



Academic Senate
for California Community Colleges

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

Accreditation Basics

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ACCREDITATION

DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH ASCCC 2020-21
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

What do you know
about accreditation?

Which of the following is true of accreditation?

- A. It compares colleges to best practices in education
- B. It punishes colleges based upon audits
- C. It grades and ranks colleges based on standards
- D. It guarantees the quality of education to the federal government and the public
- E. It is something to pay attention to every 5-7 years

Who participates in accreditation processes?

- A. Faculty
- B. Administration
- C. Classified
- D. Students
- E. Managers
- F. All of the Above

Overview

- **WHO:** Accrediting Agencies
- **WHAT:** Accreditation Standards and Structures
- **WHY:** Importance of accreditation
- **HOW:** Faculty role in accreditation

WHO oversees accreditation?

- **Accreditors:** private independent educational organizations (nongovernmental)
- **Institutional Accreditors**
 - Regional: includes ACCJC
 - National: includes DEAC
- **Programmatic or Specialized Accreditors**
 - Dental, Nursing, Funeral Services, and more

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)

- Part of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which also includes WASC Senior Colleges and University Commission (WSCUC) and Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS WASC)
- Accredits associate degree granting institutions in California, Hawaii, the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands
- Establishes eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, commission policies, and procedures to assess institutional quality
- Professional Staff → Public Commissioners → Peer Reviewers

WHAT is Accreditation?

- A process of continual institutional improvement
 - Self-evaluation
 - Development and use of good standards-supporting practices and processes
 - Regular monitoring
 - Addressing gaps as they are identified
- Reporting to the public via reports to the accrediting commission
- Validation of self-evaluation through a visit from a peer review team
- Quality assurance through external peer review
- Focus is on how a college meets a standard, not on how a college does not

WHAT is Accreditation?

- Accreditation is based on each college's performance against standards as aligned with college mission, policies, and processes.
- Standards...
 - Are guided by higher education regulations and policies and developed by stakeholders within each region
 - Vary between accrediting agencies, but themes are consistent
- ACCJC has 4 standards:
 - I. Mission, Academic Quality & Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity
 - II. Student Learning Programs and Support Services
 - III. Resources
 - IV. Leadership and Governance
- Colleges must also meet eligibility requirements and comply with commission policies

Eligibility Requirements

- Institutions must meet eligibility requirements (ERs).
- ERs validated as part of Institutional Self-Evaluation Reporting (ISER) process
- ERs 1-5 must be separately addressed in ISER; 5-21 are addressed within the standards
 1. Authority
 2. Operational Status
 3. Degrees
 4. Chief Executive Officer
 5. Financial Accountability

Accreditation Standards

Commission Policies

- Policies align with Federal Department of Education regulations
- Highlights:
 - Institutional Compliance with Title IV (Financial Aid)
 - Institutional Degrees and Credits
 - Distance Education and on Correspondence Education
 - Competency Based Education
 - Credit for Prior Learning
 - Representation of Accredited Status

Accreditation Process: Ongoing



Accreditation is an ongoing process. Colleges spend the most time in Institutional Follow-up.

Accreditation cycle is 7 years; midterm reports are due in year 4.

What is the purpose of accreditation?

- A. For colleges to compare themselves to other colleges
- B. For colleges to identify and publicize their faults or shortcomings
- C. For colleges to identify the ways they meet standards for quality
- D. For colleges to identify and improve gaps or shortcomings
- E. For colleges to demonstrate to the public that they meet minimum standards for operation and instruction

Importance of Accreditation

Only accredited institutions qualify for financial aid (Title IV funds) and federal/state grants!

For students:

- Vital for portability / transfer of credit
- Vital for legitimacy of degrees and publications
- Vital for receipt of federal financial aid

For the public:

- Assures legitimacy of institution and confidence in quality of programs and services
- Promotes accountability through ongoing external evaluation

Importance of Accreditation

For Colleges:

- Incentive for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional improvement
- Feedback for improvement as a result of peer review process
- Enhanced reputation as an accredited institution
- Access to federal programs and private support

Faculty Role in Accreditation

Participation is key!

- 10+1 includes Faculty Roles in Accreditation – faculty leadership is critical
- Be engaged with campus committees and processes
- Understand accreditation and how college processes and practices are all part of on-going institutional accreditation
- Be engaged in identifying gaps, proposing solutions, and locating evidence of effective practices
- Participate on accreditation standards teams (including leadership of teams!)
- Key collaborators: CIOs, ALOs, Institutional Effectiveness/Research

Resources

U.S. Department of Education

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>

Council for Higher Education Accreditation

http://www.chea.org/4DCGI/cms/review.html?Action=CMS_Document&DocID=48&MenuKey=main

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

<https://accjc.org>

THANK YOU!