



RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

8.2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

8.2.1. Relationships with the Commission on Higher Education and the Commission on Elementary Schools

The Commission on Secondary Schools shall cooperate with its sister commissions in developing close relationship between schools and colleges and in furthering PK – 16 education and initiatives.

8.2.2. Relationships with Other Regional Accrediting Agencies

The Commission on Secondary Schools shall cooperate with the other five regional accrediting agencies (New England Association, North Central Association, Northwest Association, Southern Association, and Western Association) in activities of mutual interest. Examples of such cooperation include acceptance of transfer students in the same manner as they are accepted by institutions within their own association and the exchange of information such as evaluation materials, Standards for Accreditation, and best practices in the accreditation field.

8.2.3. Availability of Cooperative Evaluation with Other Accrediting Agencies

Other agencies provide evaluation and accreditation services to particular types of institutions in the Middle States Association region. Since a number of institutions seek to be accredited by the Commission on Secondary Schools while working with an agency that specializes in a particular type of institution, the Commission has adopted guidelines for conducting joint self-study, planning, and evaluation processes.

8.2.3.1. Guidelines for Cooperative Evaluations: Guidelines for cooperative evaluations include the following:

- Each agency shall apply its own Standards for Accreditation, make its own accreditation decision, and inform the institution and the other accrediting agency accordingly. Consultation between the staffs of the cooperating agencies is encouraged and expected. Neither agency takes responsibility for the candidacy or accreditation action of the other.
- All dues and fees are established separately and paid directly to each agency.
- The self-evaluation and planning protocol used must meet with the approval of each agency.
- The evaluation team shall be agreed upon by both agencies.
- All documents including the self-study and planning document, the evaluation team report, and all accreditation maintenance reports shall be provided to both agencies.
- The institution is required to follow a mutually agreed upon protocol (reports, special visits, conferences, etc.) for establishment and maintenance of its accredited status.

- If either agency finds it necessary to remove accreditation from an institution that received accreditation through a cooperative process, it will inform the cooperating agency of its action and provide the reasons for it.
- Agreements with other agencies shall be subject to review and discussion at any time. Either organization may withdraw from the agreement if the conditions of the agreement are found to be untenable and an appropriate resolution can not be reached.

8.2.3.2. Institutions Already Accredited by an Agency with whom CSS has a Collaborative Agreement: Secondary institutions that are now accredited by another accrediting agency, but not by CSS, may petition to become accredited by CSS, if CSS has a collaborative agreement with that agency. Such secondary institutions may be granted an accreditation status by CSS until such time as a successful self-study and planning activity and evaluation team visit can be conducted jointly. The accreditation shall be coterminous with the last term of accreditation granted to the secondary institution by the collaborating agency. The institution shall agree that its next scheduled self-study, planning, and evaluation activities shall be conducted jointly with the Commission on Secondary Schools. NOTE: This policy is not applicable to postsecondary institutions.

8.2.3.3. Review of Adverse Actions By Other Accrediting Agencies: When a secondary institution accredited by the Commission that is also accredited by another accrediting agency has an adverse action taken against it by the other agency, the Commission may choose to conduct a review of the institution. In the case of postsecondary institutions, this review is always required. This review shall consist of a request for a written statement by the institution about the circumstances of the adverse action. The institution will be asked to demonstrate that it is still in compliance with the Commission on Secondary Schools Standards for Accreditation. The Commission may also seek additional information from the other agency on the reasons for actions taken.

8.2.3.4. Sharing Information with Other Agencies: The Commission shall routinely share information, as outlined in the policy on Ethics and Integrity, with other accrediting agencies.

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