

5. Adopting and Promulgating Standards and Policies

Procedure for Adopting and Promulgating Accrediting Commission Standards and Policies for the Accreditation of Distance Education Institutions

The Accrediting Commission has the power and responsibility to establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of distance education institutions. These criteria take the form of Accreditation Standards, Policies, and Procedures followed by the Commission as it evaluates and accredits institutions. The criteria are under continual review and changes are made as appropriate and as required.

Origin of Standards and Policies

The Accrediting Commission will consider recommendations for Accreditation Standards and Policies that come to it from any source in any manner or form. The following will be the normal sources for such recommendations:

1. The regular review of existing Accreditation Standards and Policies by the Commission and its staff and needs found by the Commission and its staff in the conduct of the work of the Commission;
2. The Standards Committee of the Distance Education and Training Council;
3. Reports and evaluations by members of the Accrediting Examining Committees and Observers;
4. Governmental agencies with responsibilities and interest in students, institutions, and the accreditation process;
5. Consumer oriented groups surveyed as a part of the accreditation process;
6. Accredited or applicant institutions;
7. Responses from a formal triennial validity and reliability mail survey conducted by the Commission;
8. Students and the general public through surveys made as part of the accreditation process, complaints, and correspondence received by the Commission;
9. Industry representatives and employers of students trained through distance education; and
10. Recognition agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation may recommend changes to correct any deficiencies noted.

Adoption of Accreditation Standards and Policies

The Commission considers recommendations for new Accreditation Standards and Policies or changes in existing Standards and Policies. Recommended Accreditation Standards and Policies approved by the Commission are called “Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies.”

The Commission gives advance notice and opportunity to comment on proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies. Persons, institutions, and organizations affected by or with an interest in the Commission standards and policies will be advised of Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies and of the date they will be given final consideration by the Commission. They will be advised through DETC’s web site and in DETC Bulletins and other publications mailed to the sources for recommendations listed above. Comments will be solicited.

After publication of the Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies, interested persons, institutions, and organizations will be given at least 30 days to file written comments with the Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission. Interested persons, institutions, and organizations will be given the opportunity to appear before the

Commission to present oral comments on the date indicated. Notice of the desire to appeal must be filed with the Executive Director at least 10 days prior to the meeting date. Oral presentations will be not more than 30 minutes in length, and written comments and a summary of the oral presentation must be filed with the Executive Director prior to the appearance.

The Accrediting Commission, after considering written comments and hearing oral presentations, will take action on the Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies. The Commission can adopt Accreditation Standards and Policies as proposed, adopt with changes or modifications, defer action until further study and consideration is given, or reject the Proposed Accreditation Standards outright. When Accreditation Standards and Policies are adopted, the Commission will set the date that they will become effective, providing a reasonable time for school compliance.

Promulgation of Accreditation Standards and Policies

The Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission will announce Accreditation Standards and Policies adopted by the Commission and take the action necessary for their implementation. The effective date and procedures for implementation, if required, will be included in the announcement.

1. Information on new Accreditation Standards and Policies will be posted on DETC’s web site and published in DETC Bulletins and publications mailed to the sources for recommendations listed above.
2. The relevant publications of the Accrediting Commission will be revised to include the new Accreditation Standards. Changes will be made to the DETC Business Standards as required.
3. Commission Policies will be published and made available as required for their implementation.

Comments and Suggestions on Accreditation Standards and Policies

Interested persons, institutions, and organizations are encouraged to submit comments on existing Accreditation Standards and Policies and make suggestions for additions or revisions. Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission.

#