



***Re: Accrediting Commission Report
December 2017 Meeting
(via email distribution)***

Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This letter provides information regarding actions undertaken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its December 2017 meeting. Specific reports relative to the December 2017 Commission meeting will be available on the ACCET website under the “Commission” tab, including: (1) Final Actions Taken by the Commission (referenced by institution), (2) Summary Statistics of Actions Taken by the Commission, and (3) a copy of this Accrediting Commission Report, which describes new and/or revised ACCET policy documents considered by the Commission for final approval or call for comment. Also available on the website is a request for written comments relative to institutions scheduled for consideration of accreditation at the Commission’s April and August 2018 meetings.

A summary of Commission actions taken at the December 2017 meeting regarding ACCET policies is provided below, including: (1) final documents approved by the Commission (available on the ACCET website under “Documents and Forms”) and (2) call for comment on proposed revisions to policy documents.

As a reminder, the Commission’s Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) conducts an ongoing review of each ACCET policy document at least every five years. Additionally, SPRC considers specific policy documents for review and revision to address governmental regulatory requirements, arising issues of concern, and/or the need for additional policy guidance. Member institutions and other interested parties are invited and encouraged to submit their written comments to proposed changes to ACCET policies and standards (available on the ACCET website under “News”).

FINAL APPROVAL

1. ACCET Document 28.4 - ACCET Criteria To Be an Eligible Independent Third-Party Employment Verification Auditor and the Required Scope of Work

This document identifies the criteria to meet ACCET’s requirements to be an eligible independent third-party employment verification auditor and the scope of work required of the auditor.

CALL FOR COMMENT

1. Document 3.ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages Template

Proposed are changes to the specific field criteria under Standard II-A – Governance to add the following requirement: “*The institution enrolls students under the appropriate visa status, which is: (a) a F visa for academic and language (avocational) programs, (b) a J visa for visitor exchange programs, and (c) a M visa for vocational and/or technical programs, consistent with federal requirements.*”

2. Document 11 – Policies and Practices of the Accrediting Commission

Proposed is a change to make explicit the time limit for programmatic probations that mirrors the limit for show cause directives, as follows: *“The duration of the programmatic probation may not exceed 12 months, unless the Commission extends the time frame for good cause, defined as significant improvement by the institution in the deficient area(s) and/or the need for sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance (e.g. measurable improvement in program completion and/or placement rates). Beyond the initial 12-month period, an extension for good cause may be incrementally determined to be sound by the Commission at each successive Commission meeting, for a maximum period of 12 months.”*

3. Document 16 – Transfer of Credit Policy

For purposes of clarity, proposed is to specify that tuition and fees are to be adjusted *“to ensure a pro-rated tuition reduction for transfer credit awarded.”*

4. Document 23 – Admissions Requirements and Ability to Benefit

Proposed is the following change relative to proof of high school graduation or its equivalent: *“Documented proof of high school graduation or its equivalent must include a copy of a high school diploma or a GED, a high school transcript, and/or written certification by a cognizant authority for home-schooled students. A student attestation of high school graduation, which identifies the name of the secondary school, location, and date of graduation, may be provided as proof of high school graduation only on a limited, exceptional basis such as when the student’s high school closed or a foreign high school transcript is unavailable from a foreign country at war, in a declared state of emergency, or other extreme circumstances that prevent access to transcripts. In such an event, the student’s file must include: (1) documented evidence that the institution made all reasonable efforts to obtain documented proof of high school graduation and (2) written documentation to substantiate the extraordinary circumstances that warranted the use of a student attestation of high school graduation.”*

5. Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs

For purposes of clarity, proposed are changes to make clear that ACCET’s requirements are the same for externship, internship, and practicum. Additional changes are proposed for purposes of clarity such as stating that any required program template must be submitted with an application for an out-of-scope program and the subsequent program report. Also proposed is to delete reference to the bachelor degree pilot, as the pilot is postponed indefinitely.

6. Document 25.10a – Guidance for On-Site Credit Review

Proposed are the following changes regarding the assignment of credit based on work outside of class (homework) for financial aid purposes:

- *Homework assignments are separate and distinct from the work assigned during the scheduled hours of the course/program, particularly for training delivered through interactive distance learning. Hours spent completing homework must be in addition to the regularly scheduled instructional hours of the course/program and not count as scheduled instructional hours.*
- *Homework is typically weighted between 10%-15% of the final course grade and is not to exceed 20% of the final course grade.*

- *Although homework may be assigned and required for successful completion of an externship/internship course/module (e.g. the submission of a journal), homework hours are not approved by ACCET for financial aid purposes.*

7. ACCET Document 28.3 - Completion and Placement Verification Pilot

At the August 2017 Commission meeting, changes were made to enhance the ACCET on-site placement verification process to ensure its effectiveness at campuses with large student enrollments, with the pilot to begin for visits scheduled in the December 2017 review cycle. Following the successful implementation of the initial pilot, proposed is to lower the enrollment threshold required to add an extra team member to assist with the completion and verification process for initial and reaccreditation visits to be piloted beginning with the April 2018 review cycle. To ensure a sufficient placement verification sample (20% - 30%), proposed is to continue to implement the following changes, but to lower the enrollment threshold from 450 enrollments to 350 enrollments in vocational programs, as reported for the “current year” on Document 12b – Annual Report and Enrollment Statistics:

- Require all vocational institutions to complete, in advance of their visits, the On-Site Sampling Verification Form for all student cohorts in all programs. This will ensure that institutions are well prepared for the on-site completion and placement verification process. It will significantly expedite the on-site review of the team and avoid undue delays in conducting the verification process.
- Maintain the current completion and placement verification process for any initial or reaccreditation visit to a campus with less than 350 enrollments in vocational programs reported for the “current year” on Document 12b – Annual Report and Enrollment Statistics.
- Add an extra team member to assist with the completion and placement verification process for any initial or reaccreditation visit to a campus with 350 – 999 enrollments in vocational programs reported for the “current year” on Document 12b.
- To supplement the on-site completion and placement verification process, require 3rd party verification of placements for any initial or reaccreditation visit to a campus with 1,000 or more enrollments in vocational programs reported for the “current year” on Document 12b.

8. Document 29 – Catalog Guidelines and Checklist

Proposed is to require a catalog to include the following additional items:

- Identification (by program) of any additional requirements such as immunizations, medical physical exams, background checks, and/or drug tests, etc.*
- Summary (by program) of any conditions and relevant state requirements that may adversely impact the students’ ability to benefit from training, sit for certification/licensure examinations, if applicable, and/or work in the field (e.g. felony conviction), in accordance with ACCET Document 30 – Policy on Recruiting, Advertising, and Promotional Practices.”*
- If applicable, require a statement affirming that non-immigrant foreign students will be enrolled under the appropriate visa status, which is a M visa for all vocational programs and a F visa for avocational ESOL programs, consistent with federal requirements.

- d. *For each avocational and vocational program, require a full and accurate description of the following: (Refer to ACCET Document 38 – Certification and Licensing Policy):*
1. *Identification of any certification, licensing, registration, or examination requirements that are mandatory and/or optional for program graduates.*
 2. *Any measures taken by the institution to prepare graduates to obtain mandatory and/or optional certification, licensing, registration, or examination, including: (i) any related coursework; (ii) test prep, test review, and/or test materials for certification/licensing; (iii) test vouchers; (iv) on-site testing for certification/licensing exams; and/or (v) payment or reimbursement of any certification/ licensure/registration fees.*

9. Document 38 - Certification and Licensing Policy

A new policy is proposed to clarify when Standard IX-C Certification and Licensing is applicable and what the expectations are for recording and tracking the success of program graduates in obtaining certification and licensing, along with the pass rates of graduates on any examinations required for certification and licensing.