



Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Telephone: (267) 284-5000 | www.msa-cess.org

DUES & FEES

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools will establish a schedule of dues and fees annually on the recommendation of the MSA-CES Finance Committee and the MSA-CSS Finance Committee. Dues and fees shall be set to assure that the Commissions are able to meet their operational expenses and to provide for the maintenance of an investment portfolio.

Section 1: Annual Dues.

- a. Payment of annual dues entitles MSA-CESS accredited institutions to all of the rights, privileges, and services outlined in the Commissions' policies.
- b. The following services are provided from the annual dues to accredited institutions as part of the annual dues:
 - 1) Listing of the institution's name and pertinent information in all directories of the Commissions and on the Commissions' website as a MSA-CESS accredited or candidate institution;
 - 2) Official notice of accreditation and a personalized accreditation certificate for display;
 - 3) Unlimited attendance at workshops offered for the 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);
 - 4) Attendance at visiting team chair training workshops (by invitation only);
 - 5) Technical assistance by the Commissions' staff via phone, mail, and email;
 - 6) Consultation with schools preparing for accreditation and the phases of the continuous school improvement;
 - 7) A maximum of one onsite visit and/or presentation on accreditation-related topics once every three years by the MSA-CESS staff or Commissions' representative;
 - 8) All necessary technical reviews of objectives required self-study and accreditation protocols;
 - 9) Provision of MSA-CESS-developed accreditation self-study and accreditation materials;
 - 10) Research and development necessary to develop and maintain current, useful, and relevant Standards for Accreditation and self-study and accreditation materials;
 - 11) Use of both the MSA-CESS and the Middle States Association logo;
 - 12) Upon request of the institution, official letters and other documents verifying the institution's 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.);
 - 13) Provision of visiting teams to conduct and accreditation evaluation of the institution on behalf of MSA-CESS; training of team chairs;
 - 14) Provision of print and online newsletters and articles about accreditation;
 - 15) Opportunity to participate in Commissions' governance by electing members of the Commission on Elementary Schools and/or the Commission on Secondary Schools, as appropriate, responding to Commission input/needs assessment surveys, and participation on advisory committees;
 - 16) Opportunity for professional development and enrichment by serving on visiting teams;
 - 17) Processing of accreditation maintenance reports=;
 - 18) A voice in establishing the Standards for Accreditation;
 - 19) Opportunity to gain continuing education units for required teacher/administrator certification mandates;
 - 20) Maintenance of historical records of institutional accreditation;

- 21) For postsecondary institutions, the opportunity to register the institution's website as a ".edu" domain; and
- 22) The opportunity to register the institution with The College Board as an Advanced Placement and SAT test site.
- c. An institution that has been offered and accepts the status of Candidate for Accreditation is assessed membership dues annually in the same manner and according to the same dues schedule applicable to MSA-CESS accredited schools.
- d. Annual dues are billed on a fiscal year basis (July 1—June 30).
- e. Institutions that accept an offer of Candidacy for Accreditation status between July 1 and December 31 shall be charged a full year's dues. Institutions that are offered candidacy between January 1 and April 30 shall be charged a half-year's dues. Dues billing for institutions that are offered candidacy between May 1 and June 30 will be deferred until the following fiscal year.

Dues for Associate Business Members.

- a. The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools will establish a dues schedule for Associate Business Members annually on the recommendation of the MSA-CESS Finance Committees.
- b. Associate Business Members shall be notified of changes to the dues schedule following the Commissions' decision to change the dues schedule.
- c. Dues for Associate Business Members shall be billed within 30 days of the date on which the written agreement with MSA-CESS is signed by both parties and payable within 30 calendar days of the billing.
- d. All dues for Associate Business Members are non-refundable.

Notification to Member Institutions of Dues Increases. Institutions shall be notified a minimum of six months in advance of increases in dues.

Section 2: Fees.

- a. Candidacy Fee. Institutions that register to express formally their interest in seeking accreditation by the Commission(s) will be billed a Candidacy Fee, which is to be paid at the time the Candidacy Application is submitted. No further action toward accreditation will be taken until the Candidacy Fee is paid.
 - 1) The Fee is for the costs of training Candidacy Visitors, developing candidacy materials, developing materials for candidacy visits, processing candidacy reports, and the administrative costs for processing the candidacy report.
 - 2) Travel costs associated with the candidacy visit are assessed separately.
 - 3) Payment of the Candidacy Fee does not guarantee that an institution will be offered the status of a Candidate for Accreditation. When Candidate for Accreditation status is offered and accepted, the institution is not admitted into Candidacy until all applicable dues and fees are paid.
- b. Evaluation Preparation Fee. An onsite visit for the purpose of accreditation or reaccreditation will be charged an Evaluation Preparation Fee.
 - 1) MSA-CESS will include an invoice for the Evaluation Preparation Fee when it sends an Application for Evaluation to accredited and candidate institutions that are due for an onsite accreditation/reaccreditation visit. Payment of the fee must be sent to the Commissions with the completed Application.
 - 2) Dates for an onsite team visit will not be established and no action on developing a team for a visit will occur until the Evaluation Preparation Fee is paid. This Fee does not include the costs associated with hosting the visiting team (e.g., housing, meals, and travel). Such costs are paid directly by the institution.

- 3) If an onsite visit is postponed at the request of a school after a visiting team has been developed, the fee will not be refunded, and the school will be charged a separate Evaluation Preparation when it has requested a new onsite visit.
- c. Other fees: Additional fees may be charged as necessary.
 - d. Specific Services for a Fee. A wide range of institutional improvement services may be provided by the Commissions to member and non-member schools. The amount of the Fee depends on the services to be rendered and is agreed to prior to the delivery of the service.
 - e. Establishing Fees for Services Provided. To ensure fairness and equity, the Commissions shall approve a standard fee schedule that outlines services and fees.
 - f. 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.

Section 3: Scope of Services Provided as a Part of Dues and Required Fees.

Scope of Services Provided by Dues: 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.

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.

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.

Section 4: Other General Guidelines

Refunds of Dues and Fees for Member Institutions. All dues and fees are non-refundable.

Dues and Fees for Member Institutions in Cooperative Accreditation Relationships. All dues and fees are established separately and paid directly to each accreditation agency when an institution seeks MSA-

CESS accreditation as well as the accreditation of one of the Commission's cooperative partners. There shall be no commingling of funds between agencies.

Nonpayment of Dues and Fees. Institutions with unpaid dues and fees shall be considered delinquent and subject to removal of the institution's accreditation or status as a Candidate for Accreditation in accordance with the Accreditation Actions Policy.

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.