

Introduction

Accreditation in education began over a century ago. The movement started as a public reaction to the extreme differences between educational institutions that initially appeared to be similar. Accrediting bodies were voluntarily organized by educators to develop and implement common policies and standards to measure educational quality. From its inception, accreditation has been a non-governmental, completely voluntary peer group method of identifying educational institutions or programs which meet published standards of quality. A variety of regional and professional accrediting groups came into being in the early 1900s in response to the public's demand for reliable indicators of institutional quality.

The DETC and Its Accrediting Commission

The Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) was founded in 1926 under the name “National Home Study Council.” As a voluntary association of correspondence schools, its purpose was, and still is today, “to foster and preserve high quality, educationally sound and widely accepted distance education and independent learning institutions.”

In 1952, the Council decided further improvements should be made in the procedures used to examine and approve distance study institutions for membership. A system of voluntary accreditation seemed to be the best solution. As the planning progressed, individuals in the then U.S. Office of Education, the National Commission on Accrediting, and other recognized accrediting agencies assisted in creating the Council.

The Council's independent Accrediting Commission was officially established in 1955. Four years later, the Commission was listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a “nationally recognized accrediting agency” under the terms of Public Law.

Like other nationally recognized accrediting agencies, the Accrediting Commission is reviewed periodically by the U.S. Department of Education to make certain that it meets the criteria for federal recognition as published in Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Since 1959, the U.S. Secretary of Education has continuously recognized the Accrediting Commission, and its recognition was last renewed in 2006. Its next review is scheduled for 2011. The procedures and standards of the Commission have been continuously refined and improved over the past six decades.

In 1973, the Accrediting Commission received the recognition of the National Commission on Accrediting, thus becoming the first agency accrediting private schools—at that time, most of them proprietary—to receive such recognition. In 1975, the Accrediting Commission became a charter member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), a non-governmental body recognizing and coordinating the activities of accrediting agencies throughout the United States. In 1993, COPA was dissolved and the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA) was formed. DETC was also a charter member of that organization.

In 1994, the National Home Study Council changed its name to the Distance Education and Training Council. CORPA was dissolved on in 1996 and its successor, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), was formed. DETC became a charter member of CHEA. The Commission's CHEA recognition was last renewed in January 2001. Its next review is in 2011. (*At this time, CHEA's recognition is through first professional degree level.*)

Today, the Accrediting Commission is recognized by the Secretary of Education as the national institutional accrediting body postsecondary institutions offering programs primarily by the distance education method up through the Professional Doctoral degree level.

DETC's scope of recognition **enables DETC degree-awarding institutions** to establish eligibility to participate in the various federal programs, i.e., Title IV federal student loans or Pell Grants, or to make use of the American Opportunity Tax Credit.

Recognition of the Commission from the U.S. Secretary of Education and from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation is for postsecondary purposes only, and these recognitions **do not** apply to elementary or secondary schools (this is due to changes in the federal law). However, the DETC Accrediting Commission has been examining, evaluating, and granting accreditation status to elementary and secondary schools since 1955.

Accreditation

Why Become Accredited?

What does accreditation mean to you, the administrator or faculty member of a distance education institution? Is it an opportunity to improve the educational quality of your institution? Or, is it a means of evaluating and comparing your courses/programs, facilities, and procedures with those of others? A process whereby an accrediting body grants public recognition to an institution as having met certain standards?

Accreditation is **all** of these. However, the greatest value of accreditation is to be found in undergoing the process itself, a process of self-evaluation in which an institution voluntarily monitors and controls its own behavior to ensure that its "programs and policies embody standards of good practice."

Currently, accreditation may be said to:

- assure students that an institution delivers on its promises;
- foster excellence in education through the development of standards for assessing educational effectiveness;
- encourage improvement through continual self-evaluation and planning;
- demonstrate comparability between degree programs offered at regionally accredited institutions with DETC-accredited degree programs; and
- assure the educational community, students, state and federal authorities, the general public, and other interested agencies and/or organizations that an institution has clearly defined and appropriate objectives; maintains conditions under which their achievement can be reasonably expected; is accomplishing them; and can be expected to continue to do so.

The word "accreditation" has acquired many shades of meaning over the years. Distance education accreditation is certification by a recognized body that a distance education institution has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive study and peer examination which has demonstrated that the institution does in fact meet the established standards.

The institution must perform the functions that it claims: that it has set educational goals for students who enroll; offers formal, organized learning experiences and services that enable students to meet these stated goals; and can, in fact, show that students and graduates have benefited from the learning experiences provided.

DETC accreditation is founded on these philosophic principles:

- Accreditation is **purely voluntary**. The applicant institution voluntarily elects to apply for accreditation and it voluntarily agrees to comply with all standards and policies of the Commission.
- Accreditation is a **non-governmental** peer review process in which the integrity and good faith of an institution and its officers are essential.
- The burden of proof in demonstrating compliance with standards rests with the institution, **not** with the Accrediting Commission. The **institution must prove** to the Accrediting Commission that it meets or exceeds the standards.
- The Accrediting Commission considers information about an applicant institution **from any source** in reaching its conclusion.
- Accreditation is by its nature a formal, but nonetheless, **collegial process**. It works best when there is a common agreement that the chief purpose for seeking accreditation is the identification of soundness, honesty, and quality in the practice of distance education. It was never intended to be an adversarial procedure whereby legal professionals employ courtroom procedures to attain accredited status.

What is DETC Accreditation?

Distance study accreditation is an institution-wide source of nationally recognized accreditation that covers all distance study activities of the institution. It is unique in American accreditation because it is based upon a method of delivering instruction rather than on geographical location, educational level, or subject matter discipline. It covers **all** programs, courses, and distance study endeavors of an institution, including degree, non-degree, vocational, and avocational programs. The Accrediting Commission of the DETC provides distance study institutions with a single source of nationally recognized accreditation, all the way from kindergarten through the doctorate degree levels.

What is Distance Education?

Distance education is designed for learners who live at a distance from the teaching institution or educational provider. It is the enrollment and study with an educational institution that provides organized, formal learning opportunities for students. Presented in a sequential and logical order, the instruction is offered wholly or primarily by distance study, through virtually any media. It may incorporate or make use of printed materials, videotapes, audio recordings, facsimiles, telephone communications, and the Internet through e-mail and Web-based delivery systems. When each lesson or segment is completed, the student makes available to the institution the assigned work for correction, grading, comment, and subject matter guidance by qualified instructors. Corrected assignments are returned to the student. This exchange fosters a personalized student-instructor relationship, which is the hallmark of distance education.

Originally, most distance education courses were vocational in nature, but today courses are offered for academic, professional, and avocational purposes for students of all ages. There are numerous specialized programs, such as those for blind persons and for parents of small children with hearing impairments. Distance education is available in practically any field, from accounting to zoology. Courses are offered in gemology, high school diploma, journalism, locksmithing, child day care management, yacht design, and many subjects not widely offered in resident schools.

Distance education courses and programs also vary greatly in scope, level, and length. Some have a few assignments and require only a few weeks to complete, while others have a hundred or more lesson assignments requiring three or four years of conscientious study. Some Bachelor's degree programs may take six years or more to complete.

What are the Benefits of Accreditation?

For more than a century, DETC institutions have been leaders in the field of distance education. Accreditation:

- provides a reliable indicator of institution quality for counselors, employers, educators, governmental officials, and the public;
- is an expression of confidence in the educational program, the policies, and the procedures of the institution by its peers—a lasting source of pride to the institution;
- is an external source of stimulation to improve services, programs, and staff through periodic self-studies and evaluations by an outside agency;
- is an assurance of high standards and educational quality through the institution's adherence to established criteria, policies, and standards;
- brings the institution recognition through the extension of special status by several states under their legislation and regulations, as well as recognition given by federal, state, and local agencies in referring students to accredited institutions;
- allows an institution and its courses to be listed in the *DETC Directory of Accredited Institutions* available on DETC's web site;
- enables the institution to qualify to participate in the voluntary education tuition assistance program administered by the Defense Activity on Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) for most of the U.S. military services;
- by federal law, provides eligibility for certain federal programs. For example, only accredited distance education institutions are eligible to participate in the G.I. Bill and, as mentioned above, the DANTES tuition assistance program. DETC degree-awarding institutions are eligible to apply to the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Title IV federal student aid programs;
- permits an institution to be listed in the directory, *Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education*, which is published annually by the American Council on Education;
- permits an institution to be listed on the institution databases of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the U.S. Department of Education's web sites;
- authorizes an institution to obtain the coveted ".edu" e-mail and web site addresses;

- allows the use of the DETC seal and reference to accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council;
- allows students to qualify for tuition reimbursement under certain state, industry, corporate, or union-sponsored tuition assistance plans requiring enrollment with an accredited institution;
- brings eligibility for participation in the academic credit evaluation procedure conducted by the American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT);
- expedites acceptance of advertising by newspapers, electronic newsletters, magazines, radio and television stations, and other advertising media;
- helps facilitate, but does not guarantee, acceptance of credits and degrees by other academic institutions; and
- provides a unique professional development opportunity for the institution's staff members to serve on accrediting examining committees visiting other institutions.

The Accrediting Commission

Members of the Accrediting Commission

The DETC Accrediting Commission is a duly constituted accrediting body that operates within the incorporated association of the Distance Education and Training Council. The Commission has **complete autonomy** to make accrediting decisions. The Accrediting Commission has nine members, and its makeup includes persons possessing either academic or administrative expertise or both. Four of the Commissioners are from outside the field and are considered in every sense to be representatives of the public, and five Commissioners are from the distance education field.

Institution Commissioners: Institution Commissioners are from the distance education field and are CEOs or upper level executives of accredited distance education institutions. The five school Commissioners may serve no more than two full consecutive three-year terms each. The *DETC Constitution and Bylaws* of the Distance Education and Training Council provides: "Commissioners from the distance education field shall be currently active academic or administrative personnel from member institutions that do not have a representative currently serving on the Accrediting Commission."

Public Commissioners: The four Commissioners from outside the distance education field are selected for their overall interest in education and their competence in business, industry, education, government, and related fields. Public Commissioners may serve for a maximum of three three-year terms. The DETC has been fortunate in being able to attract and retain for the maximum allowable terms exceptionally well-qualified individuals as Public Commissioners over the years.

Public Commissioners have been appointed to serve on the Commission because of the great interest they have demonstrated in the cause of high standards for institutions, their willingness to become involved and committed to the

accrediting program for distance education, their demonstrated objectivity and sound judgment, and the outstanding competencies they bring to the Commission from their respective backgrounds.

A Public Commissioner may not be (1) an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution that either is accredited by DETC or has applied for such accreditation; (2) a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with DETC; and (3) a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in (1) or (2) above.

Officers of the Commission: The officers of the Commission are a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and the Executive Secretary who is also the Executive Director. The Chair and Vice Chair are members of the Accrediting Commission elected to office by vote of the Commissioners. It is customary for a public Commissioner to serve as Commission Chair.

For the academic and professional qualifications, and employment and organizational affiliations of the Commissioners and Staff, please visit the Web site at www.detc.org and select “About Us.”

Current Members of the Accrediting Commission: The following individuals are the current members of the Accrediting Commission:

- Timothy Mott, *Chair*, Faculty—Distance Learning, Union Institute & University*
- David W. Curd, President, *Vice Chair*, College of the Humanities and Sciences Harrison Middleton University
- Mary Adams, President, American Sentinel University
- Josette P. Katz, Professor, Atlantic Cape Community College*
- Patrick O’Malley, Assurance Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (retired)*
- Robert G. Mayes, Jr., President, Columbia Southern University
- Jack Nill, Dean of Education, Global University
- Judith A. Turner, Vice President and Director of Education, Art Instruction Schools
- Carol S. Osborn, Deputy Director, DANTES (retired)*

*Public Commissioners

The Staff

Equally valuable in this process is the Commission’s staff, which assists the Commission in carrying out its mission. The staff provides counsel to applicants seeking accreditation, training for members of the Examining Committees, and continuous communication with states, including the U.S. Department of Education, CHEA, and other relevant agencies. Accrediting Commission staff members serve as observers on Examining Committees; appoint Examining Committee members; arrange logistics for visits and Commission meetings; and serve as the central communications link between the public, applicants, other accrediting associations, and the Accrediting Commission.

The Executive Director is the day-to-day administrator of the Commission and the staff, and he manages and supervises the accreditation process. The Executive Director is responsible for liaison between and among the Commissioners, the Examining Committees, and the institutions participating in the accrediting process.

Current Staff Members: The current staff members and the year each started service are:

- Michael P. Lambert, Executive Director, 1972
- Sally R. Welch, Associate Director, 1974
- Nan Bayster Ridgeway, Director of Accreditation, 2005
- Robert S. Chalifoux, Director of Meetings and Publications, 2005
- Lissette D. Hubbard, Accrediting Coordinator, 2007
- Brianna L. Bates, Information and Accounts Specialist, 2009
- Joseph C. Luman, Legal Counsel, 1987

Powers and Responsibilities of the Commission

The powers and responsibilities of the Commission are to:

- establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of distance education and organizations;
- establish its operating budget and provide for a schedule of reasonable fees which will assure the financial stability of the Commission;
- receive applications from institutions desiring accreditation;
- appoint qualified evaluators and provide for a comprehensive evaluation procedure;
- review the Chair's reports and all other pertinent material and accredit or withhold accreditation from applicant institutions;
- issue a directory of accredited organizations (*DETC Directory of Accredited Institutions*—available on DETC's web site) and maintain a web site in which institutions will be identified in a manner which indicates their program offerings;
- make available to the public current information covering the criteria for accreditation and the operation of the Commission;
- re-evaluate at reasonable intervals the accredited organizations' programs, organization, and courses of study; and
- exercise such other powers as are necessary to carry out the functions of a reputable, nationally recognized accrediting association.

Commission's Scope and Mission

The DETC Accrediting Commission's scope is the accreditation of institutions offering programs primarily by the distance education method up through the professional doctorate degree level.

Its mission is to promote, by means of standard-setting, evaluation, and consultation processes, the development and maintenance of high educational and ethical standards for education and training programs delivered through distance learning. The DETC Accrediting Commission identifies and accredits distance education institutions and training provider that have attained and maintained the standards deemed necessary to operate at a minimum level of quality.

The Commission applies its standards and policies in a manner that respects the mission of the institutions, including those with faith-based or religious missions, in ensuring that the educational programs are of sufficient quality to achieve the stated objectives and mission.

Eligibility Requirements

Before the Commission will accept an institution's "Application for Accreditation," the institution must demonstrate that it meets the following eligibility criteria:

- The institution must be a "**bona fide**" distance education institution and/or training provider, which is defined by the Accrediting Commission as "an educational institution or organization whose primary purpose is providing education or training which (1) formally enrolls students and maintains student records; (2) retains a qualified faculty to service students; (3) transmits to students organized instructional materials; (4) provides continuous two-way communication on student work, e.g., evaluating students' examinations, projects, and/or answering queries, with prompt feedback given to students; and (5) offers courses of instruction which must be studied **predominantly at a distance** (51% or more) from the institution or organization." That is, distance education should be the primary method of study for the majority of students, and distance education courses should comprise the majority of course offerings.
- At the time of the initial application, the institution must have been enrolling students for two consecutive years under the present ownership and with the current programs.
- The institution must be properly licensed, authorized, exempted, or approved by the applicable state educational institutional authority (or its equivalent for non-U.S. institutions). The institution must also be in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Exemptions from state law, etc., must be documented.
- The institution's "Application for Accreditation" must be complete.

The Commission must also be assured that the courses and programs of the institution are within the capability of the Commission to examine and evaluate. The Accrediting Commission reserves the right to limit the scope of its review to the kinds of institutions and types of programs for which it feels adequate standards have been developed and for which it has the competence to review.

In addition, the Commission may not accept an application from an institution, otherwise qualified, if travel conditions or security concerns in that country are perceived by the Commission to be unsafe.

The Commission also requires that **all** courses, programs, divisions, and/or affiliates of the ownership undergo the accreditation process. The failure of one program and/or division to apply for or achieve accreditation within a time frame set by the Commission renders **all divisions** ineligible for accreditation. In addition, if one course, program, division, and/or affiliate of the ownership is ineligible to apply for accreditation, all “divisions” of that ownership are deemed to be ineligible.

Communicating with the Commission

Individuals seeking further information about the Accrediting Commission, you may consult:

- in person, by appointment
- by mail to: DETC, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Suite 2, Washington, D.C. 20009-2529
- by telephone at (202) 234-5100
- by fax at (202) 332-1386
- by e-mail at nan@detc.org
- by viewing DETC’s home page at “<http://www.detc.org>”

Receipt of all mailed communications is assumed to be received by the addressees by the fifth calendar day after being post marked.

The Process of Accreditation

Steps in the Accreditation Process

Since accreditation is a voluntary process, each institution must make its own choice to seek accreditation or not. Institutions desiring accredited status are expected to take the initiative in going through a series of steps outlined below. Institutions seeking accreditation or reaccreditation assume the burden of proof in presenting themselves as meeting the established standards. The steps in the accreditation process are:

1. Obtain the *DETC Accreditation Handbook*, Complete DETC Course, Review Application, and Begin Writing SER

Institution receives the *DETC Accreditation Handbook* and reviews it carefully: The Accrediting Commission’s comprehensive publication on accreditation, the *DETC Accreditation Handbook*, is currently sold for \$50 (U.S.). It is available from DETC’s web site at no charge (www.detc.org, select “Publications” and “Accreditation Handbook”). The Handbook is updated every January, so please check DETC’s web site to make certain you have the most up-to-date versions of the documents. For institutions undergoing the five-year reaccreditation process, information will be sent to them in the preceding year advising them of their upcoming reaccreditation review.

Enroll and Complete Course: A key person must enroll in and **complete** the *DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation* to qualify as a Compliance Officer. The course is available online or in print for no charge from DETC’s web site at www.detc.org, “Member Services” (sign in using the word “guest” for your user name and password) and then select “Publications.” This course should be completed **before** submitting the Application for Accreditation and before writing the SER. DETC will not accept an application without proof that someone has completed this course.

Review Application: The CEO/President should review the “Application for Accreditation” found in Appendix E.2. and make certain he/she understands all that is required in the accreditation process.

Begin Writing the SER: The Compliance Officer and staff begin writing the institution’s Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The SER is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the “Guide to Self-Evaluation” for initial applicants or the “Guide to Self-Evaluation for 5-Year Review” for institutions undergoing reaccreditation found in Appendix B. The SER provides data on all areas of an institution’s operation, history, course offerings, student services, finances, etc. The self-evaluation includes a wide gathering and analysis of pertinent data on all aspects of the institution and its work. It should, above all else, be a **truly self-analytical document** that identifies an institution’s particular strengths and challenges. It should reveal the philosophy, organization, specific practices and procedures (documented wherever possible), the success of different operations, and the outcomes of the educational process including the degree to which the institution is accomplishing its stated objectives. Data should not be amassed routinely, but in a constant search for new meanings, new methods and procedures, new hypotheses, and new ideas for improvement. The Self-Evaluation Report really “tells a story” about the institution. What the Accrediting Commission is looking for is a **candid self-analysis** of the institution.

Even though the Compliance Officers is the key person who oversees the writing of the SER, it is recommended that as many staff as possible help to write the Report. Preparing the SER is a great learning experience for everyone. When writing the SER, the name of a contact person should be assigned to each Standard. This helps the evaluators to determine whom to interview during the on-site visit.

Preparing the Self-Evaluation Report may take only a few months for a small institution to as many as nine months for a large institution. Institutions are instructed to allow sufficient time for writing, editing, and revising the Self-Evaluation Report. This is a key document in the institution’s quest for accreditation!

2. Submit Application and Other Required Information

Institution submits application with application fee: To initiate the accreditation process, the Application for Accreditation (found in Appendix E.2.), and the \$1,000 accreditation fee (or \$500 reaccreditation fee), must be submitted to the Commission. Initial applicants must submit their SER no later than 60 days after submitting their Application. The Accrediting Commission accepts applications from institutions that have been operating as a **bona fide** distance education institution or organization and enrolling students for at least **two** years under the present ownership and with the present courses. The CEO must sign the “Certification of Application” in the Application. In doing so, the CEO agrees that at least one key person has completed the course, *DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation*. Upon receipt of the Application, the Commission staff will consult with the institution as needed. Receiving the Application *begins* the formal process. The steps obligated in the accreditation process must be taken within two accrediting periods after application is made (approximately one year).

Institutions submits students names, catalogs, and copy of state licensure: The names and addresses (mailing and e-mail) of the **first 100 students** consecutively enrolled with the institution beginning on the **first day of the 18th month preceding the date of the application** must be submitted on self-adhesive mailing labels or e-mail addresses (check with Nan Ridgeway). If you have fewer than 100 students, submit all the names and addresses. Insofar as possible, the number of students must reflect the same proportion of the enrollments for each of the institution’s major course offerings. For example, if you have 100 students enrolled in two separate courses, then approximately one-half of the students on the mailing labels or e-mail addresses should be from each respective course. Institutions must also enclose a copy of its catalog(s) and a copy of its state license.

DETC posts names of applicants for accreditation on its web site and publications: The name of the institution applying for reaccreditation is published in DETC publications (*DETC News*, *DETC Bulletin*, *Washington Memo*, etc.) and web site (www.detc.org), and the public is requested to send any comments they may have to the Accrediting Commission by a given date. **As of October 1, 2008, the name of an initial applicant will not be published in DETC’s publications or posted on DETC’s web site until after it has completed a successful Readiness Assessment.**

3. Undergo Readiness Assessment (*Initial Applicants Only*)

Initial applicants must submit two copies of its SER (no later than 60 days from the date of application). Once DETC receives these documents, the Director of Accreditation (Nan Ridgeway) will coordinate a review by an evaluator for a Readiness Assessment (see C.12.). The evaluator reviews the SER and writes a report stating if the institution is deemed “ready” to undergo a full on-site visit. Then the institution proceeds to the next step. If the institution is not deemed “ready,” then it must correct the areas of concern and submit an updated SER to be reviewed again before proceeding with the accreditation process (see C.12.)

4. Submit Course Materials, DETC Schedules On-Site Visit and Surveys Students

Institution submits courses materials for review: Policy C.5. describes what course materials are required to be submitted as part of the accreditation process. Typically a new applicant for accreditation must submit **one** complete set of course materials. An institution undergoing a reaccreditation examination must follow the directions in C.5. Policy on Course/Program Approvals. Submissions include advertising, an institution catalog, enrollment agreement(s), examinations and examination solutions, and all tools, kits, and equipment provided with the course(s). Course materials submitted as part of an institution’s application for accreditation **are not** returned to the institution; they are consumed in the review process.

Subject matter experts, who are also called “subject specialists,” are selected to review and report on the institution’s course materials. Typically, these reviews take place in the subject specialists’ home or office. However, if an institution offers a combination distance study-resident program, offers a degree program, or has an extremely large number of courses (e.g., a military institute), then one or more subject specialists are appointed to visit the institution for an on-site review of course materials during the full on-site visit. Each subject specialist submits to the Accrediting Commission written report on the courses reviewed.

Date of Visit is Set: A mutually convenient on-site examination date is coordinated with the institution. On-site visits are from one to two days, depending upon the size of the institution. In cases where resident training is provided as a required or as an optional part of a distance education course, the training facilities are examined to make sure that outcomes of resident training contribute to the total course objectives.

Students Surveyed: These students are asked to complete a survey form (either electronically or paper-based) which contains questions about enrollment practices, lessons, student services, and student satisfaction with the course(s) and the institution. A self-addressed stamped envelope is mailed with the paper survey to encourage students to return the survey to the Commission.

In addition, the Commission staff also surveys Better Business Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, various consumer protection agencies, accrediting associations, and federal and state regulatory agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Trade Commission, and the U.S. Department of Education, for information on the educational services, business ethics, and general reputation of **all** applicant institutions.

5. Submit SER, Receive Subject Specialist Reports, and Respond to Comments

Institution Submits SER: The Compliance Officer completes and sends the institution's SER. (Check with Nan Ridgeway for instructions on where to ship the SERs). This should be done at least **4 to 6 weeks** before the on-site visit. If an applicant institution is deemed ready for a full on-site review, it must revise the draft of its SER by incorporating the improvements made since the Readiness Assessment.

As instructed by the DETC staff, the institution must submit the required number of Self-Evaluation Reports by a specified date. In addition, the institution must provide the appropriate instructions and passwords for full access to the institution's web site and/or online courses. This allows members of the examining committee to review the appropriate items/content before the on-site visit. Usually, an institution will submit 10 copies of the SER (this includes those sent to examiners).

Examining Committee is Selected: The Examining Committee is not limited in size, but usually includes a Chair, an Educational Standards Examiner, a Business Standards Examiner, Subject Specialists for each subject area (who may or may not visit the institution), and an Observer for the Accrediting Commission. An Examining Committee is appointed to visit the institution for the purpose of verifying the information in the Self-Evaluation Report, and to gather additional facts for the Accrediting Commission. Once the examiners are selected, their names are submitted to the institution. The institution may object, with an adequate reason, to a specific examiner and request that another examiner be chosen.

Examiners (also called evaluators) are selected from among educators, executives, and practitioners in business, technical, and service fields. To become a **qualified examiner**, one must complete the distance education course entitled "DETC Evaluators Training Program" and receive a certificate of completion. One must **also** serve as an "Examiner-in-Training" on at least one on-site visit. The Commission develops and maintains a record of the qualifications of people who have been trained as examiners. The Commission strongly stresses to each examiner the need for confidentiality before, during, and after the on-site visit. Evaluators known to have competing interests with an applicant institution are not appointed to serve on the applicant's examining committee.

State Observers are Invited: Representatives from state licensing bodies and from federal agencies are notified of forthcoming visits and are invited to participate as observers in the process. They are encouraged (but not required) to submit written reports to the Chair at the conclusion of the visit.

DETC Sends Subject Specialist Reports and Student Surveys to the Institution: The DETC staff will send the Subject Specialist Reports and Student Surveys received to the institution 3-4 weeks prior to the Examining Committee's visit so that institutional representatives can prepare for questions from the visiting committee.

Institution addresses any "does not meet standard" comments from subject specialists: If the institution receives any "Does Not Meet" ratings for a standard from the subject specialists, it must write a response. The institution's response should be sent to DETC two weeks after receiving the Subject Specialists Reports. The written responses should also be given to the Educational Standards Evaluator and subject specialist(s) when they arrive at the institution. They will review the responses to determine whether the courses deficiencies have been corrected and whether the course is now approved.

Examiners Receive and Review SER, Subject Specialist Reports, and Student Surveys: A copy of the SER is sent to each evaluator by the institution. DETC sends any Subject Specialist Reports and Student Surveys it received prior to the on-site visit to the institution and each evaluator. When special examinations are ordered, SERs are also required before the on-site visits. While on-site visits are required for all institutions seeking accreditation or reaccreditation, they may or may not be required for institutions submitting interim progress reports.

Whenever possible, the SER is sent by the institution to each examiner 4 to 6 weeks prior to the on-site visit. Each examiner reads the SER carefully and uses the “Examiner’s Rating Form for All Institutions” to consider the institution’s responses to each question. The examiners make notes of any questions not answered in the SER or areas in which they may have concerns. The examiners use their notes to form their list of questions to be asked or items to be checked at the on-site visit. The examiners are not limited to the questions on the rating form, and are encouraged to ask their own questions as they confirm an institution’s compliance with the standards.

Complaint Summary is Prepared: The Accrediting Commission has a formal procedure for handling complaints lodged against an accredited institution (see C.20). A summary of any complaints received on an institution that is undergoing reaccreditation is compiled and the summary is presented at the executive breakfast meeting on the day of the on-site visit.

6. Institution Undergoes On-Site Visit and Examiners Write Reports

Institution undergoes the on-site visit: During the visit, the questions asked by the examiners and the methods of inquiry help safeguard impartial judgment. Each examiner develops a comprehensive picture of the institution’s operations *before* the visit by doing a thorough review and study of the SER. Information provided in the report is verified at the time of the visit. The Examiner’s Rating Form directs Examining Committee members in their inquiries. Also, the presence of an Accrediting Commission observer helps ensure objectivity, impartiality, uniformity, and adherence to established procedures.

At the time of the on-site visit, it is vital that all key staff members are present or available, including faculty, principal managers, outside accountants, and instructors. Members of the Examining Committee will want to interview many of the key staff members during the on-site visit. School representatives and the Educational Standards Evaluator (and possibly the Chair) will want to discuss the Subject Specialist Reports and student survey results (if previously forwarded) during the on-site visit.

Evaluators test and verify information in the SER: Below are details for the on-site visit. The Committee members will work in their area of expertise during the examination. They will interview staff and examine files, review records, verify data, and assemble relevant information to aid in preparing their individual reports.

Chair informs the institution when to expect the Chair’s Report: At the end of the visit, the Chair will meet with the CEO/President and tell him/her when he/she may expect to receive the Chair’s Report (typically it is one month after the visit).

Evaluators write reports and send them to the Chair: Each examiner completes the appropriate sections of the “Examiner’s Rating Form for All Institutions” and writes a report using the templates provided. Each report is a narrative stating his/her findings and recommendations and expanding on or explaining any “No” ratings. Once again, the examiners are not limited by the questions on the rating form. They are encouraged to explore any related characteristics and activities that help to determine whether the institution meets each of the 12 Standards.

Observer’s and CEO’s comments are solicited: Any observers/representatives from state licensing bodies and/or federal agencies are strongly encouraged to send their comments to the Commission and the Chair. Their comments should address any issues concerning the institution’s compliance with state or federal regulations or the accrediting process itself. The CEO’s comments are solicited immediately following the on-site visit and prior to the receipt of the Chair’s Report.

Commission surveys on-site evaluators: After the on-site visit, the Commission surveys the examiners for any comments they may have on the institution’s SER, the on-site visit, and the accreditation process. If a state observer

went on the on-site visit, the Commission normally sends the observer a copy of the Chair's Report and the institution's response to the Chair's Report.

7. Chair Writes & Submits Report and Institution Responds

Chair writes report and sends it to DETC: Once the Chair receives all of the examiners' reports, the Chair then prepares a Chair's Report. The purpose of the Report is to present to the Accrediting Commission a thorough, succinct, and accurate statement of the findings of the Examining Committee. It presents a composite view of the findings of Committee members and subject specialists on the policies, conditions, and practices of the institution as measured against the published standards for accredited institutions. The Chair's Report also summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Subject Specialist reports.

In the Report, the strengths and the deficiencies of the institution are noted. The Report lists Committee findings and presents Committee recommendations on how an institution might take action to bring existing policies, practices, materials, or services into accord with specific standards. The Chair's Report does not, however, make any recommendation to the Accrediting Commission as to the overall approval or disapproval of the institution's application for accreditation. The Chair sends his/her report to the Director of Accreditation. The Director of Accreditation does not edit or make changes to the Chair's Report.

DETC sends the Chair's Report to the institution for comment: A copy of the Chair's Report is forwarded, approximately four weeks after the on-site visit, to the CEO of the applicant institution by the Director of Accreditation for comment and response before the Accrediting Commission takes action. This procedure provides the institution with the opportunity to respond to Committee findings as well as to report on any corrective actions taken subsequent to the visit. The institution has 14 days from the receipt of the Report to comment on the Report and to submit additional written materials that it desires to place before the Accrediting Commission.

8. Commission Reviews, Takes Action and Announces Decision

Commission reviews surveys, Chair's report, and the institution's response to the Chair's report: The Accrediting Commission usually meets twice a year, in January and in June, to take action on the institutions' applications for accreditation. At each meeting, the Commission reviews information and documentation on the various applications for initial accreditation or reaccreditation. The Commission looks at the Chair's Report; the institution's response to the Chair's Report; student surveys; any complaints from the public; information gathered from Better Business Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, consumer agencies, accrediting associations, and federal and state regulatory agencies; any responses to the public notices; institution's advertisements and catalog; any communications between the institution and the Accrediting Commission; and other relevant documentation from various sources.

Commission makes decision and informs institution: The Commission can take one of four courses of action:

1. accredit a new applicant institution, or continue an institution's accredited status;
2. accredit, or continue accreditation, with conditions that an institution must agree to meet within a period not to exceed one year. (Note: the Commission will initiate adverse action against an institution if it fails to meet all of the conditions within the specified time unless the Commission decides the time period should be extended for a good cause);
3. defer a decision for a period not to exceed one year pending receipt of a Special Report, or submission of additional information and, possibly, a follow-up on-site visit; or

4. deny accreditation to an applicant, or withdraw accreditation from an accredited institution.

If the Commission determines there is a “good cause,” it may grant an extension of time on a deferral and/or accreditation with stipulations.

After a final decision is made, the Commission will notify the institution within 10 days of its decision. If the Commission votes to deny or withdraw accreditation, the institution is sent a statement of the reasons for denial and the institution may appeal or request reconsideration of the decision of the Commission. The Commission will hear the appeal at the earliest practical time (see “Right to Appeal or Reconsideration” below). If an institution is denied accreditation or if accreditation is withdrawn, the institution must wait one year from the date of the Commission’s decision before making application for accreditation again.

All judgments of the Accrediting Commission are final. They are not subject to review or veto by DETC members.

Commission announces decision: After a **final** decision is made, the Accrediting Commission notifies other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies, state and federal agencies, and the public about accreditation status of institutions and any adverse actions taken. Announcements of accreditation, reaccreditation, denial, and/or withdrawal of accreditation are made in DETC publications (*DETC News*, *DETC Bulletin*, *Washington Memo*, etc.) and the web site. After the final decision is announced, the Commission purges its files and keeps only the reports and information specified in its file retention policy.

The On-Site Visit

The following briefly describes the procedures for the on-site examination:

- **Executive Meeting:** Prior to arrival at the institution, the Committee members meet at an executive meeting which is usually held at the hotel where the examiners are staying. The group discusses and reviews the SER, subject specialists’ reports, any student complaints, any complaints received from the public, and any student surveys received. During this meeting, the Committee develops a schedule of activities for the day. The Chair reviews specific responsibilities of the each Committee member and any Accrediting Commission policies.
- **Tour of Institution:** Upon arrival at the institution, the Committee meets with the head of the institution and others on the faculty and administrative staff. The purposes of this meeting are to provide for mutual acquaintances, to agree upon a schedule and plan of procedure, to have the CEO state the institution’s philosophy and purpose, and to describe the institution’s organization and office layout. The Committee members are shown to a private room that will serve as their “headquarters” while on the visit. A brief tour of the facilities is conducted. The Committee members note where key officials or staffs are located so that they may interview them later. The Committee members should **not** ask questions during the tour.
- **Examiners Interview Staff:** The Committee members visit various departments to conduct interviews with school staff members. Each Committee member works in his or her own area of expertise during the examination and meets with the entire Examining Committee periodically during the review. Committee members may work alone or together depending upon the size and complexity of the institution. Most interviewing is conducted using one-on-one interviews. However, in larger institutions, a Committee member may meet with small groups of officials. Committee members work from the documents, take notes, examine files, review records, verify data, and assemble relevant information to aid in preparing their individual reports. Committee members will also want to interview instructors and/or students by telephone while at the institution.

- **Working Luncheon:** A working, “executive session” lunch for the Committee members is arranged to afford examiners an opportunity to consolidate their notes, assess their progress, and discuss among themselves any changes in the visitation schedule which appear to be necessary. The lunch is made available in the Committee’s meeting room and is provided by the institution.
- **Summary Meeting:** After the interviews are finished, the Committee meets back at their headquarters at the end of the visit to consolidate notes and to ensure that all areas have been reviewed and the appropriate people interviewed. They also agree upon a time schedule for submitting individual Committee member reports to the Chair. Generally, reports are submitted to the Chair within a two week time frame.
- **Exit:** There is **no** “exit interview” with the CEO of the institution. The visit ends with a brief conference between the Chair and the CEO. The Chair may ask for further information which the Committee will need for its report and informs the CEO of an approximate date when he or she may expect to receive a copy of the Chair’s report. The Chair thanks the CEO for the cooperation and hospitality received. Because this meeting takes place **before** the examiners have had an opportunity to reflect on all information gained and conditions observed and **before** they have had time to prepare their reports, the Chair does **not** discuss the findings of the Committee. Because judgment regarding accreditation rests **solely** with the Accrediting Commission, neither the Chair nor any member of the Committee is authorized to say anything that implies acceptance or rejection of the institution by the Commission. The fact that the institution knows it will be receiving a written report of Committee findings prior to Commission action mitigates any need for an “exit interview” or need for Committee members to indicate “how they feel” about the institution.

Right to Appeal or Reconsideration

The institution may appeal or have a reconsideration of an action of the Commission to deny or terminate accreditation. A statement of the procedure for appeals or reconsideration may be found in Appendix D.2. A request for the “reconsideration” alternative involves a hearing before the Accrediting Commission itself. A request for the “appeal” alternative includes a hearing before an independent three-member appeals panel. The “Application for Appeal or Reconsideration” is found in Appendix E.3.

Arbitration

Institutions applying for accreditation from DETC agree to observe DETC’s post-hearing arbitration procedures as outlined in DETC D.2. Requesting Reconsideration or Appeal of Commission’s Decision.

Maintaining Accreditation

In order for an institution to maintain its eligibility for accreditation, it must be in continuous compliance with accrediting standards and requirements. This means, among other things, that an institution must: be in continuous operation training students in accordance with its primary objective; fulfill all reporting requirements; maintain compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements; and pay all sustaining, processing, and on-site evaluation fees as required on a timely basis.

Sharing Information with Other Agencies

The Accrediting Commission routinely notifies other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and state and federal agencies about the status of an institution and any adverse actions.

Review of Dually-Accredited Institutions

The Accrediting Commission will promptly review the accreditation of an institution that is accredited by another recognized accrediting agency upon notification that another recognized accrediting agency has taken an adverse action with respect to the institution or placed the institution on probation or an equivalent status. The Accrediting Commission will review the institution's accreditation to determine if it should also take adverse action against the institution.

Decisions of Other Agencies

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit or re-accredit an institution that is subject to a threatened action, a pending action, an interim action, or a final action by another recognized accrediting agency whereby the end result could or has lead to the institution being put on public probationary status or whereby their accreditation or pre-accreditation status could be revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or terminated.

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit or re-accredit an institution that is the subject to a threatened action, a pending action, an interim action or final action, taken by a state agency whereby the end result could or has lead to suspension, revocation, or termination of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education.

Obligations of Accreditation

Accreditation brings with it a number of obligations for the institution. An accredited institution must continue to meet all Accreditation and Business Standards, and it must continually strive to improve itself. Having been recognized by the Commission, the institution must continue to justify the confidence placed in it and modify itself in areas that may have been identified as weak. Accredited institutions are obligated to:

- **File an Annual Report:** Each accredited institution is required to file an Annual Report to the Accrediting Commission. An updated Annual Report form (see Appendix E.6. or 7.) is sent to each institution in January to report on previous year's activities. The institution also has the continuing obligation to advise the Commission of significant changes to what it had originally represented upon its initial accreditation or reaccreditation. In certain situations the Accrediting Commission may request an institution to submit a financial statement (see Appendix C.10.). The financial statement should cover the activities of the legal entity that has the responsibility for operating the institution.

As part of the Annual Report, the institution must report its data on its course completion and graduation rates. It must also submit data on students' satisfaction as demonstrated by the percent of students who answer "yes" to the three mandatory questions as described in C.14. Policy on Student Achievement and Satisfaction.

- **Pay Annual Dues and Accreditation Fees:** An accredited institution is charged an annual Accreditation Fee to help sustain the accreditation process (see Appendix E.1.). As a member of DETC, each member institution is charged annual Dues. These Dues support the research and professional activities of the Council. The Dues and Fees are based on annual tuition receipts. An updated "Computation for Dues and Fees Form" form (see Appendix E.10.) is sent to the institution early in the year. The proper amounts are recorded and the form is returned to the DETC office. The DETC staff figures the amount of Dues and Fees owed by the institution. A statement is sent to the institution indicating the amount of Dues and Accreditation Fees owed. Dues and Fees not paid in full by April 30th are charged a late fee. Accredited institutions failing to meet their financial obligations to the Accrediting Commission and the Council by the end of the fifth month of DETC's fiscal year (August 31st) will be directed to undergo a special accrediting review if the obligations are not met by the end of the sixth month (September 30th).

- **Teach-Out Commitment:** The institution should also be mindful of its formal commitment to “teach out” all students who enroll in its distance study programs irrespective of changes in the institution’s accreditation status (see Appendices E.8. and E.9.). The institution should **update** the Teach-Out Commitment and send it to the Accrediting Commission when there are changes in the institution’s ownership, management, or location.
- **New and Revised Courses:** The institution must inform the Commission whenever it adds or revises a course/program. C.5. Policy on Course/Program Approval gives detailed information on what must be submitted to fulfill the institution’s obligation.
- **Correct any Incorrect or Misleading Information:** An accredited institution is required to issue public correction to all incorrect or misleading information knowingly or unknowingly released in reference to its accreditation status, the contents of reports of the examining committee from accreditation-related visits, and/or any actions taken by the Accrediting Commission with respect to the institution.
- **Advise Commission in a Timely Way:** An accredited institution must promptly inform the Commission of any actions it plans to take itself or actions taken against it by other agencies if those actions could affect its good status in the eyes of the Commission or the public, and resolve complaints in a forthright, prompt, amicable, and equitable manner. Members should make periodic contact with the staff of the Commission apprising them of governmental and media actions which may affect their institutions or the Commission.
- **Advise Commission of Substantive Changes:** It is the duty of the Accrediting Commission to make certain that any substantive change an accredited institution makes does not adversely affect its capacity to continue to meet DETC’s standards of accreditation. Institutions must obtain the Commission’s approval before the change in the institution’s scope of accreditation is granted. Policy C.1. Policy on Substantive Change and Notification lists what is considered to be a “substantive change.”
- **Participate in Evaluations:** One way an institution’s staff can continue to learn, improve, and also contribute to the DETC is by **actively participating** in the evaluation of other institutions which are being considered for accreditation. The Commission conducts training sessions in which school officials are instructed in how to be an effective evaluator. An online course entitled “DETC Evaluator Training Program” is available on DETC’s web site to train and update evaluators.
- **Renew Accreditation:** An accredited institution must take the steps necessary to renew its accreditation at least every five years. After this time, without affirmative action by the Accrediting Commission to continue or renew the institution’s accreditation, the accreditation expires as of the date determined by the Commission. The Commission staff will send the institution a notice stating that they are up for reaccreditation the following year. The institution will need to make application for reaccreditation by sending in the “Application for Accreditation” form (see Appendix E.2 or E.3.) by the date specified.

Once the institution is re-accredited, the staff will issue a reaccreditation certificate citing the original date of accreditation and the reaccreditation date.

Failure to Meet Obligations

If at any time an institution fails to meet its obligations of accreditation in a timely manner including failure to pay its financial obligations to DETC in a timely manner, the Accrediting Commission may order a special visit. C.16. Policy on Special Visits provides the details. If any institution fails to agree to the special visit and observe the timelines specified by the Commission, it may lose its accreditation. The Commission may elect to hold a special meeting (if appropriate) to review the findings of such on-site review, and determine if accreditation is to be removed or affirmed.

Resignation from Accreditation

An applicant for initial accreditation may withdraw its application **at any time** during the accreditation process. For currently accredited institutions, the Accrediting Commission will accept a resignation from accreditation **only** if the institution's status with the Accrediting Commission is in "good standing," defined as:

- the institution had not been ordered to undergo or is not currently undergoing a specially-ordered accreditation review;
- the institution has filed all required reports or has otherwise met all of the conditions set by the Accrediting Commission for its continued accreditation;
- the institution has no active students at all for one year; and
- the institution's financial obligations to the Commission are current.

Review of Standards

The Accrediting Commission engages in a continuous review of its standards and procedures. Annually, the DETC's Standards Committee performs a formal review of the adequacy, currency, validity, and reliability of the standards and makes appropriate recommendations (see Appendix D.5.). The Commission invites suggestions for changes to the standards from all interested parties. Periodically, the Commission conducts a Validity and Reliability Survey of higher education officials, DETC members, and other interested parties.

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Functions of the Evaluating Committee Members

Chair

- coordinates visit
- assures examiners complete their tasks during visit
- sets date for submission of reports (2 weeks)
- prepares Chair's report and submits it to the Director of Accreditation

Educational Standards Evaluator

- evaluates institution using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Director of Accreditation
- verifies special areas:
 - educational mission, objectives, curricula, and materials
 - educational services
 - student services
 - student achievement and satisfaction
 - qualifications of Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff
 - research, self-improvement, and planning
- reviews comments on any "does not meet" ratings
- handles special concerns:
 - reviews student surveys
 - reviews complaints
 - reviews course/program completions
 - reviews outcomes assessment plan

Degree Program Evaluator

- evaluates school using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Director of Accreditation
- handles special concerns:
 - reviews degree objectives, curriculum, and courses
 - interviews faculty and reviews qualifications
 - reviews student/teacher ratios
- reviews comments on any "does not meet" ratings

Business Standards Evaluator

- evaluates institution using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Director of Accreditation
- verifies special areas:
 - admission practices and enrollment agreements
 - advertising and promotional literature
 - control of recruitment personnel
 - financial responsibility
 - compliance with DETC standards on federal student Title IV aid
 - tuition policies, collection procedures, and refunds
 - plant, equipment, and record protection
 - research, self-improvement, and planning
- handles special concerns:
 - reviews financial statements
 - reviews enrollment agreements
 - reviews refund policies

Visiting Subject Specialists

- review courses on-site
- evaluates institution using standards and rating forms
- submit reports to Chair and Director of Accreditation
- evaluate special areas:
 - facilities
 - existence and condition of equipment
- interviews faculty and instructors

AC Observer

- assures AC procedures are followed

Staff Member

- coordinates schedules and logistics

State Agency Observer

- participates as a full member of the committee
- provides pertinent information from state files
- observes institution's evaluation and process
- files comments to Commission (optional)

Readiness Evaluator

- reviews Self-Evaluation Report and determines if the institution is ready for an on-site visit

8 Steps in the Accrediting Process

1. **Obtain DETC Handbook, Complete DETC Course, Review Application, and Begin Writing SER**
 - Institution receives the most recent *DETC Accreditation Handbook* and reviews it carefully
 - Key person enrolls and completes the *DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation* to qualify as a Compliance Officer
 - CEO/President reviews application for accreditation
 - Compliance Officer and Staff begin writing Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
2. **Submit Application and Other Required Information**
 - Institution submits application with application fee
 - Institution submits student names, catalogs, and copy of state licensure
 - DETC posts names of applicants for reaccreditation on web site
3. **Undergo Readiness Assessment (*Initial Applications Only*)**
 - Institution submits the SER within 60 days of submitting application
 - DETC/Evaluator conducts Readiness Assessment
 - Institution undergoes Readiness Assessment
 - If deemed “ready,” institution proceeds to next step and DETC posts name of applicant on web site
4. **Submit Course Materials, DETC Schedules On-Site Visit and Surveys Students**
 - Institution submits course materials for review (DETC sends courses to subject specialists)
 - DETC schedules date for on-site visit
 - DETC surveys students and agencies
5. **Sends SER, Receive Subject Specialist Reports, and Respond to Comments**
 - Institution sends SER
 - DETC selects evaluators for the examining committee and invites State Observer
 - DETC sends subject specialists reports to the institution, along with any student surveys received
 - Institution addresses any “does not meet standard” comments from subject specialists
 - Examiners receive and review SER, subject specialists reports, and student surveys
 - DETC prepares complaint summary
6. **Institution Undergoes On-Site Visit and Examiners Write Reports**
 - Institution undergoes on-site visit
 - Evaluators test and verify information in SER
 - Chair informs institution when to expect Chair’s Report
 - Evaluators write reports and send them to the Chair
 - Observer’s and CEO’s comments are solicited
 - Commission surveys on-site evaluators
7. **Chair Writes and Submits Report and Institution Responds**
 - Chair writes report and sends it to DETC
 - DETC sends Chair’s report to institution for comments
 - Institution responds to Chair’s report
8. **Commission Reviews, Takes Action, and Announces Decision**
 - Commission reviews surveys, Chair’s report, and the institution’s response to Chair’s report
 - Commission makes decision and informs institution
 - Commission announces decision

(Please note: This page is left blank on purpose.)