

3. Notification and Information Sharing

Procedure for Notifying Federal, State, Accrediting Agencies, and Public of the Commission's Decisions and Information Sharing

Pursuant to Federal Regulations regarding the recognition of other accrediting agencies, the Accrediting Commission will observe this policy in keeping interested and appropriate groups informed of the accrediting actions taken by the Commission.

- **Initial or Reaccreditation:** The Commission will provide written notice to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies, and the appropriate accrediting agencies, at the same time it notifies the institution of the decision, but no later than **30** days after the Commission makes its decision to accredit or reaccredit an institution. *(10/11)*
- **Deny or Withdraw Accreditation:** The Commission will provide written notice to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies, and the appropriate accrediting agencies, at the same time it notifies the institution of the decision, but no later than **30** days after the Commission makes a **final** decision to deny or withdraw accreditation. A final decision to deny or withdraw accreditation is one reached after an institution has exhausted the appeals process provided for in D.2. *(10/11)*
- **Show Cause Directive:** The Commission will provide written notice to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies, and the appropriate accrediting agencies, at the same time it notifies the institution of the decision, but no later than 30 days after the Commission makes a decision to place an institution on Show Cause. *(10/11)*

The Commission will provide written notice to the public of any of the decisions listed above within **24** hours of its notice to the institution.

For any decisions to deny or withdraw accreditation, the Commission will make available to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing agencies, and the appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public, no later than **60** days after the final decision, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the Commission's decision and the official comments, if any, that the affected institution may wish to make regarding the Commission's decision. If no official comments by the institution are provided within **14** days of notification, the Commission will document that the affected institution was offered the opportunity to provide an official comment. *(10/11)*

Resigning or Voluntarily Withdrawing Accreditation: Upon receiving notification from an institution to resign or voluntarily withdraw from accreditation, the Commission will provide written notice and post it on its website within **30** days to the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing agencies or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies and, upon request, the public. *(10/11)*

Accreditation Lapses: If an institution decides not to renew its accreditation, the Commission will provide written notice and post it on its website within **30** days of the date on which the institution's accreditation lapses to the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing agencies or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies and, upon request, the public. *(10/11)*

The Commission will submit to the U.S. Secretary of Education the name of any institution it accredits which the Commission has reason to believe is engaging in fraud and abuse, along with the Commission's reasons for concern about the institution's activities and where DETC has found significant or systemic deficiencies in the assignment of credit hours by an institution or program. The Commission will also inform the U.S. Secretary of Education whenever it has found significant or systemic deficiencies in the assignment of credit hours by an institution.

Scope of Public Information (10/11)

The Commission will make available to the public and may publish in official DETC publications, including its website and/or Directory of Accredited Institutions, the following information:

1. The name, address, phone number, and website address of an accredited institution
2. The month and year accredited and month and year accreditation expires
3. A summary list of programs offered by the institution
4. A summary of information pertaining to an adverse action as defined in D.1.
5. A summary of information pertaining to an action subject to appeal; and
6. The date of an institution's voluntary withdrawal of accreditation.

Confidentiality of Records: Information pertaining to the Commission's actions is confidential and is not shared with third parties, other DETC institutions, the media, or the public, except as authorized by an institution or as required by government regulation, judicial or administrative process, and other legal requirements.

Sharing Information with Government Entities and Other Accrediting Agencies (10/11)

DETC will grant all reasonable special requests for accreditation information made by other accrediting agencies and government entities. Requests for information from such entities must be writing, submitted to the Executive Director of DETC, and state the name and address of the institution for which the information is sought, the nature of the information requested, and the purposes for which the information is to be used. A decision to deny such a request is not subject to appeal.

Institutions accredited by or seeking accreditation from DETC provide a release as part of its Application for Accreditation for purposes of eliciting information from state licensing agencies and governmental entities, as well as an acknowledgment of the fact that accreditation information may, at the discretion of the Commission, be shared with other accrediting agencies and government entities.

Authorized Disclosure of Information (10/11)

If an institution wishes specific accreditation information that is otherwise to be treated as confidential to be released to third parties, the CEO of the institution or an institution-designated official must provide a written release on official letterhead to the Executive Director of DETC stating the precise information sought to be released and the party or parties to whom the information is to be released.

Also see C.22. Policy on Information Provided the U.S. Department of Education.

Public Disclosure of Accreditation Status (10/11)

DETC specifies how an accredited institution may refer to its accreditation status. DETC Business Standard I.B.1. states: An institution may refer to its accredited status as, “Accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council” “Accredited by the DETC Accrediting Commission,” “accredited member of DETC” or “DETC Accredited.” An institution may use the term “accredited programs,” “accredited courses,” and/or “nationally accredited” when referring to its individual programs, courses, and/or institution.

Also DETC Business Standard IB.6. states, “An accredited institution must state its accredited status in its catalog and on its website. DETC’s name, address, and telephone number must be published in the institution’s catalog, along with a link to DETC’s website (www.detc.org).”

DETC Business Standards I.A.1. requires that “All advertisements, website copy or promotional literature with respect to the institution, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates are accurate, clear, and readily accessible to the public and clearly indicates that training or education is being offered at a distance.” This applies to properly disclosing in all its advertisements, promotional literature, and catalogs the specific academic or instructional programs covered by an institution’s accredited status.

DETC does not have a preaccreditation or candidacy status. An applicant institution may not refer to its accreditation status in any manner. In doing so, it could potentially mislead the public about the institution’s affiliation with DETC. When an institution applies for initial accreditation, it must certify on its Application for Accreditation that it “agrees to not make any promotional use of its application for accreditation status prior to receiving DETC accreditation.”

If DETC is informed that an applicant institution is telling the public it is “preaccredited,” or “will be accredited,” the Executive Director will notify the institution immediately and tell them to cease and desist. If the institution continues, it is counseled that it may not proceed with the accreditation process.

Accredited institutions found to be in violation will the DETC Business Standards may be required to undergo a full accreditation review.

Correction of Misleading or Inaccurate Information (10/11)

DETC requires that an accredited institution must correct any misleading or inaccurate information it releases. DETC Business Standards I.B.9. states, “An institution must publicly correct any misleading or inaccurate information it releases on its accreditation status, contents of reports of the examining committee from accreditation-related visits, and/or actions taken by the Accrediting Commission with respect to the institution.”

DETC will notify the institution of the misleading or inaccurate information, and request that the institution immediately make the correction, post a notice of the correction, and document to DETC that that correction has been made. Failure to do so within **10** days may result in an order of a Special Visit (see C.16. Policy on Special Visits).

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