

ACCSC ACCREDITATION ALERT

To: ACCSC Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
From: Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director
Date: July 1, 2025
Subject: Announcement and Revisions to the ACCSC *Standards of Accreditation*

Revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation*:

Chapter 1 – Rules of Process and Procedure

- Composition of the Commission – *Section I (A)*
- Definition of a School and Educational Objectives – *Section I (A), (B)(4), & (C)(2)*
- Separate Facility Definitions – *Section I (A)*
- Consortium/Partnerships – *Section I (A) & (C); Section IV (C) & (E)*
- Substantive Changes – *Section IV (C)*
- Change of Control – *Section IV (E)(2)(s)*
- Teach-Out Plans – *Section IV (F)(2)(c)*
- Basis for Decisions, Commission Actions, Effective Date, and School Closures – *Section VII (B), (C), (F), (K), (L), (M), & (N) (Q)(1)(4) & (P)(6)*
- Denial of a Substantive Change, Coverage of Appeals, and Composition of the Appeals Panel – *Section II (A)(1); Section VII (P); & Section VIII (A)(1) & (C)(4), & Section VIII (D)(3)*
- Standards Revisions and Systematic Program of Review – *Section IX (A) & (B)*
- Pilot Projects – *Section XI (B)(1)*

Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

- Management and Administrative Training – *Section I (A)(3)*
- Consortium/Partnerships – *Section II (A)(8)(a) &*
- Recruitment Standards – *Section IV (A) & Appendix IV*
- Accreditation and Approval Disclosures – *Section IV (C)(4)(c) & ACCSC Catalog Checklist**
- Student Satisfaction – *Section VI (A)(1) & (5)*
- Student Achievement – *Section VII (B)(2)*
- Separate Facilities *Section VIII (A)*
- Use of a Diminutive Name (Nickname) – *Appendix I & Appendix IV*
- Use of Consultants – *Appendix VIII*
- Fee Increases – *Appendix I*

Bylaws

- Section 1.03 – Composition
- Section 1.09 – Committees

Announcement

- **Collection of Financial Information***

Throughout this Accreditation Alert, new text is annotated in **red, bold, italic**; deleted text in ~~blue strikethrough~~; and moved text in green underline or ~~green strikethrough underline~~.

The Commission has republished the *Standards of Accreditation*, now dated July 1, 2025 replacing the previous version. The July 1, 2025 *Standards of Accreditation* document is now available for download.

All revisions and fees changes are effective July 1, 2025, however, there are two areas noted with an “*” above as being in effect but not enforced until October 1, 2025. For additional information related to this Accreditation Alert, please contact Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director, at 703.247.4520 or mccomis@accsc.org.

**REVISIONS TO THE RULES OF PROCESS AND PROCEDURE, STANDARDS OF
ACCREDITATION**

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following non-substantive revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION I – DEFINITIONS, ACCREDITATION OBLIGATIONS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS, AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Definitions

1. The term "Commission" refers to the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges composed as described in the *Bylaws* of the Accreditation Alliance of Career Schools and Colleges ("AACSC") ***and as set forth below:***
 - a. ***One or more Commissioners will be designated as the following:***
 - i. ***Administrative – An individual currently or formerly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary programmatic or institutional administration for a school.***
 - ii. ***Academic – An individual currently or formerly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education, training, teaching, or research in a school setting.***
 - iii. ***Educator, Practitioner, and/or Employer – an individual currently or formerly engaged in the application of skills, teaching, or employment of individuals.***
 - b. ***The number of Public Commissioners (as defined in the Bylaws) shall be at least 15% but less than a majority of the total number of Commissioners.***
2. The term "public member/~~Commissioner~~" used in the *Standards of Accreditation* ~~and/or the Bylaws~~ means a person who:
 - a. Has experience in industry, government, education (e.g., accreditation, postsecondary, public, private, adult or vocational/career-oriented), or in similar or allied fields;
 - b. Is not an employee, member of the governing board, owner, shareholder, or consultant of an institution that is accredited by the Commission, has applied for accreditation by the Commission, or is affiliated with a School Commissioner or any institution or entity which is also affiliated with a School Commissioner;
 - c. Is not a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with ACCSC;
 - d. Is not a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (b) or (c) of this definition; and
 - e. Has been appointed to ~~serve on the Commission pursuant to Section 1.05 of the AACSC Bylaws or appointed to~~ sit on the Standing Appeals Panel pursuant to *Section VIII (D)(2)(d), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.
3. ***The term "Single Purpose Institution" means an institution that offers a single program that leads to a singular and specific occupation.***

Renumber subsequent items.

DEFINITION OF A SCHOOL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The Commission has been discussing definitions regarding in order to avoid language that would unnecessarily put limits on ACCSC's opportunities to expand its reach as well as untended barriers to growth opportunities for schools. The revised definition of a school is intended to allow other approaches to the review of school structure while in keeping with ACCSC's mission.

With regard to educational objectives, The Commission has made a revision in order to clarify and remove redundancy with regard to educational objectives, to remove an inconsistent use of language, and to remove what may be perceived as an artificial barrier to the form that such objectives may take.

SECTION I – DEFINITIONS, ACCREDITATION OBLIGATIONS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS, AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Definitions

15. The term "school" refers to a postsecondary institution with trade, occupational, or career-oriented educational objectives. ~~A school is comprised of one or more physical facilities that~~ **systematically provides education for students in a structured teaching and learning environment** ~~offers programs residentially, through a combination of residential training and distance education methodologies, or solely using distance education methodologies~~ **in-person residential training, distance education methodologies, or a combination of both.**

B. Purpose and Scope

4. Limitations of Scope: The Commission does not profess to have within its capability, and does not define as its purpose, the evaluation of any school that may seek accreditation. Rather, a school must fall within the Commission's scope and meet the requirements of this section before it may apply for consideration. Accordingly, the Commission may decline to consider for accreditation otherwise eligible schools if it determines that the programs offered by an applicant school fall outside the Commission's primary scope and competence or there is a lack of standards necessary for meaningful review. ~~Schools primarily directed toward avocational or general education objectives are ineligible for accreditation by the Commission.~~

C. Educational Objectives

1. The school's primary educational objective must be to prepare students for entrance or advancement in one or more occupations requiring technical or career-oriented competencies and skills. Educational objectives must be career oriented and provide graduates with the necessary competencies, skills, and level of education for employment **or advancement** in their fields of study. ~~A school must ensure that all required courses are available to enable students to complete their programs of study.~~ [striketrough green text moved to Section II (A)(3)(a)(iii), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation.]
2. A school may have secondary educational objectives other than those described above (e.g., a GED preparation course, refresher training course, avocational courses, continuing education courses, etc.); ~~however, any such educational objectives may not have greater priority within the school's mission and operations than its career-oriented educational objective.~~ The inclusion of courses with secondary educational objectives as within the school's institutional scope of accreditation is at the option of the institution.

SEPARATE FACILITY DEFINITIONS

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department and to show that the Commission adopts and applies the federal definitions of separate facilities, the Commission has made the following additions, revisions, and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION I – DEFINITIONS, ACCREDITATION OBLIGATIONS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS, AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Definitions

15. The term “school” refers to a postsecondary institution with trade, occupational, or career-oriented educational objectives that systematically provides education for students in a structured teaching and learning environment through in-person residential training, distance education methodologies, or a combination of both. *Each school will have a single, permanent ACCSC reference number.*
16. ~~A “school” is a main or branch campus facility that meets the definition above. Each school will have a single, permanent, nontransferable ACCSC reference number. See Section VIII, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation for separate facility definitions.~~

For those institutions participating in Title IV, Higher Education Act federal student financial aid programs the following federal definitions of separate facilities are adopted and applied:

- a. A branch campus is approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a branch campus and is an independent separate physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, and that also is permanent in nature; offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized education credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.*
- b. An additional location is a physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. An additional location participates in the Title IV, Higher Education Act programs only through the certification of the main campus. Additionally, a federal, state, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, juvenile justice facility, or other similar correctional institution is considered to be an additional location even if a student receives instruction primarily through distance education at that location.*

Renumber items to follow.

D. Institutional Eligibility Requirements

2. A school must describe itself and be recognized consistently by each accrediting agency, state agency, and federal agency with regard to identity (i.e., school name, *campus classification, and address* ~~main school, branch, or equivalent~~), purpose, governance, programs, credentials awarded, personnel, finances, and constituents served, and must keep each agency apprised of any change in its status.

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIPS

The Commission has sought to find common-sense solutions to some of the self-imposed limitations that ACCSC's *Rules* and *Standards* may present with regard to how and where programs are offered and to do so in such a way as to not curb innovative approaches and beneficial partnership arrangements. Thus, the Commission has turned to its consortium and partnership agreement standards to provide an opportunity for school to offer education more broadly. The intent and expectations of the revisions in this area include:

- Placing a greater reliance on consortium and partnership agreements particularly with employers (e.g., hospitals, labs, community colleges, apprentice sites) as a means to remove barriers to innovation;
- As is already required, a school must notify and have approved any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreements with other schools or training providers in advance of such contracts taking effect (see *Section II (A)(8), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);
- Under the new language, a consortium agreement could cover instances where, for example, a school utilizes a facility that is not defined as a separate facility, (e.g., a hospital, lab, or clinic) to conduct training for a portion of a program that is not an externship or a clinical;
- However, under the new language, the use of a consortium agreement cannot be used to excuse meeting ACCSC's separate facility requirements that would otherwise apply—for example, a school could not argue that a lease with a landlord is a consortium or partnership “agreement” rather than a separate facility;
- A school, as is always the case, retains the responsibility to ensure that the education delivered meets accreditation standards and is accountable as such—e.g., a school could not point to failures of a hospital facility as an excuse for not otherwise meeting accreditation standards.

Also, in order for a program to be eligible for federal financial aid it must meet federal definitions/criteria/regulations despite any approval by ACCSC.

The Commission did make an adjustment to the revisions proposed in the Call for Comment. Specifically, a commenter pointed out that the Commission used the terms “a portion” and “any portion” of a program and that the Commission should be consistent in the language. The Commission agreed and determined that while the definition of the word “portion” is sufficient to indicate that this does not allow for a complete program to be offered using a consortium or partnership agreement, the consistent use of language is important. Thus, the Commission has used the term “a portion” of a program throughout.

SECTION I – DEFINITIONS, ACCREDITATION OBLIGATIONS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS, AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Definitions

- 9. The term “consortium or partnership agreement” means any instance where a portion of an ACCSC-accredited school’s approved programs is provided by or at another entity (accredited or unaccredited) or where another entity provides the facilities for the school to offer a portion of an approved program off-site in a program-appropriate setting whereby approval as a satellite location separate facility under these standards is not required.*

Renumber remaining items.

C. Educational Objectives

3. A school may enter into consortium or partnership agreements where a portion of a program is offered by **or at** an entity other than the **ACCSC-accredited** institution in accordance with these *Rules and Substantive Standards*.

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Changes Requiring Notification

A school must notify the Commission of the following:

There is no proposed revision in *Section IV (A)(1)*, but this is included here to show that this notification provision is already in place.

1. Any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreements with other schools or training providers in advance of such contracts taking effect (see *Section II (A)(8), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);

C. Substantive Changes

2. The Commission considers the following to be substantive changes to an educational institution:
 - a. Level I – Staff Level Approval:
 - xii. A consortium and/or partnership agreement with another school/entity (accredited or unaccredited) ~~to offer~~ **for the delivery of** ~~any~~ portion of a program;

E. Substantive Change Application Requirements

6. Program Approval, Additions, and Modifications
 - a. Substantive Change: New Programs or Changes Requiring Prior Commission Approval
 - vi. Consortium/Partnership Agreements: In any instance where a portion of an approved program is ~~offered by~~ **delivered by or at** an entity other than the ACCSC-accredited institution via any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreement, the school must submit the Application for a Consortium/Partnership Agreement or the Application for a Distance Education Consortium/Partnership Agreement as applicable. An on-site evaluation may be required in conjunction with the approval of a consortium/partnership application based upon the scope of the agreement ~~and the accredited status of any other entity offering a portion of the school's program.~~
 - b. On-site Evaluation Requirements: An on-site evaluation will be required for new program approval as follows:
 - v. The addition of a consortium/partnership agreement with an entity that is not accredited by a recognized accrediting agency to ~~teach~~ **engage in the delivery of** a portion of a school's program.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following non-substantive revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

C. Substantive Changes

2. The Commission considers the following to be substantive changes to an educational institution:
 - a. Level I – Staff Level Approval:
 - v. A change in the academic measurement of an educational program from clock hours to credit hours, *credit hours to clock hours, type of academic year, or time-based / non-time-based methods (e.g., calendar-based to competency-based or vice versa, etc.);*
 - xii. A consortium and/or partnership agreement with another school/entity (accredited or unaccredited) ~~to offer~~ *for the delivery of any* portion of a program; and
 - b. Level II – Commission Level Approval:
 - i. A change of mission or educational objectives;
 - ii. A change of control, *a change in legal status, or a change in the form of control* (with the exception of a transfer of ownership interest within an immediate family—*see Level I substantive changes above*);

CHANGE OF CONTROL

The Commission has seen several change-of-control transactions that have raised questions with regard to the resources and/or the ability of potential new owners to take on the responsibility – operational and compliance – of owning and operating an accredited school. The Commission has also seen instances where post transaction, new owners have sought to take on an additional transaction or significant substantive changes prior to the completion of the pending change of control process. This is problematic because the change of control process is meant to measure the degree to which a new owner can be successful in owning and operating the ACCSC-accredited school. Without the completion of that process, it can be difficult to know whether additional transactions should be considered or approved. Even controlling entities with significant experience owning and operating an ACCSC-accredited school may become over-extended through an acquisition and as such prudent to restrict additional transactions without some evidence of the success of a prior transaction. As such, the Commission has made a revision to the *Rules* below.

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

E. Substantive Change Application Requirements

2. Change of Control and Change of Ownership
 - i. Application for a Change of Control-Part I, Notification and Filing Requirements:

- ii. Application Content: The *Application for a Change of Control-Part I* ~~school~~ must provide sufficient information to allow an assessment of ~~it's~~ *the school's* projected financial ~~stability~~ *resources and position and the management and administrative capacity and responsibility* under the proposed new controlling individual, group, or entity and ~~by~~ *explaining* the financing of the proposed transaction. *The application must demonstrate, among other things, that Additional consideration may be required if the background of the proposed owners, board members, or and managers and raises questions as to their qualifications, the proposed change of control raises concerns as to the soundness of the available resources and financial structure of the school position will positively contribute to or other concerns arise regarding the school's ability to meet compliance with accrediting standards in an ongoing manner post change of control.*
- s. Restrictions:
 - i. *A school may not apply for a change of control when the proposed new owner is currently in a separate change of control/ownership process with ACCSC unless the school and proposed new owner can demonstrate that good cause exists to allow a new change of control/ownership application in advance of the completion of the pending process (i.e., acceptance of the Change of Control On-Site Evaluation Report).*
 - ii. A school that undergoes a change of control may not relocate beyond 25 miles within a two-year period from the date that the change of control occurred.
 - iii. A school that relocates beyond 25 miles may not apply for a change of control for a period of two years from the date that the Commission approved the relocation.
 - ~~iii~~iv. A main school may not apply for *a change of mission or educational objectives or for* accreditation of a branch campus within one year following the Commission's recognition of a transfer of accreditation resulting from the change of control, unless the main school can show good cause why it should be allowed to apply for ~~a branch campus~~ *such a substantive change* in a shorter time frame.
- ~~iv~~v. ****

TEACH-OUT PLANS

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following non-substantive revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

F. Teach-Out Plans and Agreements

- 2. The Commission will require a school to submit a complete ACCSC Institutional Teach-Out Plan Approval Form and if practicable a Teach-Out Agreement with another accredited institution when:
 - c. The Commission receives notice from the U.S. Department of Education that it has initiated *an emergency action against an institution, or* an action to limit, suspend, or terminate ~~an school-institution's~~ *an institution's* participation in any Title IV, *Higher Education Act federal student financial aid* program ~~under the Higher Education Act;~~

BASIS FOR DECISIONS, COMMISSION ACTIONS, EFFECTIVE DATE, AND SCHOOL CLOSURE

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*. Of particular note:

- Deferral actions will generally be limited to 12 months,
- The actions available to the Commission do not need to be progressive (e.g., the Commission does not have to place a school on Warning before it can take a Probation action);
- When the Commission determines a school is out of compliance with an accreditation standard, the school will be placed on Probation and will be given a maximum timeframe to achieve compliance; and
- The Commission will use "Show Cause" actions to indicate heightened concerns of non-compliance that require immediate review and action.

With regard to school closures, a closing school must adhere to an approved teach-out plan "prior to closure" in order to avoid the Commission taking an adverse accreditation decision to withdraw the closing school's accreditation.

SECTION VII – COMMISSION ACTIONS

B. Effective Date of Commission Decision

The general rule is that the effective date of a Commission decision is the date on the letter notifying the school of that decision. The effective date may be some other date for the following types of reasons:

7. Other dates as established elsewhere in these *Rules* and as circumstances dictate, the Commission may establish different effective dates *except that the effective date of the Commission's decision will not predate either (i) an earlier denial of accreditation to the school, or (ii) acceptance of a school in the initial accreditation process.*

C. Basis for Decisions

5. *The Commission notifies the institution of a decision in writing, including any identified deficiencies of compliance.*
6. ****

F. Deferral of Action

1. The Commission may defer any action on an application for accreditation (initial or renewal), substantive change, or other reviews or matters if additional information is required for the school to demonstrate compliance with the *Standards of Accreditation* or other accreditation requirements. Generally, in reaching a decision to defer action, the Commission will consider *factors such as:*
 - a1. The extent to which the school can ~~make~~ *provide sufficient additional information* ~~significant progress~~ within a short period of time;
 - b2. Whether there is insufficient information about the school and/or the issues in question *require clarification;* ~~or~~

- ~~c3.~~ Whether the information necessary for the Commission to render a decision is lacking **but should otherwise be available.**
- 2. The Commission may not defer for a period longer than 12 months in total. If a school has not resolved the area(s) in question within the established timeframe, then the Commission will take further action as deemed appropriate.**

K. Warning

1. In cases where the Commission has ~~reason to believe that a school is not or may not be in compliance~~ **concerns regarding a school's** compliance with one or more accreditation standards or other requirements, the Commission may, ~~at its discretion,~~ issue a Warning to the school. **At its discretion, the Commission may place a school on Warning without first taking any other action listed in these Rules.**
2. ~~A Warning may be initiated by the Commission or by the Executive Committee in accordance with Section 1.09.a, AACSC Bylaws, Standards of Accreditation.~~
- ~~3.~~ A Warning will be issued upon any of the following:
 - a. The suspension, withdrawal/revocation, or involuntary termination of a school's accreditation from another accrediting body;
 - b. The suspension **or the** withdrawal, ~~/~~ revocation, or involuntary termination of a school's ~~or its~~ license or authority to operate from a state oversight agency **that is subject to appeal;** ~~or~~
 - c. The filing for bankruptcy or receivership; **or**
 - d. A delinquency in the submission of a required response, notification, directive, report, fee, etc. in accordance with established deadlines and policies.**
- ~~4.3.~~ ~~When the Commission issues a Warning,~~ **4.** The Warning will be in writing and will:
 - a. State ~~fully~~ the reasons why the Commission issued the Warning;
 - b. Identify the standard(s) and/or ~~other~~ accreditation requirement(s) **at issue** ~~with which the school may not be in compliance;~~
 - c. ~~Explain the reasons and recite the evidence indicating that the school may not be in compliance with accreditation requirements;~~ and
 - d. Advise the school of its obligations operating under the Warning and the deadline for response.
- ~~5.4.~~ Upon ~~expiration of the time limits for submission of the~~ **review of the school's** response to the Warning or any progress report or additional requirements placed on a school in relation to the Warning, ~~a decision will be made on the school's compliance with the accreditation standard or requirement noted in the order. The~~ Commission may:
 - a. Remove the Warning if the school's response gives evidence that such removal is warranted ~~or if the response shows that the school complies with accreditation standards and requirements;~~
 - b. Continue the Warning;
 - c. Take any other action set forth under *Section VII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation;* or
 - d. In certain limited circumstances, delegate the authority to vacate a Warning to the Executive Director of ACCSC when established conditions have been met by the school.

65. The Commission may require a school to submit Commission-directed reports and receive on-site evaluation teams in conjunction with a Warning. ~~Failure to demonstrate compliance with accrediting standards or other accrediting requirements by the end of the Warning period may result in the withdrawal of the school's accreditation.~~
76. Within a timeframe set forth in the Warning notification, the Commission may require the school to:
- Inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed/continued on Warning and provide such notice on the school's website;
 - Provide a summary that accurately describes the reasons for the Warning; and
 - Provide the uniform resource locator (URL) where the Commission's summary of the Warning can be obtained from the Commission website.
87. The Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions (i.e., separate facilities, new programs) to a school or its separate facilities while the school is under a Warning. However, a school that is subject to a Warning may seek the Commission's approval for the transfer of accreditation that would result from a change of ownership as described in *Section IV, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.

L. Probation

- In cases where the Commission has made a determination that a school is out of compliance with one or more accreditation standards or other requirements, the Commission ~~may, at its discretion,~~ **will** place a school on Probation. ~~As part of the Probation, the Commission may, at its discretion, direct the school to show cause as to why the school's accreditation should not be withdrawn. A school subject to Probation will be required to demonstrate corrective action and compliance with accrediting standards.~~
- ~~At its discretion, the Commission may place a school on Probation without first~~ **taking any other action listed in these Rules.**
- The Commission may require a school to submit Commission-directed reports and receive on-site evaluation teams in conjunction with Probation. Failure to demonstrate compliance with accrediting standards or other accrediting requirements by the end of the probationary period may result in the school being removed from the accredited list.
- ~~At its discretion, the Commission may place a school on Probation without first issuing a Warning.~~
- ~~When the Commission directs a Probation,~~ **The Probation will be in writing and will:**
 - State the reasons ~~and cite evidence explaining and supporting~~ why the Commission issued the Probation;
 - Identify the standard(s) and/or other accreditation requirement(s) at issue; and
 - Advise the school of its obligations under the Probation and the deadline for response.
- Upon ~~expiration of the time limits for submission of~~ **review of the school's** response to the Probation or any progress report or additional requirements placed on a school in relation to the Probation, ~~a decision will be made on the school's compliance with the accreditation standard or requirement noted in the order. T~~he Commission may:
 - Remove the Probation if the school's response gives evidence that such removal is warranted or if the response shows that the school complies with accreditation standards and requirements;

- b. Continue the Probation; or
 - c. Take any other action set forth under *Section VII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.
6. The Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions (i.e., separate facilities, new programs) to a school or its separate facilities while the school is on Probation. However, a school that is subject to Probation may seek the Commission's approval for the transfer of accreditation that would result from a change of ownership as described in *Section IV, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.
7. Within seven days of receipt of the Probation notification and for the duration of that action, a school must:
- a. Inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed/continued on Probation and provide such notice on the school's website;
 - b. Provide a summary that accurately describes the reasons for the Probation; and
 - c. Provide the uniform resource locator (URL) where that action can be obtained from the Commission's website.

M. *Show Cause Order*

1. *When the Commission has determined a school to be out of compliance and that the severity of the issues warrant immediate heightened attention, the Commission ~~may~~ will direct the school to show cause as to why the school's accreditation should not be withdrawn ("Show Cause Order"). A school subject to a Show Cause Order will be required to demonstrate corrective action within the time period set by the Commission.*
2. *At its discretion, the Commission may place a school on a Show Cause Order without first taking any other action listed in these Rules.*
3. *The Commission may require a school to submit Commission-directed reports and/or receive on-site evaluation teams in conjunction with the Show Cause Order.*
4. *The Show Cause Order will be in writing and will:*
 - a. *State the reasons why the Commission issued the Show Cause Order;*
 - b. *Identify the standard(s) and/or other accreditation requirement(s) at issue; and*
 - c. *Advise the school of its obligations under the Show Cause Order and the deadline for response.*
5. *Upon review of the school's response to the Show Cause Order or any progress report or additional requirements placed on a school in relation to the Show Cause Order, the Commission may:*
 - a. *Remove the Show Cause Order if the school's response gives evidence that such removal is warranted or if the response shows that the school complies with accreditation standards and requirements or*
 - b. *Take any other action set forth under Section VII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation.*
6. *The Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions (i.e., separate facilities, new programs) to a school or its separate facilities while the school is on a Show Cause Order. However, a school that is subject to a Show Cause Order may*

seek the Commission's approval for the transfer of accreditation that would result from a change of ownership as described in Section IV, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation.

7. *Within seven days of receipt of the Show Cause Order notification and for the duration of that action, a school must:*
 - a. *Inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed/continued on a Show Cause Order and provide such notice on the school's website;*
 - b. *Provide a summary that accurately describes the reasons for the Show Cause Order; and*
 - c. *Provide the uniform resource locator (URL) where that action can be obtained from the Commission's website.*

N. Time Frame to Remedy Noncompliance

~~The maximum time frame to remedy noncompliance are as follows:~~

1. When the Commission has found an area in which a school is out of compliance with accreditation standards or requirements, the Commission will ~~notify the school in writing of the maximum time frame allotted to remedy the noncompliance or cure the deficiency~~ *provide the institution with a written timeline as set forth in the Commission's notification for coming into compliance that is reasonable based on the nature of the finding(s), the school's stated mission, and the educational objectives of the institution.*
2. The **maximum** allotted time frame, together with the time for the Commission's decision, will not exceed the lesser of 150% of the length of the longest program offered at the school or three years unless there is good cause to extend the maximum time frame for achieving compliance. The Commission is not required to allow the maximum time frame to remedy noncompliance in all instances and ~~may~~ will establish shorter time frames as deemed appropriate, including taking immediate adverse action.
3. ~~Minimally~~ *Generally, in order for the Commission to find that* good cause **exists** to extend the maximum time frame, ~~requires~~ the school ~~to~~ **must** show that:
 - a. During the period of review, significant progress has been made toward achieving compliance with the accreditation standard(s) in question;
 - b. The school is otherwise meeting ~~all other~~ requirements set forth by the Commission; and
 - c. ~~When~~ **E**xtenuating circumstances exist such that only through the provision of additional time can the school demonstrate its compliance with the standard(s) **cited**.

The Commission of its own accord may also extend the maximum time frame in limited and exceptional circumstances if the circumstances are beyond the institution's control (e.g., a natural disaster or other catastrophic event significantly impacting an institution's or program's operations). Under no circumstances shall the Commission be required to extend the maximum time frame to achieve compliance.

- ~~34.~~ The time frame to remedy noncompliance will begin on the date that the Commission first informs a school that a finding of noncompliance has been made but will not begin during a period when the Commission is still in a fact-finding process.
- ~~45.~~ If the school does not bring itself into compliance within the period specified by the Commission or within the maximum time frame described above, the Commission will take adverse action.

~~5. The Commission is not required to allow the maximum time frame to remedy noncompliance in all instances and may establish shorter time frames as deemed appropriate, including taking immediate adverse action.~~

~~N~~O. Denial of Accreditation

~~Θ~~P. Denial of a Substantive Change Application (see revisions below in the next section of this Alert)

~~P~~Q. Withdrawal of Accreditation

1. Following the due process required by these *Rules*, the Commission may take ***an adverse accreditation action to*** withdraw the accreditation of a school any time a school fails to demonstrate compliance with one or more accreditation standards or other requirements and for any of the reasons, or combination thereof, described below.
2. The Commission may, at its discretion, withdraw a school's accreditation and remove the school from the list of ACCSC-accredited schools without first ~~issuing a Warning or Probation~~ ***taking any other action listed in these Rules.***

6. In instances where a school closes without:
 - a. Completing the education for all enrolled students prior to the closure;
 - b. Having an approved teach-out plan (to include a teach-out agreement(s) as may be required) that the school adheres to ***prior to closure***; or
 - c. Having made formal arrangements for all students to complete their education elsewhere through transfer credit, articulation, or as part of a teach-out agreement ***prior to closure***the Commission will consider the school to have had its accreditation withdrawn as of the date that the school closes.

~~Θ~~R. Voluntary Withdrawal or Closure

4. In instances where a school closes without:
 - a. Completing the education for all enrolled students prior to the closure;
 - b. Having an approved teach-out plan (to include a teach-out agreement(s) as may be required) that the school adheres to ***prior to closure***; or
 - c. Having made formal arrangements for all students to complete their education elsewhere through transfer credit, articulation, or as part of a teach-out agreement ***prior to closure***the Commission will consider the school to have had its accreditation withdrawn as of the date that the school closes.

~~R~~S. Other Actions to Monitor Ongoing Compliance

DENIAL OF A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE, COVERAGE OF APPEALS, AND COMPOSITION OF APPEALS PANEL

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*. In addition, the Commission has removed its authority to cease processing a school's application as an appealable action.

New text in **red, bold, italic**; deleted text in ~~blue strikethrough~~; and moved text in green underlined or ~~green strikethrough underlined~~.

SECTION II – APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND SELF-EVALUATION

A. Applications for Accreditation

1. Application for Initial Accreditation¹
 - k. ~~The Commission may cease processing an applicant's Application for Initial Accreditation which had been accepted for processing if the Commission determines that good cause exists for doing so. The school shall be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons to stop processing the application. A school may appeal the Commission's decision in accordance with Section VIII of these Rules.~~

~~1.~~****

SECTION VII – COMMISSION ACTIONS

P. Denial of a Substantive Change Application

2. The Commission's **adverse accreditation** decision **to deny a substantive change** will be delivered to the school in writing and the school will have an opportunity to appeal the Commission's decision in accordance with *Section VIII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*.
3. The Commission may, at its discretion, deny a substantive change application without first ~~issuing a Warning or Probation~~**taking any other action listed in these Rules**.
4. **If the school elects not to appeal the Commission's decision, then the adverse accreditation decision is final.**
5. **Student Notification Requirements:**
 - a. **Upon receipt of notification from the Commission of a decision to deny a substantive change, the school must within seven days inform all students enrolled in the school and those seeking admission of the accreditation decision and indicate where that action can be obtained from the Commission's website.**
 - b. **If the school chooses to appeal the accreditation decision, then the school must inform current and prospective students of the appeal during the appeal process.**
 - c. **Once a decision to deny a substantive change is final, then the school must within seven days inform current and prospective students that the denial of a substantive change action is final.**

¹ Unaccredited schools or schools accredited by another agency seeking ACCSC accreditation.

SECTION VIII – APPEAL OF A COMMISSION DECISION

A. Coverage of Appeals

The appeal procedure specified in this section of the *Rules* is the exclusive remedy for a school that believes that an adverse accreditation decision by the Commission is unwarranted pursuant to the terms set forth in this section of the *Rules*.

1. Only adverse accreditation decisions made by the Commission are subject to appeal. Adverse accreditation decisions are:
 - a. A decision to deny a substantive change application;
 - b. ~~A decision to cease processing an application for initial accreditation as described in these Rules;~~
 - c. A decision to deny an application for initial accreditation; and
 - d. A decision to withdraw accreditation.

D. Appeals Panel

3. Sitting Appeals Panel: ~~Three persons are nominated~~ *Nominees* by the Executive Director of ACCSC from the Standing Appeals Panel ~~and~~ are confirmed by the Commission Chair to serve as the Sitting Appeals Panel, which will fairly and impartially consider a school's appeal. One member will be designated to Chair the Sitting Appeals Panel, one member will be designated as an administrative representative, one member will be designated as an academic representative, and at least one member will be a public member.⁺ *In cases where a single purpose institution is appealing a Commission decision, the Appeals Panel will include a member that is designated as an Educator, Practitioner, and/or Employer. Each Appeal Panel member will be designated to fill only one role.*

~~^{FN1} An Appeals Panel Member may hold more than one designation—for example a member may be designated as the Chair of the Sitting Appeals Panel and as an administrative representative or a member may be designated as a public member and as an academic representative—but in no case will a member be designated as both an administrative and academic representative.~~

SECTION X – NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

C. Notification of Commission Actions to Government Entities and Other Accrediting Agencies

4. The Commission will:
 - a. Provide written notice to the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate state licensing agency, and other accrediting agencies at the same time it notifies the school but no later than 30 days after a final adverse accreditation decision *as defined in Section I (A)(7), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation* and
 - b. Make available to the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate state licensing agency, and other accrediting agencies the reasons for the Commission's decision along with any comments submitted by the school no later than 60 days after a final adverse accreditation decision *as defined in Section I (A)(7), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation* ~~the reasons for the Commission's decision along with any comments submitted by the school.~~

STANDARDS REVISIONS AND SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM OF REVIEW

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION IX – REVISIONS TO AND WAIVERS OF THE *STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION*

A. Authority

3. *The Commission maintains a comprehensive systematic program of review that occurs at regular intervals, involves all relevant constituencies, and that demonstrates that its standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions relevant to the educational or training needs of students. If, at any point during this process the Commission determines that a change is necessary, the Commission will initiate action within 12 months to make the change and complete this change within a reasonable period of time.*
4. The AACSC Bylaws are revised in the manner as described therein.

B. ~~Publication of~~ Proposed Changes to the *Standards of Accreditation and Opportunity to Comment*

1. *Before making a change to a substantive standard, the Commission will provide notice and an opportunity to comment to* ACCSC-accredited and applicant schools, persons, institutions, and organizations affected by or with an interest in the Commission's rules, policies, procedures, and standards *("interested parties").*~~are generally advised of~~ *Such* proposed revisions *are generally provided* through a notice sent by ~~the ACCSC's~~ Executive Director ~~of ACCSC~~ *and posted on the ACCSC website.* ~~The Commission may make changes to the Rules of Process and Procedure and adjust fees without seeking comment as allowed by the Bylaws.~~
2. ~~Generally, interested parties will have 30 days to submit such comments; however, the Commission may establish a shorter or longer comment period as may be deemed necessary. The Commission will be responsive to~~ *interested party* ~~comments received by the comment deadline and~~ *but is not required to consider comments received after the published comment deadline.*
3. ~~The Commission may make changes to the Rules of Process and Procedure and adjust fees without seeking comment as allowed by the Bylaws.~~
24. The Commission will submit to the U.S. Secretary of Education any proposed change in the policies, procedures, or accreditation standards of ACCSC that might alter the Commission's scope of recognition or compliance with the criteria for recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

C. ~~Opportunity for Comment~~

~~The Commission encourages all interested parties to submit written comments concerning proposed changes in the Commission's standards, requirements, policies, and procedures. Generally, interested parties will have 30 days to submit such comments; however, the Commission may establish a shorter or longer comment period as may be deemed necessary. The Commission will be responsive to comments received by the comment deadline and is not required to consider comments received after the published comment deadline.~~

Recodify the Sections to follow.

PILOT PROJECTS

In order to show more clearly ACCSC's alignment with federal regulations as part of the Petition for Re-recognition process with the Department, the Commission is making the following revisions and clarifications to its *Rules*.

SECTION XI – PILOT PROJECTS

B. Application

1. The Commission will consider an application for a pilot project in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. The educational significance of the proposal ***and how the pilot project conforms to commonly accepted academic standards, or the equivalent;***

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

As part of the Petition for Re-recognition process, it was identified that ACCSC's Rules in this regard are in need of updating in order to show more clear alignment with federal regulations.

The Rule is re-written in ***red bold italic***

SECTION X – NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

D. Disclosure of Commission Actions to the Public

5. The Commission ***notifies, upon request, the public if an accredited institution:***
 - a. ***decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation, within 10 business days of receiving notification from the institution that it is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation or***
 - b. ***Lets its accreditation lapse, within 10 business days of the date on which accreditation lapses.***~~after receiving notice of a decision by a school to voluntarily withdraw its accreditation, will provide written notice to the public of such decision within 30 days of the date on which the school's accreditation lapses.~~

REVISIONS TO THE SUBSTANTIVE STANDARDS, STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING

Based upon its review of number and the types of findings cited by on-site evaluation teams and the quality of the school responses, the Commission has noted that schools appear to need to put added focus, resources and training to areas that help to ensure and effectively show ongoing compliance with accrediting standards. Moreover, the Commission and staff have observed that many schools made significant institutional and program changes during and after the pandemic-era and appear to be working to resolve the repercussions of the impact of the policies, documentation, and the strains of trying to continue operations. Given these circumstances, the Commission believes that it is appropriate to add language to the *Standards of Accreditation* to remind schools that training in accreditation standards, policies, and requirements is an important role for a school's staff and faculty. In support of these expectations, the Commission is updating and is continuing to add training resources, such as video tutorials, to its website.

SECTION I – OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION

A. Ownership, Management, and Administrative Capacity

3. Members of school management and administrative employees must participate in ongoing development and training activities that support their particular roles in the school ***including as applicable, ACCSC requirements and procedures.***

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIPS AND SEPARATE FACILITIES

ACCSC continues to receive inquiries related to facilities and program/course delivery options. In reviewing these proposals, the Commission has sought to find common-sense solutions to some of the self-imposed limitations that ACCSC's current *Rules* and *Standards* may present. Of note, the current design and definitions date back to 1999 and while there have been several tweaks and adjustments since then, the overriding principles remain largely intact.

Thus, the Commission turned to its consortium and partnership agreement standards to serve as another category for instances where a school can partner with another entity to offer a portion of an approved program. Context for the revisions are summarized below.

- Placing a greater reliance on consortium and partnership agreements particularly with employers (e.g., hospitals, labs, community colleges, apprentice sites) as a means to remove barriers to innovation;
- As is already required, a school must notify and have approved any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreements with other schools or training providers in advance of such contracts taking effect (see *Section II (A)(8), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);
- Under the new language, a consortium agreement could cover instances where, for example, a school utilizes a facility that is not defined as a separate facility, (e.g., a hospital, lab, or clinic) to conduct training for a portion of a program that is not an externship or a clinical;
- However, under the new language, the use of a consortium agreement cannot be used to excuse meeting ACCSC's separate facility requirements that would otherwise apply—for example, a school could not argue that a lease with a landlord is a consortium or partnership "agreement" rather than a separate facility;

- A school, as is always the case, retains the responsibility to ensure that the education delivered meets accreditation standards and is accountable as such—e.g., a school could not point to failures of a hospital facility as an excuse for not otherwise meeting accreditation standards.

Also, in order for a program to be eligible for federal financial aid it must meet federal definitions/criteria/regulations despite any approval by ACCSC.

New text in **Red, Bold, and Italic** print, and deleted text is ~~blue strikethrough~~.

SECTION I – DEFINITIONS, ACCREDITATION OBLIGATIONS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS, AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Definitions

- 8. The term “consortium or partnership agreement” means any instance where a portion of an ACCSC-accredited school’s approved programs is provided by or at another entity (accredited or unaccredited) or where another entity provides the facilities for the school to offer a portion of an approved program off-site in a program-appropriate setting whereby approval as a satellite location separate facility under these standards is not required.***

Renumber 9 through 20.

C. Educational Objectives

3. A school may enter into consortium or partnership agreements where a portion of a program is offered by ***or at*** an entity other than the ***ACCSC-accredited*** institution in accordance with these *Rules and Substantive Standards*.
5. Regardless of any consortium/partnership agreement or contractual arrangement, only programs or courses that have been recognized or approved in accordance with accrediting requirements may be represented as being within the scope of the school’s institutional accreditation.

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Changes Requiring Notification

A school must notify the Commission of the following:

There is no proposed revision in *Section IV (A)(1)*, but this is included here to show that this notification provision is already in place.

1. Any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreements with other schools or training providers in advance of such contracts taking effect (see *Section II (A)(8), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);

C. Substantive Changes

2. The Commission considers the following to be substantive changes to an educational institution:

- a. Level I – Staff Level Approval:

- xii. A consortium and/or partnership agreement with another school/entity (accredited or unaccredited) to ***provide training and/or facilities for the delivery of*** ~~any~~ portion of a program;

E. Substantive Change Application Requirements

6. Program Approval, Additions, and Modifications

- a. Substantive Change: New Programs or Changes Requiring Prior Commission Approval
 - vi. Consortium/Partnership Agreements: In any instance where a portion of an approved program is ~~offered by~~ **delivered by or at** an entity other than the ACCSC-accredited institution via any consortium, partnership, or contractual agreement, the school must submit the Application for a Consortium/Partnership Agreement or the Application for a Distance Education Consortium/Partnership Agreement as applicable. An on-site evaluation may be required in conjunction with the approval of a consortium/partnership application based upon the scope of the agreement ~~and the accredited status of any other entity offering a portion of the school's program.~~
- b. On-site Evaluation Requirements: An on-site evaluation will be required for new program approval as follows:
 - iv. The addition of distance education program delivery where:
 - 3. A school proposes to offer a portion of a program by distance education through a consortium or partnership agreement with an entity that is not accredited by a recognized accrediting agency; or
 - v. The addition of a consortium/partnership agreement with an entity that is not accredited by a recognized accrediting agency to ~~teach~~ **engage in the delivery of** a portion of a school's program.

SECTION II – PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. General Program Requirements

The following requirements apply to all programs, irrespective of the credential offered.

- 8. Consortium/Partnership Agreements
 - a. In any instance where the school has entered into a consortium, partnership, or contractual agreement ~~to offer a portion of a program~~, the school retains responsibility for the quality of the courses of study and programs offered as well as the achievement of expected and acceptable outcomes irrespective of any such consortium, partnership, or contractual agreement.
 - b. 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, with the exception of an approved teach-out plan or agreement.

RECRUITMENT STANDARDS

The Commission has reviewed a number of requests and proposals for the use of “recruiters” and representative agencies—particularly in international settings—incongruent with the requirement that a school only use its own “employees” to conduct recruiting activities in accordance with *Section IV (A)(3) Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*.

Upon review of these requests and proposals, the Commission believes that the requirement for “employee” may elevate form over substance. The substantive spirit and intent of the standard is to ensure that an institution has sufficient “control” over what an individual acting on behalf—or representing—the school can do or say in the student recruitment process. Therefore, the form through which a school exerts that control may be less important than the substance of the control itself, which likely can be achieved outside of traditional notions of employer/employee relationships and potentially through other forms of agreements and arrangements.

Accordingly, Commission has made the revisions below that replace the term “employee” with “representative,” defines “representative” quite broadly, and which intend to maintain the requirement that regardless of any arrangement or agreement, a school retains the responsibility “for all statements made by and the conduct of the individual, employee, or agent when representing the school.” Please also note that all individual “representatives” would be expected to sign the ACCSC Code of Conduct for Representatives Engaged in Recruitment Activities.

New text in **Red, Bold, and Italic** print, deleted text is ~~blue-strikethrough~~.

SECTION IV – STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADVERTISING, AND DISCLOSURES

A. Recruitment

3. A school only uses its own ~~employees~~ **representatives**^{FN1} to conduct student recruiting activities. ~~and is~~ **A school is** prohibited from engaging employment agencies to recruit prospective students. **Affiliated** Schools^{FN2} ~~under common ownership~~ may ~~employ a single recruiter~~ **share representatives to conduct recruitment activities.**
4. A school is responsible to its students and prospective students for the actions and representations of its recruiters and representatives and, therefore, selects these individuals with the utmost care and provides adequate training and proper supervision. A school has and enforces an acceptable code of conduct for all ~~school personnel~~ **representatives** whose primary responsibilities are to engage in recruiting and admissions functions prior to and during admission and matriculation. The school’s code of conduct is in writing, includes minimally all elements set forth in *Appendix IV, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*, is accepted and dated by the representative and **a the school maintains a** copy ~~of which is maintained in the individual’s personnel file.~~

Replace ~~personnel~~ with **representative** throughout the remainder of this section and *Appendix IV*.

^{FN1} *As used through this Section and in Appendix IV, “representative” means any individual, employee, personnel, or agent with whom the school enters into an arrangement (employment or contractual) whereby the school: a) is responsible for ensuring that the individuals, employees, personnel, or agents are operating in compliance and b) retains responsibility for all statements made by and the conduct of the individual, employee, or agent when representing the school. All requirements of this Section apply to all such representatives. See Appendix IV which requires a signed code of conduct for representatives engaged in recruitment.*

^{FN2} *See Section I, Rules of Process and Procedures, Standards of Accreditation for a Definition of “affiliated schools.”*

**APPENDIX IV – ~~RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS PERSONNEL CODE OF CONDUCT~~
ACCSC Code of Conduct for Representatives Engaged in Recruitment Activities^{FN}**

~~The provisions below~~ **This appendix** sets forth the items that, at a minimum, are to be included in the code of conduct required by *Section IV (A)(4), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*. The school may choose the specific language to be used in its code of conduct so long as the language conforms to the spirit and intent of the items below. The school may also include other elements in the code of conduct as it deems appropriate. The code of conduct must be in writing and accepted, minimally, by all ~~school personnel~~ **representatives** whose primary duties include student recruitment and admissions functions.

^{FN} *As used through this Appendix and in Section IV, “representative” means any individual, employee, or agent with whom the school enters into an arrangement (employment or contractual) whereby the school: a) is responsible for ensuring that the individuals, employees, or agents are operating in compliance and b) retains responsibility for all statements made by and the conduct of the individual, employee, or agent when representing the school. All requirements of this Section apply to all such personnel.*

ACCREDITATION AND APPROVAL DISCLOSURES

During on-site evaluations, teams have observed that information provided as part of an accreditation application, in particular the Application for Renewal of Accreditation, is:

- Frequently inconsistent with regard to approval by a third-party regulatory agency and/or accreditation and
- Does not cover the full array of approvals.

This has the effect of leaving students with incomplete or inaccurate information regarding state agency approval and whether an institution has required programmatic approvals (e.g., programmatic accreditation, state board, national examination type agencies). For example, a school may indicate that it is approved to operate by the Commission on Independent Education in the state of Florida but makes no mention of the Florida Board of Nursing approval for the nursing program. Other examples include cosmetology/barbering schools that may be approved by both a state agency and a Cosmetology/Barbering Board, flight schools that may be approved by both a state agency and the FAA, and truck driving schools that may be approved by both a state agency and a state department of transportation. The lack of complete information also leaves students unsure where to check the status of program approval, where to lodge a complaint, or whether the program is eligible for the student to take an industry examination.

Several years ago, the Commission sought to bridge this issue by requiring institutions to disclose approval by a regulatory agency and adding *Section IV (C)(4)(c), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*. While the *Standards of Accreditation* direct schools to disclose this information, the standards do not provide any guidance on how or where to disclose this information. Therefore, in order to help ensure that students and ACCSC are readily receiving accurate information, the Commission is revising *Section IV (C)(4)(c), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation* with additional direction in the *Catalog Checklist*.

These revisions are included in the July 1, 2025 standards, but go into effect October 1, 2025 in order to give schools time to make the necessary adjustments to catalogs.

SECTION IV – STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADVERTISING, AND DISCLOSURES

C. Disclosures

Schools must make accurate **and readily available** disclosures to students as follows:

4. Accreditation and Approval

- c. **The school must disclose in its catalog all state, federal, and accreditation approvals for which the institution has received, ~~Where a program requires accreditation (institutional or programmatic) and/or approval by a third party regulatory agency (e.g., state or federal approving/authorizing agency, licensing agency, oversight board, national certification entity, institutional or programmatic accreditation, etc.).~~ In cases where a program requires specific approval** for the purpose of licensure, **examination**, certification, or employment, a school **also** discloses to students whether or not such accreditation and/or third-party recognition has been achieved and is in good standing. Any claims regarding any type of accreditation or approval by an oversight entity must be truthful and accurate.

ACCSC Catalog Checklist:

Item Number	Catalog Checklist – Required Items	Page Number(s)
6.	A list of all state and/or federal regulatory or oversight agencies from which the school has received approval/authorization (e.g., state and/or federal approving/authorizing agency, licensing agency, oversight board, national certification entity, etc.) and a list of all institutional or programmatic accrediting agencies from which the school has received a grant of accreditation (if programmatic, include the specific accredited program).	

Current items 6. through 24. renumbered 7. to 25.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The Commission has revised its student services standards to more clearly establish expectations that schools to have “mechanisms for ongoing attentiveness to student needs” that support student achievement and that schools should monitor student satisfaction for this same goal.

New text in **red bold italic text** and deleted text in ~~blue strikethrough text~~.

SECTION VI – STUDENT SERVICES AND RECORDS

A. Student Services

1. The school:

- a. Is attentive to its students’ ~~educational and other~~ needs as a means to support ~~retention~~ **student achievement outcomes;**
- b. ~~Maintains~~ **Maintains** written policies and procedures addressing student services;~~;~~
- c. ~~Makes~~ **Makes** students aware of such services.

5. The school continually monitors and addresses ~~the~~ students' *satisfaction and student* needs for services as a means to assist students achieve successful ~~educational and~~ student achievement outcomes.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In 2023 ACCSC reorganized *Section VII (B), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation* as a means to streamline, reduce redundancy, and to move language to either the *Rules* or *Appendix VI* for better alignment. In so doing, the Commission neither intended nor believes that it made any substantive changes to the language, application, or the expectations of the student achievement standards. However, as part of ACCSC Petition for Re-recognition process, it was identified that ACCSC's Rules may not be clear. For example, the 2023 revision uses the word "except" which has been misconstrued to represent exemption. Thus, the Commission is resetting the language to make clear that schools simply have an opportunity to show the impact of external factors on student achievement but that the presence of such factors does not create an exemption from the normal application of the student achievement standards. Just as in 2023, the Commission does not believe the revisions below are substantive, but instead seek to clearly show and reinforce and the Commission's long-term commitment to assessing and enforcing its student achievement standard.

SECTION VII – STUDENT LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, PROGRESS, AND ACHIEVEMENT

B. Student Achievement

2. The school demonstrates successful student achievement by:
 - a. Documenting through its assessment practices that students are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and competencies intended by the program objectives and
 - b. Maintaining acceptable rates of student graduation and employment in the career field for which the school provided education as well as acceptable pass rates on licensure/certification exams where required by governmental entities to work in a particular career field, ~~except as provided in (4.) below.~~^{FN}

In determining whether the school maintains acceptable rates of student graduation and employment, the Commission will review and consider not only the rates at which students graduate from a training program, attain employment in a training related field, and pass licensure/certification exams required for employment in relation to the Commission's established benchmark rates, but also other factors that impact student achievement as presented by a school.

^{FN} See *Appendix VI* for the Commission's current established *graduation, graduate employment, and licensure/certification exam* benchmark rates ~~for acceptable student achievement~~. See the *Rules of Process and Procedure* for reporting and monitoring related to student achievement.

~~3. The school supports student achievement rates through student transcripts, the school's verifiable records and documentation of initial employment of its graduates, and exam pass rate data obtained from the requiring entity.²~~

- ~~32.~~ For any program that has a graduation, employment, or licensure/certification exam pass rate that is lower than the Commission's established benchmark rates, a school may still demonstrate with supporting documentation the successful achievement of its students in that program by:
 - ~~a. P~~providing other reliable indicators of successful student learning and ~~by~~

² If another entity or agency requires a higher examination pass rate, the higher standard shall apply and the Commission will take into consideration any action taken by another oversight entity or agency with regard to a school's failure to meet an examination pass-rate requirement.

1. Branch Campus

- a. A ~~branch campus~~ *facility approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a branch campus and* that is an independent separate facility established by a main school that:
 - i. Is geographically apart from the main school and permanent in nature;
 - ii. Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, a certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
 - iii. Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization;
 - iv. Has its own budgetary and hiring authority; and
 - v. Provides all necessary educational resources and student services (e.g., advising, testing, library resources, financial aid, employment assistance, etc.) required by accrediting standards.
- b. *A facility that is an independent separate facility established by a main school that:*
 - i. *Is geographically apart from the main school and permanent in nature;*
 - ii. *Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, a certificate, or other recognized educational credential;*
 - iii. *Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization;*
 - iv. *Has its own budgetary and hiring authority; and*
 - v. *Provides all necessary educational resources and student services (e.g., advising, testing, library resources, financial aid, employment assistance, etc.) required by accrediting standards.*

~~A branch campus must be adequately managed in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section I, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation. The management and supervision oversight of the branch campus must be carried out by the same ownership and management that controls the main school.~~

2. Satellite Location

A satellite location is a classroom extension of a main school or branch campus. A satellite location must be within a reasonable and commutable distance from its main school or branch campus oversight entity. It is the responsibility of the school seeking to establish a satellite location to demonstrate with documentation the reasonableness of the commuting distance. A school seeking to establish a satellite location must be able to assure its proper management, control, and supervision through qualified administrative staff and faculty. All educational and student services available at the school seeking to establish a satellite location must be provided and readily available to students attending the satellite location (e.g., advising, testing, learning resources, financial aid, employment assistance, etc.) A satellite location that provides more than 50% of any one program will be required to submit segregated student achievement data for that program *and will be considered an additional location when the definition in Section I (A), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation is applicable.*

3. Distance Education Facility

A distance education facility is a separate facility housing the functions associated with distance education delivery operations. The facility is an extension of a main school or branch campus that

has distance education within the school's scope of accreditation.³ A distance education facility must be licensed by the appropriate state regulatory agency with oversight responsibilities of the school. A distance education facility must be under the same ownership as the main school or branch campus, and must demonstrate proper management, control, and supervision of the distance education facility. *A distance education facility that provides more than 50% of any one program will be considered an additional location when the definition in Section I (A), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation is applicable.*

USE OF A DIMINUTIVE NAME (NICKNAME)

The Commission is implementing a new process to allow schools to use a diminutive name (e.g., a shortened version of its name or nickname) and for both versions of the name to be added to the school's official College 360 profile. Once approved, this allows schools to use both forms of the name largely, although not entirely, interchangeably.

Beginning July 1, 2025, schools now have an opportunity to apply for the use of a diminutive name (nickname). For applications submitted before December 31, 2025, no processing fee shall apply. Applications submitted after December 31, 2025 will require a \$350 processing fee. Upon approval of the application, the diminutive name will be added to the "School Info" tab of the institution's College 360 profile.

APPENDIX I – ACCREDITATION FEES

Application for Use of a Diminutive Name..... \$350

APPENDIX IV – RECRUITMENT AND ADVERTISING

GUIDELINES FOR ADVERTISING

3. A school may only advertise its name *or a diminutive version of its name* as approved by the Commission.^{FN} *In places where the Standards of Accreditation require the inclusion of the school's name, then the school must use the full name of the school (e.g., enrollment agreement, transcript, completion credential).* ~~except that a school may use an abbreviation in its advertising so long as the school's full name is included at least once. In addition, a school may also use an abbreviation of its name for building signage and in documents provided to students, so long as the school's full name is used in those circumstances prominently at least once.~~

^{FN}*Submit the Application for Use of a Diminutive Name for approval of a shorter/abbreviated version of the school's name (e.g., a nickname).*

³ A school will be exempt from obtaining distance education facility approval if the distance education facility is within a reasonable, commutable distance from the main school or branch with distance education approval.

USE OF CONSULTANTS

In 2008, the Commission adopted *Appendix VIII - Statement for Working with External Consultants in the Accreditation Process*. The Commission—informed by the experiences of on-site evaluation team members—had found several experiences when an institution’s utilization/reliance of an external consultant appeared to eclipse the participation of school staff during accreditation reviews. These experiences included work that was clearly produced by a consultant for the sole purpose of achieving a positive accreditation outcome, but that did not represent sustainable practice within the institution and instances where consultants would insert themselves into the on-site evaluation process to answer questions and argue with team members regarding compliance with accrediting standards.

While *Appendix VIII* speaks to the use of “the utilization of external consultants in the accreditation process,” the appendix previously only addressed interaction with external consultants during the on-site evaluation. Given several instances where schools are utilizing consultants in a variety of manners beyond applications for accreditation and on-site evaluations and which have led to significant confusion for both ACCSC staff and school, the Commission has revised *Appendix III* in order to make clear ACCSC’s expectations as it relates to interacting with consultants.

APPENDIX VIII – STATEMENT FOR WORKING WITH EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

ACCSC STATEMENT FOR SCHOOLS WORKING WITH ~~EXTERNAL~~ CONSULTANTS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The following statement is provided to assist an institution undergoing the process of accreditation to understand the perspective of the Commission regarding the utilization of ~~external~~ consultants in the accreditation process.

ACCSC does not take a position with regard to whether institutions should seek the assistance of an ~~external~~ consultant while undergoing any part of the accreditation process, particularly the self-evaluation process. Furthermore, ACCSC does not recommend specific individuals or consulting firms to any institution seeking ~~external~~ assistance.

If an institution chooses to use an ~~external~~ consultant in the accreditation process, the ~~external~~ consultant may not be present at the institution during any part of an on-site evaluation. The **Commission and** on-site evaluation team will expect to communicate directly with management and employees of the institution and not with a consultant employed solely for the purpose of completing the accreditation process. ***Regarding a substantive change process or other required compliance reports and responses, the Commission allows for the involvement of a consultant who may join communication between ACCSC and the institution; however, Commission staff will not communicate with a consultant solely.***

FEE CHANGES

The following fee changes are effective July 1, 2025:

APPENDIX I – ACCREDITATION FEES

Application and Report Fees: ^{FN}

Activity / Application / Report

Fee

Application for Approval of a Degree Program

- Associate Degree\$1,500
- Baccalaureate Degree\$2,000
- Master's Degree\$2,500

Application for Approval of a Degree Program-Affiliated Schools

- 1st SchoolSame as Above\$1,500
- Each Affiliated School – Associate Degree (must be submitted concurrently)\$750
- Each Affiliated School – Baccalaureate Degree (must be submitted concurrently)\$1,000
- Each Affiliated School – Master's Degree (must be submitted concurrently)\$1,250

Application for a Branch Campus

- Part I\$1,2501,500
- Part II\$2,0002,500

Application for a Change of Location

- Part I\$7501,000
- Part II\$150350

Application for Initial Accreditation

- Program Fees to be submitted with Part II:

Program Type	# of Active Programs	Fees
Master's Degree	Each Program will require a separate Application for Approval of a Master's Degree Program	\$1,5002,500/each

- Unrelated Program\$1,2501,500

Application for a Non-Degree Program-Affiliated Schools

- Related Program
 - 1st School\$1,250
 - Each Affiliated School (must be submitted concurrently)\$750
- Unrelated Program
 - 1st School\$1,2501,500
 - Each Affiliated School (must be submitted concurrently)\$750

Application for Use of a Diminutive Name\$350

(See above for payment implementation)

Commission Action Related Fees:

At the Commission's discretion, the fees set forth below will be assessed for the processing of the following types of Commission actions:

Request for Additional Information ~~\$250~~ **\$250**

FN Please be advised that if a school submits an application that does not comply with requirements the Commission will assess a \$250 Incorrect Application Fee

REVISIONS TO THE ACCREDITATION ALLIANCE OF CAREER SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES – BYLAWS

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

In an Accreditation Alert dated June 18, 2025 the Commission proposed amendments to the AACSC Bylaws to clarify the Composition of the Commission and the role of the Executive Committee. In each instance, the membership voted by a greater than 2/3 majority in favor of the proposed amendments.

In addition, the Commission has made corresponding and supplementary changes necessary in the *Rules* to clarify these requirements. Further, the Commission is defining a single-purpose institution to address how the Commission includes educators, practitioners, and/or employers on its decision-making bodies and any appeals panel convened for a single-purpose institution. Additional adjustments are to clearly indicate that the Executive Committee is not a decision-making body.

ARTICLE I – BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ACCREDITING COMMISSION OF CAREER SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Section 1.03 – Composition

The Commission shall be composed of an odd number of not less than nine (9) members and not more than seventeen (17) members *consisting of individuals elected or appointed as established in these Bylaws and designated as set forth in the Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*. The number of Public Commissioners shall be at least ~~30~~**15**% but less than a majority of the total number of Commissioners. ~~The remainder of the Commission shall be composed of School Commissioners.~~ The number of Commissioners may be changed within the foregoing limits by a vote of at least two-thirds of the Commission. The number and composition of the Commission may otherwise be changed only by amendment of the Bylaws pursuant to Section 4.04 hereof.

~~At least 30% of the Commissioners will be designated as an Academic—an individual currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education, training, teaching, or research—and at least 30% of the Commissioners will be designated as an Administrator—an individual currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary program or institutional administration.~~

Section 1.09 – Committees

The Commission may create such standing or special committees as it may deem necessary or desirable and define their duties and responsibilities. Except as provided below, appointments to such committees shall be made by the Chair of the Commission as such office is defined in Section 1.11.a.i hereof and confirmed by the Commission. In addition to any standing or special committees created in accordance with the foregoing, the following shall constitute standing committees of the Commission:

- a. Executive Committee: The membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Corporation, as such offices are defined in Section 1.11 hereof. Between meetings of the Commission, the Executive Committee is *delegated authority and* empowered to act upon matters *related to the management and operations of the Commission requiring immediate action and to issue a Warning to accredited institutions*, but the Executive Committee may not change or waive standards of accreditation or *make decisions that would change the accredited status of a school—i.e., place a school on Warning, Probation, or Show Cause or grant, renew, deny, or withdraw accreditation—which are authorities reserved exclusively by the Commission as the decision-making body.*

ANNOUNCEMENT
COLLECTION OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION
FINANCIAL STATEMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Section V (C), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation requires the annual submission of financial information to include audited financial statements to be prepared in accordance with the *Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Financial Statements and Related Information*. The submission of this information is crucial to the Commission ongoing monitoring mechanisms. To support a more efficient and effective collection of key financial information, schools are now required to supplement the financial statements with an ACCSC **Financial Statement Analysis Worksheet** that includes a summary of key financial information, the federal composite score (as required for those schools participating in federal student aid programs), and a z-score analysis. The submission of the **Financial Statement Analysis Worksheet** will allow for a more timely and efficient collection of important indicators of the financial soundness and health of an institution will aid the Commission in reacting appropriately with regard to any decline in a school's financial stability.

Effective July 1, 2025 and enforced for all annual financial reports submitted on or after October 15, 2025, the Commission will require the submission of the **Financial Statement Analysis Worksheet** that includes the calculation of the federal composite score and z-score analysis.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET INFORMATION

Altman Z-Score Formula	
The Altman Z-Score Consists Of Five Performance Ratios That Are Combined Into A Single Score	
$1.2A + 1.4B + 3.3C + 0.6D + 1.0E = Z\text{-score}$	
Performance Ratios:	Score Thresholds:
Ratio A: Working Capital divided by Total Assets	Score below 1.8: Indicates a firm is headed for bankruptcy
Ratio B: Retained Earnings divided by Total Assets	Score above 3: Indicates a firm is unlikely to enter bankruptcy
Ratio C: Earnings before Interest & Taxes divided by Total Assets	Score between 1.8 and 3.0 Area of uncertainty
Ratio D: Market Value of Equity divided by Total Liabilities	
Where E: Sales divided by Total Assets	

Composite Score Components		
The Composite Score Has Three Components and a Strength Factor		
Ratio	Weight	Strength Factor
Primary Reserve Ratio: Adjusted Equity divided by Total Expenses	30%	x 20
Equity Ratio: Modified Equity divided by Modified Assets	40%	x 6
Net Income Ratio: Income before Taxes divided by Total Revenues	30%	x (33.3xRatio) + 1
Score Thresholds:		
Passing	Score 1.5 or greater	
In the Zone	Score between 1.0 to 1.4 (if school was passing prior year)	
Failing	Score below 1.0	