

Policy for Approval of Specialized Accreditation Agencies

1. The Commission on Higher Education’s (CHE) list of approved accrediting agencies consists of those agencies included in the *List of National Institutional and Specialized Accrediting Bodies Recognized by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education* and posted on the Commission’s website.
2. Petitions to add or delete accrediting agencies from the Commission’s list may be submitted to the Director of the Commission’s Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing 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 Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP)	Spring Meeting	Fall Meeting
Consideration by Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAA&L)	Summer Meeting	Winter Meeting
Consideration by CHE	July/September	March

3. An accrediting body is eligible for Commission approval if:
 - A. it is approved by the U. S. Department of Education; or
 - B. it is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation; or
 - C. licensure/certification in South Carolina requires graduation from a program holding such specialized accreditation.
4. If an accrediting body meets the necessary requirements in #3, and if there is no institutional objection at the end of the institutional review period and subsequent Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) meeting, Commission staff shall

have the authority to approve the accrediting body and add it to the Commission's list of approved accrediting agencies.

5. When a new accrediting agency is added to the Commission list, institutions with existing programs accreditable by the new agency have up to five years before being required to report the accreditation status of those programs. Institutions must notify the Commission's Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing upon achieving successful accreditation.
6. When the Commission approves a new academic program that is accreditable under an agency on the CHE list, the institution will have up to five years before being required to report the accreditation status of the program. Institutions must notify the Commission's Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing upon achieving successful accreditation for a new program.
7. If the Commission lists two (or more) recognized accrediting agencies for a single discipline (e.g., business administration, nursing), institutions may choose either agency for accreditation purposes. No institution will be expected to hold specialized accreditation from two agencies for the same discipline.

Approved by the Commission on Higher Education on May 1, 2008.