



## **ACCET Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation**

The ACCET Standards for Accreditation are approved by the membership and are the standards by which institutions are evaluated for purposes of accreditation with ACCET. Institutions that aspire to ACCET accreditation are characterized by a commitment to institutional integrity, program quality, and successful student outcomes as well as a commitment to self-evaluation for the purpose of improving institutional effectiveness.

In accordance with the ACCET Bylaws, the Accrediting Commission has exclusive authority to interpret the standards for accreditation and may adopt such policies and procedures as it deems necessary for the sound implementation of the accreditation evaluation process. These standards, along with approved policies and procedures, provide the criteria for the evaluation of institutions seeking to obtain and/or maintain ACCET accreditation.

### **Standard I – Mission, Core Values, Ethics, and Planning**

The institution has a mission, core values, and ethics that are compatible with the mission, scope, and standards of ACCET and has an effective planning process to enhance and improve the institution and its education, training, and services. The institution operates with integrity in all matters and in accordance with the “Principles of Ethics for ACCET Institutions” at all times.

- A. **Mission:** The institution clearly states its mission and makes it public. The mission defines the purpose of the institution and provides a definitive basis upon which to deliver and assess its education and training programs. The institution establishes and utilizes specific criteria to measure whether it is achieving its mission. The education and training provided by the institution are consistent with its mission and are supported by documented evidence of continued need, including successful student outcomes, projected market demand, and positive market experience.
- B. **Core Values and Ethics:** The institution establishes core values that support the institution’s mission and are consistent with the *Principles of Ethics for ACCET Institutions*. These core values guide the operation of the institution, including admissions, finances, education and training, management, and student services.
- C. **Planning:** The institution utilizes a strategic planning process, consistent with its scope and size, to establish a **business plan** that supports **its** mission. The plan is updated at least annually, implemented to improve the institution, and reviewed at least **twice a year** to assess progress in achieving the stated goals. The institution establishes a sound, written plan that identifies specific and measurable educational and business goals to be achieved in a one-year and multi-year (two to three years) time frame. For each goal, the plan includes operational strategies, projected time frames, required resources, and method(s) for subsequent evaluation that are utilized to measure progress in achieving the established goal.

### **Standard II – Governance and Management**

The institution is capably and responsibly managed.

- A. Governance: The institution has a clearly identified and accountable governance structure, appropriate to the size of the institution and consistent with ACCET requirements, that delineates authority for the approval of institutional policies and responsibility for the overall direction and effectiveness of the institution. This management structure ensures the integrity and capability of the institution and its compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.
- B. Institutional Management: The institution's management is responsible for developing and effectively implementing policies within an organizational framework that is clearly defined, understood, and effective. Written policies and procedures guide the day-to-day operations of the institution, ensure the effective operation of the institution, and are readily accessible to faculty and staff.
- C. Human Resource Management: The institution's management develops and implements written human resource policies and procedures and makes them readily accessible to all personnel. These policies and procedures **are effectively utilized to ensure that qualified and capable personnel, at appropriate staffing levels, are evaluated at least annually.** These policies and procedures address the recruitment, selection, hiring, orientation, supervision, evaluation, retention, training, and professional development of all personnel.<sup>1</sup>
- D. Records: The institution has an organized record-keeping system that ensures all records are maintained in an accurate, orderly, and up-to-date manner. The record-keeping system facilitates ready access and review of these records by appropriate parties. All records are protected from unauthorized access and undue risk of loss. Employees and students have appropriate access to information contained in their files. Records are maintained for a period of time consistent with applicable statutes, regulations, and sound business and educational practices.
- E. Communications: Management ensures regular and effective communication among appropriate members of the institution on pertinent aspects of its operations, including the delivery of quality education, training services, and student services. To maintain operational effectiveness, periodic meetings with employees are conducted and appropriate documentation is maintained on significant issues, consistent with the size and purpose of the institution.
- F. Professional Relationships: The institution establishes relationships, memberships, and affiliations with professional and other organizations within the education/training and employer/industry, and community network. These relationships are maintained, utilized, and documented for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the education, training, and student services.
- G. Emergency Preparedness: The institution has a comprehensive emergency response plan that includes guidelines for how to respond in the event of emergencies due to a variety of circumstances such as fire, weather, lockdown, violent or suspicious behavior, medical emergencies, etc. The emergency evaluation and preparedness plan is appropriately communicated to staff, faculty, and students. The plan provides for short-term and long-term flexibility as necessary for student, faculty, and staff safety and the minimization of disruption to

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<sup>1</sup> Additional requirements related to instructional personnel are specified in Standard VI – Qualifications and Supervision of Instructional Personnel.

operations and educational delivery. The institution ensures that the plan is kept up to date and is operationally viable.

### **Standard III – Financial Capacity and Responsibility**

The institution is fiscally sound and demonstrates ethical financial practices.

- A. **Financial Stability and Procedures:** The institution demonstrates a record of responsible financial management with resources sufficient to provide quality education, training, and student services and to complete the instruction of all enrolled students. Financial reports provide clear evidence of financial stability and sound fiscal practices. The institution assesses its finances at adequate intervals, at least quarterly. Written policies and procedures exist for proper financial controls and the supervision of financial management staff. Qualified and capable individuals manage and evaluate the effectiveness of the financial operations and practices.
- B. **Tuition Practices:** Tuition charges are applied fairly and consistently. All financial transactions, including all charges and payments of tuition and other program costs are properly recorded and tracked on individual student ledgers. Cancellation and refund policies are written, fair, and equitable; are consistently administered; and comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.
- C. **Financial Assistance/Scholarships:** The institution ensures that any student financial assistance programs, including federal and state financial aid programs, institutional scholarships, and externally funded scholarships, are responsibly administered, are governed by written policies and procedures, and in full compliance with relevant statutes and regulations. All student financial assistance is awarded in a fair and equitable manner.

### **Standard IV – Curriculum Design and Development**

The institution's curriculum design and instructional materials are up-to-date, educationally sound, and appropriate for the expected outcomes of the program/courses.

- A. **Educational Goals and Objectives:** The institution's programs and courses have appropriate and measurable educational goals and objectives. The curriculum content and learning experiences are preplanned and present a sound, systematic, and sequential learning experience for students. The content and length of programs ensure that sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skill elements are included to meet the specific and measurable performance outcomes expected for the courses and programs. The institution must demonstrate that the length of the program is appropriate to provide a student with the requisite knowledge and skills of the courses and programs.
- B. **Program/Instructional Materials:** Program materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, instructional guides, and texts demonstrate the appropriate scope, sequence, and depth of each program or course in relation to the stated goals and objectives. Instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, software, learning activities, visual aids, electronic links, and other teaching tools support the goals and objectives. All materials are relevant, up-to-date, readily available, and facilitate positive learning outcomes.

- C. **Supervised Practical Experience:** When required as a part of a program, an externship/internship/clinical experience or other training-related **practical** experience is based on a preplanned outline of the specific knowledge, skills, and experience to be acquired. Written policies and procedures for the supervision and evaluation of externships/internships/clinical experiences are established, followed, and verified to ensure consistency and effectiveness. **Sufficient sites are available** to ensure appropriate and timely learning experiences.
- D. **Curriculum Review/Revision:** The institution implements effective written policies to regularly monitor and improve the curriculum. The policies include both soliciting and utilizing feedback from relevant constituencies (e.g., faculty, students, graduates, employers, and advisory/certification boards) and analyzing student outcomes, including student completion, and, if applicable, job placement results. The policies ensure a periodic comprehensive review of the curriculum as it relates to the expected learning outcomes.

#### **Standard V – Instructional Delivery and Resources**

The institution utilizes appropriate and effective instructional methods and other resources to ensure sound instructional delivery, which may be provided through a variety of delivery modes, including traditional classroom/lab instruction, interactive distance learning, and blended instruction.

- A. **Instructional Methods:** Instructional methods encourage active and motivated engagement by students. Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the curricula are followed and consistently applied by all instructional personnel. The instructional methodology is consistent with contemporary training industry standards and appropriate to the educational goals and curricular objectives, facilitates learning, and serves the individual learning needs and objectives of students. Instructional methods provide encouragement, challenges, and learning opportunities/activities for all enrolled students, taking into consideration different learning abilities and styles, prior levels of achievement, and different learning modalities such as visual, audio, and kinesthetic.
- B. **Equipment, Supplies, and Learning Resources:** Equipment, supplies, and other learning resources support the goals and objectives of the programs offered by the institution. Adequate, appropriate, up-to-date, and functional equipment, supplies, learning resources, and furnishings are readily available for instructor and student use and for the effective delivery of the institution's education and training.
- C. **Facilities:** The institution's facilities are appropriate for the education, training, and student services offered. In-person instruction is conducted in a safe, accessible, sanitary, and comfortable environment conducive to learning. The facilities meet all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

#### **Standard VI – Qualifications and Supervision of Instructional Personnel**

The institution ensures that qualified instructors, under professional and capable direction, effectively deliver education and training services.

- A. **Qualifications of Instructional Personnel:** Instructional personnel possess the appropriate combination of relevant educational credentials, specialized training, certification, work experience, and demonstrated teaching and classroom management skills, which qualify them

for their training assignments. Instructional personnel meet all relevant accreditation, federal, state, local, **and** industry-specific requirements.

B. Supervision of Instruction:

Instructional personnel are supervised by individuals with relevant education and experience in instructional delivery and management who demonstrate effective evaluation and direction of such personnel. Qualified supervisors conduct and document a class observation at least annually, and review that observation with the instructor, along with any applicable administrative responsibilities and any collected student feedback.

C. Instructor Orientation and Training: The institution develops and implements a written policy for the effective orientation and training of instructional personnel to ensure consistent and effective instruction. Regular and relevant internal training and/or external professional development of instructional personnel are conducted and documented.

**Standard VII – Admissions and Student Services**

The institution recruits and enrolls only qualified students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the education and training services and provides student services appropriate to their needs.

A. Recruitment: All advertising, promotional materials, and representations made by or on behalf of the institution for recruiting purposes, including, **but not limited to, online** content, catalog, and social media postings, make only justifiable and provable claims regarding the courses, programs, costs, location(s), instructional personnel, student services, outcomes, and other benefits. All communications with prospective students are ethical, honest, and consistent with ACCET policies. The institution does not state or imply that employment, occupational advancement, and/or certification and licensing are guaranteed.

B. Admissions/Enrollment: The institution's written policies for admissions and enrollment are clearly stated, defined, and in compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Reliable and regular means are utilized to ensure that, prior to acceptance, all applicants are able to benefit from the education and training services, consistent with ACCET policies. The enrollment process, including any online process, is preplanned, effective, and regularly monitored by the institution to ensure its integrity.

The written enrollment agreement, contract, or application, as applicable, is furnished to appropriate parties before any payment or obligation is made and clearly identifies the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties. This document includes, at a minimum, (1) all costs stated in clear and explicit language, and (2) cancellation and refund policies that comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

C. Transfer of Credit: A vocational institution has written policies and procedures that ensure the fair and equitable treatment of students relative to the transfer of credit to and from the institution. The institution provides clear, complete, factual, and timely information regarding its transfer policies and practices. All institutions making statements relative to the acceptance of their coursework for credit by another institution have documented evidence to support such statements.

D. **Student Services:** Student services are provided **in alignment** with the mission and programmatic learning objectives of the institution and include such services as student orientation, academic and non-academic advising, tutoring, job placement assistance, extracurricular activities, and housing, as applicable.

#### **Standard VIII – Student Assessment and Achievement**

The institution utilizes appropriate and educationally sound methods to assess student performance, attendance, and achievement.

A. **Performance Measurements:** Performance measurements are written, periodically evaluated, and updated to ensure instructional effectiveness. The institution has an educationally sound, written assessment system that appropriately relates to the performance objectives of the program or course and includes, at a minimum, the grading scale, grading criteria and weighting, and means of assessment, such as tests, quizzes, reports, projects, attendance, and participation. The institution clearly and effectively communicates the assessment system to students at orientation and/or the beginning of the course/program.

B. **Attendance:** The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures for monitoring and documenting attendance. The attendance policy ensures that student attendance and participation are consistent with (1) the expected performance outcomes of the course or program and (2) statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements, including, at a minimum, the required student attendance rate established by the Commission. The institution publishes a clear description of its attendance requirements and the consequences of failure to meet these requirements, and students **are informed** of their attendance on a regular and timely basis.

C. **Student Progress:** The institution effectively monitors, assesses, and records the progress of students utilizing an educationally sound and clearly defined assessment system established by the institution. Semester credits, quarter credits, clock hours, and/or continuing education units are used to denote the successful completion of the education and training services. Student progress is documented consistently in accordance with institutionally established performance outcomes and is communicated to all students. Students are informed of their progress on a regular and timely basis. The institution publishes a clear description of its requirements for satisfactory student progress, as well as the consequences for failure to meet these requirements and utilizes sound written policies and procedures to determine student compliance with these requirements and to document the results.

#### **Standard IX – Institutional Effectiveness**

The institution utilizes appropriate methods of evaluation to assess institutional effectiveness and to ensure that student outcomes are consistent with the institution's mission and the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.

A. **Student Satisfaction:** The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide an effective means to regularly solicit, assess, document, and validate student satisfaction relative to the quality of education, training, and student services provided. The institution maintains open lines of communication with students and demonstrates responsiveness to student issues. As appropriate to the length of the program or course, the institution conducts interim student evaluations and a final evaluation upon completion of the

term of enrollment measuring the totality of the student experience. Student feedback is utilized to improve the education, training, and student services provided by the institution.

- B. Employer/Sponsor Satisfaction: The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide an effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate employer/sponsor satisfaction relative to the quality of the education and training provided. Feedback from sponsoring organizations, agencies that fund the training of students, and employers who hire graduates is documented and utilized to improve the education, training, and student services of the institution. This feedback may be obtained through various means such as surveys, advisory committees, and/or focus groups.
- C. Certification and Licensing: When the purpose of instruction includes preparing students to meet the standards for licensing, certification, registration, or examination requirements, the curriculum includes appropriate content, hours, preparation, and materials to meet the requirements for such credentials. The institution records, tracks and assesses the pass rates of graduates on applicable certification and licensing exams and uses the results to validate and/or improve the quality of the educational programs offered. The institution also publishes the pass rates of its program graduates on certification and licensure exams, as required.
- D. Completion and Job Placement: The institution establishes and implements written policies and procedures that provide effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate the quality of the education and training services provided relative to completion and placement rates, as applicable.
  - Completion: The number of students who complete the programs and courses in which they enroll is consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.
  - Job Placement: Institutions offering vocational programs provide job placement assistance to graduates and document the results to enhance the effectiveness of the training services provided. The quality of such programs is validated by positive training-related outcomes consistent with the benchmarks established by the Accrediting Commission.