



Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools
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POLICY 4.1

INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS) shall make available to schools, school systems, and other education institutions two types of services:

- a. Services to accredited and candidate institutions provided as a part of annual dues and fees; and
- b. Services provided for a fee to institutions that are not accredited by the Commission(s) or candidates for accreditation by the commission(s).

4.1.1. Scope of Services Provided as a Part of Dues and Required Fees. The following services shall be provided to accredited and candidate institutions as a part of their annual dues and required fees.

- a. Listing of the institution's name and pertinent information in all Commission directories and on the Commissions' website as an accredited or candidate member;
- b. Official notice of accreditation letter and a personalized accreditation certificate for display;
- c. Unlimited attendance at workshops offered for overview and awareness of accreditation protocols and other required aspects of the accreditation process (although attendance at each session may be limited due to space);
- d. Attendance at team chair training workshops (by invitation only);
- e. Technical assistance from the Commission's staff via phone, mail, email, webinar, and online meetings;
- f. Consultations regarding preparing for accreditation and the phases of continuous institutional improvement;
- g. A maximum of one onsite visit and/or presentation on accreditation-related topics once every three years by the MSA-CESS staff or representative;

- h. All necessary technical reviews of objectives required for accreditation;
- i. Use of MSA-CESS-developed accreditation self-study and accreditation protocols and accompanying materials and permission to make additional copies as needed for accreditation purposes;
- j. Research and development necessary to develop and maintain current, useful, and relevant Standards for Accreditation and self-study and accreditation protocols and accompanying materials;
- k. Use of both the logos of the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools;
- l. Maintenance of recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a Title IV gatekeeper for postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technical institutions and compliance with all of the regulations and the Secretary's criteria for maintaining such recognition;
- m. Official letters, upon request of the institution, verifying accreditation/candidacy for accreditation status to other individuals and organizations (e.g. College Board, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, state education and certification departments, armed services recruiters, etc.);
- n. Provision of qualified visiting teams and chairs of visiting teams to the institution for accreditation and/or reaccreditation purposes;
- o. Provision of print and online newsletters and articles about accreditation;
- p. Opportunity to participate in the work of the Commission on Elementary Schools and/or the Commission on Secondary Schools by election to a Commission (by invitation only), membership on an advisory committee (by invitation only), and responding to requests for feedback on the biannual member satisfaction survey; proposed changes to the Standards for Accreditation, various needs assessment surveys;
- q. Opportunities for professional development and enrichment by serving on visiting teams;
- r. Processing of accreditation maintenance reports and visits;
- s. A voice in establishing the Standards for Accreditation;
- t. Opportunity to gain continuing education units for required teacher/administrator certification mandates; and
- u. Maintenance of historical records of institutional accreditation.

4.1.2. Scope of Services Provided for a Fee: The following services may be provided for a fee to all schools, school systems, and other education institutions:

- a. Attendance at workshops offered on topics related to institutional improvement but not required for successful completion of the accreditation/reaccreditation process;
- b. Onsite visits and presentations by members of the Commissions; staff that exceed those outlined in services covered by annual dues and required fees;
- c. Facilitation of strategic planning and other institutional improvement efforts not required as part of the accreditation/reaccreditation process;
- d. Design and development of assessment tools;
- e. Design, development, and interpretation of satisfaction and perception surveys;
- f. Conducting training for governing bodies; and
- g. Other institutional improvement services, as appropriate.

4.1.3. Limitations on Providing Services for a Fee to Accredited and Candidate Institutions. The Commission may provide additional services for a fee to accredited and candidate institutions if the following conditions are met:

- a. All such services shall be approved in advance by the President. In cases in which the President is the service-provider, the President shall report on such activities to the Commissions at their next regularly scheduled meetings.
- b. Members of the Commissions' staff providing the service shall not serve as the institution's Agent of Responsibility.
- c. The service provided is clearly beyond the scope of typical accreditation services.
- d. Members of the Commission's staff are prohibited from providing any service for a fee that could be construed as actually writing segments of the institution's self-study. Members of the staff shall take extra care to ensure that institutions with which MSA-CESS has a services-for-a-fee relationship follow the typical "checks and balances" review process with review by the appropriate advisory committee, the appropriate Membership and Accreditation Committee(s), and the full Commissions before any accreditation action is taken.
- e. During accreditation discussions regarding the institution, the service-provider (staff member who is currently providing or already provided the

service) shall abstain from making any comments about the institution and shall not engage in efforts to influence the Commission(s)' accreditation decision.

f. Members of the Commission's staff are prohibited from providing consultative services of any kind to accredited and candidate institutions for personal profit or gain. Staff members may not provide such services during vacation time and are prohibited from using MSA-CSS property, either real or intellectual, for private consulting purposes.

4.1.4. Establishing Fees for Services Provided. To ensure fairness and equity, the Commissions shall approve a standard fee schedule that outlines services and fees.

4.1.5. Reporting of Income from Services for a Fee. On income and expenditure statements, income and expenses for services for a fee shall be reported separately from statements of dues and fees.

4.1.6. Denial of Access to Member Services. The Commissions reserve the right to deny access to services for a fee if an institution is in arrears for the payment of dues and fess or is otherwise in breach of accreditation maintenance requirements.

Action	Date	Notes
Initial Adoption	By MSA-CSS April 12, 2003	4.1.1. – 4.1.5.
	By MSA-CES and MSA-CSS as a MSA-CESS policy October 28, 2011	
Revisions		