



CANDIDACY

3.3. CANDIDACY FOR ACCREDITATION

A Candidate for Accreditation is an educational institution that has satisfactorily met the Candidacy Indicators (a subset of the Standards for Accreditation) has formally accepted the offer of Candidacy for Accreditation, and has had that acceptance affirmed by the Executive Director. In addition, a Candidate for Accreditation has been in operation successfully for at least one academic year or longer if so mandated by state regulations, and reflects a willingness and readiness to participate in the self-study, evaluation, and planning activities required by the Commission. An institution may be a Candidate for Accreditation for a maximum of three years unless specific approval is requested of and approved by the Executive Director.

3.3.1 Initiating Candidacy

An institution may initiate the candidacy process by contacting the CSS Executive Director via letter, phone call, email, or fax. The institution shall complete a Candidacy Application prior to the assignment of the Candidacy Visitor.

The decision to offer candidacy to an institution evolves through a variety of means, including but not limited to:

3.3.1.1. Completion and submission of a Registration Form and an Application for Candidacy, followed by a formal candidacy visit to the institution, or

3.3.1.2. In certain cases, the Executive Director may waive the requirements in 3.3.1.a. based on pre-established collaborative relationships with an institution's parent organization. That relationship assures that the institution meets the Commission requirements for candidacy and has the capacity to succeed in the accreditation process, or

3.3.1.3. If the institution is accredited by one of the organizations with which the Commission has a cooperative accreditation agreement.

3.3.2 Candidacy Visit

Institutions determined by the Executive Director to be eligible to begin the candidacy process shall have an onsite visit by a staff member or a representative of the Commission. The purpose of this visit is two-fold: a.) to determine whether the institution currently meets Standards for Accreditation or is likely to do so in the near future and b.) to ascertain the institution's readiness for the accreditation process. Under certain circumstances, the Executive Director has the authority to waive the onsite visit requirement, but never in the case of postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology institutions which shall always host an onsite visit. The Candidacy Visitor shall submit a written report on his/her findings to the Executive Director.

3.3.3 Offer/Deferral of Candidacy

Decisions to offer candidacy or defer candidacy are made by the Executive Director and reported to the Commission at its next scheduled meeting. The institution shall be

informed, in writing, within 60 days of the decision and the reasons for the decision. If an institution's candidacy is deferred, the institution shall be afforded due process in consideration of such an action.

3.3.4 Term of Offer of Candidacy

The offer of candidacy is valid for one calendar year. All offers not accepted within one year may be rescinded by the Executive Director.

3.3.5 Term of Candidate Status

An institution will be admitted as a Candidate member of the Commission upon its acceptance of the offer of candidacy. Institutions may remain in candidacy for a period not to exceed three years. During that time, the institution must complete its self-study and planning processes, receive a CSS-appointed evaluation team, and successfully achieve accreditation. If an institution is unable to successfully complete accreditation, it is no longer considered to be a candidate member and returns to correspondent status.

If unusual conditions arise that preclude a candidate institution from meeting requirements within the period set, the institution must seek approval, in writing, for extension of the term of candidacy. Decisions on extension of the candidacy term are made by the Executive Director. Under no circumstances, however, will the candidacy term exceed five years.

3.3.6. Candidate Fees and Dues

A Candidacy Fee, as set by the Commission, is charged for the Candidacy Visit. The institution is also assessed applicable travel costs for the visit.

A candidate member is assessed annual membership dues, effective with the acceptance of the offer of candidacy, in the same manner and according to the same dues schedule applicable to accredited member institutions.

3.3.7. Responsibilities of Candidate Institutions

Candidate institutions shall fulfill, as appropriate, all expectations expressed in Policy 1.2.—Expectations of Accredited Institutions.

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