

# Accreditation: What Everyone Should Know

A Presentation for  
Association of Chief Business Officials (ACBO)

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# We'll Cover Five Topics

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1. An Introduction to Accreditation and ACCJC
2. Eligibility Requirements and Standards
3. Levels of Sanctions
4. Importance of CBO's Role
5. Designation and Role of State Special Trustee

# An Introduction to Accreditation and ACCJC

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## What is Accreditation?

- Accreditation is the U.S. higher education practice of reviewing and certifying the educational quality of an institution.
- Accreditation is a non-governmental, peer-review process in which an institution is compared against a set of standards that describe “best practices” and is expected to meet or exceed those standards.
- Accreditation is voluntary but is used by the U.S. Department of Education to determine eligibility for federal funds for higher education.

# What are the purposes of accreditation?

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- To provide quality assurance to the public so that students and others will know the institution is of sufficient quality to meet standards.
- To provide stimulus for continuous improvement in educational quality through periodic comprehensive evaluations, midterm reports and other interactions with the institution.

# Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

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- ACCJC accredits associate degree granting institutions in California, Hawaii, the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. ACCJC is one of three commissions under the corporate entity known as WASC.
- WASC is a corporate entity with three divisions.
- The two other accrediting commissions that are part of WASC are:
  - ✓ The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU), and
  - ✓ The Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS).
- WASC and its three divisions are regional accreditors and accredit institutions.

# The WASC Membership

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- ACCJC/WASC operates in the Western Region: California, Hawaii, Republic of Palau, Guam, Saipan, Federated States of Micronesia, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, and American Samoa.
- ACCJC member institutions are public, private, secular, faith-based, non-profit and for-profit.

# Who are the Commissioners?

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- The ACCJC/WASC is composed of 19 Commissioners selected from the member institutions of the ACCJC and from the Public.

5 public   5 faculty   3 administrators  
1 Hawaii CCs   1 PPEC   1 California CCs  
1 ACSCU   1 ACS   1 Private Institution

# What Are Eligibility Requirements?

- The Eligibility Requirements (ERs) must be met completely in order for institutions to apply for accreditation. Compliance with the criteria is expected to be continuous, and institutions that have achieved accreditation must demonstrate that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements in their self study reports and their comprehensive evaluation.
- There are 19 Eligibility Requirements (Accreditation Reference Handbook (August 2008)). ERs 17 (Financial Resources) and 18 (Financial Accountability) address financial stability.



# What are the Standards?

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- Standards are statements of institutional good practice that, if followed, lead to educational effectiveness and quality.
- They are minimum conditions that must be met to gain and retain accreditation.
- They are a blueprint for sound educational, administrative, financial and governance practices.

# The Four Standards

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- I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness
- II. Student Learning Programs and Services
- III. Resources
- IV. Leadership and Governance

# What's New in the Standards

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- Accreditation Standards published in 2002 (2001 for ACSCU) have new requirements that:
  - ✓ Institutions engage in ongoing assessment of educational quality and improvement.
  - ✓ Institutions identify and use student learning outcomes as a key indicator of their educational effectiveness in addition to other measures.
  - ✓ Institutions provide evidence of their effectiveness.

# What's New in the Standards

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- ✓ The Standards specify the role of the president/chancellor in assuring institutional quality.
- ✓ The Standards specify more precisely the role of the governing board and include one prohibition on governing board behavior.
- ✓ The Standards integrated the previous 10 standards into four, and require institutions and teams to do integrated, holistic analyses of institutional quality.
- ✓ Institutions demonstrate an ongoing culture and practice of assessment, including institution-wide dialogue about quality and how to improve it.

# Force of Sanctions

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- Institutions are advised that the Commission is required by the U.S. Department of Education not to allow deficiencies to exist for more than a total of two years.
- If concerns are not resolved within this period, the Commission will take action to terminate accreditation.

# Three Levels of Sanctions

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- Issue Warning
- Impose Probation
- Order Show Cause

# Actions that Terminate Accreditation

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- If Institution does not satisfactorily explain or correct deficiencies or has taken an action that has placed the institution significantly out of compliance with commission standards or eligibility requirements.
- The accredited status of the institution continues pending completion of any review and appeal process the institution may request.

# Importance of CBO's Role

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- Responsibility and Ownership of Eligibility Requirements 17 (Financial Resources) and 18 (Financial Accountability)
- Responsibility and Ownership of Standard III (Resources) and Standard IV (Leadership and Governance)



# Designation and Role of State Special Trustee

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- ◉ Legislation/Chancellor's Office
- ◉ Mutual Settlement Agreement
- ◉ Duties Specified in Section 58312 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations