

NACCAS Standards and Criteria
January 2014

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

NACCAS Goals of Accreditation

- A. To foster and improve post-secondary education and training in cosmetology arts and sciences, massage, and related and unrelated areas.
- B. To establish and enforce minimum standards of performance towards ensuring that accredited post-secondary schools offer, and can be reasonably expected to continue to offer, successful programs to prepare graduates for licensure, certification and/or employment in these areas.
- C. To ensure that each accredited institution carries out its educational activities in ethical and responsible ways.

The minimum performance requirements accredited institutions must meet constitute the NACCAS Standards and Criteria, and cover the following areas:

- 1. Educational objectives and institutional evaluation
- 2. Instructional staff
- 3. Administrative services
- 4. Admissions policies and procedures
- 5. Student support services
- 6. Curriculum
- 7. Financial practices and management
- 8. Instructional space and facilities
- 9. Evaluation of students
- 10. Occupational Associates Degree courses of study and programs

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Preface

The Commission may determine an institution's compliance with accreditation requirements through assurances from the institution (A), observation (O), and documentation (D). Each criterion is preceded with an indication of the primary method used.

Whenever a reference to a written document appears in the Standards, compliance may be shown through documents that are produced in a written copy, web-based, or any other printable media format.

Institutions may review the [*Sample Forms and Guidelines*](#) (found on the NACCAS website under "Other Key Documents") booklet for examples of ways to comply with various criteria throughout the standard.

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Standard I – Educational Objectives and Institutional Evaluation

The institution has a published mission statement identifying the institution as providing career preparation. The institution assesses its performance as related to its stated objectives, summarizes the results of the assessment, and uses the assessment to maintain or improve institution performance.

- D 1. A mission statement has been adopted by the institution and clearly identifies the institution as one preparing graduates for employment.
- D 2. The mission statement is published in the institution's catalog.
- D 3. The data contained in the institution's most recent NACCAS Annual Report are accurate.
- D 4. The institution maintains documentation that can be verified and supports the rates of completion, licensure/certification, and employment for the most recent Annual Report year.
- D 5. The institution is responsible for the achievement of expected and acceptable outcomes, regardless of mode of educational delivery:
 - a. Completion rate – 50%
 - b. Pass rate on certification or state licensing examinations, if required – 70%
 - c. Placement rate of graduates – 60%

(If the institution is in compliance with current low outcomes monitoring, this criterion is not cited as a limitation).

- D 6. The institution has an external advisory committee comprised of an employer or employers representing the field(s) of study offered by the institution. A committee member may represent multiple fields.
- D 7. Advisory committee member(s) shall provide annual feedback in those areas relevant to their experience and/or background. The feedback from the advisory committee must include, but does not have to be limited to, information about the institution's:
 - a. Curriculum;
 - b. Facilities and equipment; and
 - c. Completion, licensure or certification, and placement rates.
- D 8. The institution must solicit feedback from current students based on its mission and educational objectives at least annually.
- D 9. The institution must solicit feedback from graduates based on its mission and educational objectives at least annually.
- D 10. The institution must maintain a summary of the feedback received from the advisory committee members, students and graduates.
- D 11. Based on the feedback received, the institution implements improvements and changes, as applicable.

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Standard II – Instructional Staff

The institution employs an instructional staff that is fully qualified and of adequate size to fulfill the objectives of the educational courses and/or program(s) regardless of mode of delivery.

- D 1. Instructors hold teaching credentials demonstrating compliance with applicable state requirements.
- O/A 2. The student/teacher ratio meets the state requirements, if applicable, and in the absence of state requirements, the student/teacher ratio must not exceed 30 students in attendance per instructor.
- A 3. Qualified substitute instructors are familiar with the institution's curriculum, policies and procedures.
- A 4. Qualified substitute instructors are used when needed.
- D 5. Instructors, with the exception of substitutes, attend meetings according to the institution's policy which shall require a meeting at least once every 12 months.
- A 6. Instructor meeting topics are relevant to the institution's stated mission and educational objectives.
- D 7. Within each year of employment, each regularly employed instructor (but not substitute instructors) meets the applicable state requirements for continuing education or obtains 12 hours of continuing education, whichever is greater. This requirement shall not apply during the employee's first year of employment. A year of employment shall be measured on a calendar basis or rolling 12-month basis, as defined by the institution's policy.
- D 8. Continuing education completed in person or online, includes a minimum of 4 hours in teaching methodology.
- D 9. Each instructor, with the exception of substitutes, acknowledges receipt of a written performance evaluation at least once every 12 months.
- D 10. The evaluation includes, at a minimum, teaching preparation and effectiveness.

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Standard III – Administrative Services

The institution has in place administrative policies and services appropriate to the educational courses and/or program(s). Such policies and services meet applicable federal, state, local, and NACCAS policies.

- D1. The institution is legally authorized to provide training.
- O 2. Appropriate licenses and certificates issued by state and/or other regulatory authorities are publicly displayed in accordance with state regulations.
- A/O/D 3. The institution complies with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing the operations of the institution including the NACCAS [*Rules of Practice and Procedure*](#) (see page 55).
- D 4. The institution has adopted written operating policies and procedures.
- A 5. The institution's written operating policies and procedures are implemented and maintained effectively.
- D 6. The institution has current, signed participation agreement(s) and Eligibility Certification Approval Report (ECAR) listing approved courses and/or programs, if applicable.
- D 7. If participating in federal loan programs, the institution maintains an official cohort default rate below the threshold established by the U.S. Department of Education.
- D 8. Advertising conforms to the NACCAS [*Policy on Advertising*](#) (see page 26).
- D 9. The institution maintains copies of any training agreements with government agencies, school districts and/or other entities, if applicable.
- D 10. The institution guarantees each student (or parent or guardian if the student is a dependent minor) access to that student's records.
- D 11. The institution requires written consent from the student or guardian (each time) before releasing any student information in response to a third party request, other than a request by NACCAS, unless otherwise required by law.
- D 12. The institution provides access to student and other institution records as required for any accreditation process initiated by the institution or by the National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts and Sciences, or in response to a directive of the Commission.
- O 13. All institution records are maintained and safeguarded against loss, theft, identify theft, or damage.
- A 14. The institution utilizes technologies and practices that are effective in verifying the identity of a distance-learning student who participates in class or coursework (such as a secure login and pass code or proctored examinations) while protecting student privacy.
- A/D 15. Any information provided to applicants, enrollees, or students that is relevant to their decision to enroll in the institution or to satisfactorily complete the course and/or program must be available in the language in which the course will be taught.

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Standard IV – Admissions Policies and Procedures

The institution has published student admissions policies that are appropriate for the educational courses and/or program(s), and the institution follows these policies.

- D 1. The institution's admission policies require that each student meet one of the following:
- a. Have successfully completed high school or its equivalent as evidenced by any of the items on the following non-exhaustive list: copy of diploma, copy of GED certificate, copy of a transcript showing high school completion, or a certificate of attainment (only applicable to non-Title IV recipients), etc.; or
 - b. Have evidence of completion of home schooling that state law treats as a home or private school. If the state issues a credential for home schooling, maintain this credential; or
 - c. Have the ability to benefit from the training, according to the NACCAS [Ability-To-Benefit Policy](#) (see page 32).
 - d. If attending under a training agreement with a government agency, school district, and/or other entity, meets the admission requirements set out in the training agreement and/or applicable state licensing or certification regulations.
- D 2. A limited number of secondary students who are not enrolled under a training agreement as described in item d above (no more than 10% of the number of students currently enrolled) may be admitted, if the applicant meets the state requirements for admission, obtains permission in writing from the secondary school in which they are enrolled and successfully completes a pre-enrollment evaluation, as established by the institution.
- D 3. The institution's written catalog complies with the NACCAS [Catalog Requirements](#) (see page 35).
- D 4. Before accepting an applicant for admission, the institution provides the applicant access to the institution's catalog.
- D 5. Before enrollment each applicant is provided access to written information that accurately reflects the most recent annual report year statistics.
- D 6. Before enrollment, each applicant is provided access to written information that accurately reports the certification or licensing requirements of the jurisdiction for which it is preparing graduates.
- D 7. The institution uses an enrollment agreement that complies with the NACCAS [Enrollment Agreement Requirements](#) (see page 33).
- D 8. The enrollment agreement must be fully executed prior to the enrollee starting classes.
- D 9. A copy of the fully executed enrollment agreement is provided to the enrollee and legal guardian, as applicable.
- D 10. A copy of the fully executed enrollment agreement is maintained by the institution.
- D 11. If the institution has a leave of absence policy, it must be in compliance with the NACCAS Leave of Absence Policy.
- D 12. The institution's policies clearly state that the institution does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, religion, or ethnic origin in admitting students.

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- D 13. The institution has a policy that clearly defines how training or education received at another institution is applied to the receiving institution's course or program requirements (including the possibility that no such transfer credit is granted).
- D 14. The institution maintains a list of institutions with which they have established an articulation agreement, if applicable.
- D 15. The institution's practices are consistent with its admissions policies and requirements.
- D 16. The institution notifies distance-learning students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity.
- D 17. If an institution offers a program that is longer than the state requirements, before enrollment, each applicant is provided the rationale for completing the additional hours and the benefits to be derived from the additional training.
- D 18. Before enrollment, each applicant is provided access to written information that reflects generally known prerequisites for employment and factors that might preclude an individual from obtaining employment in the field for which training is provided, such as:
 - a. licensure requirements;
 - b. regulatory oversight restrictions;
 - c. physical requirements of the industry; and
 - d. ability to meet requirements set forth by employers.

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Standard V – Student Support Services

The institution has in place student support services, which provide appropriate information and advice to students.

- A 1. The institution provides access to orientation programs, whether verbal, printed, web-based, or other media format on or before the first day of class.
- A 2. The orientation program provides, at a minimum, information about:
 - a. the instructional course or program;
 - b. the educational objectives of each course or program;
 - c. administrative policies affecting students; and
 - d. support services available to students.
- A 3. Students are provided with academic advising and additional assistance, as necessary.
- A 4. Contact information for professional assistance is made available to students.
- D 5. The institution offers employment assistance to help graduates' efforts to secure education-related employment that includes, but is not limited to training in:
 - a. Professionalism;
 - b. Resume development;
 - c. Interview preparation; and
 - d. Job search skills.
- A 6. Information and advice on available financial assistance is accessible to students.
- D 7. The institution has an internal complaint or grievance procedure to consider student complaints that complies with the NACCAS [Internal Grievance Procedure Policy](#) (see page 41).
- A 8. The institution implements the [Internal Grievance Procedure Policy](#) (see page 41), as applicable.

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Standard VI - Curriculum

The institution offers educational courses and/or programs congruent with the mission of the institution and its educational objectives. Courses and/or programs incorporate job market requirements in instruction through involvement with the institution's advisory committee. The institution ensures that all courses and/or programs offered by the institution, regardless of location or mode of delivery, are qualitatively consistent.

- A/O 1. Courses and/or programs are congruent with the mission of the institution and its educational objectives.
- A/O 2. Courses and/or programs meet the state requirements where the student is seeking licensure and/or certification, if applicable.
- D 3. Each student is provided with a written program and/or course outline, at the beginning of the program and/or course.
- D 4. The course and/or program outlines(s) must include each of the following elements:
 - a. Name of the course or program;
 - b. Course or program description;
 - c. Course or program educational objectives;
 - d. Contents of the units of instruction and, as applicable, hours, credits and/or competencies devoted to each unit;
 - e. Instructional methods used to teach the course and/or program; and
 - f. Grading procedures.
- A/O 5. In order to fulfill course and/or program requirements, the institution makes available to students the following:
 - a. Textbooks and/or text materials;
 - b. Supplementary instructional resources;
 - c. Equipment, as applicable; and
 - d. Products and supplies, as applicable.
- A/O 6. The institution provides students and teachers with access to current written reference materials to support the educational course and/or program(s) offered.
- D 7. Courses and/or programs offered by the institution comply with the applicable regulatory agency curriculum requirements. In the absence of oversight agency regulations regarding curriculum, courses and/or programs are designed to meet industry standards using feedback from the institution's advisory committee and required elements of the state or national examination, if applicable, and/or requirements defined in the oversight agency's statutes or regulations for licensure.
- A 8. Each course and/or program provides instruction on the regulations governing the scope of practice for which students are training.
- A 9. Each course or program provides supervised instruction in the applicable skills and competencies.
- D 10. Academic and practical learning precede student salon or clinic activities, as applicable.
- A/O 11. Academic and practical learning methods (e.g. discussion, question and answer, demonstration, cooperative learning, distance education, problem-solving, interactive lecture,

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individualized instruction, student and classroom presentations, labs and student salon activities, etc.) are used during the program.

- A/O 12. Effective training aids and audiovisual materials are used to supplement the instructional process.
- D 13. Instruction in classrooms, labs, student salons, and/or via distance learning, if applicable, is effectively organized as evidenced by:
- a. Program and/or course outlines;
 - b. Lesson objectives;
 - c. Evaluations; and
 - d. Other applicable instructional materials.
- D 14. To offer a course and/or program that exceeds the required minimum course or program length by more than 50%, the institution must justify the course or program length. In accordance with the mission of the institution, the justification must state how the course or program length is necessitated by the following factors:
- a. Industry needs as determined and/or recommended by the institution's Advisory Committee; and
 - b. Special academic needs of the students served.
- D 15. If an institution participates in an externship, the institution's externship complies with all applicable requirements established by the state regulatory agency, however, not to exceed 10% of the total course and/or program. In the absence of regulations promulgated by the state regulatory agency, the institution's externship will comply with the NACCAS [*Externship Requirements Policy*](#) (see page 42).
- D 16. The institution is responsible for the management, control, and delivery of distance education instruction.
- D 17. Distance education cannot be used as a mode of delivery for more than 50% of any program.

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Standard VII – Financial Practices Management

The institution maintains a sound financial condition and has qualified financial management.

- D 1. Financial statements must be submitted no later than six months after the end of the institution's fiscal year. Institutions applying for initial accreditation must submit their financial statements for the most recent fiscal year at the time they submit their application for initial accreditation.
- D 2. The financial statements of the institution demonstrate that it has the financial resources to ensure continuity of operation, educational programs and services, and to fulfill its obligations to students and employees, by meeting the following requirements:
- a. Has met the requirements as set forth by the U.S. Department of Education, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. 668.171(b) (1), or the successor regulation, or
 - b. A ratio of current assets to current liabilities of one-to-one or greater (current ratio); a positive tangible net worth; and a profit in the most recent accounting year, or in two of the most recent three accounting years. Any assets of the institution that are excluded in the calculation of the composite score shall also be excluded by NACCAS in the calculation of the current ratio and net worth, or;
 - c. If the institution is not in compliance with Criterion 2 (a) or 2 (b), it has the option to demonstrate financial stability by meeting the following requirements:
 - i. Cash and cash equivalents plus available lines of credit are equal to at least 16.7% of annual revenue.
 - ii. Ratio of net liabilities (total liabilities minus cash and cash equivalents) to tangible net worth is 2:1 or less, OR ratio of total debt to earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) is 3:1 or less.
 - iii. At the institution's expense, it agrees to an onsite evaluation of its financial stability by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm selected by NACCAS, and NACCAS determines the evaluation report demonstrates positive financial stability. A copy of this report shall be provided to the institution. The evaluation shall include a series of agreed upon procedures to be determined by NACCAS. These procedures may include (but may not be limited to) the following areas of concern:
 - A. Capacity to meet financial obligations as they come due.
 - B. Compliance with loan and lease agreements.
 - C. Compliance with state requirements for posting surety bonds for student tuition refunds where institution operates instructional programs.
 - D. Compliance with federal and state tax requirements, and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education (if applicable).
 - E. Budget process and internal financial reporting.
 - F. If applicable, the institution's financial relationship with a holding company.
 - G. Personal interviews with the institution's auditor and key members of management.

In accordance with [Section 8.18](#) (see page 116) of the NACCAS [Rules of Practice and Procedure](#) (see page 55), an institution is required to bring itself into compliance with accreditation requirements within the time frames established in the *Rules*.

In addition, the institution's financial statements:

- d. Do not contain a "going concern" note from the institution's auditor;
- e. Do not disclose that the institution is in default on any of its debt obligations;
- f. Are audited by an independent Certified Public Accountant; and

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- g. Are prepared on an accrual basis, and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

- D 3. Institutions participating in Title IV funding programs must submit audited financial statements in accordance with federal auditing standards and guidelines.

- D 4. Unless superseded by a state-, federal- or program-mandated refund policy, the institution shall adopt a policy that complies with the NACCAS [*Withdrawal and Settlement Policy and Checklist*](#) (see page 43).

- D 5. For institutions participating in federal Title IV financial aid programs, the institutional refund policy applies in addition to applicable returns to Title IV programs.

- D 6. The institution applies the applicable refund policy to all terminations for any reason, by either party, including student decision, course and/or program cancellation, or institution closure.

- D 7. The institution maintains evidence that institutional refunds are received by the recipient in a timely manner, such as, but not limited to, a cancelled check, bank reconciliation, signed receipt of delivery, or documentation that funds were disposed of in accordance with applicable federal or state regulations.

- D 8. The institution accurately implements the applicable refund policy.

- D 9. The institution complies with the NACCAS [*Policy on Extra Instructional Charges*](#) (see page 47), if applicable.

- D/A 10. Staff working with financial and accounting records is qualified by training and/or experience in accounting and bookkeeping.

- D/A 11. Staff working with student financial aid is qualified by training and/or experience in applicable laws and regulations.

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Standard VIII – Instructional Space and Facilities

The institution provides equipment, instructional and laboratory space, and other physical facilities that are adequate for instructional needs and meet professional standards of safety and hygiene.

- O 1. Instructional areas allow for effective delivery of instruction.
- O/A 2. Instructional space is equipped to accommodate the numbers of students assembled at one time.
- O 3. The institution meets applicable fire, building, health, ventilation, heating and safety requirements, in particular:
 - a. Sanitary drinking water is available;
 - b. Sanitary lavatories have hot and cold running water;
 - c. Appropriately located fire extinguishers are maintained in operable condition;
 - d. Electrical service is adequate to serve institution needs; and
 - e. Emergency evacuation plans are known to staff and students.
- O 4. Classrooms and service facilities are used exclusively for training.
- O 5. A sign indicating clearly that all services are performed by supervised students is posted in a place easily seen by all service customers.
- O 6. When a professional service facility or other business entity and an institution are under the same ownership or otherwise associated, separate operation of each entity is maintained.
- O 7. The name of the institution appears on exterior signs at the institution location.
- O 8. The name clearly identifies the institution as an educational institution.

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Standard IX – Evaluation of Students

The institution uses systematic student evaluation to assist student learning and to demonstrate satisfactory student achievement before a certificate of completion is awarded.

- D 1. Each student is evaluated periodically on attendance, academic and/or practical learning, as applicable.
- D 2. Practical learning is evaluated using written criteria, such as rubrics or similar means.
- A 3. Student evaluation results are provided to students.
- D 4. The institution documents that each student who graduates or is otherwise awarded a certificate of completion has fully met the institution's published graduation requirements.
- D 5. The institution's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy complies with the NACCAS Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and Checklist for [Programs Measured in Clock Hours or Competencies](#) (see page 49) or for [Programs Measured in Credit Hours](#) (see page 52).
- D 6. The institution accurately evaluates student progress according to the requirements of the NACCAS Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and Checklist, for [Programs Measured in Clock Hours or Competencies](#) (see page 49) or for [Programs Measured in Credit Hours](#) (see page 52), if applicable.

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Standard X – Occupational Associate Degree Programs

The institution offers Occupational Associate Degree programs and/or courses that are consistent with the institution's mission and educational objectives. The general education courses offered in the program are applicable to the occupation. Institutions offering degree courses and/or programs must meet all other applicable standards of accreditation.

- D 1. Instructors teaching applied general education courses must have at least an associate's degree with appropriate course work in the subject area(s) taught OR related work experience (3 years) and college level course work in the subject area being taught.
- D 2. If the institution has a transfer policy, it must state that a minimum of 25% of the degree program must be delivered by the institution awarding the degree.
- D 3. The program must consist of a minimum of two academic years and 60 semester credit hours in length.
- D 4. A minimum of 45 semester credit hours must be included in the occupational area.
- D 5. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours must be included in general education courses.
- A 6. Courses and/or programs enhance the ability of an individual to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace.
- A 7. Courses and/or programs must be qualitatively related to the occupational degree offered.
- D 8. Resource materials available to degree-seeking students are relevant, current, and appropriate to the courses of study and/or programs.