

## **POLICY ON ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS AND CHANGES OF LOCATION**

ACCET has established the policies and procedures identified in this document to guide an accredited institution in applying for ACCET prior approval to:

- I: Expand the institution's accreditation to encompass additional locations, including: (a) a branch, (b) an auxiliary (satellite) classroom, and/or (c) a temporary avocational classroom.
- II. Change the institution's location.

Information related to additional locations is provided in Part I, including eligibility requirements to add locations, along with the definitions and specific application processes for different types of additional sites. Part II outlines the application process to obtain approval to change the location of an institution.

### **I. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS**

The accreditation of a main campus may be expanded to include additional locations under the conditions and procedures prescribed in this document. Note that each additional location must have the identical ownership/authority as the main campus and utilize the same name as the main. The only exceptions to this naming convention are instances in which: (a) programmatic or geographic descriptors are added to the name (e.g. Franklin Institute – Miami, Franklin Institute – Tampa, Franklin Institute – Orlando) and/or (b) state regulations prohibit the use of a particular name (e.g. “university” or “college” limited to institutions offering degree programs).

Of primary concern to ACCET is the ability of an institution seeking to expand to demonstrate the planning capability and the educational, financial, operational, managerial, personnel and physical resources necessary to ensure continued compliance with all ACCET standards and policies. An institution making application for an additional location must be prepared to administer all aspects of the operation as a fully accredited extension of the main campus effective the first day of approval. The failure of a branch, auxiliary (satellite) classroom, or temporary avocational classroom to be in full compliance with ACCET standards and policies is a direct reflection on the main campus and will call into question its accredited status.

ACCET policies guide and monitor the process for establishing an additional location as an extension of the main campus. Specific restrictions have been established, which preclude an institution from making an application for an additional site, as noted below:

1. Institutions accredited for a period of one year may not make application for any new branches or auxiliary classrooms.
2. Institutions receiving reinstatement of accreditation following a change of ownership/control may not make application for any new branches, auxiliary classrooms, or temporary avocational for 12 months following the change of ownership/control.

3. Institutions involved in the reaccreditation process may not make application for additional locations following the originally scheduled due date of the Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER) and prior to a final Commission decision on the institution.
4. Following a grant of initial accreditation of three years or longer, institutions are restricted from making application for the first year. Thereafter, a maximum of one branch and two auxiliary classrooms in any given 12-month period may be submitted.
5. Following a grant of reaccreditation of three or more years, institutions may make application to establish a maximum of one branch and three auxiliary classrooms in any given 12-month period.
6. If an ACCET accredited institution seeks to add a branch or auxiliary classroom, as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is not accredited by ACCET, it will be subject to all the requirements outlined in this policy document, except that no such branch or auxiliary classroom location will be granted approval until an on-site visit report and response is reviewed and accepted by the ACCET Accrediting Commission.
7. If an ACCET accredited institution seeks to add a branch, as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is accredited by ACCET, the institution will be subject to all the requirements outlined in this policy document, except that no preliminary visit will be required to the branch. Because an additional site is included within, but not separable from, the accreditation status of the main campus, the independent sale or acquisition of such a site will simultaneously discontinue the site's accredited status with the original main campus. Upon receipt of interim approval, the branch that is purchased by or merged with an ACCET accredited institution will be included within the grant of accreditation of the purchasing/acquiring institution, pending final approval of the Commission following review of the Branch Analytical Self-Evaluation Report (BASER) and on-site visit. Note that program approval does not automatically transfer with the addition of a branch, as a result of a merger or purchase of any operational entity. The institution acquiring or purchasing the new branch will apply for program approval as warranted, with any on-site program evaluation completed through the scheduled branch on-site visit, and not through a separate program visit.
8. An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies.

An institution may request and may be granted a special consideration by the Accrediting Commission, if it can demonstrate a compelling rationale to waive any of these restrictions. Early conferral with and guidance from ACCET staff is recommended.

#### **ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS CATEGORIZED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS:**

**Branch**: A full-service facility, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main campus. A branch has the same ownership and management as the main campus, is permanent in

nature, offers complete educational programs, and has its own budget and sufficient administrative and instructional personnel to provide comprehensive educational and student services.

**Auxiliary (Satellite) Classroom:** An instructional site, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main or branch campus. An auxiliary classroom has the same ownership and management as the main campus, offers one or more courses/programs, and/or provides a specialized training facility required for one or more programs. All admissions/enrollment activities and students services are provided at the main or branch campus to students attending the satellite site; therefore an auxiliary classroom has minimal administrative staff with limited administrative responsibilities. For institutions offering vocational programs/courses and/or Intensive English Programs, the auxiliary classroom must be located within a reasonable distance from the main or branch campus, based on documented evidence that students at the satellite site have appropriate access to student services provided at the main or branch campus.

**Temporary Avocational Classroom:** A temporary avocational instructional site, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main or branch campus of an institution offering only avocational programs/courses and utilized as a supplemental classroom for a maximum period of six months. A temporary classroom has the same ownership and management as the main/branch campus and offers instruction in one or more courses/programs on a temporary basis. All admissions/enrollment activities and students services are provided at the main or branch campus to students attending the satellite site; therefore a temporary classroom has minimal administrative staff with limited administrative responsibilities. If a classroom is to be used for more than six months, the institutions must seek approval for an auxiliary classroom.

## **ADDITIONAL LOCATION APPLICATION PROCESS**

Described below is the process for seeking and obtaining prior approval from ACCET for each of the following types of additional locations:

- A. Branches
- B. Auxiliary (Satellite) Classrooms
- C. Temporary Avocational Classrooms

If applicable, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and the state in which the new site is located will be notified by ACCET, at the time of the interim approval, of the inclusion of the site in the main campus' grant of accreditation. If the institution participates in Title IV funding, it must follow the policies and procedures established by USDE for notifying the Department of the new site. The letter from ACCET serves to advise USDE of the institution's approval by the accrediting agency and does not take the place of any formal notification that must be submitted by the institution.

### **A. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR BRANCHES**

#### **Step 1: Application**

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other

Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval to establish new branches must provide the following documentation:

- **Branch Campus:** Completed ACCET Document 26.1 - Application for Branch Approval with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule. This application is prepared and submitted electronically through the Accreditation Management System (AMS).

An institution should allow a maximum of 30 days for processing from the date a complete application for a branch is received in the ACCET office. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without the proper state license or, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state, a letter from the state documenting the exemption. Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for the opening of the institution's new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application can not occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. Upon receipt, the institution must submit a copy of the state's approval of the additional location to ACCET.

If the programs or courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new or revised programs/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be granted with the stipulation that the program/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

## **Step 2: Preliminary On-Site Visit**

After the application for a new site has been reviewed by ACCET staff and determined to be complete, the institution will be required to submit ACCET Document 8 – Request for On-Site Evaluation Visit and the applicable fee as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule. A preliminary on-site visit will be conducted by an ACCET Commission Representative or designee, prior to the opening of the location.

Specific guidelines relative to this on-site visit will be provided at the time the visit is scheduled. The focus of the visit will be to establish that the facility, equipment, supplies, administrative support, and faculty are appropriate and adequate for the institution's projected program offerings and enrollments. During the preliminary visit, the following documents must be available for review: (1) a copy of the application, along with all supporting documentation and (2) the operations manual(s) that guides the day-to-day operation of the institution. A written report of the preliminary visit will be completed by the Commission Representative and submitted for review by the ACCET Branching Review Committee.

### **Step 3: Interim Approval Process**

Once the institution's application is complete and the preliminary on-site visit has been conducted, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee as to whether permission to establish a new site should be granted. The Executive Committee of the Accrediting Commission will make a determination as to whether to grant interim approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction at a prospective branch prior to receipt of ACCET interim approval.

A letter of interim approval will include information and timelines relative to: (1) the submission of the Branch Analytic Self-Evaluation Review (BASER), (2) the scheduling of the full on-site visit, and (3) the review cycle in which the branch will be considered for final approval by the Accrediting Commission. Additionally, the institution may be notified that a representative of the institution will be required to attend the next available Accreditation Workshop. Final consideration of the institution's application for a branch campus by ACCET will take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Accrediting Commission following a full on-site after the site begins operation.

### **Step 4: Submission of BASER**

The institution will be required to submit a BASER within two to three months after the start of classes at the new site. The BASER is completed and submitted electronically through the Accreditation Management System (AMS).

### **Step 5: Full Team On-Site Visit**

A full on-site visit will be conducted within six months of the institution starting classes. The institution will receive the team report and have an opportunity to respond to the report. The team report and institutional response are completed and transmitted electronically through AMS.

### **Step 6: Final Approval Process**

The Accrediting Commission will review the team report and the institution's response to the team report of the full on-site visit at its next regularly scheduled meeting and make a final decision regarding the approval of the new site.

## **B. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR AUXILIARY (SATELLITE) CLASSROOMS**

### **Step 1: Application**

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking

approval to establish new auxiliary (satellite) classrooms must provide the following documentation:

- **Auxiliary Classroom:** Completed ACCET Document 26.2 - Application for Auxiliary (Satellite) Classroom Approval with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

An institution should allow a maximum of 30 days for processing from the date a complete application for an auxiliary (satellite) classroom is received in the ACCET office. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without the proper state license or, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state, a letter from the state documenting the exemption. Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for the opening of the institution's new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application can not occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. After the additional location is approved by ACCET, the institution must also provide ACCET with approval documentation from the state that encompasses the additional location.

If the programs/courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs of study/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new or revised programs/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be granted with the stipulation that the program/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

For institutions offering vocational programs/courses and/or Intensive English Programs, the auxiliary campus must be located within a reasonable distance from the main or branch, based on documented evidence that students at the satellite site have appropriate access to student services provided at the main or branch campus. For an institution offering Intensive English Programs at an auxiliary classroom co-located on the campus of a higher education institution, this requirement may be met if there is an executed contractual agreement provided with the institution's application demonstrating that the host higher education institution will provide appropriate student services to students at the auxiliary site.

## **Step 2: Preliminary On-Site Visit (Only Applicable to Vocational Institutions)**

Auxiliary classroom sites of vocational institutions are required to have a preliminary visit before ACCET approval is granted. All other auxiliary classroom sites will receive final approval following review of the completed application and relevant supporting documentation by the ACCET Branching Review Committee.

After the application for a new site has been reviewed by ACCET staff and determined to be complete, a vocational institution will be required to submit ACCET Document 8 – Request for On-Site Evaluation Visit and the applicable fee as identified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule). A preliminary on-site visit will be conducted by an ACCET Commission Representative or designee, prior to the opening of the location.

Specific guidelines relative to this on-site visit will be provided at the time the visit is scheduled. The focus of the visit will be to establish that the facility, equipment, supplies, administrative support, and faculty are appropriate and adequate for the institution's projected program offerings and enrollments. During the preliminary visit, the following documents must be available for review: (1) a copy of the application, along with all supporting documentation and (2) the operations manual(s) that guides the day-to-day operation of the institution. A written report of the preliminary visit will be completed by the Commission Representative and submitted for review by the Branching Review Committee.

### **Step 3: Final Approval Process**

Once the institution's application is complete and, if applicable, the preliminary on-site visit has been conducted, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review the application and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee as to whether permission to establish a new site should be granted. Upon review of the pertinent facts, the Executive Committee of the Accrediting Commission will make a determination as to whether to grant final approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction at a prospective auxiliary classroom prior to receipt of ACCET approval.

**NOTE:** Once approved, an auxiliary classroom located adjacent to or directly across from the main or branch campus is considered an expansion of the main or branch campus facility; therefore, the following additional fees for the auxiliary classroom may be waived: (1) additional annual sustaining fees, (2) additional reaccreditation application fees, and/or (3) additional on-site reaccreditation evaluation visit fees.

## **C. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR TEMPORARY AVOCATIONAL CLASSROOMS**

### **Step 1: Application**

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse action as defined in Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Action by Other Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval to establish a temporary avocational classroom must provide the following documentation:

- **Temporary Avocational Classroom:** Completed ACCET Document 26.3 - Application for Approval of Temporary Avocational Classroom with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 - Fee Schedule).

Every attempt will be made to process applications for temporary classrooms on an expedited basis. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process.

If the programs of study/courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to beginning instruction advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new/revised program/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be granted with the stipulation that the program of study/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

## **STEP 2: Final Approval Process**

Once the institution's application is complete, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will make a determination as to whether permission to establish a new site should be granted. Following a review of the application and supporting documentation, final approval, deferral, or denial of the application will be issued.

## **II. APPLICATION PROCESS TO CHANGE AN INSTITUTION'S LOCATION**

A change of location is the relocation of an existing accredited entity or approved additional location within the same general geographic area (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, town/city, county, etc.). ACCET considers an "accredited entity" to be a composite of the school's administration, faculty, curricula, policies/procedures, student support systems, including the student body itself. If an accredited entity is relocating to a new/different location within the same general geographic area, the institution is required to seek and obtain prior approval from ACCET by completing and submitting ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location Approval. However, if the accredited entity closes in one location and reopens in a new location outside the general geographic area of the accredited entity which requires substantial changes in the components of the accredited entity, ACCET considers this a campus closing and refers the institution to ACCET Document 32 – Teach-Out/Closure Policy.

An institution is required to complete and submit ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location, along with the required supporting documentation and applicable processing fee. If the institution is seeking to relocate a non-teaching corporate office which is not designated as the main campus of the institution, the processing fee is waived and only Parts I and III of the application are required to be submitted to ACCET to ensure that the institution's information is appropriately updated in the database.

## **STEP 1: Application**

At least thirty (30) days prior to the anticipated date of the change of location, the institution must submit completed ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location Approval, along with the required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

Upon receipt, every attempt will be made to process the application on an expedited basis. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without documented evidence of: (1) approval of the change of location by the state licensing/approval agency or (2) exemption from the state, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state (e.g. a letter from the state documenting the exemption). Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for operating the institution at the new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application cannot occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. After the change of location is approved by ACCET, the institution must also provide ACCET with approval documentation from the state reflecting the change of location.

## **STEP 2: Final Approval Process**

Once the institution's application is complete, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review and consider whether approval should be granted for the change of location. The relocation of a main campus may be required to have a preliminary one-day visit prior to approval. The institution will be notified as to whether ACCET granted final approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from operating and offering instruction at the new location prior to receipt of ACCET approval.