



SCOPE AND CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

3.1 SCOPE AND CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

3.1.1. Scope of Membership

3.1.1.1. Jurisdiction: The Commission on Secondary Schools has jurisdiction for the accreditation and evaluation of public and non-public middle, intermediate, and/or secondary schools, non-degree granting vocational technical and postsecondary institutions, special purpose schools, supplementary education centers, and distance education institutions.

3.1.1.2. Grade Levels/Ages Served: Institutions with beginning grade levels above grade 4 through grade 12 (or grade 13 where provided) are within the Commission's jurisdiction. In addition, postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology institutions for adult learners of any age are served by the Commission.

3.1.1.3. Types of Institutions Served: The Commission on Secondary Schools actively supports and encourages a diverse and open membership that includes public, independent, church-related, and proprietary institutions representing different cultures, religions, admissions processes, educational philosophies, and pedagogical delivery systems. This includes such varied institutions as schools serving gifted students or those with handicapping conditions, Job Corps Centers, correctional schools, supplementary education centers, distance education institutions, and single gender institutions.

- Definition of a Supplementary Education Organization (SEO): A supplementary education organization is defined by the following characteristics:
 - is non-degree, non-diploma granting
 - offers programs generally outside of the normal school day and often outside of the school building
 - offers programs that are educational (as opposed to recreational or avocational) in nature and that include significant features of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices found in comprehensive school settings
 - is designed to meet narrowly focused curricular purposes
 - often offers diagnostic, remedial, enrichment, or alternative instruction
 - enrolls students generally on a part-time basis

- Definition of a Distance Education Institution (DEI): A distance education institution is defined by the following characteristics:
 - is a diploma-granting or certificate-granting (e.g. GED, LPN) institution
 - utilizes, as its primary mode of instructional delivery, an alternative to traditional classroom-based instruction, such as via the Internet, mailed correspondence, or fax.

- offers programs that are educational (as opposed to recreational or avocational) in nature and that include significant features of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices found in comprehensive school settings
- provides reasonable access to professional expertise for additional instruction and assistance where self-paced learning is employed
- enrolls students on a part- or full-time basis

3.1.1.4. Institutional Admissions Criteria: An institution shall not discriminate in its admission of students on the basis of race, ethnic background, gender, or handicapping condition. Nor shall it discriminate on the basis of religion unless the institution is officially church-related and wishes to admit students mainly from communicants of that denomination. Institutions that have been designed specifically to serve a single gender or that are supported by a state or federal agency to serve a specialized group of students shall not be considered discriminatory.

3.1.1.5. Joint Accreditation with the Commission on Elementary Schools: The Commission on Secondary Schools provides joint accreditation with the Commission on Elementary Schools to institutions with age and grade levels that extend below grade 5 and beyond grade 9. An institution accredited jointly by the Commission on Elementary Schools and the Commission on Secondary Schools is administered through the Committee on Institution-Wide Accreditation.

3.1.2. Categories of Membership.

There shall be three categories of membership in the Commission on Secondary Schools: candidate and accredited.

3.1.2.2. Candidate for Accreditation Members: A Candidate for Accreditation is an educational institution that has satisfactorily met the Candidacy Indicators (a subset of the Standards for Accreditation) has formally accepted the offer of Candidacy for Accreditation, and has had that acceptance affirmed by the Executive Director. In addition, a Candidate for Accreditation has been in operation successfully for at least one academic year or longer if so mandated by state regulations, and reflects a willingness and readiness to participate in the self-study, evaluation, and planning activities required by the Commission. An institution may be a Candidate for Accreditation for a maximum of three years unless specific approval is requested of and approved by the Executive Director.

An institution admitted to this category is entitled to make public its candidate status in its publications, correspondence, and student transcripts.

3.1.2.2. Accredited Members: Accredited members are institutions that have been determined to meet all MSA Standards for Accreditation, that adhere to applicable Commission policies, and that meet the requirements of the self-study protocol used. The institution agrees to adhere to the Commission's accreditation maintenance requirements, and there are no outstanding issues that would require monitoring or on-site visits beyond the normal events required by the protocol used.

3.1.2.3. Affiliate Member: An Affiliate Member is a business, service provider, and/or professional association that provides education products, programs, and/or services that are deemed by the President/Executive Director to have potential value to MSCSS member institutions as they pursue their accreditation and school improvement activities.

Criteria for Affiliate Member

- Business, service provider, and or professional association that provide education products, programs, and/or services that are deemed by the President/Executive Director to have potential value to MSCSS member institutions as they pursue their accreditation and school improvement activities;
- A record of value, integrity, and quality in the providing of products, programs, and/or services;
- A written agreement approved by the Executive Committee and signed by the President/Executive Director and an authorized representative of the Affiliate Member specifying:
 - Any products, programs, and/or services to be provided to MSCSS member institutions;
 - The costs of such products, programs, and or services to MSCSS member institutions;
 - The specific benefits to be provided by MSCSS to the Affiliate Member;
 - Revenues to be realized by MSCSS from the sale by the Affiliate Member of products, programs, and/or services to member institutions and any conditions to those revenues;
 - The date upon which the agreement will expire (agreements may be renewed annually).

Benefits Provided to Affiliate Members. The benefits to be provided by MSCSS to Affiliate Members are based on the amount of dues paid by each Affiliate Member. The benefits include:

- Bronze Membership
 - Inclusion in a membership director and/or resource guide
 - One advertisement in two MSCSS newsletters per year
- Silver Membership
 - All benefits of Bronze Membership
 - Inclusion of product/program/service information in four MSCSS mailings
- Gold Membership
 - All benefits of Bronze and Silver Membership
 - Link on MSCSS website
 - Opportunity to sponsor one MSCSS workshop or publication

Uses for Revenues Realized from Affiliate Members. Revenues realized from Affiliate member dues and any revenues to be realized from agreements with Affiliate Members for the sale of products, programs, and/or services to member institutions may be used for one or more of the following purposes, as determined by the Finance Committee:

- Reduce dues increases;
- Finance specific research and development projects;
- Increase the capacity of the Commission to provide services to its member institutions.

3.1.3. Voluntary Withdrawal from Membership.

An institution that voluntarily withdraws from membership may, for a period of one year, reinstate membership at the same status as when it withdrew. If the period of time

exceeds one year, then the institution will need to reinstate membership through the full candidacy process as described under Policy 3.3.—Membership Policies: Candidacy.

3.1.4. Lapsed Members with Expired Accreditation Terms.

When an accredited institution has allowed its accreditation term to lapse, the accreditation term has expired, and the institution wishes to remain in CSS membership, the institution will be returned Candidate status. In the case of postsecondary institutions, a return to Candidate status will occur only if an onsite visit verifies that the institution meets entry-level accreditation standards. All policies related to candidate members will then apply.

3.1.5. Actions Required of an Institution Following Removal of Accreditation or Voluntarily Withdrawal from Membership.

When the Commission has taken action to remove the accreditation of and terminate the membership of an accredited member institution, or when an institution voluntarily withdraws from membership, no refund of dues or fees will be made, and the institution will sacrifice all access to services outlined in Policy 4.1.1.1.—Institutional Improvement Services: Services Provided as a Part of Membership Dues. As a non-member, however, the institution may avail itself of Commission services provided for a fee as outlined in Policy 4.1.1.2.—Institutional Improvement Services: Services Provided for a fee.

The institution must immediately remove from display its accreditation certificate and remove from all publications, documents, and other forms used by the institution to communicate with its stakeholders and the public at large the Commission's logo and all references to its membership in and accreditation by the Commission on Secondary Schools. Failure to remove all references within 90 days of removal of accreditation and termination of membership may result in legal action by the Commission.

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