



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Request for Comments: Performance of Accrediting Agencies

AGENCY: Accreditation Group, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.

ACTION: Call for written third-party comments.

SUMMARY: This notice provides information to members of the public on submitting written comments for accrediting agencies currently undergoing review for purposes of recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Herman Bounds, Director, Accreditation Group, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 270-01, Washington, D.C. 20202, telephone: (202) 453-7615, or email: herman.bounds@ed.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This solicitation of written third-party comments concerning the performance of accrediting agencies under review by the Secretary of Education is required by § 496(n)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended, and pertains to the Summer 2019 meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). The meeting date

and location have not been determined, but will be announced in a later Federal Register notice. Also, a later Federal Register notice will describe how to register to provide oral comments at the meeting.

Agencies Under Review and Evaluation: The Department requests written comments from the public on the following accrediting agencies, which are currently undergoing review and evaluation by the Accreditation Group, and which will be reviewed at the Summer NACIQI meeting. The agencies are listed, with their current and requested scope of recognition, by the type of application each has submitted:

Applications for Renewal of Recognition

1. National Association of Schools of Dance, Commission on Accreditation. Scope of recognition: The accreditation throughout the United States of freestanding institutions that offer dance and dance-related programs (both degree and non-degree-granting), including those offered via distance education.
2. National Association of Schools of Music, Commission on Accreditation. Scope of recognition: The accreditation throughout the United States of freestanding institutions that offer music and music related programs (both degree and non-degree-granting), including those offered via distance education.

3. National Association of Schools of Theatre, Commission on Accreditation. Scope of recognition: The accreditation throughout the United States of freestanding institutions that offer theatre and theatre-related programs (both degree and non-degree-granting), including those offered via distance education.

Compliance Report

1. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. Compliance report includes the following: finding identified in the September 20, 2017 letter from the senior Department official following the June 20, 2017 NACIQI meeting available at:
<https://opeweb.ed.gov/aslweb/finalstaffreports.cfm>, with respect to recognition requirements found at 34 C.F.R §602.15(a)(2). Scope of recognition: The accreditation and preaccreditation ("Candidate for Accreditation") of degree-granting institutions of higher education in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, including the accreditation of programs offered via distance and correspondence education within these institutions. This recognition extends to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees and the Appeals Committee of the College

Delegate Assembly on cases of initial candidacy or initial accreditation and for continued accreditation or candidacy.

2. Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools. Compliance report includes the following: finding identified in the September 20, 2017 letter from the senior Department official following the June 20, 2017 NACIQI meeting available at:

<https://opeweb.ed.gov/aslweb/finalstaffreports.cfm>,

with respect to recognition requirements found at 34 C.F.R §602.15(a)(1) and §602.15(a)(2). Scope of recognition: The accreditation of institutions with postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology programs in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to include the accreditation of postsecondary, non-degree granting institutions that offer all or part of their educational programs via distance education modalities.

Application for an Expansion of Scope

1. Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. Scope of Recognition: The accreditation of both clinical pastoral education (CPE) centers and supervisory CPE programs located within the United States and territories

Requested Scope of Recognition:

The provisional accreditation and accreditation of both clinical pastoral education (CPE) centers and certified educator CPE programs within the United States and territories, including those that offer those programs via distance education.

Application for Initial Recognition

1. National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation. Requested Scope of Recognition:
The pre-accreditation and accreditation of nursing education programs, in the United States and its territories, which offer a certificate, diploma or degree at the practical/vocational, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral levels, including those offered via distance education.

Submission of Written Comments Regarding a Specific Accrediting

Agency or State Approval Agency Under Review:

Written comments about the recognition of one of the accrediting or State agencies listed above must be received by March 30, 2019, in the ThirdPartyComments@ed.gov mailbox and include the subject line "Written Comments: (agency name)." The email must include the name(s), title, organization/affiliation, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the person(s)

making the comment. Comments should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or in a medium compatible with Microsoft Word (not a PDF file) that is attached to an electronic mail message (email) or provided in the body of an email message. Comments about an agency that has submitted a compliance report scheduled for review by the Department must relate to the criteria for recognition cited in the senior Department official's letter that requested the report, or in the Secretary's appeal decision, if any. Comments about an agency that has submitted a petition for initial recognition, renewal of recognition, or an expansion of scope must relate to the agency's compliance with the Criteria for the Recognition of Accrediting Agencies, which are available at

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>.

Only written material submitted by the deadline to the email address listed in this notice, and in accordance with these instructions, become part of the official record concerning agencies scheduled for review and are considered by the Department and NACIQI in their deliberations.

Note: In addition to the agencies listed above, the agenda for the Summer 2019 NACIQI meeting includes all accrediting agencies that were scheduled to appear at the Winter 2019 NACIQI meeting. The Winter 2019 NACIQI meeting was cancelled due to the lapse in appropriations. The solicitation of third-party comments for

those accrediting agencies was announced in the Federal Register notice (83 FR 44869-44870), dated September 4, 2018. The written comment period for those accrediting agencies has closed. The final staff reports for those agencies have been released and are available at:

<https://opeweb.ed.gov/aslweb/finalstaffreports.cfm>

Electronic Access to this Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: *www.gpo.gov/fdsys*. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site. You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by

Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

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