



*Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

SEPARATE ACCREDITATION FOR UNITS OF A MEMBER INSTITUTION

- Policy Statement -

The Commission on Colleges accredits an institution as a totality. This accreditation includes, in addition to the parent campus, all centers, branches, campuses, or other sites of a degree-granting institution at which postsecondary degree or non-degree work is offered. These centers, sites, or locations are referred to as “extended units.” COC-accredited institutions which offer courses or programs at several locations must declare one of these locations a parent campus for the purposes of accreditation. All branch campuses related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control must (1) include the name of the parent campus and make it clear that its accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus and (2) be evaluated during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. All other extended units under the accreditation of the parent campus must be evaluated during such reviews.

For an extended unit to be eligible for accreditation as a separate institution, it must be located in and chartered or incorporated within one of the eleven states, Latin America, or other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges. Furthermore, if the institution is part of a system covering more than one accrediting region, the locus of administrative control for the institution must be within the geographic jurisdiction of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

If the Commission on Colleges determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that the control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct that the extended unit seek to become a separately accredited institution. A unit which seeks separate accreditation should bear a different name from that of the parent. A unit which is located in a state or country outside the geographic jurisdiction of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and which the Commission determines should be separately accredited or the institution requests to be separately accredited, must apply for separate accreditation from the regional accrediting association that accredits colleges in that state or country. Failure to make adequate progress toward such accreditation may endanger the status of the unit and/or the accredited status of the parent campus.

Procedure for an Extended Unit Seeking Separate Accreditation

1. The unit notifies the President of the Commission in writing of its intent and then completes an Application for Membership, including all documentation required to demonstrate compliance with Core Requirements 2.1-2.11, Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1 and 3.5.1 related to institutional effectiveness and student learning, Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 related to faculty qualifications, and all Federal Requirements. The notification and application must contain authorization by the parent entity for the unit to seek separate accreditation.
2. The Application Form is reviewed by Commission staff.
3. If staff cannot determine apparent compliance with the standards listed above, the unit may exercise its option to refer the application to the Committee on Compliance and Reports of the Commission on Colleges. After considering the recommendation, the Commission may authorize the unit to complete a Compliance

Certification addressing compliance with the Comprehensive Standards and subsequently to receive an Accreditation Committee visit, or it may deny such authorization. If authorization is denied, the unit remains a part of the parent institution and may reapply for accreditation as a separate institution at any time that it wishes. (The extended unit seeking separate accreditation may not initiate other substantive changes during this period.)

4. If staff can determine apparent compliance with Core Requirements 2.1-2.11; Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1, and 3.5.1, and 3.7.1, and all Federal Requirements, the President of the Commission may authorize the unit to complete a Compliance Certification addressing the Comprehensive Standards and subsequently to receive an Accreditation Committee visit. (The extended unit seeking separate accreditation may not initiate other substantive changes during this period.)
5. The staff member assigned to the parent institution then visits the unit to assist in completion of the Compliance Certification.
6. After the Accreditation Committee visit, which will normally occur within two years of authorization of the visit, the application, the institution's Compliance Certification, the report of the Accreditation Committee, and the unit's response to that report are forwarded to the Commission for action.
7. The Commission either grants or denies separate accreditation.
8. If the Commission approves the separate accreditation of the unit, the newly-accredited institution will be required to have its accreditation reaffirmed five years after the granting of membership (and every ten years thereafter). For reaffirmation of accreditation, the institution must document compliance with all Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements.
9. If the Commission denies approval of the separate accreditation of the unit, the unit may continue to be included under the accreditation of its parent campus. However, non-compliance in connection with seeking separate accreditation could possibly affect the accredited status of the parent campus. The unit may apply again as it wishes.
10. There is no provision for candidacy in the process of separate accreditation of an extended unit.
11. The unit seeking separate accreditation remains accredited under the parent campus until final action on separate accreditation is taken.

All management agreements, option agreements, or other contractual agreements with respect to the management and control of the extended unit, if any, must be in place at the time of submission of the application and included for review in the application. After an extended unit becomes a separately accredited institution, it may not change ownership for at least three years following the date of accreditation as a separate entity without loss of accreditation. After the three-year period, if the institution changes ownership, it is required to notify the Commission on Colleges in keeping with the substantive change policy and procedures of the Commission.

*Approved: Commission on Colleges, December 2002
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