



*Re: Accrediting Commission Report
April 2019 Meeting
(via email distribution)*

Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This letter provides information regarding actions taken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its April 2019 meeting. Specific reports relative to the April 2019 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 August and December 2019 meetings.

A summary of Commission actions taken at the April 2019 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. Document 4 – Application for Accreditation

Approved are changes to require the following documentation for a non-profit entity: (1) official written notice from the Internal Revenue Service acknowledging that the institution has federal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status, (2) official written notice from the state government authorizing non-profit status for the institution and (3) a signed ACCET attestation affirming that the institution operates in accordance ACCET requirements for a non-profit institution, as identified in ACCET Document 22 – Policy on Change of Ownership and/or Control. For purposes of clarity, approved is to request an “ownership chart” and not a “ownership organization chart”.

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

For purposes of clarity, approved are changes to specify that the Accrediting Commission's decision to defer or deny initial accreditation or to defer or deny reaccreditation is not subject to a request for special consideration of the Commission. For purposes of clarity, also approved are additional changes to specify the following: (a) The three-member appeals panel shall be composed of a former Commissioner who shall be designated as the Chair of the Appeal, (b) On each appeals panel, there shall be a separate public representative, academic representative from an ACCET accredited institution, and administrative representative from an ACCET-accredited institution; and (c) An appeals hearing may be conducted electronically or in person.

3. Document 48 - Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies

No substantive changes were approved to this document, which was under consideration as part of the five-year document review cycle.

4. Document 50FR – On-Site Financial Review Checklist

Approved were no substantive changes to this document, which was under consideration as part of the five-year document review cycle.

CALL FOR COMMENT

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

Proposed is to add the following statement to the section on the appeals process: *“The appeals hearing shall be held before the next Commission meeting following the notice of denial or withdrawal, unless the Chair of the Commission determines that special circumstances warrant a delay or time extension.”*

2. ACCET Document 31ESOL – Cancellation and Refund Policy

For purposes of clarity, proposed is guidance relative to the offering of tuition discounts, as follows:

“An institution must treat students fairly and equitably relative to tuition, other charges, and refunds. Tuition discounts may be offered, on a limited basis, to students, provided that: (a) all students meeting the eligibility criteria are given the tuition discount; and (b) there is a fair, equitable, and reasonable rationale for the tuition discount. This includes, but is not limited to discounts for multiple term/session enrollments, full tuition payment by or on behalf of the student, a specific program offered at a specific time of year, and/or promotions to increase student diversity. Note that refunds made to or on behalf of students with tuition discounts must be based on the discounted tuition charged, except when students with multiple term/session discounts fail to attend multiple terms/sessions.”

3. Documents 49 – Policy for Processing Complaints Against ACCET Accredited Institutions and Applicant Institutions

Proposed are the following changes: (a) align the closure process for dismissed complaints whether they are anonymous complaints or not; (b) align and extend to 14 days the time frame for: (i) notice of complaints to institutions, (ii) institutional responses to complaints, and (iii) notification of closure of complaints; (c) clarify that when a follow-up visit is directed by the Commission to investigate a complaint, the institution may be required to provide its response to the complaint in conjunction with the institutional response to the team report.