

24. Policy for Non-U.S. Institutions (approved for public comment 6/3/11)

If a distance education institution located outside the United States wishes to apply for accreditation, it must petition the DETC Accrediting Commission and request that its application be accepted. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case bases.

In its petition, the institution should:

- describe how accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the DETC will be of benefit to the institution and to its students;
- explain how accreditation will be used; and
- commit that the institution head and/or key personnel will actively participate in Council affairs if the school is accredited.

A large proportion of the institution’s courses/programs and materials must be in English to give the English speaking examiners and the Accrediting Commission a comprehensive understanding of the institution and its programs. Waivers to this Policy may sometimes be granted upon written petition to the Commission.

Extensive pre-application and visitation contacts between the institution and the DETC staff are required to assure a full understanding of standards and procedures and to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments. Such contacts should be made through exchanges of correspondence, telephone conversations, and in face-to-face meetings, **which may include a Readiness Assessment** (see C.12.). The institution will pay reasonable expenses for such contacts.

The institution will be evaluated using the standards of the Accrediting Commission. The DETC Business Standards will be applied on an item-by-item basis with due regard to the national laws, regulations, and cultural environment applicable to the applicant. The Commission may approve the tuition refund policy used by a non-U.S. government-owned institution if it is found to be “fair and equitable” to students.

~~If the institution believes that any accreditation standard should be waived or interpreted in a special way, the burden of substantiating this belief is placed on the applicant. The institution must express such beliefs in correspondence prior to the on-site visit and provide the substantiating arguments in its Self-Evaluation Report.~~

Action

~~In a cover letter submitted with the *Application for Accreditation* (see Appendix E.2.), the **head of the applicant institution** should:~~

- ~~▪ describe how accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the DETC will be of benefit to the institution and to its students;~~
- ~~▪ explain how accreditation will be used; and~~
- ~~▪ commit that the institution head and/or key personnel will actively participate in Council affairs if the school is accredited.~~

If the Commission agrees to accept the institution’s application, the institution must follow the 8 steps in the accreditation process (see pages 19-24 of the DETC Accreditation Handbook). It must submit a completed Application for Accreditation (see Appendix E.2) and a copy of its Self-Evaluation Report within 60 days of submitting the application. A Readiness Assessment will be conducted to determine if the institution is ready to undergo an on-site visit.

The specified number of copies of a full Self-Evaluation Report must be provided to the Director of Accreditation at least three months prior to the date set for the on-site visit.

The **visiting committee** will consist of at least three evaluators and the Accrediting Commission Observer. The normal course review policy will be followed. In certain cases, a subject specialist will accompany the visiting committee. When possible, an educator from the institution’s geographic area will be included on the visiting committee.

When possible, an individual from the appropriate national government regulatory body will be invited to observe the accreditation process. The process must remain independent of any government review procedures, however, and the voluntary, non-governmental nature of accreditation must be preserved.

The institution will pay the actual cost of the review, including travel expenses of the visiting committee, fees for course/program reviews, and honoraria plus a 15 percent administrative fee. U.S. Evaluators will be authorized to travel via “Business Class” when flying, and the applicant agrees to pay such airfare expense. The institution will be sent an estimated fee that must be paid (in U.S. funds) prior to the visit. Adjustments will be made following the visit.

Where a government affiliated or supported non-U.S. institution does not enroll a significant number of U.S. students, the Commission may permit a ten-year cycle for full accreditation reviews. In addition to submitting an Annual Report, such an institution will be asked to submit an Interim Report at the five-year point of its accreditation. The Commission may order a staff visit to follow-up on any items noted in the Interim Report.

An institution accredited on the basis of successful operation outside of the United States may operate in the U.S. only after receiving approval from the Accrediting Commission. To obtain this approval, the institution must first undergo a Readiness Assessment (see C.12. Policy on Readiness Assessment). This assessment will assess the ability of the institution to operate in an American academic environment, including whether the materials and pedagogy are appropriate for U.S. students. It will also examine whether the institution has sufficient support, academically and financially, to maintain itself in the U.S. market.

This Readiness Assessment can result in a finding that the institution is ready to commence U.S. operations, that **some** operations should await the completion of a full visit, or that the institution is not yet prepared for U.S. operations. Should the visit conclude that the institution is not yet ready, a re-application for U.S. operations may be made after one year. Students enrolled by the institution will be surveyed using the established survey procedure.

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