

AMERICAN PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

The DETC Process of Accreditation and How to Ensure Success

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Introduction

- Background
- DETC Accreditation Process

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Benefits of Accreditation

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Benefits of Accreditation


- Accreditation by DETC sets a standard of excellence
- Allows Institutions to gain exposure in field of Academia
- Gives the Institution an opportunity to be recognized by federal and state agencies
- Allows Institutions to participate in tuition assistance and funding programs

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Benefits of Accreditation


- Permits Institution to be listed on several databases, including:
 - Council for Higher Education Accreditation
 - U.S. Department of Education

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Benefits of Accreditation

- Catalyzes development within Institution including faculty, courses, and programs.
- Allows Institution to take advantage of advertising through different media avenues.

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Accreditation Eligibility and Standards

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Accreditation Eligibility

- Institution must meet Distance Education standards:
 - Enroll students (for 2 consecutive years in the same program to be accredited)
 - Maintains records
 - Employs qualified faculty
 - Offers organized course materials
 - Offers courses of instruction from a distance
 - Provide student coursework evaluation

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Accreditation Eligibility

- Institution must be appropriately licensed by federal, state, local, and other related governmental organizations
- “Application for Accreditation” must be completed and submitted by set deadline



Accreditation Standards

1. Clearly defined and stated mission, goals, and objectives
2. Educational objectives must be stated clearly as well as provide updated course materials
3. Provide adequate student services
4. Provide proper examination services and attention to individual student differences



Accreditation Standards

5. Have an outcomes assessment plan
6. Employ qualified faculty
7. Only enroll students that would benefit from instruction
8. Provide accurate advertising and promotional services



Accreditation Standards

9. Provide adequate financial resources to students
10. Use fair and equitable tuition and refund policies that meet the minimum DETC tuition cancellation policies





Accreditation Standards

11. Provide adequate facilities, equipment, and record protection
12. Conduct continuous research and self-improvement studies

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Accrediting Commission's Goal

The Accrediting Commission's goal is to establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of distance education and independent learning organizations. This is executed by appointing only the most qualified Commission members and re-evaluating accredited Institutions on a five year interval basis.

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The Process of Accreditation

- Taking initiative
- Aligning standards of your University with the DETC Accreditation Standards
- DETC Accreditation Handbook
- Planning the process

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Beginning the Process

- Obtaining the DETC Accreditation Handbook
- Reviewing the application
- Completing the DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation
- Assessing your institution and determining your strengths and weaknesses


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Writing the Self-Evaluation Report

- Begin staff meetings on a monthly basis 6 months prior to submitting Self-Evaluation Report (SER):
 - Discuss strengths and weaknesses of University with employees


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Writing the Self-Evaluation Report

- Assign standards sections to appropriate staff (i.e. Standards VII for Admissions Practices and Enrollment Agreements would be assigned to the Admissions Director)
- Set timeline for submission of completed sections by assigned staff


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Reviewing the SER

- First draft of all sections completed 4 months prior to submission of SER
- Begin weekly meetings 8 weeks prior to submitting SER for revisions of each section


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Reviewing the SER

- Begin bi-weekly meetings with key staff to discuss development/revisions of Exhibits
- Begin compiling the SER with Exhibits 4 months prior to submission of SER

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Submitting the Application

- Submit requirements
 - Application for Accreditation
 - Application fee
- Submit draft of SER 60 days within submitting application
- Gather all materials you will need to submit with your Self Evaluation

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Students Surveyed

- Along with the course materials being submitted, mailing labels for the first 100 students enrolled in the applying Institution must be submitted.
- Students surveyed must be proportionate for each course (i.e. 4 courses offered, 25 students to be surveyed from each course)

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Organizations Surveyed

- The Commission will also survey various organizations related to the Institutions' operations including:
 - Better Business Bureau
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Federal and State regulatory agencies
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - And others

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Other Requirements to be Submitted

- Student names– accompanied with mailing labels
- Institution catalogs
- Copies of state licensures


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Readiness Assessment

- Submit 2 copies of SER draft
- Director of Accreditation will coordinate review by third party evaluator for review of SER draft
- Evaluator will deem Institution as “ready” or “not ready”


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Readiness Assessment

- If deemed “ready”, Accreditation Director will coordinate onsite visit with Institution
- If Institution is not “ready”, it must revise SER as per recommendation by specified deadline before proceeding to the next step


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Submitting Course Materials for Review by Curriculum Specialist

- Institutions should follow the C.5. Policy on Course Approval located in the DETC Handbook regarding the specific Course Materials that are required for submission.
- One complete set of Course Materials must be submitted for each course that will be evaluated as part of the degree program. Including the following:


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Submitting Course Materials for Review by Curriculum Specialist

- Advertising materials
- Institution Catalog
- Enrollment Agreement
- Examination and examination solutions
- All tools, kits, and equipment accompanying each course

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Subject Matter Expert Review

- Subject Matter Experts will review and provide report on each course that is evaluated
- Institution will receive the report and must respond to any "B" and "C" ratings as designated within the report
- Upon submission of Institution's response an Onsite visit will be coordinated by DETC Accreditation Director

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Preparing for a Successful Onsite Visit

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Onsite Visit

- An Onsite visit is coordinated with Institution and DETC to be held prior to Commissioner's meeting scheduled in January and June of each year
- Duration period 1-2 days
- Selected evaluation members are chosen for the Onsite visit. The institution will be notified of the representatives who will be attending the visit

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Prior to Onsite Visit

- The Institution submits the SER at least 10 weeks prior to the Onsite Visit
- The final SER should include implementation of the suggestions made by the Readiness Assessment in both the SER and the Exhibits as applicable

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Prior to Onsite Visit

- The Institution must also supply the full instructions, passwords, and usernames to DETC for the Institution's website and/or online courses
- The Examining Committee is selected.

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Prior to Onsite Visit

- The purpose of the Examining Committee is to verify the SER and gather additional information for the Accrediting Commission. This Committee represents the "eyes and ears" of the Commissioners
- State observers are notified and invited to participate in the scheduled visit

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Prior to Onsite Visit

- DETC Subjects Specialist Report is sent to Institution
- SER, Subjects Specialist Report, and Student Surveys are sent to and reviewed by Examining Committee
- Final SER and Exhibits are sent to each Examining Committee member by DETC Accreditation Director

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Prior to Onsite Visit

- Examining Committee uses "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" in order to determine the institutions' adherence to the twelve standards
- Complaint Summary is compiled by Accrediting Commission

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Staff Preparation for Onsite Visit

- Confirm staff interview assignments
- Begin mock interviews with staff
- Begin bi-weekly meetings with key staff to discuss onsite review 4 weeks prior to visit
- Review Checklist (see handout)
- Assign key personnel for interview during visit


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Staff Preparation for Onsite Visit

- Mock interviews
- Prepare Welcome Packet (in Mock Room) which includes the following:
 - Blueprint of office
 - Staff present for interview
 - Lunch plans


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Preparing for the Onsite Visit

- Ready your conference room with the following:
This is your time to shine!!
- You have done all the work, you are prepared and now it's time to handle the last minute details


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Preparing for the Onsite Visit

- This is your time to shine! Ready your conference room with the following:
 - Have all pertinent manuals available
 - Include 2 copies of your SER and Exhibits
 - Include the Specialist's Report and your response
 - Have examples of textbooks available for viewing with course names and descriptions


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Preparing for the Onsite Visit


- Have Catalog, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbooks, and examples of marketing materials (available for viewing in Mock Room)
- Separate each SER exhibit in different (color-coded) folders for ease of viewing (View in Mock Room)
- You have done all the work, you are prepared and now it's time to handle the last minute details!

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Onsite Visit

- Institution is visited by Accrediting Commission and Examining Committee
- Commission meets with CEO/President of Institution and other staff to discuss:
 - A schedule for the day
 - The philosophy and purpose of the Institution
 - Describe Institution's organization and layout

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Onsite Visit


- All staff members, faculty, and administration must be present or made available for interview during the visit
- Each Committee member assesses and examines his/her respective areas of expertise

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Onsite Visit


- Chair will meet with CEO/President of the Institution to discuss possible content in Chair's Report
- Chair's Report will be sent to the Institution approximately one month after onsite visit
- Each Examining Member will complete a "Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form"

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Onsite Visit

- Visiting state representatives/observers are also encouraged to send comments to Committee and Chair
- Onsite Examiners are surveyed by Commission

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The Chair's Report

- Once the Chair has received the summaries from the Examiners, a Report is compiled that details the findings of the Committee members
- This report lists Institution's strengths and deficiencies
- Report also lists recommendations for policies and procedures for greater compliance to specific standards


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The Chair's Report

- The Report is provided for the Accrediting Commission
- A copy is sent to the Institution approximately 1 month after the onsite visit
- The Institution has an opportunity to respond to the Report 14 days upon receipt
- Institution can provide additional written materials if necessary

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After the Onsite Visit

- Commission meets bi-annually to discuss incoming applicants for accreditation (January and June)
- At this time, the Commission will decide to take any of the following actions:
 - Accredit the applying Institution
 - Conditionally accredit the applying Institution
 - Defer the decision (not to exceed one year)
 - Deny accreditation

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After the Onsite Visit

- Once a decision has been made, the Commission will notify the Institution within 10 days of the decision
- If the Institution has been denied, it must wait 1 year before reapplying for accreditation
- The Commission will notify federal and state agencies of the decision as well as announce it in DETC publications



Questions?

