Curacao Transnational Accreditation of Council

Steps Toward Accreditation

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Introduction

The *Steps Toward Accreditation* manual is designed to guide institutions through Applicant Status, Candidate Status, Accredited Status, and Reaffirmation of Accredited Status with the (CTAC).

The manual is intended for all institutions who have indicated an interest in seeking accreditation with CTAC and details the steps for each of the processes in moving from one phase to the next. Questions regarding the accreditation process (policies, procedures, standards, or evaluative criteria) should be directed to the CTAC office.

All Standards, which serve as the basis of the process toward accreditation, are available in the *Accreditation Manual*. This publication may be downloaded from the CTAC website.

Categories of Recognition

The following are the progressive categories of recognition with CTAC through which institutions will successively proceed:

Corresponding Institution: An institution that has made initial contact with CTAC and been determined by CTAC staff to be eligible for membership with CTAC.

Applicant Institution: An institution whose application has been approved by the CTAC Applicant Review Committee (ARC) having demonstrated compliance with the Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) via the application process.

Candidate Institution: An institution that has been granted pre-accredited status by action of the Accreditation Commission, indicating that the institution has demonstrated compliance with the Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) via the self-study process.

Candidate status is often referred to as "pre-accredited" status.

Candidate institutions are eligible to apply for participation in federal financial aid programs.

Credits granted by institutions holding Candidate status are generally transferable to other institutions, according to the practices of the receiving institution.

Accredited Institution: An institution accredited by CTAC having demonstrated substantive compliance with CTAC Standards via the self-study process.

Reaffirmation of Accreditation: An institution that has its Accreditation status renewed having demonstrated substantive compliance with CTAC Standards via the self-study process.

Institutional Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) are (1) the Standards associated with The CTAC Accreditation Requirements (IERs #1 - #16) and (2) the Standards noted as Federal Requirements (IER #17) with which an institution must demonstrate compliance in order to be accepted as an "Applicant" and subsequently authorized to begin the Self-Study process for consideration by the Accreditation Commission for "Candidate" level recognition. (Note: Some Federal Requirements may not pertain to all applying institutions, i.e. Title IV

Participation. If a Federal Requirement does not apply to your institution, simply note such on the appropriate documents.)

Compliance with these IERs is considered "Basic Compliance" and indicates that the institution has demonstrated compliance with the Standards and Federal Requirements supporting the IERs.

Institutions awarded "Candidate" status will have been deemed in compliance with these IERs and capable of demonstrating compliance with all other non-IER Standards within the period of "Candidacy".

The IER's and the Standards associated with them are as follows:

IER #1 – Faith Statement:
1.1 The institution has a Faith Statement which is readily available and included in appropriate official publications.

IER #2 – Mission and Name
2.1 The institution has a Mission Statement which is current and comprehensive, an accurate guide for the institution's operations, approved and periodically reviewed by the institution's Board, communicated to the institution's constituencies, and accurately reflective of its Faith Statement.

IER #3 – Institutional Objectives
3.1 The institution has adopted clearly defined written Institutional Objectives which are consistent with the institution's mission, stated in measurable terms, and approved and periodically reviewed by the institution's Board.

IER #4 – Institutional Integrity
4.1 The institution operates with integrity and is represented accurately and honestly to students, the public, and to CTAC.

IER #5 – Operational Authority
5.1 The institution has legal authorization to operate from all appropriate governmental agencies (state, federal, territory, country) in which it is located and has filed copies of such authorizations with CTAC. If a governmental requirement conflicts with a CTAC Standard, the institution will be deemed to be in compliance with the CTAC Standard as long as it is in compliance with the governmental requirement.

IER #6 – Organizational Structure
6.1 The institution's Board, of not less than five (5) voting members, is the legally constituted body that holds the institution in trust, has appropriate oversight in matters of policy, operation and evaluation; and exists without conflicts of interest.

6.2 The institution's Board appoints and periodically evaluates a full-time Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is not the Chair of the institution's Board or a Chair of any of its sub-committees, and who is granted the legal authority to fulfill the tasks defined in the written job description for this position as the individual responsible for carrying out published Board policies and procedures.

6.3 A full-time Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is in place who has the credentials, experience, and competence to lead the institution's educational programs toward quality outcomes, and the CAO is periodically evaluated.

IER #7 – Publications and Policies
7.1 The institution's publications are Board approved and include at least the following: *Board Manual, Policies Manual, Catalog(s), Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook*.

IER #8 – Educational Programs
8.1 The institution has at least one academic program at the diploma, certificate, associate, bachelor, masters, and/or doctoral level (based on at least 60 semester credit hours or equivalent at the associate level, at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the bachelor level, or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the graduate or professional level).

8.2 The curriculum clearly relates to the mission and objectives of the institution.

8.3 Academic programs have adequate enrollment to facilitate student interaction appropriate to quality instruction and to financially sustain the program.

8.4 Undergraduate academic degree programs offered include an appropriate general education core. General education courses are not narrowly focused nor are they directed toward a specific occupation or profession. Undergraduate bachelor degree programs include a minimum of 30 semester hours, with at least three (3) semester hours, in each of the humanities/fine arts, behavioral/ social sciences, and natural science/math. Associate degree programs include a minimum of 15 semester hours in general education.

IER #9 – Faculty
9.1 The institution employs at least one full-time, contracted, academically and spiritually qualified faculty member for each program area to teach and perform related duties, such as advising and the curricular oversight needed for the institution to fulfill its mission.

IER #10 – Student Services
10.1 The institution offers an array of student services that are appropriate to its mission and objectives and which address the needs of its students regardless of location or the mode of delivery of educational programs.

IER #11 – Financial Operations
11.1 The institution's finances are adequate to support the staffing, facilities, equipment, materials, and support services for the approved programs.

11.2 A certified external audit of the institution's financial statements is conducted each year in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards. Final audit reports along with all management letters are submitted to the CTAC office annually within five (5) months of the close of the institution's fiscal year. (See definition of *Certified External Audit*.) Audits demonstrate a recent history of financial stability. (See Definition of *Financial Stability*.) Institutions organized as non-profit or not-for-profit entities must have their audits prepared using the "net asset" model of accounting consistent with the policies and procedures provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) in its document, *Audit and Accounting Guide: Not-for-Profit Organizations: 2017,* or any later enacted version.

11.3 The institution demonstrates credit lines or other liquid reserves adequate to ensure operations at all times.

IER #12 – Institutional Assessment
12.1 The institution has developed and implemented a comprehensive *Assessment Plan* which includes all aspects of the institution.

12.2 The institution provides a systematic assessment of whether or not student learning outcomes at the institution, program and course levels are appropriate to its educational mission.

IER #13 – Strategic Planning
13.1 The institution has developed and implemented a comprehensive, Board approved *Strategic Plan* which is based on both internal and external factors.

IER #14 – Library and Learning Resources
14.1 The institution furnishes library and learning resources and related services appropriate to support the institution's mission, academic programs, and administrative functions, through strategic, operational, and financial planning. These resources and services are made available to all students regardless of location or mode of course delivery.

14.2 The institution employs an adequate number of professionally qualified staff who administer the institution's library and learning resources.

IER #15 – Facilities and Equipment
15.1 The institution provides, maintains, and controls adequate facilities and equipment (both on and off -campus) that appropriately serve the needs of the educational programs, support services, and other mission related activities.

IER #16 – Health and Security
16. 1 Appropriate health and security measures, including an Emergency Plan, are in place for all institutional facilities and activities.

IER #17 – Federal Requirements
17.1 Credit Hours: The institution's award of credit hours and length must meet national norms and federal requirements.

The institution is responsible to award credit hours in accordance with accepted practices in higher education and in compliance with the Federal definition of a credit hour which is as follows: "A credit hour for Federal purposes is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of worked expected in a Carnegie unit: key phrases being 'institutionally established,' 'equivalency,' 'reasonable approximate,' and 'minimum amount.'"

The institution must have policies determining credit hours awarded for course and programs. Determining a credit hour should be equivalent to the following: (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including

laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.

The institution must demonstrate peer review of a credit hour for courses regardless of mode of delivery. CTAC staff, peer evaluators, and/or the CTAC Accreditation Commission will review the assignment of a credit hour to determine the reliability and accuracy of the assignment and process. - §600.2, §602.24(f)

17.2 Program Length and Cost: The institution's programs must be appropriate to the institution's mission and objectives and must demonstrate that program lengths are comparable to accredited institutions of higher education.

 Program-specific fees and tuition must be published and appropriate for the program length and objectives. - §602.16(a)(1)viii

17.3 Student Complaints: Institutions must record student complaints. Records must be kept of student complaints received, the process for addressing the student complaints, and the manner in which the student complaint was handled in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The institution's student complaint policy must include, at a minimum: a method for receiving confidential student input, clear step-by-step procedures for due process, an appropriate office that securely maintains all information and records of complaints, appeals, proceedings, and instructions for filing a complaint with CTAC and any other relevant government agencies. - §602.16(a)(1)ix

17.4 Transfer of Credit Policies: The institution has published policies and procedures for accepting transfer of credits. Published policies include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit transfer, credit by examination, experiential learning (undergraduate only), advanced placement, and professional certificates. Policies and practices must ensure that course work is at the collegiate level. The institution is responsible for the quality of course work and credit given on the transcript.

The policies and procedures must be published and communicated to those who administer the policies. Articulation agreements must be disclosed and the institution listed with which the agreement is made. - §602.24(e)

17.5 Distance Education and Correspondence Education: The institution demonstrates that programs and courses offered via Distance Education and Correspondence Education are in compliance with the Federal definition of Distance Education and Correspondence Education (Title IV funds are available for Distance Education only):

Distance Education Definition: Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above.

Correspondence Education Definition: Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from

the instructor; interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; correspondence courses are typically self-paced; and correspondence education is not distance education. - §602.3

[NOTE: This definition for Correspondence Education is provided to ensure that the institution's Distance Education meets the definition of Distance Education and does not fall to the level of Correspondence Education. Correspondence Education is not reviewed by CTAC and is not included in an institution's scope of recognition with CTAC.]

17.6 Verification of Student Identity: An institution offering Distance Education as stated in Federal definitions must have a process to verify that the student who registers for a Distance Education program or course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit. Methods to verify the student include but are not limited to: a secure login or passcode, proctored examinations, or new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying the identity of the student.

Institutions must notify the student at the time of registration of any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity. - §602.17(g)1

17.7 Student Privacy: The institution has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in Distance Education programs or courses. - §602.17(g)2

17.8 Public Information: The institution makes the following information available to students and the public through the institution's Catalog(s), website and/or other methods: academic calendar, grading policies, refund policies, admission policies, program requirements, and information regarding tuition and fees. - §602.16(a)(1)vii

17.9 Advertising and Recruitment Materials: The institution's advertising and recruitment materials must accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. - §602.16(a)(1)vii

17.10 Fraud and Abuse: The institution must not engage in fraud or abuse and practices or procedures that are designed to deceive students or falsify information to students. - §602.27(6)

17.11 Student Achievement: The institution's assessment of student achievement includes retention rates, course completion rates, graduation rates, job placement rates, and state or other licensing examinations. Student achievement information is made available to the public. - §602.16(a)(1)i

17.12 Title IV Participation: The institution maintains and demonstrates compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended.

In evaluating the institution's compliance with Title IV program responsibilities, the CTAC Accreditation Commission will rely on documentation forwarded to CTAC by the U.S. Secretary of Education supported by letters of authorization on file from relevant agencies indicating certification of eligibility and Federal Aid audits - §602.16(a)(1)x, §602.27(a)6,7

Achieving Applicant Status

1. **Initial Communication and Orientation**

    a. Institutions interested in pursuing accreditation with CTAC should contact the CTAC Office and expresses such interest.

    b. CTAC staff will respond to the institution by sending the *Initial Contact Data* Form which is to be completed and returned to the CTAC Office.

    c. CTAC staff will review the *Initial Contact Data* Form to determine the institution's eligibility for membership.

    d. If the institution appears to be eligible for membership, it is assigned a CTAC Staff representative. At this point, the institution is considered a "Corresponding" institution.

    e. The institution and assigned CTAC staff representative will schedule the institution for the required Application Orientation. The Application Orientation may take place at either the institution's campus, at the CTAC office, or at the Application Workshop at the CTAC Annual Conference. If the Orientation takes place at the institution's campus, the institution will be expected to cover the staff representative's travel expenses. There is no additional fee associated with the Application Orientation meeting.

    f. After completing the Application Orientation, the institution is provided access to all documents relevant to the application process.

2. **Institutional Submissions**

    a. Once the applying institution has determined that it is able to demonstrate compliance with all of the Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) and is ready to submit an application to CTAC the following items will be submitted:

    ☐ The Applicant Institutional Profile
    ☐ The Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IER) checklist along with all required supporting documentation in a three-ring binder with exhibit numbers clearly noted.
    ☐ The Instructional Staff Listing (ISL)
    ☐ The Applicant Salary Worksheet
    ☐ The non-refundable Application Fee according to the current fee schedule

    b. The Application Fee MUST be submitted by check drawn on an institutional account.

    c. When submitting the Application to the CTAC office, please send one printed copy and one electronic copy (on a flash drive) of all documents.

3. **Applicant Review Committee Procedures and Determination**

    a. The Applicant Review Committee (ARC) will conduct an initial review of the Application materials. Financial documentation is reviewed by the CTAC Vice Executive Secretary of Finance.

b. The ARC makes one of the following determinations regarding the institution's application and notifies the institution accordingly:

1. <u>Approve the institution's application</u> - If the institution's application is approved, CTAC staff notifies the institution that it may begin the Self-Study process. At this point, the institution is considered an "Applicant" institution.
2. <u>Defer the institution's application</u> - If the institution's application is deferred, CTAC staff notifies the institution of the clarifying documents that should be submitted in order for the ARC to reconsider the application. If the application is initially deferred by the Application Review Committee, the institution will be allowed no more than two additional opportunities to submit clarifying documentation. If the application is not approved after two subsequent submissions of requested additional documentation, the application will be denied.
3. <u>Deny the institution's application</u> - If the institution's application is denied, CTAC staff notifies the institution of the reason(s) for the denial as well as information concerning the timeline for re-applying. If the application is denied, the institution may reapply after one year.

NOTE: Submitting an application does not guarantee the institution will achieve "Applicant" status and be permitted to move toward Candidacy.

Achieving Candidate Status

Explanation of Candidate Status

Candidate Status offers institutions the opportunity to establish an initial, formal, and publicly recognized pre-accredited status with CTAC. An institution seeking Candidacy must provide evidence of sound planning, have adequate resources to implement these plans, and have the ability to achieve Accredited status. This status does not guarantee the institution will become accredited.

The maximum time period for moving from Candidate status to Accredited status is five years. An institution that does not achieve Accredited status within the five-year period will be removed from Candidacy and must wait a minimum of one year before reapplying.

An institution that has been deferred for Candidate status may reappear before the Accreditation Commission when able to demonstrate that specified deficiencies have been corrected.

1. **Initial Communication**

   a. The institution is notified that it has achieved Applicant Status and can proceed toward Candidate status.

   b. The institution downloads *Self-Study Guidelines* from the CTAC website.

   c. The institution completes and submits to the CTAC Office, the *Self-Study Proposal* with all required components and the current required Change of Status Review fee and staff travel advance fee. (see fee schedule)

2. **Staff Self-Study Visit**

   a. Once the *Self-Study Proposal* and applicable fees have been submitted, CTAC staff will contact the institution to set up a date for a visit to the institution.

   b. CTAC staff will provide the institution with information related to the visit in advance.

   c. The staff visit will ensure that the institution is prepared to move forward in the Self-Study process, provide guidance to the institution in moving forward in the Self-Study process, and finalize the dates for the Evaluation Team Visit.

3. **Self-Study Process**

   a. The institution completes the *Self-Study Report* according to the established timelines.

   b. At least six weeks prior to the scheduled Evaluation Team Visit, the institution submits to the CTAC Office an electronic copy of the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents, along with the travel advance for an Evaluation Team according to the fee schedule.

   c. CTAC staff will review the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to determine if the *Report* is ready for submission to the members of the Evaluation Team.

d. Once cleared, the institution will forward the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to the members of the Evaluation Team.

4. **Evaluation Team Visit**

   a. The institution hosts the Evaluation Team according to the established dates.

   b. The Evaluation Team conducts the visit and submits a draft copy of the *Evaluation Team Report* to the institution at the conclusion of the visit.

   c. The institution is provided information concerning the reporting of errors of fact, which may be contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

   d. Within 10 working days after the Evaluation Team Visit is completed, the institution should report any errors of fact contained in the *Evaluation Team Report* to the CTAC office.

5. **Post Evaluation Team Visit Follow-Up**

   a. Once the institution has reported any errors of fact, CTAC staff will make any necessary adjustments to the *Evaluation Team Report* and send a final copy of the finalized *Report*, along with an *Institutional Response Matrix* to the institution.

   b. Utilizing the *Institutional Response Matrix*, the institution will respond, by the date prescribed, to all of the determinations (Findings, Recommendations, and Suggestions) contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

   c. An invoice for any outstanding fees and / or visit-related expenses is sent to the institution for payment prior to the institution's appearance before the Accreditation Commission for consideration of Candidate status.

6. **Appearance Before the Accreditation Commission**

   a. The institution will appear before the Accreditation Commission at the meeting following the submission of the *Institutional Reponse* Matrix.

   b. At this appearance, the institution will update the Accreditation Commission concerning progress made at the institution since the *Institutional Response Matrix* was submitted, and will be given the opportunity to answer any questions raised by the Accreditation Commission.

   c. After deliberation, the Accreditation Commission will render and announce one of the following decisions regarding the institution's bid for Candidate status:

   - <u>Grant</u> the institution Candidate status
   - <u>Defer</u> the institution's request for Candidate status based on specified deficiencies
   - <u>Deny</u> the institution's request for Candidate status

d. The Executive Secretary of CTAC will officially notify the institution of the decision of the Accreditation Commission by letter. The notification will also provide required follow-up information for institutional action.

Progress Reports for Candidate Institutions

Within five years from the Accreditation Commission's approval for Candidate status, an institution must demonstrate compliance with all deficiencies (Findings and / or Recommendations) identified in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

A *Progress Report* is required regularly (usually February 15 and August 15 of each year) until full compliance is determined.

Achieving Accredited Status

Explanation of Accredited Status

Accreditation offers institutions the opportunity to continue an ongoing formal and publicly-recognized professional relationship with CTAC as a member institution. Accredited institutions have achieved this level of recognition through continuous self-study. They have provided evidence that they are accomplishing their mission and are providing quality educational programs.

Institutions that choose to hold accreditation with CTAC and have already achieved Candidate or Accredited Status with an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, must demonstrate compliance with all Standards outlined in the CTAC *Accreditation Manual*. It is understood that the Self-Study data compiled for any other U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agency may be used without unnecessary duplication of effort; however, the data must be presented using CTAC format. A staff and team visit are required to verify the contents of the documents submitted.

1. **Initial Communication**

   a. The institution is notified that it has demonstrated compliance with all Findings and / or Recommendations given by the previous Evaluation Team and that they are cleared to proceed toward Accredited status.

   b. The institution downloads *Self-Study Guidelines* from the CTAC website.

   c. The institution completes and submits to the CTAC Office, the *Self-Study Proposal* with all required components and the current required Change of Status Review fee and staff travel advance fee. (see fee schedule)

2. **Staff Self-Study Visit**

   a. Once the *Self-Study Proposal* and applicable fees have been submitted, CTAC staff will contact the institution to set up a date for a visit to the institution.

   b. CTAC staff will provide the institution with information related to the visit in advance.

   c. The staff visit will ensure that the institution is prepared to move forward in the Self-Study process, provide guidance to the institution in moving forward in the Self-Study process, and finalize the dates for the Evaluation Team Visit.

3. **Self-Study Process**

   a. The institution completes the *Self-Study Report* according to the established timelines.

   b. At least six weeks prior to the scheduled Evaluation Team Visit, the institution submits to the CTAC Office an electronic copy of the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents, along with the travel advance for an Evaluation Team according to the fee schedule.

c. CTAC staff will review the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to determine if the *Report* is ready for submission to the members of the Evaluation Team.

d. Once cleared, the institution will forward the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to the members of the Evaluation Team.

4. **Evaluation Team Visit**

a. The institution hosts the Evaluation Team according to the established dates.

b. The Evaluation Team conducts the visit and submits a draft copy of the *Evaluation Team Report* to the institution at the conclusion of the visit.

c. The institution is provided information concerning the reporting of errors of fact, which may be contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

d. Within 10 working days after the Evaluation Team Visit is completed, the institution should report any errors of fact contained in the *Evaluation Team Report* to the CTAC office.

5. **Post Evaluation Team Visit Follow-Up**

a. Once the institution has reported any errors of fact, CTAC staff will make any necessary adjustments to the *Evaluation Team Report* and send a final copy of the finalized *Report*, along with an *Institutional Response Matrix* to the institution.

b. Utilizing the *Institutional Response Matrix*, the institution will respond, by the date prescribed, to all of the determinations (Findings, Recommendations, and Suggestions) contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

c. An invoice for any outstanding fees and / or visit-related expenses is sent to the institution for payment prior to the institution's appearance before the Accreditation Commission for consideration of Accredited status.

6. **Appearance Before the Accreditation Commission**

a. The institution will appear before the Accreditation Commission at the meeting following the submission of the *Institutional Reponse* Matrix.

b. At this appearance, the institution will update the Accreditation Commission concerning happenings at the institution since the *Institutional Response Matrix* was submitted, and will be given the opportunity to answer any questions raised by the Accreditation Commission.

c. After deliberation, the Accreditation Commission will render and announce one of the following decisions regarding the institution's bid for Accredited status:

- <u>Grant</u> the institution Accredited status
- <u>Defer</u> the institution's request for Accredited status based on specified deficiencies
- <u>Deny</u> the institution's request for Accredited status

d. The Executive Secretary of CTAC will officially notify the institution of the decision of the Accreditation Commission by letter. The notification will also provide required follow-up information for institutional action.

Progress Reports for Accredited Institutions

Within a maximum of two years from the Accreditation Commission's approval for Accredited status, an institution must demonstrate compliance with all deficiencies (Findings and / or Recommendations) identified in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

A *Progress Report* is required regularly (usually February 15 and August 15 of each year) until full compliance is determined.

Achieving Reaffirmation of Accredited Status

Explanation of Reaffirmation

After the initial five years of Accredited status, institutions are expected to reaffirm their accreditation through a full reaffirmation process comparable to that of achieving accreditation. This first reaffirmation is for a period of up to ten years and includes the required Interim Fifth-Year Review at the mid-point of the ten-year Accreditation cycle.

1. **Initial Communication**

    a. The institution is notified that it is approaching the required Reaffirmation period and is provided information regarding the Reaffirmation process.

    b. The institution downloads *Self-Study Guidelines* from the CTAC website.

    c. The institution completes and submits to the CTAC Office, the *Self-Study Proposal* with all required components and the current required Change of Status Review fee and staff travel advance fee. (see fee schedule)

2. **Staff Self-Study Visit**

    a. Once the *Self-Study Proposal* and applicable fees have been submitted, CTAC staff will contact the institution to set up a date for a visit to the institution.

    b. CTAC staff will provide the institution with information related to the visit in advance.

    c. The staff visit will ensure that the institution is prepared to move forward in the Self-Study process, provide guidance to the institution in moving forward in the Self-Study process, and finalize the dates for the Evaluation Team Visit.

3. **Self-Study Process**

    a. The institution completes the *Self-Study Report* according to the established timelines.

    b. At least six weeks prior to the scheduled Evaluation Team Visit, the institution submits to the CTAC Office an electronic copy of the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents along with the travel advance for an Evaluation Team according to the fee schedule.

    c. CTAC staff will review the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to determine if the *Report* is ready for submission to the members of the Evaluation Team.

    d. Once cleared, the institution will forward the *Self-Study Report* and all supporting documents to the members of the Evaluation Team.

4. **Evaluation Team Visit**

    a. The institution hosts the Evaluation Team according to the established dates.

b. The Evaluation Team conducts the visit and submits a draft copy of the *Evaluation Team Report* to the institution at the conclusion of the visit.

c. The institution is provided information concerning the reporting of errors of fact, which may be contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

d. Within 10 working days after the Evaluation Team Visit is completed, the institution should report any errors of fact contained in the *Evaluation Team Report* to the CTAC office.

5. **Post Evaluation Team Visit Follow-Up**

a. Once the institution has reported any errors of fact, CTAC staff will make any necessary adjustments to the *Evaluation Team Report* and send a final copy of the finalized *Report*, along with an *Institutional Response Matrix* to the institution.

b. Utilizing the *Institutional Response Matrix*, the institution will respond, by the date prescribed, to all of the determinations (Findings, Recommendations, and Suggestions) contained in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

c. An invoice for any outstanding fees and / or visit-related expenses is sent to the institution for payment prior to the institution's appearance before the Accreditation Commission for consideration of Reaffirmation of Accredited status.

6. **Appearance Before the Accreditation Commission**

a. The institution will appear before the Accreditation Commission at the meeting following the submission of the *Institutional Response* Matrix.

b. At this appearance, the institution will update the Accreditation Commission concerning happenings at the institution since the *Institutional Response Matrix* was submitted, and will be given the opportunity to answer any questions raised by the Accreditation Commission.

c. After deliberation, the Accreditation Commission will render and announce one of the following decisions regarding the institution's bid for Reaffirmation of Accredited status:

- <u>Grant</u> the institution Reaffirmation of Accredited status
- <u>Defer</u> the institution's request for Reaffirmation of Accredited status based on specified deficiencies
- <u>Deny</u> the institution's request for Reaffirmation of Accredited status

d. The Executive Secretary of CTAC will officially notify the institution of the decision of the Accreditation Commission by letter. The notification will also provide required follow-up information for institutional action.

Progress Reports for Reaffirmation Institutions

Within a maximum of two years from Accreditation Commission approval for Reaffirmation of Accredited status, an institution must demonstrate compliance with all deficiencies (Findings and / or Recommendations) identified in the *Evaluation Team Report*.

A *Progress Report* is required regularly (usually February 15 and August 15 of each year) until full compliance is determined.

Interim Fifth-Year Review

CTAC institutions that have been granted a ten-year Reaffirmation of Accreditation, are required to participate in the Interim Fifth-Year Review (IFYR) process. This process first occurs during the fifth year of the institution's Reaffirmation. The following components constitute the IFYR: (1) the completed Interim Fifth-Year Review Form and (2) documentation in support of the data reported by the institution on the Interim Fifth-Year Review Form. The IFYR focuses on data compiled from the outcomes of assessment procedures that demonstrate the institution is accomplishing its stated mission. The accreditation status of the institution continues during this process.

Institutions participating in the IFYR process are required to submit the IFYR form, along with the supporting documentation, and the Interim Fifth-Year Status Review Fee (see fee schedule) according to the established timeline. All components of the IFYR should be submitted electronically. The IFYR process also involves a peer review process, a CTAC staff visit, and a report to the Accreditation Commission.

Institutions required to participate in the IFYR process will be notified by the CTAC Office and will be provided with detailed instructions and all of the forms necessary to complete the process.