



POLICY 6.2

CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS

6.2.1. Career and Technical Institutions Eligible for Accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools. Institutions established to provide career and technical programs to secondary and/or postsecondary students/adult learners are eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Secondary Schools (MSA-CSS) if the following criteria are met:

6.2.1.1. The institution delivers career and technical programs to both secondary and adult/postsecondary learners, the institution agrees to seek accreditation for the entire institution including secondary and postsecondary programs;

6.2.1.2. For institutions that provide postsecondary, non-degree granting career/technical programs, , the institution is established and legally recognized as a postsecondary institution whose programs lead to the granting of training certificate, diploma, or similar document; and

For institutions that provide postsecondary, non-degree granting career/technical programs, said programs do not lead to the granting of an Associate's or higher academic degree.

6.2.2. Standards and Indicators of Quality for Career and Technical Institutions. The Commission shall establish and maintain Standards for Accreditation and Indicators of Quality for Career and Technical Institutions.

6.2.3. Reviews of the Standards of Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions. The Commission on Secondary Schools shall conduct ongoing and comprehensive reviews of its Standards for Accreditation of Career and Technical Institutions to verify that they remain adequate to evaluate the educational quality of those institutions and relevant to the educational and training needs of their students. The Commission uses a combination of longer-

term reviews, regular ad hoc reviews, special reviews, and institutional and onsite evaluator reviews to accomplish this task. The various reviews are described below:

6.2.3.1. Longer-Term, Comprehensive Review. The Commission shall conduct a comprehensive review of its Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions at least once every five years, unless ongoing reviews of the Standards indicate a need for a more frequent review. The primary purpose of the long-term, comprehensive review is to determine if the current Standards, when viewed as a whole and individually, are adequate to evaluate the quality of institutions' educational programs and relevant to the education and training needs of their students.

6.2.3.2. Ad hoc Reviews. At the end of each meeting of the Commission's advisory committees and Membership and Accreditation Committee at which the accreditation of a career and technical institution is reviewed, a less formal *ad hoc* review of the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions shall be conducted.

a. The purpose of these reviews is to determine if, based on the application of the Standards for Accreditation to the accreditation recommendations for specific institutions being considered at a meeting, there are issues with any of the Standards that require further investigation and possible modification.

b. In addition, the implications of changes to:

- 1) The requirements of the U.S. Secretary of Education for 1) the criteria for recognition of the Commission as a Title IV gatekeeper by the U.S. Secretary of Education,
- 2) 2) The requirements for institutions' participation in Title IV student loan programs,
- 3) The field of career/technical education, and
- 4) Business and industries whose interests the institutions serve, and

6.2.3.3. Special Standards Reviews. The quality and effectiveness of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions are also discussed during Commission activities conducted routinely during each year.

These activities typically include discussions with MSA-CSS-accredited institutions during various workshops conducted for its member institutions, reviews of any complaints received during the year that suggest issues with the Standards, responses on team member evaluation forms, etc. If issues are identified with any of the Standards during these ad hoc reviews, proposals for new and/or revised Standards are developed, distributed for comment to the relevant constituencies, and voted on at a subsequent Commission meeting.

6.2.3.4. Reviews by Institutions and On-site Evaluators. After each onsite accreditation visit, the Commission surveys the institution about its perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technology Institutions. MSA-CSS schedules this activity immediately after each site visit because it recognizes that institutions that have recently prepared a self-study and undergone an on-site review have a particularly keen insight into the relevance of the Standards, the effectiveness of their application during the self-study and onsite visit, etc., and thus can provide useful information for the Commission to consider during its structured review of the Standards.

- a. In a similar fashion, the Commission surveys on-site evaluators after each site visit to gain any insights they might have about the Standards, their effectiveness in evaluating educational quality, their relevance to the education and training needs of students, etc.
- b. The information obtained from both of these activities is provided to the Commission for use during the Commission's structured reviews of the Standards.

6.2.3.5. Criteria for the Review. The purpose of reviews of the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technology Institutions shall be to ensure that each Standard and Indicator of Quality meets the following criteria:

- a. Clarity and Reliability: The Standards and their Indicators of Quality are clear and understandable so that they can be applied consistently during accreditation evaluations of career and technology institutions.
- b. Comprehensiveness: The Standards and their Indicators of Quality address *all* of the organizational elements, components of the educational program, and

- services for students that must be in place for a career and technology institution to provide high quality programs for its students.
- c. Appropriateness: The Standards and their Indicators of Quality require a level of quality in organization, curriculum, instruction, and services that will ensure that graduates are able perform the job tasks in the career field for which they were trained.

6.2.3.6. Constituencies Involved in the Review. Relevant constituencies shall be involved in the review process and shall be given a meaningful opportunity to provide input into the review and to respond to proposed changes. The review process shall include a sample of accredited and candidate institutions, current and past employers of graduates, professional associations, state agencies, licensing bodies, representatives of business and industry, recent and past alumni, and current students.

6.2.3.7. Results of the Review. Should a review indicate that changes to the Standards for Accreditation are warranted, those changes shall be made within 12 months of the review.

6.2.3.8. Notice of Standards Changes. Institutions shall be notified at least six months in advance of when the proposed revised Standards for Accreditation go into effect.

6.2.4. Self-Study and Accreditation Protocol. The Commission shall provide a self-study and accreditation protocol expressly designed for career and technical institutions. The protocol shall be reviewed and revised as necessary on an ongoing basis to keep it current with the requirements for recognition of the Commission by the U.S. Secretary of Education and 2) current trends in the career/technical education field.

	Revisions	MSACES Action Date	MSACSS Action Date
Initial Adoption			April 12, 2003
Revisions			October 17, 2003
	By Executive Committee under policy 2.2.11.5		December 12, 2003
			April 22, 2006

	Revisions	MSACES Action Date	MSACSS Action Date
	Editorial changes only		October 30, 2010
		MSA-CESS Actions	
	April 4, 2014	Revision to delete references to postsecondary, non-degree granting career/technical institutions, which are now treated in Policy 6.3	