



January 5, 2015

*Re: Accrediting Commission Report  
December 2014 Meeting  
(via email distribution)*

Dear ACCET Members and Other Colleagues:

This letter provides information regarding actions undertaken by the ACCET Accrediting Commission at its December 2014 meeting. Specific reports relative to the December 2014 Commission meeting are available on the ACCET website under the “Commission” tab, including: (1) Final Actions Taken by the Commission (referenced by institution), (2) Summary Statistics of Actions Taken by the Commission, and (3) a copy of this Accrediting Commission Report, which describes new and/or revised ACCET policy documents considered by the Commission for final approval or sent out for comment, including a call for comment on proposed revisions to ACCET Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation. Also available on the website is a request for written comments relative to institutions scheduled for consideration of accreditation at the Commission’s April and August 2015 meetings.

A synopsis of the Commission’s actions on ACCET policies undertaken at the December 2014 meetings is included as follows: (1) final documents approved by the Commission (available on the ACCET website under “Documents and Forms”), (2) call for comment on proposed revisions to policy documents, and (3) the five-year review of ACCET Standards for Accreditation. As a reminder, the Commission’s Standards and Policy Review Committee (SPRC) conducts an ongoing review of each ACCET policy document at least every five years. Additionally, SPRC considers specific policy documents for review and revision to address governmental regulatory requirements, arising issues of concern, and/or the need for additional policy guidance. Member institutions and other interested parties are invited and encouraged to submit their written comments to proposed changes to ACCET policies and standards (available on the ACCET website under “News”).

### **Final Approval**

#### **1. Document 10 – Schedule of Fees**

Changes were made to the narrative relative to additional locations to reflect approved changes made recently to ACCET 26 – Review and Approval of Additional Locations. Note that the Commission did not increase fees for 2015, including application, visit, and annual sustaining fees.

## **2. Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs**

Changes were made to more clearly define out-of-scope programs and the process of review for out-of-scope programs, including the approval of vocational programs to be offered by avocational institutions.

## **3. Document 27 – Policy on Financial Reporting and Financial Stability**

The following changes were made at the recommendation of the Financial Review Committee: (a) the addition of a table of contents, (b) the addition of initial applicants to the policy requirement for annual financial statements, and (c) a change to the documentation requirements to include a signed attestation to ensure the submission of financial statements that comply with ACCET requirements.

### **Call for Comment**

## **1. Document 1 – The Accreditation Process**

Proposed are changes to provide additional clarity regarding the accreditation of organizational entities, within larger institutions, offering continuing education as clearly identified objectives, including corporate training divisions, continuing education departments/divisions of colleges and/or universities, and Intensive English Programs owned and operated by colleges or universities. Proposed changes indicate that these organizational entities may be eligible for accreditation provided that they are discrete units with distinct management, budgets, and clear responsibility for the promotion and delivery of the education offered, including but not limited to enrollment, curriculum, faculty, student outcomes, and refunds, as applicable.

### **Five-Year Review of ACCET Standards for Accreditation**

## **1. Proposed Schedule and Timeline for Standards Review:**

November 2014: SPRC drafted revisions to the Standards for Accreditation, based on extensive input received from member institutions, students, and other interested parties, including comments from the following sources:

- Focus Group: Members from 12 vocational and avocational institutions met on November 2, 2014 to identify areas of proposed change to the ACCET standards;
- Standards Advisory Committee: Members from 15 vocational and avocational institutions participated in teleconference calls on October 23 and 28, 2014 to identify standards in need of further clarity and/or revision;
- Standards Survey: This survey was completed on SurveyMonkey by 136 respondents, including Commissioners, member institutions, staff, and other interested parties. Respondents provided written comments and rated each of ACCET's 33 standards relative to three criteria: (1) relevancy, (2) adequacy, and (3) clarity.
- Student Surveys and Focus Groups: Over 700 students at member institutions (vocational and avocational) provided feedback through a written survey and/or focus groups. Student rated the importance of individual ACCET standards to them.

December 2014: Commission reviewed the comments/ratings received on the current standards and approved proposed revisions to the Standards for Accreditation to go out for comment.

April 2015: SPRC and Commission will review and revise, as necessary, Standards for Accreditation, based on comments received from the membership and other interested parties. The Commission will approve any subsequent revisions to go out for additional comment.

August 2015: SPRC and Commission will review/revise Standards for Accreditation based on comments received from the membership and other interested parties. The Commission will approve proposed revisions to the standards for subsequent consideration and approval by the membership at the ACCET Annual Conference.

October 2015: The membership will vote on proposed revisions to the Standards for Accreditation at the ACCET Annual Conference.

## **2. Call for Comment – Standards for Accreditation:**

At its December 2014 meeting, the Commission approved an initial draft of proposed revisions to ACCET Document 2 - Standards for Accreditation to go out for comment.

Proposed revisions were made to: (1) emphasize ACCET's focus on student achievement, student outcomes, institutional effectiveness, and continuous institutional improvement; (2) address redundancy within the standards; and (3) provide further clarity and guidance.

Thank you for your continued commitment and responsiveness to our ongoing efforts to refine and strengthen the ACCET standards, policies, and practices. We extend special thanks to those who completed the Standards Survey and to those member institutions who solicited valuable feedback from their students through the Student Survey and/or Student Focus Groups. Your contributions to this Partnership for Quality® are the foundation on which our combined accomplishments are measured. Thank you.

Sincerely,

William V. Larkin, Ed.D.  
Executive Director