Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This public notice provides information regarding actions taken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its August 2021 meeting. Specific reports relative to the August 2021 Commission meeting are 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 December 2021 meetings.

A summary of Commission actions taken at the August 2021 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.

**Five-Year Review of ACCET Standards:** The Commission approved a process and timeline for the five-year review of ACCET Document 2 - Standards for Accreditation to be completed in 2021. Much progress has been made relative to the five-year review, including soliciting comments through:

1. The first meeting of the Standards Task Force on February 24th;
2. The Standard Focus Group held on March 2nd;
3. A Standard Survey completed by 92 institutions, Commissioners, staff, and other interested parties; and
4. A Student Survey on Accreditation updated by the Standard Task Force, administered by member institutions, and completed by over 2,000 students.

All these comments were compiled and informed the work of the Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) when it convened to review and revise the Standard for Accreditation for consideration by the Commission at the April 2021 and again at the August 2021 meeting.
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- An updated draft of Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation were approved by the Commission to go out for Call for Comment following the August 2021 Commission meeting.
- A final draft of the Standards for Accreditation is scheduled to be considered for approval by the ACCET membership at the Annual Business Meeting held during the ACCET Annual Conference in November 2021.

CALL FOR COMMENT

1. Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation
As previously announced to the membership, proposed are changes informed by comments received from:
(a) the Standards Survey,
(b) Student Survey on Accreditation,
(c) the Standards Focus Group, and
(d) the Standards Task Force.
Please keep in mind that proposed revisions previously issued via Call for Comment are highlighted in yellow, with additional proposed revisions from the August 2021 meeting highlighted in blue, and proposed deleted text is formatted with a strikethrough.

2. Document 3.ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Template
At the August 2021 meeting, the Accrediting Commission considered the proposed changes to clarify the minimum qualifications for instructional personnel by stating:

Instructional personnel must have, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree and either: (1) twelve months of ESOL or foreign language classroom teaching experience or (2) a certificate in teaching ESOL or a foreign language that includes a practice teaching component.

Upon review at the August 2021 meeting, the Accrediting Commission voted to table this matter for additional research and discussion going forward.

3. Document 3.OAD – Occupational Associate Degree (OAD) Template
Proposed is to add language regarding the distribution of general education courses for an occupational associate degree that aligns with those required for applied bachelor’s degree. Proposed is to state that: “The institution must offer general education courses in multiple disciplines, and students must take at least one general education course in each of the following three disciplines: (1) natural and physical sciences (e.g. mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry); (2) social and behavioral sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology, history, geography, economics); and (3) humanities and fine arts (e.g. English, written and oral communications, literature, foreign language).

4. Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses
Proposed is as follows:

- To add language regarding the distribution of general education courses for an occupational associate degree that aligns with those required for applied bachelor’s degree.
- To state that: “The institution must offer general education courses in multiple disciplines, and students must take at least one general education course in each of the following three disciplines: (1) natural and physical sciences (e.g. mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry); (2) social and behavioral sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology, history, geography, economics); and (3) humanities and fine arts (e.g. English, written and oral communications, literature, foreign language).
• To include additional language regarding an applied bachelor’s degree, as follows. “An applied bachelor’s degree programs may be structured as a 2 + 2 program, with students completing an occupational associate degree that transfers into the applied bachelor’s degree. In such cases, the more rigorous requirements of the upper-level degree apply to the lower-level degree, including the minimum qualifications for instructors of general education courses.”

• To recommend removal of the limitation on institutions seeking and obtaining approval for one out-of-scope program until the institution can demonstrate the successful outcomes of graduates of its out-of-scope program (e.g. above benchmark completion and, if applicable, placement rates). As a result, new out of scope programs will be required to adhere to ACCET annual reporting requirements in the normal course, keeping in mind that substantive program changes that represent a significant departure from the institution’s previously approved scope and overall mission will result in a full on-site evaluation (ASER and full team visit).