



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

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Candidate Profile

Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

Position Overview

- The Executive Director/CEO serves as the chief executive and administrative officer of ACCSC, accountable to the Commission and working in close partnership with the Chair and Executive Committee.
 - The Executive Director ensures the integrity, effectiveness, and continuous improvement of the accreditation process while positioning ACCSC as a respected, forward-thinking authority in career education.
 - The role requires strategic leadership, operational excellence, regulatory sophistication, and unwavering commitment to students, quality, and ethical practice.
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Summary of the Ideal Executive Director

The next leader of ACCSC will be:

- A mission-driven accreditation expert
- A credible regulatory authority
- A strategic thinker and public voice
- A disciplined nonprofit executive
- A trusted partner to the Commission
- A principled advocate for students

This individual will ensure that ACCSC continues to uphold rigorous standards while advancing innovation, accountability, and student success in career education.

Ideal Candidate Profile

1. Mission-Driven Accreditation Leader

The successful candidate will demonstrate deep commitment to ACCSC's mission of serving as a dependable authority on educational quality and training in career education institutions.

Key Attributes:

- Strong belief in peer review, on-going assessment and evaluation, continuous improvement, and accountability
- Demonstrated commitment to student-centered decision-making
- Clear understanding of how accreditation impacts student outcomes, public trust, and federal policy

- Demonstrated history of advancing best practices in higher education, accreditation as a quality assurance enterprise, institutional integrity, and ethical standards

This leader must internalize ACCSC's principles: peer review, self-evaluation, continuous improvement, quality, accountability, integrity, and community.

2. Accreditation & Regulatory Expertise

Given the regulatory environment surrounding institutional accreditation, the Executive Director must bring substantial experience navigating federal and state oversight frameworks.

Experience Profile:

- 10+ years in senior leadership within:
 - Institutional or programmatic accreditation
 - Higher education administration
 - Education policy
 - Regulatory compliance
 - Nonprofit governance
- Direct experience interacting with the U.S. Department of Education
- Familiarity with:
 - Recognition processes
 - Federal Title IV implications
 - Compliance audits and reporting
 - State regulatory bodies
 - Congressional and public scrutiny of accrediting agencies

The ideal candidate understands the delicate balance between accountability and member support and can defend and enforce accrediting decisions with credibility and clarity.

3. Strategic & Thought Leadership

ACCSC seeks a leader who will not merely administer the organization, but elevate it.

Strategic Capabilities:

- Ability to set long-term strategic direction in collaboration with the Commission
- Position ACCSC as a thought leader in the future of accreditation

- Monitor and interpret trends in:
 - Workforce education
 - Federal and state higher education policy,
 - Online and hybrid delivery models
 - Competency-based education
 - Outcomes-based accountability
- Anticipate regulatory and political changes impacting career schools

The Executive Director must articulate a compelling vision that ensures ACCSC remains relevant, credible, and forward-looking.

4. Nonprofit Executive Management Excellence

As leader of a \$6M nonprofit organization, the Executive Director must demonstrate operational and financial sophistication.

Core Competencies:

- Full P&L responsibility and budget oversight
- Financial stewardship and sustainability planning
- Organizational design and systems optimization
- IT infrastructure modernization
- Human capital leadership (hiring, development, performance management)
- Risk management and internal controls

The ideal candidate has successfully led a mission-driven organization through growth, modernization, or regulatory complexity.

5. Governance Partnership & Board Relations

The Executive Director must understand and embrace the distinction between governance and management.

Essential Skills:

- Experience working with a governing board in a non-voting executive capacity
- Ability to provide:
 - Timely, objective information
 - Policy guidance
 - Strategic recommendations

- Skill in supporting Commissioners in making fair, balanced, and defensible accreditation decisions
- Comfort operating under annual performance review by the Commission

This leader must be collegial, transparent, and respectful of peer-review governance structures.

6. External Relations & Diplomacy

The Executive Director serves as a primary ambassador for ACCSC.

Stakeholder Engagement Includes:

- Federal regulators
- State agencies
- Accredited institutions
- Peer accrediting bodies
- Trade associations representing career schools
- Public and media audiences

The ideal candidate demonstrates:

- High emotional intelligence
 - Strong written and verbal communication
 - Credibility in complex or contentious settings
 - Ability to maintain constructive relationships amid scrutiny
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7. Cultural Leadership & Values Alignment

ACCSC's culture emphasizes:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Continuous improvement
- Community
- Students First

The Executive Director must model these values visibly and consistently.

Personal Characteristics:

- Ethical and principled decision-maker

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- Calm under pressure
- Measured, analytical, and fair
- Transparent and consistent
- Highly collaborative yet decisive
- Committed to professional development and scholarship

Leadership Challenges & Opportunities

- The next Executive Director will likely confront:
- Heightened federal scrutiny of accreditation
- Rapid evolution in workforce education delivery models
- Pressure for measurable student outcomes
- Increasing public accountability
- Digital transformation of accreditation processes
- Maintaining member support while enforcing rigorous standards

The ideal candidate sees these not as risks alone, but as opportunities to strengthen ACCSC's leadership role.

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Key Responsibilities

- Assist and support the Commission in achieving its mission of serving as a dependable authority as to the quality of education and training offered by career education institutions.

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- Assist and support the Commission in establishing and fostering high educational standards, quality, accountability, and ethical practices among accredited institutions.
- Administer the Commission's operations including but not limited to all aspects of the accreditation process, annual budgets and financial management, organizational design and IT infrastructure, staff management and human resources, and physical space and equipment.
- Cultivate and distribute timely information, advice, and direction needed by the Commission to set strategy; develop accrediting standards, policies, procedures; and make accreditation decisions.
- Ensure the delivery of clear and timely correspondence to member institutions expressing the Commission's decisions, actions, and guidance as well as any changes or revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation* or the accreditation process.
- Implement actions determined by the Commission, and perform such other duties as assigned by the Chair of ACCSC, Executive Committee, or the Commission.
- Maintain effective and harmonious relationships with the Commission, staff, the U.S. Department of Education, state regulators, accredited institutions, other accrediting agencies, trade associations representing career schools, and other ACCSC constituents.
- Engage in education policy discussions across a spectrum of forums representing the interests of ACCSC and accreditation as an enterprise.
- Schedule, plan, and attend all meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee participating in deliberations in a non-voting capacity unless otherwise directed by the executive committee.
- Devote time and attention to professional development activities, scholarships, and research that are complementary to ACCSC.

The Executive Director is accountable to the Commission for the successful achievement of these duties and responsibilities, with the Chair acting on behalf of the Commission to oversee and review the Executive Director's annual performance in accordance with the administrative policies and procedures of ACCSC.

Educational Background

- A graduate degree in a field aligned to the requirements and expectations of the position such as educational or organizational leadership, educational administration, public policy, nonprofit management, is required.
 - A doctorate or terminal professional degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D.) is strongly preferred.
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Experience Profile Snapshot

The strongest candidates are likely to come from one or more of the following backgrounds:

- Senior executive within an institutional accrediting agency
- President/CEO of a mission-driven education nonprofit
- Senior higher education administrator with compliance and accreditation depth
- Education policy leader with regulatory experience
- Chief academic or compliance officer in a multi-campus career education system

Required Experience

10+ years of relevant leadership experience in accreditation, higher education, education policy, regulatory compliance, or a related field.

Compensation and Benefits:

- Salary Range: \$250,000 - \$325,000 annually. Starting salary will be determined based on relevant executive leadership experience, credentials, organizational management expertise, and overall qualifications.
- Retirement Contribution
- Medical/Dental/Vision Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Vacation Leave
- Paid Holidays
- Parking
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Partner Travel Benefit

This is an Arlington, VA based position. Must be able to travel a minimum of 25% of the time/~1 trip per month. Must hold a valid driver's license

Position start date: July 1, 2027

Applications will be accepted **October 1, 2026 through December 1, 2026**

To apply for this position, submit a letter of interest - that includes an affirmation of availability for an in-office Arlington, VA position and ability/willingness to travel a minimum of 25%, and resume to: Executivesearch@accsc.org