



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 302
Arlington, Virginia 22201
703.247.4212
703.247.4533 fax
www.accsc.org

ACCSC ACCREDITATION ALERT

To: ACCSC Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
From: Michale S. McComis, Ed.D., Executive Director
Date: July 1, 2026
Subject: Announcement and Revisions to the ACCSC *Standards of Accreditation*

Revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation*:

Chapter 1 – Rules of Process and Procedure

- Submission of Documents to the Commission – *Section I (H)*
- Orientation Evaluation – *Section II (A) & Section III (B)*
- Change of Control – *Section II (E)(2)*
- Consortium/Partnership Agreements -- *Section IV (C)(2)(a)(xii), Section IV (C)(2)(b)(x), and Section IV (E)(6)(a)(vi)*

Chapter 2 – Substantive Standards

- Program Requirements – *Section II (A)(1)(a)(i-iii)*
- Admissions Policies and Practices – *Section V (A)(1 & 4) & Section IX (F)*
- Consortium/Partnership Agreements – *Section II (B)(8)(a & b)*

Fees – Appendix I

- Sustaining Fees
- Application Fees

Bylaws

- Conforming Revisions

The Commission has republished the [*Standards of Accreditation*](#), now dated July 1, 2026 and available for download at www.accsc.org.

All revisions and fees changes are effective July 1, 2026, however, the change in the sustaining fees will be assessed beginning January 1, 2027. 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.

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS TO THE COMMISSION

The Commission has made the following revisions for the submission of documents, which include a requirement that all submissions be organized and submitted as required by the ACCSC Instructions for Electronic Submission, with specifics for the inclusion of navigational bookmarks and hyperlinks, and clear guidelines for digital formats. The new language clarifies that submissions must be accompanied by a certification statement attesting to the accuracy of the information. Furthermore, all documents must be uploaded to the ACCSC's Electronic Record Management System expressly stating that submissions sent by email but not uploaded will not be considered as meeting the submission or notification requirements. These changes are intended to modernize and clarify the submission process and to ensure accuracy, consistency, and document handling.

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

CHAPTER 1 – RULES OF PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

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

H. General Instructions – Submission of Documents to the Commission

1. All submissions and notifications to the Commission must be organized and prepared in accordance with any specific instructions issued by the Commission and with the following specifications. All submissions and notifications must be:
 - a. Typewritten, clear, and legible (photocopies must be legible and photographs must be digital originals or clear copies);
 - b. Organized **and submitted** as required by the ACCSC Instructions for Electronic Submission (e.g., **prepared** ~~bookmarked~~ using required software, **inclusion of navigational bookmarks and hyperlinks**, etc.);
 - c. Identified with the school's ACCSC reference number and ~~include~~ **accompanied by** a certification statement attesting to the accuracy of the information; and
 - d. Uploaded to ACCSC's Electronic Record Management System ~~---~~ (submissions and notifications **sent via e-mail and** not uploaded will not be considered to have met ~~notification submission~~ or ~~submission-notification~~ requirements).
2. Instructions for completing applications and reports are included on the forms for each process. A school may, upon request, receive special or additional instructions from the ACCSC staff either by telephone, letter, e-mail, or in person at the ACCSC office.
3. ACCSC requires that all documentation be submitted in English or accompanied by an appropriate English translation.

ORIENTATION EVALUATION

The language regarding the Orientation Evaluation has been moved from *Section III (B), Rules of Process and Procedure* and consolidated into *Section II (A)(1), Rules of Process and Procedure* under the Application for Initial Accreditation section. This move places the Orientation Evaluation into the context of the application process where it occurs and gives greater flexibility to conduct these reviews in a more expeditious virtual manner.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REQUIREMENTS - CHANGE OF CONTROL

The Commission has modified substantive change-change of control language to: a) state more plainly what is required with regard to changes and modification of ownership and b) clarify requirements with regard to “warrants, options, and other rights to acquire ownership/controlling interests.” The Commission will also use the change of control application and modification of ownership report to provide additional guidance and examples with regard to the requirements.

With regard to a “total-reevaluation” requirements for schools that undergo a change of control, based on its experience the Commission has found that in instances where a school that has undergone a change of control and which has several years remaining in its term of accreditation, a significant period of time goes by before the Commission may discover issues or problems related to the school’s operations and/or compliance with accrediting standards under the new ownership. Therefore, the Commission proposed in the May 7, 2026 Call for Comment that a total-reevaluation be required in any instance where a school would have greater than 24 months left in its term of accreditation post transaction as a means to provide an opportunity for the new owner to undergo a self-evaluation process with the newly acquired school.

Upon reviewing the responses to the Call for Comment, one commenter made the following observations:

We respectfully recommend additional clarification regarding the proposed requirement for a total re-evaluation when more than twenty-four months remain in an institution's accreditation term following a change of control transaction. We understand and appreciate the Commission's rationale. New ownership structures can introduce changes in leadership, governance, resources, and operational practices that warrant additional oversight. At the same time, greater transparency regarding the circumstances under which the Commission may determine that a total re-evaluation is unnecessary would be beneficial. Specifically, institutions and prospective owners could benefit from additional guidance regarding factors that may constitute good cause, including but not limited to institutional performance history, compliance record, leadership continuity, financial stability, operational continuity, and demonstrated capacity to maintain compliance following the transaction. Such guidance would improve predictability and facilitate planning while preserving the Commission's ability to exercise appropriate oversight when warranted.

Generally, the Commission agrees that extenuating circumstances may exist and as such included an option for the school/new owner to “show good cause” and to make such a case why a total re-evaluation is not warranted. The Commission also agrees with the commenter that “institutional performance history, compliance record, leadership continuity, financial stability, operational continuity, and demonstrated capacity to maintain compliance following the transaction” are all factors that a school could rely on in making its case among others. Importantly, however, is the track record not just of the school but also of the new owner. In the Commission’s experience, despite a school’s past record of performance it tends to be the experience and commitment of the new owner that drives either the school’s success or failure. A new owner’s ability to show a past record of performance in operating schools in a manner that delivers on its obligations to students, demonstrates student success and compliance with accreditation standards, and shows a commitment to integrity, fairness, and ethical practice are also factors that Commission is likely to consider.

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

CHAPTER 1 – RULES OF PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

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

E. Substantive Change Application Requirements

2. Change of Control and Change of Ownership^{FN}

b. Examples of Transactions Considered to Be a Change of Ownership and Control: ...

ix. Exercising a right to acquire control (through ownership or otherwise) through any agreement, option, warrant, or other means.

f. Change/Modification in Ownership Not Resulting in a Change of Control: ~~The Commission is principally concerned with the actual ability to control rather than the form through which control is exercised and does not require controlling parties that retain control after a change of ownership transaction to submit a change of control application. Such cases include:~~

i. A change in ~~the~~ ownership that ***results in a less than 10% change but*** does not result in a change of control ***requires the submission of written notification to the Commission at least 10 days prior to the transaction.*** ~~For example, a 100% owner sells 25% of the ownership retaining 75% and thus retaining control. In such instances, a transaction which results in a 10% or greater change in the ownership requires the submission of a Modification of Ownership Report. A transaction resulting in a less than 10% change in ownership requires written notification to the Commission.~~

ii. ***A change in ownership that results in a 10% or greater change but does not result in a change of control requires the submission of a Modification of Ownership Report at least 30 days prior to the transaction.***

iii. A transaction whereby the ownership entity/*ies* changes but the same party/*ies* who had the ability to control the actions of the school (i.e., majority ownership interest) retain/*s* that ability after the transaction does not constitute a change of control but does require the submission of a Modification of Ownership Report ***at least 30 days prior to the transaction.*** ~~For example, a sole proprietorship changing to a limited liability partnership would not be considered a change of control if the ownership party that originally had the ability to control the direction of the school retained a majority ownership interest and the ability to control the direction of the school in the newly created LLP. This type of transaction requires the submission of a Modification of Ownership Report.~~

g. Change of Control Application Exclusions: The following are not considered changes of control that require approval through the filing of a change of control application.

iii. ***Unexercised or inchoate*** ~~Options, warrants, and other rights to acquire ownership/controlling interests:—These provisions—~~are generally not considered in determining ***current*** ownership/control ~~unless accompanied by agreements that substantially affect the ability to control the management and operations of the school.~~ However, should any ***such*** such option or right to acquire control—~~(through ownership, interest, or otherwise)—~~be exercised, the school must file a change of control application and receive advance approval in accordance with these *Rules*.

r. Total Re-Evaluation: ~~If warranted~~ ***In all cases, when the length of time remaining in the school's term of accreditation post transaction is greater than 24 months,*** the Commission ~~will~~***may*** require the school and any separate facilities to undergo a total re-evaluation, ***unless the school can show good cause as to why a total re-evaluation is unwarranted.*** A total re-evaluation of the school will require the school's director to attend the next scheduled Accreditation Workshop, the submission of an Application for Renewal of Accreditation and Self-Evaluation Report, the submission of all required fees, and a full-team on-site evaluation as prescribed by *Section III, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation.*

^{FN} See the Application for a Change of Control-Part I and the Modification of Ownership Report for specific requirements and examples.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Commission has added explicit language that schools must submit the appropriate substantive change application for the approval of any new program as set forth in the *Rules*. Moreover, although implied throughout the *Standards of Accreditation* the Commission has added language that demonstrating sufficient experience and resources necessary to undertake a change is a condition of approval. This is particularly important in cases where schools seek to change mission, change educational objectives, and/or significantly expand the range/scale/scope of programs offered such that the school accredited by ACCSC would become fundamentally different.

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

CHAPTER 2 – SUBSTANTIVE STANDARDS

SECTION II – PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. General Program Requirements

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

1. Approval and Programmatic Accreditation

a. Schools must:

- i. ~~h~~**Have** each program reviewed and approved by the Commission before the program is offered to students;^{FN}
- ii. **Submit the appropriate substantive change application for the approval of any new program as set forth in the Rules; and**
- iii. **Demonstrate sufficient experience and resources necessary to offer a program.**

^{FN} **For a school applying for accreditation for the first time, this means that each program offered by the school must be included in the initial accreditation application process.**

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

The Commission reviewed faculty qualifications under *Section II (B)(7), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation* which considers “outstanding professional experience and contributions to the occupational field of study” in lieu of a formal degree for teaching in an academic degree program. The review included the history and intent of the standard when it was developed and that the Commission purposefully placed the burden with the school to make determinations in this area (i.e., there is not a need for a “waiver” in these cases). The Commission considered how the standard has been applied in different scenarios and the subjectivity associated with the term “outstanding.” Based on its review and the support expressed through the responses to the May 7, 2026 Call for Comment, the Commission has determined to maintain the “in lieu of” allowance but to strike the expectation of “outstanding” professional experience and to retain the requirement that schools have the responsibility and burden to show in all instances that its faculty possess appropriate qualifications. This does not require the submission of a waiver request because the allowance is incorporated in the standard, but schools must be able to “justify and document” to an on-site evaluation team or the Commission (e.g., during an on-site evaluation or in response to a finding) “why the professional experience and contributions to the occupational field warrants substitution of the related degree.”

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

CHAPTER 2 – SUBSTANTIVE STANDARDS

SECTION III – EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

B. Faculty Qualifications

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

DISTANCE EDUCATION ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

Based on its prior review of this section and the support expressed through the responses to the May 7, 2026 Call for Comment, the Commission determined that *Section V (A)* is sufficient for assessing a school's admissions criteria across an array of residential, hybrid, or 100% distance education programs and that having a specific Distance Education admissions assessment standard is redundant. Under *Section V (A)*, the onus rests with the school to show that it has admissions criteria designed to admit only those students who are reasonably capable of successfully completing and benefiting from the training offered and which take into account the nature of the training and education provided and the program's responsibilities and demands. Moreover, the revisions below remove the expectation that school assess "learning styles" as part of the admissions criteria as experience with learning technologies have expanded greatly since the time that the distance education standards were first developed and promulgated. The Commission, however, also determined that an assessment of access and technical readiness prior to enrollment in a distance course or program remains a reasonable expectation of the *Standards*—e.g., does the student have sufficient access to equipment, bandwidth, hardware, or software that may be necessary to participate in the distance education platform. Based on the foregoing, the Commission has made the following revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation*.

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

CHAPTER 2 – SUBSTANTIVE STANDARDS

SECTION V – ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A. General Requirements

1. The school must develop admissions criteria that are designed to admit only those students who are reasonably capable of successfully completing and benefiting from the training offered **and which take into account the nature of the training and education provided and the program's responsibilities and demands.**
2. The school must publish in its catalog and inform, prior to admission, each applicant for enrollment of the program's admission requirements, process, and procedures; the nature of the training and education provided; and the program's responsibilities and demands. (See also *Section IV (C), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation.*)
3. The school must consistently and fairly apply its admission requirements.
4. Prior to enrollment the school must:

- a. Determine that an applicant meets the school's admissions requirements;
- b. For distance education courses or programs, review an applicant's access and technical readiness relative to the school's specific distance education platform/environment;**
- ~~b.c.~~ Secure documentation to demonstrate that each applicant meets all admission requirements; and
- ~~e.d.~~ Document that applicants rejected did not meet admissions requirements.

SECTION IX – DISTANCE EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

... These elements include proper authorization, management, program elements, ~~prospective~~ student assessment, faculty, student services, and distance education facilities.

A. General Distance Education Requirements

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

2. Schools must ensure that:
 - ~~i.~~ ~~Only~~ appropriate programs or courses of study are taught using distance education methodologies (the delivery of educational materials via technology); ~~that~~
 - ii. There are appropriate admissions criteria;**
 - ~~iii.~~ ~~a~~Assessment measures are in place for ~~admissions~~, student progress, and student achievement; and ~~that~~
 - ~~iv.~~ ~~a~~Appropriate resources and services are available to support student success.

~~F. Admissions Requirements and Enrollment~~

- ~~1. The school must demonstrate compliance with Section V, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation and must be able to document that students admitted into distance education programs or courses of study met the school's admissions criteria.~~
- ~~2. The school must establish an admissions process for distance education programs and courses of study that includes the following:
 - ~~a. 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.~~
 - ~~b. An assessment of the student's capability to benefit from enrolling in a distance education program prior to enrollment. 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.~~~~
- ~~3. The school must demonstrate the validity and reliability of the assessment tools used to assess a student's readiness for distance education online learning minimally using engagement surveys, academic progress, and student achievement data.~~

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Based on its review of inquiries and proposals submitted by schools along with generally positive support responses to the May 7, 2027 Call for Comment, the Commission has revised the *Rules* to allow more than 50% of a program to be offered through a consortium/partnership agreement when a school can show the Commission that such an arrangement is appropriate and to the benefit of students. This revision is not meant to allow for the significant outsourcing of a program; however, the Commission acknowledged that there can be developed high-quality programs where ACCSC-accredited schools can partner with other educational institutions to offer dual degree programs or with business and industry to provide cooperative training and hands-on skill development. When such arrangements represent 50% or more of a program, the Commission will require a justification from the school as to why such an agreement should be allowed.

One commenter suggested that the Commission add "...with the exception of those following local regulatory requirements." The Commission reviewed this suggestion and determined not to add this language to the revised *Rule*, primarily for two reasons. Firstly, the "local regulatory requirement" may be intended to prevent outside providers from offering a significant portion of a program under the regulators purview and accrediting standards should not automatically make an exemption for that regulatory limit (i.e., if a regulatory entity limits an agreement to 33%, this alone should not be grounds for an automatic exemption from the Commission's limits) and secondly, the school will have the opportunity to make its case in the application as to why any other regulatory requirements should be taken into account when applying for the program to be delivered via a consortium/partnership agreement.

As is currently the case, the school in all instances retains the responsibility for the program to be offered in a manner that meets ACCSC's standards irrespective of any consortium/partnership agreement.

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

CHAPTER 1 – RULES OF PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

SECTION IV – NON-SUBSTANTIVE & SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION & 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:
 - xii. A consortium and/or partnership agreement with another school/entity (accredited or unaccredited) for the delivery of ~~a portion of a program~~ ***less than 50% of the total clock or credit hours of a program***; and
 - xiii. An Institutional Teach-Out Agreement (unless the agreement establishes a permanent separate facility)
 - b. Level II – Commission Level Approval:
 - viii. An addition of a branch campus or other separate facility; ~~and~~
 - ix. An Institutional Teach-Out Agreement that establishes a permanent separate facility; ***and***
 - x. ***A consortium/partnership agreement with another school/entity (accredited or unaccredited) for the delivery of 50% or more of the total clock or credit hours 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 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 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 on the scope of the agreement.

CHAPTER 2 – SUBSTANTIVE STANDARDS

SECTION II – PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

B. General Program Requirements

8. Consortium/Partnership Agreements
 - a. In any instance where the school has entered into a consortium/~~partnership, or contractual~~ agreement, 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~~ ***Any program where 50% or more*** of the total number of clock or credit hours ***is*** offered ~~required in a program~~ via a consortium/~~partnership, or contractual agreement~~, ***requires review and approval by the Commission. A school may not award more than 75% of the total number of clock or credit hours required in a program via a consortium/partnership agreement,*** with the exception of an approved teach-out plan or agreement.

FEE INCREASES

Sustaining Fees

The AACSC Bylaws allow the Commission to increase sustaining fees up to 3% without a vote by the member schools on a triennial basis. The Commission last authorized a 3% increase in 2023. Due to increasing costs related to travel and other key components of the Commission's work, the Commission has authorized an increase for 2026. Effective July 1, 2026 the Commission has increased sustaining fees by 3%. Although the increase is technically effective July 1, 2026, the fee increase will actually be calculated for sustaining fees due to the Commission January 1, 2027 and later.

Accreditation Fees

The Commission has also increased certain Accreditation Fees to better align with the resources expended for the review of applications. The Commission has also authorized a \$1,500 fee for instances where a school undergoes a substantive change without submitting the required application and/or receiving approval from the Commission prior to making the change given the significant additional work placed on the Commission and staff in these instances. All fee increases shown below are effective July 1, 2026.

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

APPENDIX I – ACCREDITATION FEES

ACCREDITATION FEES

Sustaining Fees (from Section 3.01 of the AACSC Bylaws):

Effective July 1, 2026, members of the Corporation shall pay dues annually in accordance with the following:

- i. If the gross tuition of the member is \$850,000 or less, the dues shall be \$1,5~~9145~~ plus .00~~30332945~~ times gross tuition over \$200,000;
- ii. If the gross tuition of the member is greater than \$850,000 but not more than \$2,500,000, dues shall be \$3,7~~13605~~ plus .0011~~6733~~ times gross tuition over \$850,000; and
- iii. If the gross tuition of the member is greater than \$2,500,000, dues shall be \$5,8~~35655~~ plus .0001~~7469~~ times gross tuition over \$2,500,000.

Activity / Application / Report

Application for a Consortium/Partnership Agreement.....	\$1,500,000
Application for a Distance Education Consortium/Partnership Agreement.....	\$1,500,000
Application for a Change of Name	
• Part I.....	\$250,500
Modification of Ownership Report.....	\$250,500
Application for Initial Accreditation	
• Part I.....	\$750,250
• Use of University in Name to be submitted with Part I (if applicable).....	\$250,500
Application for Use of “University” in School Name	
• Part I.....	\$750,000
• Part II.....	\$250,500

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:

Reporting.....	\$250,500
Warning.....	\$500,750
Probation.....	\$1,00,250
<i>Show Cause Order</i>	<i>\$1,250</i>
<i>Failure to Submit Substantive Change Application within Prescribed Timeframe</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>

BYLAWS CONFORMING REVISIONS

ACCSC has made the following conforming revisions to the AACSC Bylaws:

Section 1.08 – This revision conforms to an earlier revision made to Section 1.06 to allow a Commissioner elected to fill a partial term to also run for one subsequent consecutive term.

Section 1.09 (b) – This revision conforms to an earlier revision made to *Section VII, Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation* which now includes a “Show Cause Order” amongst the actions the Commission may take. This section has also been recodified in an effort to make the language clearer.

Section 3.01 – This revision conforms to the Sustaining Fee increase promulgated herein.