



ACCET Document 26 – Policy on Additional Locations and Changes of Location

ACCET has established the policies and procedures identified in this document to guide an accredited institution in applying for ACCET prior approval to:

1. Expand the institution's accreditation to encompass additional locations, including (a) a branch, (b) an auxiliary classroom, (c) a special use facility, and/or (d) a temporary avocational classroom
2. Change the institution's location
3. Re-designation of a main campus

At the request of the Department of Education, ACCET conforms its designations of an institution's branch campuses and additional locations with the Department. Further, ACCET accredits all branch campuses and locations of an institution as certified for Title IV participation, except with notice to and permission from the Secretary of Education.

Information related to additional locations is provided in Part I, including eligibility requirements to add locations along with the definitions and specific application processes for different types of additional sites. Part II outlines the application process to obtain approval to change the location of an institution.

PART I: APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

The accreditation of a main campus may be expanded to include additional locations under the conditions and procedures prescribed in this document. Note that each additional location must have the identical ownership/authority as the main campus and utilize the same name as the main. The only exceptions to this naming convention are instances in which (a) programmatic or geographic descriptors are added to the name (e.g., Franklin Institute – Miami, Franklin Institute – Tampa, Franklin Institute – Orlando) and/or (b) state regulations prohibit the use of a particular name (e.g., “university” or “college” limited to institutions offering degree programs).

Of primary concern to ACCET is the ability of an institution seeking to expand to demonstrate the planning capability and the educational, financial, operational, managerial, personnel, and physical resources necessary to ensure continued compliance with all ACCET standards and policies. An institution making application for an additional location must be prepared to administer all aspects of the operation as a fully accredited extension of the main campus effective the first day of approval. The failure of a branch, auxiliary classroom, or temporary avocational classroom to be in full compliance with ACCET standards and policies is a direct reflection on the main campus and will call into question its accredited status.

ACCET policies guide and monitor the process for establishing an additional location as an extension of the main campus. Specific restrictions have been established that preclude an institution from making an application for an additional site as noted below:

1. Institutions accredited for a period of one year may not make application for any new branches or auxiliary classrooms.

2. Institutions receiving reinstatement of accreditation following a change of ownership/control may not make application for any new branches, auxiliary classrooms, or temporary avocational for 12 months following the change of ownership/control.
3. Institutions involved in the reaccreditation process may not make application for additional locations following the originally scheduled due date of the Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER) and prior to a final Commission decision on the institution.
4. Following a grant of initial accreditation of three years or longer, institutions are restricted from making application for the first year. Thereafter, a maximum of one branch and two auxiliary classrooms in any given 12-month period may be submitted.
5. Following a grant of reaccreditation of three or more years, institutions may make application to establish a maximum of one branch and three auxiliary classrooms in any given 12-month period.
6. If an ACCET-accredited institution seeks to add a branch or auxiliary classroom as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is not accredited by ACCET, it will be subject to all the requirements outlined in this policy document, except that no such branch or auxiliary classroom location will be granted approval until an on-site visit report and response is reviewed and accepted by the ACCET Accrediting Commission.
7. If an ACCET-accredited institution seeks to add a branch as a result of a merger or purchase of an operational entity that is accredited by ACCET, the institution will be subject to all the requirements outlined in this policy document, except that no preliminary visit will be required to the branch. Because an additional site is included within, but not separable from, the accreditation status of the main campus, the independent sale or acquisition of such a site will simultaneously discontinue the site's accredited status with the original main campus. Upon receipt of interim approval, the branch that is purchased by or merged with an ACCET-accredited institution will be included within the grant of accreditation of the purchasing/acquiring institution, pending final approval of the Commission following review of the Branch Analytical Self-Evaluation Report (BASER) and on-site visit. Note that program approval does not automatically transfer with the addition of a branch as a result of a merger or purchase of any operational entity. The institution acquiring or purchasing the new branch will apply for program approval as warranted, with any on-site program evaluation completed through the scheduled branch on-site visit, and not through a separate program visit.
8. An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies.

An institution may request and may be granted a special consideration by the Accrediting Commission if it can demonstrate a compelling rationale to waive any of these restrictions. Early conferral with and guidance from ACCET staff is recommended.

ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS CATEGORIZED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS

Branch: A full-service physical facility, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main campus. A branch has the same ownership and management as the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers complete educational programs, has its own budgetary and hiring authority, and has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization to provide comprehensive educational and student services. Branch campuses encompass additional locations as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

Auxiliary Classroom: A physical facility, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main or branch campus. An auxiliary classroom has the same ownership and management as the main campus, offers one or more courses/programs, and/or provides a specialized training facility required for one or more programs which represents at least 50 percent of the clock or credit hours of one educational program. All admissions/enrollment activities and student services are provided at the main or branch campus to students attending the auxiliary site; therefore, an auxiliary classroom has minimal administrative staff with limited administrative responsibilities. For institutions offering vocational programs/courses and/or Intensive English Programs, the auxiliary classroom must be located within a reasonable distance from the main or branch campus, based on documented evidence that students at the auxiliary site have appropriate access to student services provided at the main or branch campus. Auxiliary classrooms encompass additional locations as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

OTHER SPACES:

Special Use Facility: A physical facility, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main or branch campus. Special use facilities offer part of one or more courses/programs, and/or provide a specialized training facility required for one or more programs representing less than 50 percent of the clock or credit hours of an educational program. No admissions, administrative activity, or student services are conducted at the facility. Special use facilities must be located within a reasonable distance from the main or branch campus at which a portion of the program is completed.

Temporary Avocational Classroom: A temporary avocational instructional site, geographically apart from, but operated under the direction of the main or branch campus of an institution offering only avocational programs/courses and utilized as a supplemental classroom for a maximum period of six months. A temporary classroom has the same ownership and management as the main/branch campus and offers instruction in one or more courses/programs on a temporary basis. All admissions/enrollment activities and student services are provided at the main or branch campus to students attending the instructional site; therefore, a temporary classroom has minimal administrative staff with limited administrative responsibilities. If a classroom is to be used for more than six months, the institutions must seek approval for an auxiliary classroom.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Described below is the process for seeking and obtaining prior approval from ACCET for each of the following types of additional locations:

1. Branches
2. Auxiliary Classrooms/Special Use Facility
3. Temporary Avocational Classrooms

If applicable, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and the state in which the new site is located will be notified by ACCET, at the time of the interim approval, of the inclusion of the site in the main campus' grant of accreditation. If the institution participates in Title IV funding, it must follow the policies and procedures established by USDE for notifying the Department of the new site. The letter from ACCET serves to advise USDE of the institution's approval by the accrediting agency and does not take the place of any formal notification that must be submitted by the institution.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR BRANCHES

Step 1: Application

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval to establish new branches must provide the following documentation:

Branch Campus: Completed ACCET Document 26.1 – Application for Branch Approval with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule. This application is prepared and submitted electronically through the Accreditation Management System (AMS).

An institution should allow a maximum of 30 days for processing from the date a complete application for a branch is received in the ACCET office. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without the proper state license or, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state, a letter from the state documenting the exemption. Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for the opening of the institution's new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application can not occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. Upon receipt, the institution must submit a copy of the state's approval of the additional location to ACCET.

If the programs or courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new or revised programs/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be granted with the stipulation that the program/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

Step 2: Preliminary Visit

After the application for a new site has been reviewed by ACCET staff and determined to be complete, the institution will be required to submit ACCET Document 8 – Request for On-Site Evaluation Visit and the applicable fee as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule. A preliminary visit will be conducted by an ACCET Commission Representative or designee, prior to the opening of the location.

Specific guidelines relative to this visit will be provided at the time the visit is scheduled. The focus of the visit will be to establish that the facility, equipment, supplies, administrative support, and faculty are appropriate and adequate for the institution's projected program offerings and enrollments. During the preliminary visit, the following documents must be available for review: (1) a copy of the application, along with all supporting documentation and (2) the operations manual(s) that guides the day-to-day operation of the institution. A written report of the preliminary visit will be completed by the Commission Representative and submitted for review by the ACCET Branching Review Committee.

Step 3: Interim Approval Process

Once the institution's application is complete and the preliminary visit has been conducted, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review and determine whether to grant interim approval for the new branch. The Branching Review Committee will determine whether to grant interim approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction at a prospective branch prior to receipt of ACCET interim approval.

A letter of interim approval will include information and timelines relative to (1) the submission of the Branch Analytic Self-Evaluation Review (BASER), (2) the scheduling of the full on-site visit, and (3) the review cycle in which the branch will be considered for final approval by the Accrediting Commission. Additionally, the institution may be notified that a representative of the institution will be required to attend the next available Accreditation Workshop. Final consideration of the institution's application for a branch campus by ACCET will take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Accrediting Commission following a full on-site visit after the site begins operation. Interim approval of the branch will be withdrawn, if the institution fails to start classes at the new site, submit the required BASER, and complete the full on-site visit within 12 months of the award of interim approval, unless an extension is granted due to extenuating circumstances. If the on-site visit takes place within 12 months of the end of the institution's grant of accreditation, the branch campus may not be visited as part of the reaccreditation review.

Step 4: Submission of BASER

The institution will be required to submit a BASER within two to three months after the start of classes at the new site. The BASER is completed and submitted electronically through the Accreditation Management System (AMS).

Step 5: Full Team On-Site Visit

A full on-site visit will be conducted within six months of the institution starting classes. The institution will receive the team report and have an opportunity to respond to the report. The team report and institutional response are completed and transmitted electronically through AMS.

Step 6: Final Approval Process

The Accrediting Commission will review the team report and the institution's response to the team report of the full on-site visit at its next regularly scheduled meeting and make a final decision regarding the approval of the new site.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR AUXILIARY CLASSROOMS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Step 1: Application

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval to establish a new auxiliary classroom or Special Use Facility must provide the following documentation:

Auxiliary Classroom and Special Use Facility: Completed ACCET Document 26.2 – Application for Auxiliary Classroom/Special Use Facility Approval with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

An institution should allow a maximum of 30 days for processing from the date a complete application is received in the ACCET office. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without the proper state license or, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state, a letter from the state documenting the exemption. Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for the opening of the institution's new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application cannot occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. After the additional location is approved by ACCET, the institution must also provide ACCET with approval documentation from the state that encompasses the additional location.

If the programs/courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs of study/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new or revised programs/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be

granted with the stipulation that the program/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

For institutions offering vocational programs/courses and/or Intensive English Programs, the auxiliary campus/Special Use Facility must be located within a reasonable distance from the main or branch, based on documented evidence that students at the auxiliary site have appropriate access to student services provided at the main or branch campus. For an institution offering Intensive English Programs at an auxiliary classroom co-located on the campus of a higher education institution, this requirement may be met if there is an executed contractual agreement provided with the institution's application demonstrating that the host higher education institution will provide appropriate student services to students at the auxiliary site.

Step 2: Preliminary Visit (Only Applicable to Vocational Institutions)

Auxiliary classroom and special use facility sites of vocational institutions are required to have a preliminary visit before ACCET approval is granted. All other auxiliary classroom and special use facility sites will receive final approval following review of the completed application and relevant supporting documentation by the ACCET Branching Review Committee.

A preliminary on-site visit will be conducted by an ACCET Commission Representative or designee prior to the opening of the location, with one exception that is identified below. After the application for a new site has been reviewed by ACCET staff and determined to be complete, a vocational institution will be required to submit ACCET Document 8 – Request for On-Site Evaluation Visit and the applicable fee as identified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

Specific guidelines relative to this visit will be provided at the time the visit is scheduled. The focus of the visit will be to establish that the facility, equipment, supplies, administrative support, and faculty are appropriate and adequate for the institution's projected program offerings and enrollments. During the preliminary visit, the following documents must be available for review: (1) a copy of the application, along with all supporting documentation and (2) the operations manual(s) that guides the day-to-day operation of the institution. A written report of the preliminary visit will be completed by the Commission Representative and submitted for review by the Branching Review Committee.

Exception: The requirement of a preliminary visit may be waived for an auxiliary classroom or special use facility that is located at a public facility such as a public golf course or a public firing range that is inspected and certified by public governmental agencies for health and safety purposes.

Step 3: Final Approval Process

Once the institution's application is complete and, if applicable, the preliminary visit has been conducted, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review the application and determine whether to grant approval of the auxiliary classroom or special use facility. Upon review of the pertinent facts, the Branching Review Committee will determine whether to grant final approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction at a prospective auxiliary classroom or special use facility prior to receipt of ACCET approval.

Note: All approved and operating auxiliary classrooms and special use facilities will be visited during initial and reaccreditation visits. Once approved, sites located adjacent to or directly across from the main or branch campus is considered an expansion of the main or branch campus facility; therefore, the following additional fees for the auxiliary classroom may be waived: (1) additional annual sustaining fees, (2) additional reaccreditation application fees, and/or (3) additional on-site reaccreditation evaluation visit fees.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR TEMPORARY AVOCATIONAL CLASSROOMS

Step 1: Application

An accredited member institution may apply for approval of an additional location provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse action as defined in Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Action by Other Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval to establish a temporary avocational classroom must provide the following documentation, with one exception that is identified below:

Temporary Avocational Classroom: Completed ACCET Document 26.3 – Application for Approval of Temporary Avocational Classroom with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule).

Every attempt will be made to process applications for temporary classrooms on an expedited basis. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process.

If the programs of study/courses to be offered are different from those offered at the main campus, the procedures outlined in ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses must be followed. Approval for new or revised programs/courses must be obtained from ACCET prior to beginning instruction advertising, enrolling students, or providing instruction. Requests for approval to offer new/revised programs/courses must come through the main campus, with approval granted on an institutional basis. In certain cases, approval to offer a program may be granted with the stipulation that the program of study/course is approved to be offered only at a specific location.

Exception: The requirement to apply and obtain approval for a temporary avocational classroom may be waived for an avocational institution seeking to operate a temporary avocational classroom located at a public facility such as a hotel or other public facility that is inspected and certified by public governmental agencies for health and safety purposes. Note that this exception is not applicable to institutions offering vocational programs/courses and/or Intensive English Programs.

Step 2: Final Approval Process

Once the institution's application is complete, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will determine whether final approval of the temporary avocational classroom should be granted. Following a review of the application and supporting documentation, final approval, deferral, or denial of the application will be issued.

PART II: APPLICATION PROCESS TO CHANGE AN INSTITUTION'S LOCATION

A change of location is the relocation of an existing accredited entity or approved additional location within the same general geographic area (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, town/city, county, etc.). ACCET considers an “accredited entity” to be a composite of the school’s administration, faculty, curricula, policies/procedures, student support systems, including the student body itself. If an accredited entity is relocating to a new/different location within the same general geographic area, the institution is required to seek and obtain prior approval from ACCET by completing and submitting ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location Approval. However, if the accredited entity closes in one location and reopens in a new location outside the general geographic area of the accredited entity which requires substantial changes in the components of the accredited entity, ACCET considers this a campus closing and refers the institution to ACCET Document 32 – Teach-Out/Closure Policy.

An institution is required to complete and submit ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location, along with the required supporting documentation and applicable processing fee. If the institution is seeking to relocate a non-teaching corporate office that is not designated as the main campus of the institution, the processing fee is waived and only Parts I and III of the application are required to be submitted to ACCET to ensure that the institution’s information is appropriately updated in the database.

Step 1: Application

At least 30 days prior to the anticipated date of the change of location, the institution must submit completed ACCET Document 26.4 – Application for Change of Location Approval, along with the required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

Upon receipt, every attempt will be made to process the application on an expedited basis. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without documented evidence of (1) approval of the change of location by the state licensing/approval agency or (2) exemption from the state, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state (e.g., a letter from the state documenting the exemption). Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET’s processing time, when developing the timelines for operating the institution at the new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution’s application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application cannot occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. After the change of location is approved by ACCET, the institution must also provide ACCET with approval documentation from the state reflecting the change of location.

Step 2: Final Approval Process

Once the institution's application is complete, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review and consider whether final approval should be granted for the change of location. The relocation

of a main campus may be required to have a preliminary visit prior to approval. The institution will be notified as to whether ACCET granted final approval, deferral, or denial of the application. The institution is prohibited from operating and offering instruction at the new location prior to receipt of ACCET approval.

APPLICATION PROCESS TO RE-DESIGNATE THE MAIN CAMPUS

Step 1: Application

An accredited member institution may apply for approval to re-designate the main campus to an approved branch campus provided the institution is in good standing and not subject to any ACCET policy-related restrictions or pending adverse actions as defined in ACCET Document 48 – Policy on Adverse Actions and Other Negative Actions by Federal, State, and Other Accrediting Agencies. Eligible institutions seeking approval for the re-designation of the main campus must provide the following documentation:

Re-Designation of the Main Campus: Completed ACCET Document 26.5 – Application for Approval for the Re-Designation of the Main Campus to an Approved Branch Campus with all required supporting documentation and processing fee, as specified in ACCET Document 10 – Fee Schedule.

An institution should allow a maximum of 30 days for processing from the date a complete application for the re-designation of the main campus is received in the ACCET office. Incomplete applications or inadequate documentation will delay the process. Final processing will not be completed without the proper state license or, if the institution is not required to be licensed by the state, a letter from the state documenting the exemption. Consideration should be given to the processing time for state approval, in addition to ACCET's processing time, when developing the timelines for the opening of the institution's new site. If necessary to expedite the process, an institution's application may be submitted prior to the receipt of the state approval letter; however, final processing of the application cannot occur until the state approval is received.

An institution approved/licensed by means of accreditation must provide documented evidence from the state of such status with the application. Upon receipt, the institution must submit a copy of the state's approval of the additional location to ACCET.

Step 3: Interim Approval Process

Once the institution's application is complete, the ACCET Branching Review Committee will review and determine whether to grant interim approval, deferral, or denial of the application.

A letter of interim approval will include information and timelines relative to (1) the submission of a management report, (2) the scheduling of the on-site visit, and (3) the review cycle in which the re-designation of the main will be considered for final approval by the Accrediting Commission.

Step 4: Submission of Re-Designation of the Main Campus Report

The institution will be required to submit a narrative management report describing any changes that have occurred as a result of the re-designation of the main campus. The primary focus of the

report will be on Standards I, II, III, VII, IX-D and on the implementation of any of the short-range and long-range plans presented in the supporting documentation.

Step 5: Full Team On-Site Visit

An on-site visit will be conducted within six months of the institution receiving interim approval to re-designate the main campus to an approved branch location. The institution will receive the team report and have an opportunity to respond to the report.

Step 6: Final Approval Process

The Accrediting Commission will review the team report and the institution's response to the team report of the on-site visit at its next regularly scheduled meeting and make a final decision regarding the approval of the re-designation of the main campus to a previously approved branch campus.