Guidance: Pursuant to Section IV (B)(4)(a-b), the school would need to obtain written consent from the former students/graduates allowing the school to share their endorsements and images. However, the school would be in violation of Section IV (B)(4)(a), if in fact the school uses endorsements from currently enrolled students.
Scenario: A current student posts to a social media account about a Blood Drive hosted by the school and the student’s “awesome experience” helping people and practicing new skills. The post thanks the faculty and the school director for “making this happen for our community.” The school sees this post and re-posts it to its own social media account with the caption “We are so excited to share our student success stories.”

Guidance: Pursuant to Section IV (B)(4)(b), so long as the media originated with the individual (i.e., the current student) and is bona fide, factually and contextually accurate, unadulterated (i.e., not changed), and a faithful representation, then no written consent is required.
Disclosures

Catalog

Enrollment Agreement

Achievement Rates

Accreditation/Approval
The Catalog Checklist provides a list of each item required for the inclusion in a school's catalog and serves as a checklist to aid reviewers in meeting the requirements. A copy of each Catalog Checklist is to accompany each catalog sent to the Accrediting Commission. The checklist is completed in the following manner: A copy of each catalog is reviewed, item by item, and if a requirement is not met, the catalog must be revised until all requirements are met. Each requirement is numbered, and a statement must be placed in the submittal form indicating whether the requirement is met or not met. This ensures that all necessary information is collected and documented.

1. The name and address of the institution.
2. The catalog number.
3. The date of publication.
4. The school's name.
5. A statement of the school's mission.
6. A description of the school's program.
7. The school's enrollment requirements.
8. The school's program requirements.
9. The school's admissions policies.
10. The school's curriculum.
11. The school's catalog.
12. The school's accreditation status.
13. The school's compliance with legal requirements.
14. The school's financial aid policies.
15. The school's student conduct policies.
16. The school's graduation requirements.
17. The school's course offerings.
18. The school's library resources.
19. The school's technology resources.
20. The school's athletic programs.
21. The school's health and safety policies.
22. The school's student support services.
23. The school's financial aid policies.
24. The school's accreditation status.
25. The school's compliance with legal requirements.
26. The school's technology resources.
27. The school's athletic programs.
28. The school's health and safety policies.
29. The school's student support services.
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45. The school's accreditation status.
46. The school's compliance with legal requirements.
47. The school's technology resources.
48. The school's athletic programs.
49. The school's health and safety policies.
50. The school's student support services.
51. The school's financial aid policies.
52. The school's accreditation status.
• Designed and written in such a manner so as to convey an accurate, comprehensive, and dignified impression of the school.

• Narrative and any illustrations and photos pertain directly to the school and sources of illustrations and photos are clearly identified.
Provide 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 printed and bound copy of the catalog

A read-only format electronic copy that cannot be altered (e.g., portable document format (PDF), etc.)

All versions of the catalog are identical

A printed and bound copy of the catalog upon request.
ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

Clearly states the obligations of both the student and school

Includes, at a minimum, all required items listed on the ACCSC Enrollment Agreement Checklist and
## ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT CHECKLIST

The Enrollment Agreement Checklist provides a list of key items required for inclusion in a school’s enrollment agreement and serves as a detailed checklist or review for signing each of those agreements. A copy of the Enrollment Agreement Checklist is to accompany each enrollment agreement copy sent to the Commission. Mark the Enrollment Agreement Checklist for each enrolled student and keep a copy in the school’s records. The Enrollment Agreement Checklist must include all required items (Items 1 through 19). An applicable school’s enrollment agreement must also include additional items (Items 20 through 41) which document and justify any other conditions, circumstances, or qualifications agreed by the school.

### REQUIRED ITEMS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Enrollment Agreement Checklist Item</th>
<th>Page Number(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Title of agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Name and address of school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Payment method and terms of payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schedule of class attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Type of instruction: Credit diploma, or diploma granted upon graduation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nature and length of class periods for each student to be clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Orientation of class attendance:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nature and length of class periods for each student to be clearly defined.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nature and length of class periods for each student to be clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONDITIONAL ITEMS:

- Item 15 must include all required items (Items 1 through 19) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 16 must include any other conditions, circumstances, or qualifications agreed by the school.
- Item 17 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 18 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 19 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 20 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 21 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
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- Item 26 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
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- Item 33 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
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- Item 37 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 38 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 39 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 40 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
- Item 41 must include all required items (Items 20 through 41) in the Enrollment Agreement.
A school executes an enrollment agreement for all enrolled students

A school ensures that each applicant has an opportunity to review the enrollment agreement before it is signed
FURNISH A COPY TO THE STUDENT

At the time the applicant signs

Prior to the student starting class a final copy of the enrollment agreement signed by both parties.
No enrollment agreement is binding until it has been signed by the student and accepted by the appropriate school official.
Graduation and Employment Rates

As last reported to the Commission

Public notice of a graduate employment rate is accurate, not intended to mislead

Includes the school’s graduate population base and time frame upon which the rate is based
Standards of Accreditation

SECTION V ADMISSIONS
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 school develops admissions criteria to admit only those students who are reasonably capable of successfully completing and benefiting from the training offered.

Through the catalog, the school informs students of admissions requirements, process, and procedures.

The school consistently and fairly applies the admissions criteria.
Prior to Enrollment

- The school determines the applicants meet the admissions requirements.
- Secures documentation that the applicant meets the admissions requirements.
- Documents that any applicants rejected did NOT meet the admissions requirements.
Admissions Documentation is Key

- Diligence in requiring documentation is a key component.
- Self-certification by a student that he or she has a high school diploma or the equivalent is NOT considered to be “documentation” that the student has met this admissions requirement.
Documentation from Foreign Countries

✓ Translated into English
✓ 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).
Rare Circumstances

- An admissions test may be used in lieu of documentation of high school graduation
- Student must sign a statement attesting to graduation and explaining why the documentation is not available
Five Years

- Maintain documentation that admissions requirements were met
- The reason for denial
The school does not deny admission or discriminate
Reasonably accommodate applicants and students with disabilities
The school does not admit any person of compulsory school age or attending a school at the secondary level if the pursuit of training will be detrimental to the student’s regular schoolwork.
Distance Education

An assessment of the student’s technical skills, competencies, and access to technology necessary to succeed in a distance education environment prior to their enrollment in the program or course of study.

The school must utilize an assessment tool (e.g., test, preparation/orientation course, etc.) to determine if the student’s learning style is conducive to online learning.
Admissions Study

The Commission, at its discretion, may require a school to conduct a study to document the effectiveness of its admission requirements for all students.
Ability-to-Benefit

- Applicant did not graduate from high school
- May only be admitted into non-degree programs
- Ability to benefit must be confirmed by achievement of an approved score on an appropriate test
- Test instrument and score have been reviewed by an independent third party for appropriateness
Associate or Baccalaureate Degree Programs

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION
Graduate Degree Programs

Applicant must possess an earned baccalaureate degree from a recognized higher education institution.

Standardized or national examinations may be required (e.g., GRE or GMAT) or

The school may utilize other entrance tests that have been reviewed by a qualified, independent third party for appropriateness of the instrument and specific score levels required for admission.
Standards of Accreditation

Section VI Student Services
Statement of Purpose

Support for student’s academic and non-academic needs

Employment Assistance

Availability and secure maintenance of records
Student Services Program

The school is attentive to its students’ educational and other needs.

Adequate services and resources to support students.

Student services program takes into account the number of programs, the composition of the student body, and responds to individual student needs.

Coordinated by an individual with appropriate qualifications.
Student Services

- Relevant coping skills (e.g., life, career development, budget, and personal financial planning skills)
- Academic advising
- Testing and tutoring services
- Supervision and monitoring of attendance records and leaves of absence
- Graduate employment assistance
- Information concerning housing, transportation, and childcare
Counseling Services

Available to students when warranted and necessary based on the student population and circumstances.

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.
Maintain comprehensive documentation of student advising sessions.
Student Records
Records for Currently Enrolled Students

- Admissions
- Transcript
- Academic Progress
- Tuition and Fee Payments
- Refunds
- Financial Aid
- Information upon which a student's initial and continued enrollment is based
How long to keep records for currently enrolled students?

During the student’s enrollment

For five years post the student’s, withdrawal, or termination date
Official Transcript
Withdrawn/ Graduated/ Terminated

Student’s name and unique identifier;
Name and address of the school;
Program of study;
Name and date/term of courses taken;
Clock or credit hours and grades earned for each course;
Credits accepted for transfer;
Cumulative grade point average;
Date of program entry; and
Date of graduation, termination or withdrawal.
Official Transcripts

Made available to students upon request and in accordance with the school’s policies

Maintained Indefinitely

Physical or electronic

Securely maintained and protected against damage or loss
Maintain student financial records for a minimum of five years

- Financial aid
- Tuition and fee payments
- Tuition refunds
Graduate Employment Assistance

Graduate employment assistance available to students

Extent and nature aligns with claims made by the school
Graduate Employment Records

Verifiable records are maintained for five years

Statements regarding employment rates must be based on these records
Student Complaints – School Policy

Policy and procedure

Inform students in writing of the policy and procedure

Published in the school’s catalog and include a reference to the school official(s) responsible for the complaint policy and procedure
Student Complaints – ACCSC Policy

• Publishes the ACCSC Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure contained in the ACCSC Complaint Review Process Form

• Maintain a complete record of all written student complaints for at least the last five years
Standards of Accreditation

SECTION VII STUDENT LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, AND PROGRESS
Student Learning Outcomes

Statements of expectation written in measurable terms that express what a student should be able to do upon completion of a course or program.

Reflect the necessary occupational and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies.
Be sure student learning outcomes for each program are consistent with the program objectives as defined during the institution’s program design and development phase.
Example:

- What makes a “good” welder?
- What skills must the welder be able to do?
- How will competencies be measured?

A graduate must successfully complete 10 consecutive welds using the backhand and forehand technique. The welds must meet the minimum standards as defined by American Welding Society.
Reminder - share objectives, outcomes, competencies with your students - don’t leave them guessing!
Student Assessment

- The school has a developed and structured process to assess and evaluate the defined student learning outcomes of the education.
- Tidbit: Use Assessment of Learning Outcomes to Improve Program
Student Assessment

- Criteria to assess a student’s academic progress such as grading, portfolio assessment, rubrics, etc.
- Must be valid, fair, reliable.
- Assess a student’s academic progress through the program
- Promotes academic integrity and has policies and controls to discourage academic dishonesty
Student Assessment

- Report academic progress to students at regular intervals.
- Establish minimum grade point averages (or equivalent) for intervals in the program that will help ensure that students will meet requirements for graduation.
- Publish the policy
Satisfactory Academic Progress

- Define successful progress, including the intervals of evaluation
- Have processes and procedures for placing students on Probation or Termination if not meeting successful academic progress
- Include processes and procedures for notifying students of probation
- Include the school’s policies and procedures for how a student can return to normal status or re-enter school if terminated
Not using the 4.0 Scale?

If the school uses a grading scale other than the traditional 4.0 scale (e.g., letter grades, percentages, pass/fail, etc.) the school establishes comparable progress standards and publishes the grade conversion scale in its catalog.
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.

If the school terminates a student due to lack of attendance – publish the policy.
Leaves of Absence...

IF!

- Establish policies and procedures that include
  - How to get a LOA approved
  - How long a student may take a LOA
  - What happens if a student doesn’t return—usual practice – terminate student and apply refunds as appropriate
- Starts when LOA approved (in writing)
- May not exceed 180 days in a 12-month period –
  - May grant more than one leave of absence—but remember that the combined leaves of absence may not exceed 180 days within the 12-month period
Maximum Timeframe

- Publish in the catalog the normal duration of each program based on regular and required course loads and schedules - i.e., 18 months, 2 years, etc.
- Publish the implications if a student does not complete the program within the maximum timeframe (e.g., loss of financial aid eligibility and program enrollment termination)
- Clock hour program - the maximum time frame shall not exceed 1.5 times the normal duration of the program
- Credit hour program - the credit hours attempted cannot exceed 1.5 times the credit hours required to complete the program
Remember!

» 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).

BUT

» 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.
Probation and Termination Policies

- Publish in the catalog
- Specific warning procedures to notify the student in writing that continued unsatisfactory academic progress, failure to meet attendance requirements, or failure to adhere to the conduct policy will result in termination.
- DOCUMENT notification or in the case of absenteeism document that the school made an attempt to notify the student
- Publish policies and procedures to request reinstatement
What is on the Diploma?

- Graduate’s name,
- School’s name,
- Location,
- Program of study, and
- Date of graduation
Standards of Accreditation

SECTION VII STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
How Does a School Demonstrate Successful Student Achievement?
ACCEPTABLE RATES OF:

- Student graduation
- Graduate Employment in the Field
- Pass rates on licensure/certification exams where required to work in the field
And What is Acceptable?
Benchmarks

When graduation, employment and licensure rates meet or exceed the Commission’s established benchmarks

The Commission determines the benchmark rates from information collected in Annual Report submissions

The benchmark is defined as not less than one (1) standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs
Appendix VI

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RATES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rates of Graduation</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>84%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Employment Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Length in Months</th>
<th>Average Rates of Employment</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Established Benchmark Employment Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Licensure/ Certification Exam Pass Rates

- For programs where a governmental entity requires the attainment of a passing score on a licensure/certification exam in order to work
- The pass rate is acceptable when at least 70% of the students that take the exam attain a passing score
So how do I calculate these graduation and employment rates?
Instructions for activating the self-calculating beginning and ending dates into the Graduation & Employment ("G&E") Chart:

a. Use the File menu Save As function to save each chart separately under a different name.
b. Click on the G&E Chart tab at the bottom of the screen.
c. Once in the G&E Chart tab, calculate the Reporting Period:
   - Enter the required Report Date as provided or directed by the Commission in the following format: July 2021, then
   - Enter the Program Length in Months (round up to the nearest whole number). The Beginning and Ending dates of the 12-month Reporting Period will automatically be filled in on the chart.

If the dates do not appear, go to File, Options, Add-Ins. From the Add-Ins available list, select Analysis ToolPak. The Analysis ToolPak function is automatically loaded and you are now ready to proceed with completing a chart for each approved program.

Please note when completing the G&E Chart, under “Class Start Date,” use the full four digit year (ex. Jul-2019 or 7/2019).

enter student starts within the 12-month reporting period by For any questions or additional information, please contact Sean Forman at 703-247-4505 or sforman@accesc.org.
Glossary of Terms Used on the ACCSC Graduation and Employment Chart

All Data Included in the Graduation and Employment Chart Must Be Verifiable Through Appropriate Documentation

1. **Class Start Date:** The month and year such student cohort, or group of student cohorts, started a group of student cohorts to complete their studies within a single calendar month.

2. **Teacher Demand:** The number of students who entered the program the start date of the period, including students re-enrolling with advanced placement. (Note: students are considered to have been enrolled in the program if they were admitted during the spring quarter of the program. If a result of their attendance, they must then follow the institution’s refund policy.) Those in other categories (e.g., auditing, etc.) are only those associated with actual attendance, those not counted for the purposes of enrollment or satisfactory progress. In any event, any student enrolled 1 day prior to the scheduled start date of the program cannot be included in “start” for the purpose of reporting student data on the Graduation and Employment Chart.

3. **Transcript to Another Program Cohort:** The total number of students who transferred out of this program and are another ACCSC approved program or school. The total number of students for this program who return from an approved college or school is the number of students who transferred out of this program. The total number of students who transferred into this program from another ACCSC approved program of the school, and whose progress in the program is consonant with the students in this cohort group is the total number of students for the program who return from an approved college or school to another cohort as allowed by the “Transcript to Another Program Cohort” category definitions.

4. **Total Transcript Credits:** The total number of students who entered, minus those who transferred out, plus those who transferred in. This is the total number of students on which graduation will be based.

5. **Total Number of Graduates:** The number of graduates calculated using the following criteria: those who have completed the program of study, those who have transferred out of the program, and those who have transferred into the program.

6. **Graduation Rate:** The school’s official graduation rate for the cohort is based on the period from the start date of the program (line 1) to the completion of the program (line 8). The school’s official rate of completion for the cohort is based on the period from the start date of the program (line 1) to the completion of the program (line 8).
Beyond Benchmarks

- Economic conditions
- Location
- State and national trends
- Student population
- Program length
- Students who withdraw and are employed in field
Appendix VII

Guidelines for Employment Classification
Guidelines for Employment Classification

Justification of “Employed in Field”

Documentation of Verification
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Verifiable Employment Record Include</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Graduation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Initial Employment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of Employment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Address</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Contact Person/Supervisor and direct contact information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Job Title (please also provide job duties if the job title is insufficient to demonstrate alignment with program name)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The employment classification is appropriate and reasonable based on the educational objectives of the program.

The employment is for a reasonable period of time, is based on program objectives, and can be considered sustainable.

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.
Verification

- Regular
- Self-Employed
- Career Advancement
The school secures written documentation from the employer verifying the employment

OR

The school secures written documentation from the graduate verifying the employment
The school demonstrates diligent efforts to obtain written documentation AND Signature of school staff attesting to verbal verification with the employer AND the graduate.
Self-Employment - Attestation

The graduate’s name and contact information

An attestation that the self-employment is aligned with the individual's employment goals, is vocational & is based on and related to the education and training received

An attestation that the graduate is earning training-related income

In cases where licensure is required for employment, an attestation that such licensure has been achieved.
What is Career Advancement?

Pertains to students that are employed in a training related field prior to graduation.

The intent of this provision does not apply to employment toward the end of the program but prior to graduation, where the employment is based on the near anticipated completion of the program (e.g., externship to hire prior to graduation).
Career Advancement - Attestation

Written documentation (attestation) from the employer OR the graduate that the training allowed the graduate to support or maintain the employment position

Written documentation (attestation) from the employer OR the graduate that the training supported the graduate’s ability to be eligible or qualified for advancement
Third Party Verification Of Employment Records

SECTION VII STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
IS THIS VERIFICATION OF OUR VERIFICATION?

Yes.

Why?

Because...
The process provides 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.
Step One – Choose a Vendor
What does INDEPENDENT mean?

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.
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 and how this vendor can serve as a reliable verifier.
The third party verifier will provide the following for the school to include in the SER:

- 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.
Step Two – Records

Provide employment records for each graduate reported on Line 14 in every G&E Chart submitted with the Self-Evaluation Report.
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 the independent third-party may not alter the sample in an effort to get better results.
The independent third-party must verify employment records with the employer or graduate.
The independent third-party must conduct the verifications without assistance from the school, with the exception of the school’s provision of records to be verified.

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.
Verification Categories
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
Examples from an Automotive Technology Program

- **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.
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)
The third-party verifier is:

☑️ Unable to obtain verification of the school’s employment record from either the employer or the graduate.

**NOTE:** the school must use this category if the employer uses a third-party company (i.e. The Work Number)
Verified as Incorrect

This happens when the third-party verifier finds any of the following:

- The graduate is not found in employer’s records;
- The graduate’s initial employer is different than the employer listed in the school’s employment record;
- 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 Five - 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.
### Independent Third-Party Initial Employment Verification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Company</th>
<th>Report Date on Graduation and Employment Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Students Sampled</th>
<th>Total Number of Available Students to Sample</th>
<th>Sample Size Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verified as Correct</th>
<th>Verified but Different</th>
<th>Unable to Verify</th>
<th>Verified as Not Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING CHART IN THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Total Number of Students Sampled: 50
Total Number of Available Students to Sample: 100
Sample Size Percentage: 50%

Verified as Correct: 40
Verified but Different: 10
Unable to Verify: 5
Verified as Not Correct: 5
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
POLISH YOUR PROCESSES

► 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

► Verify the employment AFTER the graduate started work.
SET EXPECTATIONS WITH STUDENTS

• Begin on the first day of Orientation and continue throughout the program
• Accreditation Resources: New Student Letter / Graduation Letter
Set Expectations with Staff

Use the Form

Complete the form
Employment Record

- 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)
Miscues to Avoid

- Incomplete forms
- Poor description of job duties
- Insufficient information that demonstrates the connection between the educational objectives of the program and the vocational outcomes.
Example: Pharmacy Technician Program

Pharmacy Technician...!

Designated Hitter...?
INCLUDE EMPLOYERS

- Work proactively with employers
- Set expectations, get feedback
- Batching Verification
- Avoid the temptation to “scrub” data
- Accreditation
  Resources:
  Employer Letter - (English / Spanish)
The Guidelines for Independent Third Party Verification

The Independent Third-Party Employment Verification FAQ is available for download at www.accsc.org.
Crossing the Finish Line!
Process Overview – Crossing the Finish Line

- **December 2025**: Final Materials for the On-Site Evaluation (revised Application Part II and Self-Evaluation Report)
- **February 2026**: On-Site Evaluation
- **April 2026**: On-Site Evaluation Report
- **August 2026**: Commission Review
- **September 2026**: School Action Letter
ON-SITE EVALUATION
### Purpose of the On-Site Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verify</td>
<td>Verify data in the school’s reports, applications, responses, and any other information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Develop an understanding and perform an assessment of how well the school meets its objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine</td>
<td>Determine the extent to which the school complies with the Standards of Accreditation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school is evaluated according to:

- Documentation included in the school’s reports, applications, responses, and any other information submitted to the Commission required for the specific on-site evaluation;
- 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;
- Observations of classes, management, and administration of the school; and
- Documentation of the student achievement data reported to the Commission.
SCHEDULING

• A Commission representative will contact you to schedule the on-site evaluation
• Typically required for two days
• Regular “School Day”
  – Not exam week
  – Majority of students in class
  – Administrators and faculty present
Composition of the Team

- Team Leader/Management Specialist (administration / management)
- Education Specialist (education delivery / curriculum / faculty)
- ACCSC Staff Member (technical assistance / interpretation of Standards)
- Occupation Specialist (equipment / facilities)
- Distance Education Specialist (if required)
- State Observer (invited)
Evaluation team members do not recommend action to the Commission; this function is reserved to the Commission.

Team members volunteer as experienced professionals, not as representatives of their institutions or businesses.

Evaluate independently and to verify: the information submitted by the school, the school’s success in meeting announced objectives and demonstrating successful student achievement, and the school’s compliance with the Standards of Accreditation.
Clearing the Team

- The school will be promptly provided with the names of appointed team members.
- If any conflicts of the types prohibited by the ACCSC Evaluator Code of Conduct exist, the school must notify ACCSC’s Executive Director in writing.
- If the Executive Director determines good cause exists, the team member will be replaced.
Preparation

THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL ON-SITE EVALUATION
Prepare YOUR Team

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 Workspace for the Team

- Set aside a secure room that will provide a comfortable workspace for the number of team members that will be reviewing your institution.
- The room/space must afford privacy in which the team may conduct its review and deliberations.
- Ensure there are adequate outlets or power strips, and Internet access (provide required access codes).
Prepare Documentation

- 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
- 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
Outcomes Documentation

- For each Graduation and Employment Chart, prepare a list of students (grouped by cohort start) in the format of the table provided.
- Have documentation for each student categorized as unavailable for graduation, graduates classified as “further education” and “unavailable for employment.”
Employment Records

- Graduate name and contact information
- Program name
- Date of graduation
- Date of initial employment
- Place of employment
- Employer address and phone number
- Employer contact person/supervisor
- Descriptive job title and duties
Student Files

- Documentation of admissions requirements
- Fully executed enrollment agreements
- Satisfactory progress evaluations
- Advising sessions
- Transcripts for graduate files
- Refund calculations
- Evidence refunds were made
ACCSC’s Student Survey is a crucial part of gathering student input.

The Commission aims for surveying at least 25% of the current student population.

ACCSC uses an app-based survey form to facilitate student participation.

About one week prior to the on-site evaluation, the Commission staff person will send the school liaison a link to the student survey.

Please distribute this to your whole current student body.
And... action!
Day One - Arrival

- 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
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 Leader conducts the entrance interview and sets expectations with the school.

The team will select files for review from the lists of students required by Appendix B of the SER.
Day One – The Work

- Review student survey results and 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
Day One

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.
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.
- At the conclusion of the on-site evaluation, the team conducts a Summary Review.
- A summary of its preliminary report in relation to the school’s compliance with accreditation standards.
On-Site Evaluation Report

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE ON-SITE EVALUATION
On-Site Evaluation Report (OER)

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** written **record** of the on-site evaluation.
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
Responding to the OER

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

It is **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
Avoid

Don’t simply respond with a “will do” response that promises future action; answer with a “have done” response.

Don’t just provide exhibits with no narrative to explain what the exhibits are intended to demonstrate.

Don’t simply provide copies of newly created blank forms.
Blue Ribbon Response

Precise Documentation

Comprehensive Narrative

ACCSC Resources
Commission Review

ACTIONS
Deferral

Additional information is required from the school to demonstrate compliance. Generally, in reaching a decision to defer action, the Commission will consider:

- The extent to which the school can make significant progress towards demonstrating compliance within a short period of time;
- Whether the necessary information for the Commission to render a decision is lacking.
Denial

Following the due process required by the Rules of Process and Procedure

The Commission may deny a grant of accreditation to an initial applicant

When the Commission determines from the record that the school does not meet the requirements specified in the Standards of Accreditation
Accredit - Maximum Grants

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

- The response demonstrates compliance with accrediting standards
- Applicants for initial accreditation will be granted accreditation for up to three years
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: Student Achievement
- Refund Reporting
- Management Retention Reporting
- Program Advisory Committee Reporting
School Action Letter

- The Commission’s decision is articulated in a letter
- The official record of the Commission’s consideration
- Issued approximately 30 days after the conclusion of the Commission meeting
- Contains detailed information regarding the school’s accredited status and any response requirements
The Finish and the Start!

- Obligations of an accredited member of ACCSC
- Maintain compliance
- Continuous operation
- Fulfill reporting requirements
- Maintain state authorization
- Pay all fees
Parting Thoughts
Getting Off to a Great Start
DO THIS!

- Contact ACCSC staff with any and all questions you may have
- Utilize ACCSC website resources
- Read and familiarize yourself with the Standards of Accreditation prior to preparing and submitting the application
- Have your independent CPA read ACCSC’s Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Financial Statements and Related Information prior to preparing your school’s financial statements.
Don’t Do This!

- Submit incomplete applications
- Submit compiled or reviewed financial statements
- Have only one person at the school do all things ACCSC
- Be afraid to contact ACCSC with a question, ESPECIALLY if you think you may not be in compliance
- Rely solely on a consultant
Common Miscues on the Application for Initial Accreditation Part I

- Application fails to show graduates from longest programs
- Application fails to show at least one 300 clock hour program
- Application fails to show continuous enrollment/operation
- Financial statements not audited
- Financial statements not prepared in a comparative format
- Financial statements do not meet all three tests for eligibility
Most Common On-Site Evaluation Team Findings 2018

10 Initial schools
Average 9.2 findings per report

- Admissions (8)
- Program Advisory Committee (8)
- Enrollment Agreement (6)
- Faculty Qualifications (6)
- Recruitment (6)
Tool Kit

- ACCSC Staff
- Webinars
- Monographs
- Blueprints
- Training Center
Key Concepts

- Student Success is at the Center
- Standards = Best Practices
- Ongoing Assessment
- Strong Infrastructure/Resources
- Continuous Improvement
Assessment – where are we now and where are we going?
How do we get there from here?
Do we have enough fuel and snacks (infrastructure, resources)?
Who is going to drive? Who is checking the map?
Parting Thoughts

If you could say one thing to a school considering ACCSC accreditation, what would it be?
Real World

Be prepared to constantly use the system you design
Don’t Guess!
Pick up the phone… or keyboard
Transformation

Understand that accreditation involves a transformation to the accredited school paradigm.
GOING ON A ROAD TRIP

EXPECTATION vs REALITY

PACKING THE CAR
Focus on Excellence

Rather than just “jumping through hoops,” understand the spirit of the standard.
More than a Survival Badge

LEARN AND GROW THROUGH THE PROCESS
SLOW DOWN!
Building the Airplane

In the Air