



## **ACCREDITATION OF POSTSECONDARY NON-DEGREE GRANTING CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS**

The Commission on Secondary Schools grants accreditation to postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technical institutions based on information gathered during the Candidacy phase, from the institution's self-study, and from information gathered and observations made during an on-site accreditation visit conducted by a team of peer evaluators appointed by the Commission.

**Section 1: Requirements for Accreditation.** Accreditation is awarded by the Commission on Secondary Schools based on the following criteria:

- a. Completion of an in-depth self-study using the required self-study and accreditation that includes the assessment of educational quality and the institution's continuing efforts to improve educational quality;
- b. Completion of an onsite accreditation visit;
- c. Compliance with the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions;
- d. Compliance with the Commission's Program Assessment Template;
- e. Compliance with the Requirements of the Protocol used for self-study and accreditation;
- f. Compliance with the policies of the Commission on Secondary Schools; and
- g. Compliance with the Requirement of the Protocol to develop a Plan for Growth and Improvement that includes measurable objectives to grow and improve student performance and the institution's capacity to produce the levels of student performance included in its Profile of Graduates.

**Section 2: Evaluation for Initial Accreditation.**

- a. Candidate institutions must host an onsite accreditation visit and be granted accreditation prior to the expiration of the candidacy status.
- b. The institution submits an Application for Evaluation to request dates for an onsite accreditation visit. At the time the Application is submitted, the institution also completes the following requirements:
  - 1) Declaration of Intent. At the time the institution submits an Application for Evaluation, it must submit a Declaration of Intent by which the institution notifies the Commission that it intends or does not intend to use its MSA-CSS accreditation to establish eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA, federal student loan programs.
  - 2) Public Notice of Evaluation for Accreditation. [See MSA-CESS Policy: Third Party Comments.] When the institution receives from the Commission the dates on which an onsite accreditation visit will be conducted, it is required to notify its community of stakeholders that an accreditation visit has been scheduled and provide information regarding how third-party stakeholders may submit comments to the Commission regarding the institution's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions.

- a) Public notice shall be made by at least two means that are accessible to the institution's stakeholders. Examples include the institution's website, notice in a local newspaper; a newsletter mailed or distributed to all stakeholders.
- b) The public notice must include the following information:
  - i. Only comments directly related to the institution's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Career and Technical Institutions will be accepted;
  - ii. The website address of the Commission on Secondary Schools at which the Standards for Accreditation can be viewed;
  - iii. The requirement that comments must be in writing and include the commenter's name and address and permission for the comments to be shared with the institution;
  - iv. The requirement that comments must be received in the Commission's office not later than 30 days prior to the first day of the accreditation visit; and
  - v. The Commission's mailing and e-mail addresses to which comments and information may be sent—
    - President
    - Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
    - 3624 Market Street, 2 West
    - Philadelphia, PA 19104
    - (267) 284-5000 | accreditation@msa-cess.org
- 3) Accreditation Team Planning Worksheet. The institution prepares and submits an Accreditation Team Planning Worksheet on which it reports the institution's organizational structure and its career/technical programs. The Commission's staff uses the Worksheet to plan for the size and composition of the accreditation team.

### **Section 3: Reevaluation for Renewal of Accreditation.**

- a. The term of accreditation granted by the Commission is five years. (See MSA-CESS Policy: Accreditation Actions)
- b. In the fourth year of an institution's term of accreditation, the institution will prepare and submit a Five-Year Report. In this report, an institution provides to the Commission evidence of continued compliance with the following:
  - 1) The Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions;
  - 2) Program Assessment Template;
  - 3) The Commission's policies; and
  - 4) The Requirements of the Protocol to develop and implement a Plan for Growth and Improvement that includes measurable objectives to grow and improve student performance and the institution's capacity to produce the levels of student performance included in its Profile of Graduates and the institution's progress toward achieving its measurable objectives;
- c. The Commission shall conduct an onsite accreditation visit to confirm the contents of the institution's five-year report. Based on the Report and the visit, a recommendation will be made to the Commission to either renew the institution's accreditation for an additional five-years or to require the institution to undergo a new, comprehensive self-study followed by an onsite accreditation visit, after which the Commission will take an accreditation action.

### **Section 4: Reevaluation for a New Term of Accreditation.**

- a. If an institution was granted a renewal of its accreditation for an additional five years, it must undertake a new, comprehensive self-study, host an onsite accreditation visit, and be granted a new term of accreditation prior to the expiration of its renewed term of accreditation.
- b. At least one year prior to the expiration of the institution's term of accreditation, the institution will submit an Application for Evaluation to request dates for an onsite accreditation visit. At the time the Application is submitted, the institution also completes the following requirements:
  - 1) Declaration of Intent. At the time the institution submits an Application for Evaluation, it must submit a Declaration of Intent by which the institution notifies the Commission that it intends or does not intend to use its MSA-CSS accreditation to establish eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA, federal student loan programs.
  - 2) Public Notice of Evaluation for Accreditation. [See MSA-CCESS Policy: Third Party Comments.] When the institution receives from the Commission the dates on which an onsite accreditation visit will be conducted, it is required to notify its community of stakeholders that an accreditation visit has been scheduled and provide information regarding how third-party stakeholders may submit comments to the Commission regarding the institution's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions.
    - a) Public notice shall be made by at least two means that are accessible to the institution's stakeholders. Examples include the institution's website, notice in a local newspaper; a newsletter mailed or distributed to all stakeholders.
    - b) The public notice must include the following information:
      - i. Only comments directly related to the institution's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Career and Technical Institutions will be accepted;
      - ii. The website address of the Commission on Secondary Schools at which the Standards for Accreditation can be viewed;
      - iii. The requirement that comments must be in writing and include the commenter's name and address and permission for the comments to be shared with the institution;
      - iv. The requirement that comments must be received in the Commission's office not later than 30 days prior to the first day of the accreditation visit; and
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  - 3) Accreditation Team Planning Worksheet. The institution prepares and submits an Accreditation Team Planning Worksheet on which it reports the institution's organizational structure and its career/technical programs. The Commission's staff uses the Worksheet to plan for the size and composition of the accreditation team.
- c. At least one month prior to the scheduled date for the accreditation team's onsite visit, the institution submits its Self-Study Document to the Commission's staff and to the members of the accreditation team.