



January 5, 2016

***Re: Accrediting Commission Report
December 2015 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 2015 meeting. Specific reports relative to the December 2015 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 sent out 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 2016 and August 2016 meetings.

A synopsis of the Commission’s actions on ACCET policies undertaken at the December 2015 meetings is included as follows: (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. At the December 2015 meeting, the Commission approved final documents related to ACCET’s newly revised Standards for Accreditation approved by the membership at the ACCET Annual Conference in October 2015. These final documents included the Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER) templates and templates for specific programs (e.g. Nursing and Allied Health, Occupational Associate Degree, and English for Speakers of Other Languages) that contain the new Standards for Accreditation. The Commission approved to go out for comment draft documents, including those for a pilot for ACCET to approve bachelor’s degree programs to be offered by selected ACCET-accredited institutions (e.g. a program template with Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements for bachelor’s degree programs).

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 DOCUMENTS RELATED TO NEW STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Document 3 – Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (3.1 vocational, 3.2 avocational, 3.3 Dale Carnegie, 3.4 avocational ESOL)

Revisions were made to the ASER question to: (a) align them with ACCET’s policies and new standards, (b) provide greater clarity, and (c) reduce redundancy and streamline the questions.

2. Document 3.MT – Massage Therapy Template

Revisions were made for purposes of clarity and to reflect changes in ACCET policies. Changes were made to the Specific Field Criteria and/or Supplemental Questions/Statements under the following four standards: IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, VI-B Supervision of Instruction, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, and IX-D Completion and Job Placement.

3. Document 3.NAH – Nursing and Allied Health Template

Revisions were made to increase clarity, reduce redundancy, and align with ACCET policies. Changes were made to the Specific Field Criteria and/or Supplemental Questions/Statements identified under the following four standards: IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, IV-C Externship/Internship, V-C Facilities, and VII-B Admissions/Enrollment.

4. Document 3.OAD – Occupational Associate Degree Template

Revisions were made to indicate that this category of degree includes, but is not limited to: the Associate of Applied Science Degree, the Associate of Occupational Studies Degree, and the Associate of Applied Technology Degree. Other changes were to the Specific Field Criteria and/or Supplemental Questions/Statements identified under Standard IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives to include information contained in Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses.

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

Revisions were made to the section on “Occupational Associate Degrees” for purposes of clarity and to align with information contained in Document 3.OAD – Occupational Associate Degree Template.

6. Document 3.ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Template (fka IEP Template)

Revisions were made to: (a) increase clarity, (b) align with ACCET policies, and (c) identify alternative methods to measure ESOL programs against recognized benchmarks in order to improve and enhance programs. Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements were deleted under the following four standards: I-A Mission, IV-B Program/Instructional Materials, IV-D Curriculum Review/Revision; VI-C Instructor Orientation and Training. Changes were made to the Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements identified under the following eight standards: II-A Governance, IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, V-A Instructional Methods, VII-A Recruitment, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, VII-D Student Services, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

7. Document 3.VESOL – Vocational English as a Second Language Template

Revisions were made to: (a) increase clarity and (b) align with ACCET policies. Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements were deleted under the following two standards: IV-D Curriculum Review/Revision, and VI-C Instructor Orientation and Training. Changes were made to the Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements identified under the following seven standards: IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, IV-A Program/Instructional Materials, V-A Instructional Methods, VI-A Qualifications of Instructional Personnel, VII-B Admissions/Enrollment, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

8. Document 3.FL – Foreign Language Template

Revisions were made to: (a) increase clarity and (b) align with ACCET policies. Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements were deleted under the following three standards: IV-B Program/Instructional Materials, IV-D Curriculum Review/Revision; and VI-C Instructor Orientation and Training. Changes were made to the Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements identified under the following five standards: IV-A Educational Goals and Objectives, V-A Instructional Methods, VI-A Qualifications of Instructional Personnel, VIII-A Performance Measurements, and VIII-C Student Progress.

OTHER FINAL DOCUMENTS

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

Revisions were made to the terminology and organization, but not the substance of the document. Changes were made to: (a) create a separate section on show cause that only addresses institutional show cause, (b) change the name of “programmatically show cause” to “programmatically probation”; thereby reserving show cause to “institutional show cause”, and (c) create a separate section for “programmatically probation” that is consistent with the current description of “programmatically show cause”.

2. Document 22 – Policy on Change of Ownership and/or Control

Revisions included: (a) changes in terminology from “provisional reinstatement of accreditation” to “interim approval” and (b) codifying the review process for a change of ownership without a change of control (e.g. converting from a sole proprietorship to a “S” corporation).

3. Document 26 – Policy on Additional Locations and Changes of Location

Revisions were made to identify the approval process for the addition of a branch as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is accredited by ACCET.

4. Document 30 – Policy on Recruiting, Advertising, and Promotional Practices

Revisions were made to: (a) emphasize that all communications with prospective students must be ethical and honest, including communications through social media, the internet, and the website; (b) indicate that all advertising, promotional literature, and websites must only identify the institution and its courses/programs as approved by ACCET and, if applicable, the State licensing agency; and (c) direct institutions eligible to participate in Title IV federal financial aid to publish the disclosures and other information required by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, changes were made to the order of the bulleted items.

5. Document 35 - Policy on Attendance Requirements

Revisions were made to delete the “Standard” section and to require all institutions to provide: (a) if applicable, a description of excused absences, including a clear statement that excused absences will count as absences in the calculation of attendance rates and will not increase the maximum allowable absences; (b) if applicable, a policy relating to make-up work that is educationally sound and requires make-up to be comparable to the content, time, and delivery of the classes missed; and (c) a description of how students will be informed, on a regular and timely basis, of their progress in meeting the standards of attendance.

CALL FOR COMMENT

1. Document 3. BA – Bachelor’s Degree Template (NEW)

Proposed is the establishment of a bachelor’s degree template with Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements for bachelor degree programs.

2. Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses

Proposed are changes to add a new section on bachelor degree programs to be accredited by selected ACCET-accredited institutions during a pilot project.

3. Document 25.BA – Application for Bachelor’s Degree Program

Proposed is a new application for the approval of bachelor degree programs to be offered by selected ACCET-accredited programs during a pilot project.

4. Document 25.1 – Application for New or Revised Program/Course

Proposed are minor changes to request additional information regarding: (a) the class schedule for the program and (b) a breakdown of the hours per week and, if applicable, the number of proficiency levels and the length of the level in clock hours and weeks.

5. Document 31 – Cancellation and Refund Policy

Proposed changes are primarily for purposes of clarity. Changes include: (a) eliminating the headings “Standards VII-B Cancellation and Refunds” and “Rationale”; (b) moving to the “General Requirements” section, the following: (i) the requirement that refunds be based on last date of attendance (LDA), (ii) the statement that ACCET’s cancellation and refund policy identify minimum standards, and institutions may incorporate policies that are more generous to students, (iii) the statement regarding consistent treatment of students relative to charges and refunds, (iv) requirements regarding refund calculation documentation; (c) clarifying the section pertaining to the use of State and ACCET cancellation and refund policies; (d) clarifying what must be done if the institution is unable to translate the enrollment agreement and refund policy into a student’s native language; (e) clarifying that an institution may not impose additional requirements for refund processing; (f) calculating the 45-day deadline in the event of advanced notices of withdrawal; (g) moving the section “Charges Other Than Tuition”; (g) clarifying the language relative to international students who cancel prior to the start of class or no show; (h) moving the section on partial weeks; (i) clarifying the requirement for calculating refunds based only on tuition and other costs attributable to the portion of the program attended by the student; and (j) clarifying the language under the refund computation example.

6. Document 31.ESOL – Cancellation and Refund Policy

Proposed changes are primarily for purposes of clarity. Changes include: (a) eliminating the headings “Standards VII-B Cancellation and Refunds” and “Rationale”; (b) moving to the “General Requirements” section, the following: (i) the requirement that refunds be based on last date of attendance (LDA), (ii) the statement that ACCET’s cancellation and refund policy are minimum standards, and institutions may incorporate policies that are more generous to students, (iii) the statement regarding consistent treatment of students relative to charges and refunds, (iv) the requirements regarding refund calculation documentation; (c) clarifying the section pertaining to the

use of State and ACCET cancellation and refund policies; (d) clarifying what may be done if the institution is unable to translate the enrollment agreement and refund policy into a student's native language; (e) the calculation of the 45-day deadline for advanced notices of withdrawal; (f) changing "program" to "an enrollment"; (g) requiring refund eligibility for students who are terminated due to violations of the institution's written disciplinary or attendance policies; (g) clarifying refund requirements for students who withdraw in their first term/session and in subsequent terms/sessions; and (h) moving the items under "Changes Other than Tuition" to other sections.

Thank you for your continued commitment and responsiveness to our ongoing efforts to refine and strengthen the ACCET standards, policies, and practices. Your contributions to this Partnership for Quality® are the foundation on which our combined accomplishments are measured. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William V. Larkin".

William V. Larkin, Ed.D.
Executive Director