
Policy on Representation of Accredited Status

June 2023

Background

ACCJC member institutions must accurately post information for the public concerning its accreditation status on its website.¹ The information must be posted no more than one page (one click) away from the institution's homepage.

Policy Elements on Representation of Accredited Status

The term "accreditation" is to be used only when accredited or candidate status (preaccreditation) is conferred by the Commission. Specialized and program accreditation granted by other accreditors should be clearly specified as to the source of the accreditation, together with reference to the specific program to which it applies.

The accreditation status of a program shall not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by the Commission has reference to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, statements like "this program is accredited" or "this degree is accredited," are incorrect and misleading.

Institutions offering programs in a single field, for example, a school of art, engineering, theology, granted accreditation by the Commission shall clearly state that the institutional accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of any program offered.

When accredited or candidate status (preaccreditation) is affirmed in institutional catalogs and other official publications, it shall be stated accurately based on the complete statements listed below.

Statements on Representation of Status

The following statements govern representations of status by institutions seeking eligibility to apply for Candidacy status; by institutions with Candidacy status (preaccreditation); and by accredited institutions. In addition to the statements in this policy, institutions on warning, probation, or show cause, and institutions whose accreditation has been withdrawn, must disclose that information to students and prospective students in accordance with the Commission's *Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process*.

A. Representation by Institutions Seeking Eligibility to Apply for Candidacy Status

An institution that is preparing, has submitted, or completed an eligibility application has no formal relationship with the Commission. An institution that has attained eligibility to apply

¹ § 602.23 (d)

for Candidacy status (preaccreditation) may not make any representation which claims or implies any relationship with the Accrediting Commission.

During the period in which the college prepares its institutional self-evaluation in support of its application for Candidacy status (preaccreditation), the institution does not have a publicly recognized relationship with ACCJC and may not represent itself to current or prospective students, the public, governmental agencies, other accrediting bodies, or any other parties as having an affiliation or accredited status with the Commission.

No formal or informal statements should be made about possible future accreditation, status, or qualification which is not yet conferred by the Commission.

Once ACCJC has determined that an institution is eligible to apply for Candidacy status (preaccreditation), representations should include and be limited to the following statement:

At its (date of meeting) meeting, the Eligibility Committee of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges reviewed the Eligibility application submitted by (name of institution) and deemed (name of institution) eligible to apply for Candidacy status. Eligibility indicates that an institution demonstrates that it meets all of the Commission's Eligibility Requirements. Eligibility does not establish a formal relationship between the Commission and the institution. Inquiries about accreditation should be made to the Commission office: ACCJC, 428 J Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95814, (415) 506-0234; accjc@accjc.org.

B. Representation by Institutions with Candidacy Status

Representations of Candidacy status (preaccreditation) should include and be limited to the following statement (note that both paragraphs are required):

(Name of institution) is a Candidate for Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 428 J Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95814, (415) 506-0234, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. Additional information about accreditation, including the filing of complaints against member institutions, can be found at: www.accjc.org

Candidate for Accreditation is a status of preliminary affiliation with the Commission initially awarded for two years. Candidacy does not assure eventual accreditation.

C. Representation of Status by Accredited Institutions

Representations of accredited status should include and be limited to the following statement. Additional modifiers such as "fully accredited" are not appropriate since no partial accreditation is possible.

(Name of institution) is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 428 J Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95814, (415) 506-0234, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. Additional information about accreditation, including the filing of complaints against member institutions, can be found at: www.accjc.org

*Adopted June 1998; Revised January 1999; Edited June 2003, August 2006, August 2012;
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