



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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September 2, 1999

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. R. Austin Gilbert, Jr., Chairman, and Members,
Commission on Higher Education

From: Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chair *DC/epm*
Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

**Consideration of Revised Guidelines for Identification
of Accreditation Agencies**

Background

Please find enclosed proposed revisions to the CHE *Guidelines for Approval of Specialized Accreditation Agencies*. The revisions are consistent with the changes made at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs.

Item 6 responds to the recommendation of the ad hoc committee on accreditation that the Advisory Committee develop procedures that address "discussion of the advisability of having more than one accrediting agency for a particular discipline."

This item has been submitted to the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing for approval since the future identification of accreditation agencies has been reassigned from the Performance Funding group to Academic Affairs.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve these revised guidelines for immediate implementation.

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CHE Guidelines for Approval of Specialized Accreditation Agencies

1. The Commission's list of accrediting agencies consists of those agencies for which one or more academic programs are currently creditable in a South Carolina institution as reported on U.S. Department of Education FORM IPEDS-1C-1 (6-1-94). This reporting form is used for both Act 255 of 1992 and Act 359 of 1996 submissions.

2. Petitions to add or delete accrediting agencies from the Commission's list may be submitted to the CHE Division of Academic Affairs twice each year by any public institution in South Carolina or by the Commission staff on the schedule outlined below:

Action	Dates: Cycle 1	Dates: Cycle 2
Petition submitted to Academic Affairs	December 1	August 1
Petitions circulated to institutions	December	August
Institutions identify affected programs; provide commentary on whether acceptance should be granted	March 1	October 1
Consideration by ACAP	Spring Meeting	Fall Meeting
Consideration by CAA	Summer Meeting	Winter Meeting
Consideration by CHE	July/September	March

3. An institution or the Commission staff may request of the Commission addition of an accrediting agency only under the following circumstances: 1) the agency is recognized by either the U.S. Department of Education or by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation; or, 2) licensure/certification in South Carolina requires graduation from a program holding such specialized accreditation.

4. When a new accrediting agency is added to the Commission list, institutions with programs creditable by the new agency have up to five years to gain accreditation for those programs. Institutions must notify the Commission's Division of Academic Affairs upon achieving successful accreditation.

5. When the Commission approves a new academic program that is creditable under an agency on the CHE list, the new program will have five years to gain

accreditation through the appropriate agency and report this accreditation to the Commission's Division of Academic Affairs. However, in cases where accreditation is achieved prior to the end of the five-year window, institutions may notify CHE of accreditation at any time within the window.

6. If the Commission lists two or more recognized accreditation agencies (e.g., business administration), institutions may choose one agency for accreditation purposes. No institution will be expected to hold specialized accreditation from two agencies for the same discipline.

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