
Policy on Accreditation of Baccalaureate Degrees

January 2021

General Requirements

Member institutions which seek to gain accreditation for a baccalaureate degree program will first need to gain substantive change approval.¹ That approval may include the requirement for a follow-up report and team visit to address specific issues identified by the Substantive Change Committee and to verify that the institution remains in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies as the program implementation moves forward.

Upon completion of the substantive change requirements and following approval, the baccalaureate degree program will be expected to demonstrate and maintain compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies as part of an accredited institution. As part of an institution's comprehensive evaluation, both the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and the evaluation team report will be expected to specifically address the compliance of the baccalaureate degree program with all applicable Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies.

Institutional Baccalaureate Degree Offerings

ACCJC is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit institutions which have as a primary mission the granting of associate degrees², but which may also award certificates and other credentials, including bachelor's degrees, where the provision of such credentials is within the institution's mission and, if applicable, as authorized by their governmental authorities. The U.S. Department of Education's approval of this scope is the means by which institutions and their programs may qualify for federal student aid and federal aid to postsecondary institutions.

Per the *Substantive Change Manual* and *Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review*, an institution preparing an Institutional Self Evaluation Report for purposes of initial approval or reaffirmation of accreditation must specifically address and provide evidence of its practices as to the baccalaureate degree and how those practices meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

Adopted June 2016; Revised January 2021

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¹ See the *Policy on Substantive Change* and the Manual on Substantive Change for articulation of the policies and procedures related to substantive change.

² In accordance with the bylaws of ACCJC, the operational definition of having as a primary mission the granting of associate degrees includes the following: 75% of the programs offered by the institution must be at the Associate degree or pre-Associate degree college level, and 60% of students at the institution must be in Associate degree or pre-Associate Degree level programs. A primarily two-year higher education institution may offer baccalaureate degrees without regard to these percentages.