Steps to Becoming Accredited
Candidate Status through Initial Accreditation

Welcome to the Accreditation process! This document is intended to help you understand the main steps involved in the process to become accredited with NACCAS.

You will see several areas that are hyperlinks to documents on the NACCAS website www.naccas.org. These items are links to live documents for your review and use. When you put your cursor anywhere on the blue area and then click it will take you to that specific document that will give you more in-depth information on that item.

A resource created in August 2016 is the "Candidate Corner". This is an email account dedicated to ask general questions about the candidate process. Replies will be sent to all candidate schools where you can benefit from answers and tips related to navigating the candidate process. Note, the reply will be general and all email addresses will be hidden, so your institution's identity will remain anonymous to all of the other schools. This email address is candidatecorner@naccas.org.

The NACCAS website www.naccas.org home page has a section "Seeking Accreditation" which you can also access directly.

As always, NACCAS staff is available to assist you along the way. Click here for a directory of the NACCAS Staff. For questions related to the overall process, Carol Orsini is an Accreditation Manager and can be contacted at corsini@naccas.org. For technical questions related to logging in, password or other IT questions such as creating an account and login/password information, please contact GRS Technology Solutions at support@grstechnologysolutions.com. For questions about fees, Lupeachra Davis at ldavis@naccas.org may be contacted.

Additional Resources Available Include:
1. *Webinars*
2. *Samples & Guidelines*
3. *NACCAS website "Seeking Accreditation" tab documents*
4. *Candidate Corner Email*
5. *NACCAS Staff Members*

Webinars Strongly Recommended Include:
1. *NACCAS Resources: Tools for your Toolkit*
2. *Business Fundamentals*
3. *Administrative Capability and Capacity*
4. *Steps to Becoming Accredited*
5. *Things to Submit to NACCAS*
6. *How to Submit a Complete Application to NACCAS*
7. *Changes to Report to NACCAS*
8. *Non-Substantive Changes*
9. *Annual Reports – 101*
10. *Annual Reports – 201*
11. *How to Improve Your Outcome Rates*
12. *Understanding Standard VII, Criterion 2*

13. Institutional Self Study (ISS)
14. Advisory Board
15. Catalog Requirements
16. Enrollment Agreements
17. Pre-Enrollment/Admissions
18. Leaves of Absence
19. Institutional Refunds
20. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) 5-Part Series 101 - 105
21. Practical Grading

Step 1: Basic Eligibility	
The school is licensed as a Post Secondary Educational Institution and is open, operating, and training students.	
Explanation of the Process	Outside of NACCAS: Obtain state-required recognition as a private postsecondary educational institution (school). Additionally, NACCAS' definition of being in operations means continuously training students directly enrolled at your institution (i.e., at least one (1) student not attending through a training agreement).
NACCAS Resources	Section 1.3 and Section 1.0(g) of the NACCAS *Rules of Practice and Procedure* Part 1 of the NACCAS Rules Webinar: Steps to Becoming Accredited Recorded Webinars

Step 2:	
Workshop Requirement	
Attend a NACCAS Accreditation Workshop including the Accreditation for the Candidate School session. (3 days of classes)	
Explanation of the Process	Workshop attendance is required prior to moving forward. This is the very first step toward becoming accredited directly with NACCAS. This is the first of five (5) required Workshops that the institution's owner must attend over an institution's first five (5) years with NACCAS. Click here http://naccas.org/naccas/workshops for the schedule of upcoming NACCAS Workshops. Registration: The owner must attend all (3) days, including the Candidate Session and the Accreditation Workshop, which includes two (2) concurrent sessions. The How To (ISS) must be selected as one (1) of the two (2) concurrent session options. Complete Sections A and D of the Workshop Registration Form, available on the NACCAS website athttp://naccas.org/naccas/workshops. The Registration form is at the bottom on the page. Submit it hard copy traceable means. Note: At least one of the owners must attend. After attending the Workshop, you will receive via email a certificate of attendance within 4 weeks after the Workshop ends.
NACCAS Resources	Appendix #3 of the Rules Appendix #3 NACCAS Workshop Registration Form http://naccas.org/naccas/workshops

Step 3:		
Complete the electronic Application for Candidate Status including submitting all required exhibits and fees via the NACCAS website www.naccas.org.		
Explanation of the Process	After the school attends the Accreditation Workshop as outlined in Step #2, following this link to the NACCAS website to Application #1 will take you to the page to create an Application for Candidate Status where you will see the first element that asks you if you are already an accredited NACCAS school owner. Many Candidate schools will answer this "no" and need to create an account. As you answer each section you will be guided to your next step of the application. Complete all sections of the application. The information you include will build your institution's profile in the NACCAS database so be sure to contemplate each answer carefully and answer completely and accurately. You will be prompted to pay the application fee for the electronic candidate application via credit card. Once submitted, your application will typically be reviewed within 2 weeks of receipt.	
NACCAS Resources	NACCAS Website http://naccas.org/naccas/ and Seeking Accreditation and Creating an Application for Candidate Status Application #1. The questions include pop up information to guide you through answering the questions accurately.	

Step 4:		
Application Review (what happens after the school submits the candidate application) **The application goes through a series of reviews by the NACCAS Pre-Screener and NACCAS staff. Once it is considered complete and correct, the application is submitted to the Candidate Committee for final review. Upon approval by the Candidate Committee a letter is sent to the school "Granting Candidate Status".**		
Explanation of the Process	When your application is reviewed by a NACCAS staff member, you will receive an automatically generated email letting you know the status either that (1) corrections are needed or (2) it has been forwarded to the next level for review. If revisions are required when you log into your NACCAS account you will see that you have the ability to make changes only to the section(s) of the application where revisions and/or clarification are required. Once you make these changes, be sure to actually submit the application back to NACCAS; otherwise, the NACCAS staff member does not have access to review your revised application. If no revisions are required, at this point in time no additional information is needed from your institution. Once your application is deemed complete, it is submitted to the NACCAS Candidate Review Committee for final approval. The Committee can either approve your application, ask for additional revisions or deny the application. If the application is complete and the committee approves the application, you will be granted candidate status. You will be notified in two (2) ways: (1) via an automatically generated email that the Committee has approved your application and (2) via hard copy letter which is the official notification. The date on the letter is the actual date an institution has been granted candidate status. Candidate Status expires two (2) years from the date on the letter. Depending on how many revisions are necessary, typically candidate status can be granted within four (4) weeks if a perfect application is submitted.	
NACCAS Resources	Accreditation Manager, Carol Orsini	

Step 5:	
Note: The ISS should be uploaded at the same time that the Candidate Consultation Visit Request (Refer to Step #6) is submitted via hard copy. The ISS will not be reviewed until after the request for the candidate visit has been recived.	
Institutional Self –Study (the school's first attempt at creating the ISS)	
The school prepares the Institutional Self-Study (ISS). The ISS is based on all ten (10) of the NACCAS *Standards and Criteria*. Each Standard has multiple Criteria which need to be addressed in the ISS. In addition, changes and/or new policies and procedure may need to be put into place in the operation of your institution to ensure compliance and implementation. Note: This is the single item that will take the most time and resources during the candidate and initial accreditation processes.	

Explanation of the Process	Similar to the Application for Candidate Status, the ISS is also required to be submitted electronically via the NACCAS website for NACCAS Staff review. You were already required to attend the How To (ISS) session at the NACCAS Workshop. The following is a recap and summary of the steps of preparing an ISS
	1. Download Appendix #5C from the website http://naccas.org/naccas/Appendices.
	2. Answer each question 'Yes', 'No', or 'N/A'; provide the required narrative explanation; and provide the required exhibit(s) for each question.
	3. Prepare based on the most recent Appendix #5C on the NACCAS website. If you started the ISS and worked on it over a period of several months, be sure to re-check the website to ensure the most recent format has been used based on the revised date of the Appendix #5C.
	4. Ensure the ISS is properly formatted and bookmarked.
	5. When complete, upload the document via your log in on the NACCAS website.
	Note: A hard copy or CD-ROM ISS may be submitted to NACCAS for an additional processing fee of $250.00.
	When your ISS is reviewed by a NACCAS staff member, you will receive an automatically generated email letting you know whether the ISS has been accepted. If it is not based on the most recent version of Appendix #5C, in the proper format and/or bookmarked correctly, it will be marked as not accepted and returned to you. The contents will not be reviewed by a NACCAS staff member until it has been marked accepted.
	If no revisions are required, at this point in time, no additional information is needed from your institution.
	Once your ISS is deemed complete, it will be reviewed by a NACCAS staff member and you will receive an ISS Review Letter via email attachment.
	The length of time to it will actually take to put together an ISS as well as make changes that ensure compliance and implementation of NACCAS requirements, will depend on how much time and resources you and your staff have to devote to the process. Preparing an ISS can take anywhere from one (1) month to eighteen (18) months.

NACCAS Resources	(Appendix 5A and Appendix 5C)
	Sample Forms & Guides Sample Forms & Guides
	Guide to ISS Bookmarks and Uploading to NACCAS
	Guides to Bookmarking
	Instruction for Submission of PDF Documents to the Website or on CD ROM
	Instructions for Submissions of PDF Documents to Website or on CDROM
	Webinar: Institutional Self-Study
	Recorded Webinar: Preparing an ISS
	Webinar: NACCAS Resources: Tools for Your Tool Box General NACCAS Resources
	Webinar: Business Fundamentals General Business Information
	Webinar: Changes to Report to NACCAS Changes to Report to NACCAS
	Webinar: Nonsubstantive Changes Changes to Report to NACCAS

Step 6:
Requesting the Consultation Visit

| Explanation of the Process | School completes the Candidate Consultation Visit Request Form and submits it with all of the required fees and documents as listed on the form, which will include the ISS.

The Candidate Consultation Request Form, unlike the candidate application and ISS, must be submitted via hard copy, traceable means and the fee for the candidate consultation visit must also be submitted via check at this time.

Once a complete Candidate Consultation Visit Request Form Candidate Consultation Visit Request Form has been received, the institution is made Visit Ready by Accreditation Manager Carol Orsini within two (2) weeks of receipt. The candidate consultation date is scheduled by Travel Manager Susie Kofler and the visit date is typically within three (3) - six (6) months or less after receipt of a complete Candidate Consultation Request form. |
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| NACCAS Resources | Candidate Consultation Visit Request Form Candidate Consultation Visit Request Form |

Step 7:
Candidate Consultation Visit
This is a visit to help ensure your institution is in compliance with NACCAS Standards and Criteria. This is an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one with a NACCAS Staff Member and School Administrator ICPE.

| Explanation of the Process | The NACCAS Travel Office arranges the visit date and notifies school of the visit date, which is typically within three (3) to six (6) months of the date of receipt by NACCAS of a complete Visit Ready form.

The preliminary ISS is reviewed and an ISS Review Letter is sent via email. Please remember as previously described in Step #5, if the ISS is not in the correct format, is not based on the most recent version of Appendix #5C or is not formatted and bookmarked properly, it will be returned prior to the review.

The NACCAS Staff Team Lead contacts school via email to coordinate with the school and to provide the school with instructions for preparating for the consultation visit. The Candidate Consultation Visit is conducted by a NACCAS |
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	Staff Team Lead and a qualified School Owner/Administrator evaluator (Part 2.3(d) of the *Rules*). The visit is tailored to the specific needs and questions and training you deem you need the most assistance with to understand, develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure your operations comply with all NACCAS requirements. A mutually agreed upon timeline to come into compliance is agreed upon. From the date of the Candidate Consultation going forward, the institution will be held accountable for complying with NACCAS requirements and beginning to implement compliant policies and procedures. After the visit, within twenty-one (21) business days, NACCAS sends the school an electronic copy via email of the Candidate Consultation Visit Report. The school makes final revisions to the ISS based on findings in the Candidate Consultation Visit Report. The candidate process in general is the one time where flexibility related to timelines is provided. With the two (2) year maximum candidate status period, you set the pace for your institution to make changes necessary to come into compliance with all NACCAS requirements. This is a time to make changes under Part 4 of the Rules and notify NACCAS without application fees and without full Commission approval as described under Section 4.16 of the NACCAS *Rules*. These changes include substantive and non-substantive changes without fees and/or full commission approval. These include, but are not limited to changes in ownership, school physical location, name, expanded campus/additional location, fiscal year, official school contact, and/or adding or changing programs. When all of the changes described in the Candidate Consultation Visit Report have been made and the ISS has been fully revised and finalized, the candidate process is complete.
NACCAS Resources	NACCAS Samples and Guides Sample Forms and Guides NACCAS Handbook, in particular the Standards and Criteria http://naccas.org/naccas/Standards

Step 8:

Application for Initial Accreditation Application #2

Submit the Application for Initial Accreditation to NACCAS with all required exhibits and fees, including the revised ISS.

The school submits its most recent financial statements audited by an independent CPA directly to the NACCAS Finance Office (Standard VII, Criteria 1 – 2). *Note: Financials submitted can not be older than 14 months from the school's fiscal year end date when it goes before the Commission for accreditation.*

Explanation of the Process	The Application for Initial Accreditation itself is submitted via hard copy traceable means. It can be downloaded from the NACCAS website Application #2.
	
	Two of the required application attachments are uploaded electronically:
	    1. Financial Statements
	    2. ISS

	Payment: Pay by check included with Application.
	There is not an application fee; however, for each program in addition to one (1) included with the application, there is an additional fee of $350.00 for each program.
	The application and ISS will be assigned to an Accreditation Analyst for review. You will receive an email, a letter or letters describing any necessary revisions. Once the application and ISS have been reviewed and the financial statements have been received, the institution is placed on Visit Ready Status.
	Upon of receipt of a complete application, which includes all attachments (including the ISS and financial statements) the on-site evaluation for initial accreditation will typically be scheduled within three (3) – six (6) months of receipt of a complete application. Initial visits are given priority to ensure that the visit can take place as quickly as possible.
NACCAS Resources	Application #2 – Application for Initial Accreditation Application #2 Webinar: How to Submit a Complete Application to NACCAS Completing an Application

Step 9:
Initial Accreditation Visit
Once all documents submitted are reviewed by NACCAS and considered complete the NACCAS Travel Office staff schedules the full team visit and communicates the visit date to the school.

Explanation of the Process	The NACCAS Team Lead contacts the school with instructions for preparation for the full team visit. These instructions will be sent via email and include a Pre-Visit Survey, Forms to be printed by the Institution and a Checklist of items to submit prior to the visit as well as a list of required documentation and documents to have ready prior to the team's arrival on the day of the on-site evaluation.
	The full team visit is conducted by NACCAS Staff Team Lead and a team of qualified ICPEs including an Academic, School Owner/Administrator and Practitioners as appropriate to the programs offered at the school (Part 2.3(d) of the *Rules*). NACCAS sends the school an electronic copy of the On Site Evaluation Visit Report via email within twenty-one (21) business days after the visit.
	If any limitations (areas of non-compliance) are cited, the school responds to the Visit Report within forty-five (45) days (Part 3.10 of the *Rules)*
NACCAS Resources	Preparing for a Visit Checklist Webinar: Preparing for a Visit Recorded Webinar - Preparing for a Visit Guidelines for Responding to Limitations Guidelines for Responding to Limitations Webinar: Responding to Limitations Recorded Webinar - Preparing for a Visit

Step 10:
Commission Consideration of the School's Application for Accreditation
At the next available Commission meeting the school's application, ISS, Visit Report, and any response to the Visit Report is reviewed (Part 8.2 of the *Rules*). The school is notified by NACCAS of the Commission's decision within 45 days of the meeting.

Explanation of the Process	The Commission meets eight (8) times a year to consider school actions. The meetings are in the months of January, February, April, May, July, August, October and November. Additional meetings may be added at the discretion of the Commission.
	The institution will receive via traceable means a hard copy with the Commission's

	decision. The decisions are described under Part 8 of the Rules. The maximum grant of accreditation for an initial applicant is three (3) years. The Initial Accreditation Process typically is completed in eight (8) – ten (10) months of receipt of a complete application.
NACCAS Resources	Part 8 of the NACCAS *Rules* *Part 8 of the Rules*

Reoccuring Compliance Requirements for All Institutions

1. **Sustaining Fees**
2. **Annual Report**
3. **Financial Statements**

Explanation of the Processes	1. Sustaining Fees These are billed directly to the institution by NACCAS' finance department on an annual basis and are due in July of each year. They must be submitted by logging in using your User Name and Password on the NACCAS website. The method of payment is ACH debit so have your banking routing number and account number ready. Beginning January 1, 2107 a $25 processing fee will be charged to pay via hard copy check in the mail. 2. Annual Report The NACCAS Annual Report is used to track an institution's outcomes rates. Specifically, these rates include graduation, placement and licensure. The minimum thresholds are 50% graduation, 60% placement and 70% licensure. The Annual Report is due by November 30 of each year. The Annual Report must be uploaded via the NACCAS website using your log in. 3. Financial Statements Financial statements are due within six (6) months of an institution's fiscal year end. For example, if the fiscal year end is December 31, then the financial statements are due by June 30. They must be uploaded via the NACCAS website using your log in. The financial statements must show compliance with the requirements of Standard VII, Criteria 1 and 2 related to preparation and financial health of the institution. A financial advisory notice can be obtained both during candidate status and when the financial statements are submitted prior to the initial accreditation visit.
NACCAS Resources	The Facts About Fees Facts About Fees Schedule of Fees Schedule of Fees Annual Report Instructions Annual Report Instructions - 2016 Report - 2015 Data Annual Report Grid 2015 Data 2015 Data Annual Report Cohort Grid Webinars: Annual Report Webinars 101 and 102 Annual Report Webinars Webinar: Understanding Standard VII, Criterion 2 Understanding Standard VII, Criterion 2

Thank you for your interest and feel free to contact us!