

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Accreditation (General)

#### **What is accreditation?**

The process through which an agency or organization recognizes that educational institutions or programs of study have met established standards. This is accomplished, generally, through periodic peer evaluations.

#### **How long does it take to become accredited?**

Institutions are granted Candidate Status for a period of 2 years. Depending on how long each institution has been in operation, the process can take anywhere from 1-3 years.

#### **What are the criteria necessary for an institution to become accredited?**

Please reference the NACCAS *Rules of Practice and Procedure*, Sub-Part B – Institutional Eligibility Requirements. Sections 1.1 and 1.2 outline the “Basic Information” and “Institutional General Eligibility Requirements” for an institution to become accredited. This document may be located at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) under the subheading “Rules of Practice and Procedure.”

#### **Who do I address my mail/package to?**

All mail should be addressed to the Executive Director, Dr. Anthony Mirando. In addition NACCAS requires that all mail be sent via traceable means.

#### **Can I email or fax my applications/revisions/notices to NACCAS?**

No, all applications and notifications must be received via traceable means, such as through the mail or a delivery company.

#### **To which NACCAS department do I address my questions regarding fees?**

Please contact NACCAS’ finance department for all questions regarding fees.

#### **What are the application fees?**

Please consult the NACCAS schedule of fees, which can be found on the NACCAS website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org), under the heading Member Resources.

#### **When must I notify NACCAS if I plan on making a change at my school, such as moving, adding a new program, changing a program, or selling it?**

Thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of the change

#### **How often do I need to attend a NACCAS Accreditation Workshop?**

The requirements for attendance at a NACCAS Accreditation Workshop are detailed in the Appendices to NACCAS' *Rules of Practice and Procedure*, specifically, Appendix #3, NACCAS Workshop Requirements. This document details the requirements for both accredited and non-accredited schools, institutions going through a change of control, and for those individuals aspiring to become NACCAS Evaluators. This document may be located at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) under the subheading, "Appendices to the Rules."

### **How often are NACCAS Accreditation Workshops held?**

NACCAS Accreditation Workshops are held four (4) times a year, in different locations all over the U.S. For a current list of upcoming workshops please consult the website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org).

### **What is the procedure for submitting a complaint to NACCAS?**

NACCAS' "Complaints Against Schools" form can be found on the NACCAS website ([www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org)) under the heading "Applications and Forms." Complaints are not required to be submitted on the NACCAS form, must be in writing, must include all of the information required on the form (including attachments), and must be signed by the complaining party. NOTE: If the complainant is a student, s/he must provide documentation that s/he has gone through the internal grievance procedure of the school against which the complaint is filed.

### **When will I be notified of a Commission action?**

Per Section 8.17 of NACCAS Rules of Practice and Procedure, whenever the Commission takes an action on an applicant or accredited school, the Commission shall notify the affected institution in writing of that action within 45 days; provided however, that written notice of any action to deny or withdraw accreditation, or to place a school's accreditation on probation, shall be given within 30 days.

### **Can I provide my school's catalog to potential students via my website?**

Yes, written documents produced in written copy, web-based, or any other printable media format are considered "written documents under NACCAS Rules."

### **Do my substitutes have to complete continuing education?**

No, NACCAS only requires all regularly employed instructors, whether full time or part time, to complete the minimum continuing education hours. Substitutes are not considered regularly employed instructors.

### **How do I become an evaluator?**

Those interested in becoming an evaluator must attend a NACCAS Accreditation Workshop and the Evaluator Training concurrent session. In addition, the individual must submit an application to become an evaluator. Please contact Susie Kofler ([skofler@naccas.org](mailto:skofler@naccas.org)) or Kantrice Dorsey ([kdorsey@naccas.org](mailto:kdorsey@naccas.org)) for more information.

### **What programs does NACCAS approve?**

Please refer to Appendix #1, Statement of Scope. This document contains a non-exhaustive list which illustrates curricula and programs covered under NACCAS' scope of accreditation. This document may be located at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) under the heading "Appendices to the Rules".

### **What kinds of documents do I need to provide the team when they are coming to do an on-site visit?**

Please refer to Appendix #14A, On-Site Evaluation: Documentation for On-Site Evaluations. Appendix #14A is a list of the documents that must be available for review for the NACCAS on-site team. The document can be found at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) under the heading “Appendices to the Rules”. Please note: On the date of the on-site visit, the NACCAS Evaluation Team may request additional documentation to ensure compliance.

### **Who is my Commissioner?**

Our Commission is made up of 13 members, of which 6 are designated by geographic zone. Please refer to the NACCAS website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) and click on the heading “Commissioners” for a state by state breakdown and your applicable Zone Commissioner.

### NACCAS Annual Report

### **What is the NACCAS Annual Report?**

NACCAS’ annual report is a written declaration concerning the administrative capability and educational effectiveness of an accredited institution, submitted to NACCAS each calendar year. The annual report is a yearly requirement for all accredited institutions. It primarily contains information regarding student outcomes (i.e., completion, placement, and licensure rates), among other things. It is filed with NACCAS electronically through the NACCAS website.

### **When is the annual report due to NACCAS?**

The annual report is always due by November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year for data compiled for the previous year. In other words, data for Completion, Licensure, and Placement rates in 2011 would be due November 30, 2012. Annual reports submitted after that date are assessed a late fee.

### **Is my school required to file an annual report to NACCAS?**

If your school is accredited by NACCAS as of the annual report due date (November 30<sup>th</sup>), then you are required to file the report electronically with NACCAS. If you are still a candidate or initial applicant school as of the annual report deadline, then you are not required to file the report. However, schools in the initial accreditation phase of the process will need to complete the most recent annual report internally and be able to provide the team with back up documentation that confirms the rates you have stated.

### **Should I include financial statements with my annual report?**

No. NACCAS’ annual report (which deals with student outcome rates) is a completely separate submission from your financial statements. As stated above, the annual report is due to NACCAS on November 30<sup>th</sup> of every year. However, financial statements are due six (6) months from your institution’s fiscal year end and are to be sent to the Director of Finance. For a staff directory please consult the website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org).

### **Who should I contact if I have a question regarding the annual report?**

Jason Tiezzi is primary point of contact for questions concerning the annual report. You can reach him at extension 155 or at [jtiezzi@naccas.org](mailto:jtiezzi@naccas.org). If Jason is unavailable, you can contact Alex Kim at extension 177, or at [akim@naccas.org](mailto:akim@naccas.org). The only exception is if you have lost your NACCAS username or password. In this case, you should email Allen Harmon at [aharmon@naccas.org](mailto:aharmon@naccas.org). If you are having difficulty uploading your Annual Report information you may contact Cliff Culbreath at extension 135 or at [cculbreath@naccas.org](mailto:cculbreath@naccas.org).

### **Where can I find instructions for completing the annual report?**

On the NACCAS website, [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org), there are several links along the left-hand side. The very first link from the top is “Member Menu / Login”. Click on this link, and you will arrive at a screen titled “Member Menu: Welcome NACCAS Members”. Towards the bottom of this screen there will be a file titled “Annual Report Worksheet Instructions”. The most recent version of the annual report instructions will always be posted here. Annual Report instructions are also posted in the “NACCAS News” section of the website.

### **How do I know my annual report has been successfully submitted to NACCAS?**

Upon submitting the report to NACCAS, you should receive a confirmation email which explicitly states “Congratulations! You have successfully submitted your annual report to NACCAS”. If you do not receive this email or are unsure if the report has gone through, feel free to contact Cliff Culbreath at extension 135 or [cculbreath@naccas.org](mailto:cculbreath@naccas.org).

### Institutional Self-Study

#### **What is an Institutional Self-Study (ISS)?**

An Institutional Self-Study (ISS) is an in-depth, qualitative written assessment of an institution’s overall educational programs measured in relation to its stated mission, objectives and NACCAS accreditation standards.

#### **What format do I use to compile an ISS?**

Please reference Appendix #5A, Requirements for Compiling the ISS and Appendix #5C, Institutional Self-Study Format when completing the Institutional Self-Study. The documents are located at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) under the subheading, “Appendices to the Rules.” NOTE: Please be sure to use the most updated version of Appendix #5C each time the institution compiles an ISS.

#### **Do I have to respond to an ISS Review Letter?**

The only time an institution is required to respond to an ISS review letter is if it states **Response Required** in the upper right hand corner. Otherwise, it is not necessary or required for an institution to submit revisions to NACCAS. However, if the institution would like for its revisions to be reviewed by NACCAS staff prior to the visit, the revisions must be received within 15 days of receipt of the ISS Review letter.

#### **Can I have an extension on submitting my ISS revisions if I would like for the revisions to be reviewed (in cases where a response is not required)?**

NACCAS does not grant extensions on the submission of ISS revisions, as the revisions are not a required part of the accreditation process.

#### **How many copies of the ISS must I duplicate?**

The institution must submit one copy of its ISS to NACCAS. The institution should maintain 4 copies of the ISS once it is submitted. One copy is the institution’s official copy. The other three copies will be sent to the evaluators who will be coming to the institution for the on-site evaluation visit.

### Finance Department

#### **When are my financial statements due to NACCAS?**

Six (6) months from your fiscal year end. (The most common fiscal year end is December 31 and those financial statements are due by June 30). Financial statements for schools seeking initial accreditation are due with the initial application and must be for the most recent fiscal year.

**Do school financial statements have to be audited?**

Yes. All NACCAS-accredited schools, and those seeking initial accreditation, must submit statements audited by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA). They must be prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) on an accrual basis. Also, if a school receives federal Title IV funding, the statements must be audited according to federal government standards.

**How many years of financial statements are required at the time of application for initial accreditation?**

One (1) year. NACCAS requires audited financial statements for the school's most recent fiscal year. Also, it is not necessary to submit your tax returns to NACCAS.

**What financial statements must be submitted for a change of control?**

The new owner must provide a balance sheet as of the settlement date of the sale within 30 days after the date of sale. The balance sheet does not have to be audited, but must be at least compiled by an independent CPA on an accrual basis according to GAAP. The Commission requires this balance sheet in order to make a decision on the school's application for change of control.

**What are the NACCAS financial criteria for schools?**

Under Standard VII a school is required to achieve a composite score of at least 1.5. If it does not pass this test, the school must meet all 3 of the following criteria: (a) Ratio of current assets : current liabilities of at least 1:1, (b) Positive tangible net worth, and (c) Net income for the most recent fiscal year, or at least 2 of the past 3 years. Please note that for NACCAS purposes, intangible assets and unsecured related party receivables are not counted towards assets and net worth.

**Where can I find the composite score calculation that NACCAS uses to evaluate school financial statements?**

Consult the NACCAS website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org) and look under the subheading, "Member Resources" for the Composite Score Formula. A school owner or its CPA may download our Excel file and enter the required data to determine the school's composite score. NACCAS' Director of Finance can provide guidance if necessary. For a staff directory please consult the website at [www.naccas.org](http://www.naccas.org).

**What happens if a NACCAS-accredited school does not submit audited financial statements within six (6) months of fiscal year end?**

NACCAS will charge a late fee of \$525 for each campus location under the same ownership. Also, the school will be required to respond to a letter to "show cause" as to why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. An inadequate response may lead to loss of accreditation.

**What happens if a NACCAS-accredited school submits audited financial statements that do not meet the composite score test or the alternate criteria specified in Standard VII?**

The Commission can place the school on financial monitoring, and the school would then have a limited period of time to demonstrate compliance, per Section 8.18 of the NACCAS Rules of Practice and Procedure. The time limit is determined by the length of the school's longest program. If the school does not return to financial compliance by the specified deadline, its accreditation may be withdrawn.

**Does NACCAS accept a letter of credit required by the federal Department of Education as evidence of financial stability?**

No. If a school's composite score is below 1.5, it must meet all of the other financial criteria that are specified in Standard VII.

**How much does it cost to obtain accreditation with NACCAS?**

A school that begins the candidate process and obtains initial accreditation within a year should anticipate NACCAS fees of at least \$9,500 during that time (per fee schedule as of July 2012). This does not include the expense of having school financial statements audited by a CPA, or the cost of any changes required within the school in order to comply with NACCAS standards.

**Are there any ongoing fees to remain accredited with NACCAS?**

Yes. All schools that are accredited by NACCAS or in the process of seeking accreditation must pay sustaining fees that range from \$1,695 to \$2,055 per year (per fee schedule as of July 2012). These fees are due semi-annually at the end of January and July. There are additional fees during the renewal of accreditation process. Please see the NACCAS Schedule of Fees on our website under Member Resources for complete information.

**What happens if a NACCAS fee is not paid by the due date?**

NACCAS charges a monthly late fee equal to 25% of the past due balance. For example, if an invoice of \$1,000 is not paid on time, in the following month the school will be charged a late fee of \$250 and it may be required to "show cause" as to why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. If it still does not pay the invoice, then additional late fees of \$250 per month will be assessed, and the school may be in danger of losing its accreditation for failure to pay fees.

**How can a school dispute the assessment of a late fee?**

The school owner may file a Petition for Variance using a form for this purpose on the NACCAS website under Rules of Practice & Procedure Section 10. These petitions are reviewed by the Commission, and are granted only in the case of significant extenuating circumstances.