



---

**National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships**  
**Accreditation Commission**  
**Policies and Procedures**  
**Manual**

---

**Revised April 2020**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section Heading</u>	<u>Page #</u>
I. Background	3
II. Structure and Responsibilities of Accreditation Commission	7
III. Conflict of Interest Policies	9
IV. Peer Reviewer Qualifications	11
V. Commission Operating Procedures	13
VI. Eligibility for Accreditation	13
VII. Maintenance of NACEP Accreditation	15
VIII. Integrity	17
A. Sanctions	17
IX. Application Process	20
X. Accreditation Fees	23
XI. Peer Review Process	23
XII. Public Disclosure	27
XIII. Commitment to Cooperation	27
XIV. Appeals and Complaints	27
XV. Amendments	31

## I. Background

### A. Mission

Established in 1999, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) is a professional organization for high schools and colleges that advances seamless education through secondary and post-secondary collaborations. NACEP works to ensure that college courses offered to high school students through partnerships between college/universities and high schools are as rigorous as courses offered on the sponsoring college campus. As the sole accrediting body for concurrent and dual enrollment partnerships, NACEP helps these programs adhere to the highest standards so students experience a seamless transition to college and teachers benefit from meaningful, ongoing professional development. To advance the field and support its national network of members, NACEP actively shares the latest knowledge about best practices, research, and advocacy. The annual conference is the premier destination for college officials, high school leaders, policymakers, and researchers interested in creating an effective academic bridge between high school and college.

### B. Definitions

Concurrent enrollment provides high school students the opportunity to take college-credit bearing courses taught by college-approved high school teachers. It is a low-cost, scalable model for bringing college courses to students in urban, suburban, and rural high schools. Students gain exposure to the academic challenges of college while in their supportive high school environment, earning transcribed college credit at the time they successfully pass the course.

High School Instructors are defined as full time employees of partner high schools. Paying high school instructors, a stipend does not change the

model of endorsement.

The College Provided Faculty (CPF) model is defined as any college-bearing courses taught to high school students by college provided faculty regardless of location or delivery method. Student enrollment is due to a partnership between the high school and college or university.

College provided faculty are part-time or full-time faculty members of the institution who are not employed by a secondary partner.

#### **C. Context of Accreditation in the United States**

Accreditation is a voluntary, peer-review process designed to attest to the educational quality of new and established educational programs. Higher education institutions in the United States utilize nongovernmental peer review accreditation as an essential component of external review for quality assurance and quality improvement of educational programs. Since 2004, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) has served as the only national accrediting body for concurrent enrollment. In October 2019, NACEP accredited members voted to expand NACEP accreditation to include the College Provided Faculty Model.

#### **D. Purpose of Accreditation**

NACEP standards are salient measures and processes indicating a stable, supported program administered by an institution of higher education. The standards articulate best program practices that underlie quality and rigor of collegiate courses. NACEP accreditation is designed to distinguish concurrent and dual enrollment partnership programs throughout the nation.

Accreditation provides a self-regulatory approach rather than governmental intervention and is critical for the reputation of programs, to aid in credit transfer, and to prevent against credit mills

Institutions may apply for either an endorsement of the institution's concurrent enrollment program or the institution's college provided faculty model or both. Colleges would be required to provide evidence for the endorsement or endorsements they are applying for. The evidence required for each endorsement is different. If awarded NACEP accreditation, the award letter and all insignias will designate the endorsement received. For example: ABC Institution has been awarded NACEP accreditation with a concurrent enrollment program endorsement.

Last, but certainly not least, accreditation is a mark of assurance that students are earning college credit for college courses.

#### **E. History of NACEP Accreditation and Standards**

When NACEP was established in 1999, in response to the dramatic increase in concurrent enrollment courses throughout the country, a key concern of its founders was the quality of college classes offered by concurrent enrollment partnerships. NACEP's members include some of the nation's oldest and most prominent concurrent enrollment partnerships, who share a common belief that institutions of higher education should follow certain best practices to ensure the quality of college classes taught by high school teachers.

To this end, NACEP adopted national standards in 2002 that include measurable criteria in five categories that are markers of excellent concurrent enrollment partnerships: curriculum, faculty, students, assessment, and program evaluation. In 2004, the first four concurrent enrollment partnerships were accredited after a team of peers carefully reviewed documentation on how each program met NACEP's Standards. The Standards were revised in December 2009 and again in May 2017 after two years of member input and feedback on drafts, recommendations from experienced accreditation reviewers, considerable deliberation by the NACEP Accreditation Commission (referred to as Commission in this document), and an affirmative vote by a sizable majority of the programs

accredited by NACEP at that time. In October 2019, the accredited membership of NACEP voted in standards for College Provided Faculty models expanding the scope of NACEP.

In April 2012, following a Board discussion on the future of accreditation, the Board established a task force to explore the concept of creating an independent NACEP Accreditation Commission, separate from the NACEP Board of Directors. The task force gathered further information on external models, best practices, and a possible structure for the organization. After preliminary discussions of the Task Force's recommendations, the Board presented the concept to the NACEP membership at the October 2012 Business Meeting.

The following Accreditation Commission Implementation Plan proposal was approved by the NACEP Board of Directors during its January 2013 meeting:

That NACEP establish an independent Accreditation Commission to manage the accreditation process, review Peer Review Team reports and make accreditation decisions, and further develop accreditation-related policies. The Commission shall operate as an autonomous unit of NACEP, in close collaboration with the Board of Directors. It will take over the functions currently assigned to the Accreditation Committee, and the Board delegates to the Commission its accreditation decision-making authority and responsibility for enacting accreditation policies. The current Accreditation Committee shall cease upon the end of the April Board meeting. By October 2013, the Board will draft conforming Bylaw Amendments to further codify the Commission and any Board restructuring, and present them for ratification by the Board and membership

Representatives of NACEP-accredited programs adopted bylaw amendments in October 2013 to codify the governance structure of the Commission.

## **II. Structure, Purpose and Responsibilities of the Accreditation Commission**

The Accreditation Commission is an autonomous unit of NACEP which holds all accreditation decision-making authority and responsibility for enacting accreditation policies. The Commission is responsible for the review of a post-secondary institution's application for NACEP accreditation, management of the accreditation process, review of Peer Review Team reports, accreditation decisions, and further development of accreditation-related policies. It is chaired by a representative of an accredited program selected by the President and approved by the Board.

### **A. Purpose**

The Commission ensures that quality college courses are delivered to high school students through a consistent accreditation process defined by the NACEP standards.

### **B. Autonomy**

The Accreditation Commission shall have autonomy in accreditation decisions, accreditation policies, and all other accreditation-related matters except as follows:

- On an annual basis, the Commission shall propose a budget and any changes in accreditation application fees for consideration by the Board.
- Revisions to the Standards must be approved by the voting representatives of NACEP- accredited programs. The Commission shall draft proposed changes to the Standards, with input from the Board and the membership. Changes must be brought before the membership for consideration 30 days before a vote is taken.

### **C. Size and Composition of Commission**

The Commission shall be comprised of twelve individuals, seven directly elected by accredited programs and five (including the Chair) appointed by the NACEP President with approval of the Board. The NACEP Executive Director, Director of Accreditation and Accreditation Manager shall be staff members assigned to the Commission.

The Commission should include:

- a Chair (appointed) - can be reappointed for a second consecutive term
- a Vice Chair (appointed)
- Two At-Large Member (appointed)
- Three Representatives of two-year institutions (elected)
- Three Representatives of four-year institutions (elected)
- a Representative of private institutions (elected)
- an External Member (appointed) - to include outside perspective/expertise, such as a:
  - Secondary school representative
  - Researcher or academic who writes about education policy
  - State or federal official

### **D. Appointments and Elections**

1. Commissioner elections and appointments are held in the spring, with terms beginning after the Accreditation Commission Decision meeting.
2. Commissioners' terms shall last for two-three years, with no term limits (except for the Chair who may serve no more than two consecutive terms as Chair).
3. Terms will be staggered, with appointments and elections occurring for five positions in even years: Chair, Vice Chair, one Representative of two-year institutions, one Representative of four-year institutions, and the

External Member.

4. Designated representatives of NACEP-accredited concurrent and dual enrollment partnerships will elect the institutional representatives on the Commission, voting only in the elections for representatives from the type of institution they represent (e.g. two-year, four-year, private).
5. In making appointments or in the event of a vacancy in the Commission, the Accreditation Commission will follow the NACEP by-laws to fill the position.
6. The Chair of the Commission will serve on the NACEP Board of Directors.

#### **E. Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities**

1. To be eligible to serve on the Commission, Commissioners must:
  - Represent an institution that operates a NACEP-accredited concurrent or dual enrollment partnership (with the exception of the External Member),
  - Have prior service as a NACEP peer reviewer, or demonstrate knowledge of NACEP's standards and equivalent experience with other accrediting organizations, and
  - Not serve simultaneously on the NACEP Board of Directors (with the exception of the Commission Chair)
2. Commissioners define, understand, and lead the accreditation process through consistent implementation and evaluation of standards.
3. Commissioners support, promote, and advance high quality dual & concurrent enrollment programs through NACEP accreditation, training, policies and best practices.

#### **III. Conflict of Interest Policies**

The following conflict of interest policies apply both to Commissioners and to Peer Reviewers.

#### **A. Expectations**

To ensure the integrity of the accreditation review process, accreditation reviewers must not have any real or perceived financial, institutional, or personal interest in the outcome of the accreditation review that would affect their ability to exercise objective and independent judgment on the merits of an accreditation application.

#### **B. Reporting**

Prior to service as a Peer Reviewer, and annually thereafter, individuals must complete a NACEP Accreditation Reviewer Agreement attesting that he or she has no real or perceived conflict of interest in the institutions whose application(s) he or she has been assigned to review.

Prior to service on the Accreditation Commission, and annually thereafter, each Commissioner must complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form identifying affiliations or interests that might possibly constitute a conflict of interest or create the appearance of a conflict of interest for decisions he or she might be engaged in on behalf of NACEP.

Peer Reviewers and Commissioners must notify the Commission Chair, Director of Accreditation and Member Services, and Accreditation Manager during the year if any changes in affiliation might generate a potential conflict of interest.

#### **C. Definitions**

A real or perceived conflict of interest occurs when the individual has direct or indirect financial, institutional, or personal interest in any of the institutions whose accreditation applications he or she is involved with as a Peer Reviewer or Commissioner. Such direct or indirect interest in an institution includes:

1. Any prior, current, or prospective service as an officer, director, trustee, consultant, employee, or student, including as a volunteer mentor for the concurrent enrollment partnership;
2. A close family relationship to any individual described in section (1);

3. The concurrent enrollment partnership with which the individual is affiliated serves high school students in the same state or local market; and
4. Any other interest which might create the appearance of a financial, institutional, or personal stake in the outcome of the accreditation review that would affect an individual's ability to exercise objective and independent judgment on the merits of an accreditation application.

Conflicts also exist if any individual with whom the reviewer has a close family relationship, such as a spouse, domestic partner, or dependent, has a real or perceived conflict of interest with the institution.

#### **D. Personal Gain**

A reviewer or Commissioner shall not use the position for personal gain, for the endorsement of any product, service or enterprise, nor for the personal gain of friends, relatives or any institution with which the reviewer is affiliated. A reviewer or Commissioner shall not use reviewer status in a manner that could reasonably be construed to imply that NACEP sanctions or endorses other activities that the reviewer engages in. When teaching, speaking or writing in a personal capacity, the reviewer or Commissioner may refer to his or her accreditation service only as one of several biographical details when such information is given to identify the individual in connection with the teaching, speaking or writing.

#### **E. Recusal**

Both Commissioners and Peer Reviewers are expected to recuse themselves if a real or perceived conflict of interest exists. During discussion and votes on accreditation applications from their home states, service areas, or their own institution, Commissioners are expected to recuse themselves.

### **IV. Peer Reviewer Qualifications**

#### **A. Eligibility**

To be eligible to serve as a Peer Reviewer of NACEP accreditation applications, reviewers must:

1. Represent an institution that operates a NACEP-accredited concurrent or dual enrollment partnership. Peer reviewers are professionals in concurrent enrollment—program directors, faculty liaisons, other concurrent enrollment staff, senior administrators, or secondary partnership members affiliated with a NACEP-accredited program
2. Represent an institution that did not submit an application for re-accreditation in the current cycle if serving as a coordinator,
3. Participate in peer reviewer training prior to their first review, and make every effort to attend veteran reviewer training to remain current with accreditation-related issues, and
4. Comply with the Conflict of Interest policies.

**B. Recruitment**

Peer reviewers will be recruited at the start of each application cycle; reviewers will be asked to apply and demonstrate their interest in and experience with accreditation and NACEP. The Accreditation Commission reserves the right to recruit and assign reviewers as necessary and to remove a reviewer from a team if the Conflict of Interest policies are violated or if unprofessional behavior is identified.

**C. Maintenance of Institutional Affiliation**

Commissioners or Peer Reviewers who change positions within their institutions, move to a new non-accredited institution or who retire in the middle of an accreditation review cycle may continue in service to NACEP for the remainder of the cycle with institutional support.

Commissioners or Peer Reviewers who lose their affiliation with an institution housing a NACEP- accredited program before the conclusion of the review cycle must relinquish accreditation-related duties.

**D. Peer Review Team Role**

- Participate in Peer Review Training
- Evaluate Evidence/Application
- Coordinator (volunteer from team) schedules and facilitates meetings and interview
- Complete paperwork

## **V. Commission Operating Procedures**

### **A. Voting**

Decisions will be reached by a simple majority vote by the Commissioners who voted, either in person, over the phone, or by electronic mail.

### **B. Quorum**

A majority of the Commission (seven members) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

### **C. Parliamentary Procedures**

Generally accepted parliamentary procedures will be followed, with the Chair designating a Parliamentarian to resolve any procedural disputes.

### **D. Meetings**

The Commission shall meet in person at least once per year to make accreditation decisions and by phone as needed.

## **VI. Eligibility for Accreditation**

### **A. Program Eligibility**

A program is eligible to apply for NACEP accreditation if it meets all the following minimum criteria at the date of application:

- Is operated by a Post-secondary Institutional Member of NACEP in good standing.
- Is operated by an institution of higher education accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized Regional Institutional Accrediting Agency.
- Is operated by an institution authorized or licensed by the state agency for higher education in any state or country where it offers concurrent enrollment.

- Has continuously offered courses following the NACEP-defined concurrent enrollment program or college provided faculty model for at least **three** consecutive school years.
- Has implemented the policies and procedures described in all NACEP standards prior to applying.
- Can submit documentation that the practices described in the standards were in place during the preceding school year.
- Can submit completed program evaluation reports for each survey type identified in the Evaluation Standards of E1 and E2.

Typically, a concurrent or dual enrollment partnership has been in programmatic self-study review for at least one year prior to applying.

#### **B. Scope of Accreditation**

All courses at an institution that fall within the NACEP definition of concurrent enrollment program or college provided faculty model must adhere to NACEP's standards. Both initial and reaccreditation applicants must include all such courses in an accreditation application.

#### **C. Operating Across Multiple Campuses**

Institutions operating a concurrent or dual enrollment partnership across multiple campuses should consult the NACEP Accreditation Guide for advice on whether to submit a single application or multiple applications. Single applications are appropriate only when an institution can present documentation of a consistent, seamless, and integrated program.

#### **D. Resubmitting in Subsequent Review Cycles**

Applicants that withdraw from peer review are eligible to apply for the following review cycle if they withdraw prior to the deadline for submitting an Intent Form for that review cycle. An institution that has unsuccessfully applied for accreditation twice previously cannot apply a third time without either (a) waiting two years after the last application was submitted or (b) receiving approval from the Commission to apply.

## **VII. Maintenance of NACEP Accreditation**

### **A. Length of Accreditation Term**

NACEP accreditation is valid for five (5) academic years following the Commission's awarding of initial accreditation; accredited concurrent enrollment program or college provided faculty model partnerships must apply for NACEP re- accreditation four (4) years after initial accreditation in order to maintain continuous accreditation. NACEP accreditation is valid for seven (7) academic years following re- accreditation.

To remain an accredited program during this period, programs must be post-secondary members of NACEP in good standing, pay annual fees required of accredited programs, continue to implement policies and follow practices that meet NACEP's Standards in effect at the time, abide by the Commission's Policies and Procedures, and provide information as requested by the Commission. When a program fails to comply with any of these requirements, or upon discovery of non-conformity with NACEP's Standards, it will be subject to sanction.

A program may, through written notice to the Commission, relinquish its accreditation prior to the end of its accreditation term.

### **B. Maintenance of Institutional Accreditation**

If the regional accreditation of the institution offering a concurrent or dual enrollment partnership is suspended or revoked, the program's NACEP accreditation will be revoked as well.

### **C. Maintenance of State Licensure**

An institution operating a NACEP-accredited concurrent enrollment program or college provided faculty model must be authorized or licensed to operate as an institution of higher education, if required, in every state or foreign country where it offers concurrent enrollment. If a state agency or foreign government's authorization or licensure of the institution offering a concurrent enrollment partnership is suspended or revoked, the program's NACEP accreditation will be revoked as well.

#### **D. Maintenance of Program**

Institutions that cease to offer concurrent or dual enrollment courses over two consecutive years cannot maintain NACEP accreditation.

#### **E. Volunteer Service**

A NACEP-accredited concurrent enrollment program or college provided faculty model must provide a volunteer once every three years in the role of a peer reviewer, commissioner, board or committee member. Programs not in compliance will be subject to the Commission's Sanctions Policy. Under extraordinary circumstances such as staff turnover, vacant positions, etc, programs may apply for exemption. All exemptions are subject to the Accreditation Commission's review.

#### **F. Annual Report**

All accredited programs must submit an annual report in a format adopted by the Commission. The report promotes and facilitates continuous programmatic improvement. NACEP will publish a public report with aggregate results across all accredited programs to provide information and trends about quality concurrent and dual enrollment course offerings.

Program overview data provided in the Annual Report will be reported publicly by NACEP on each accredited program. Accreditation-related information will be reviewed by NACEP staff, who will report to the Commission any noteworthy trends across multiple programs. If staff identify specific concerns in the Annual Report regarding an individual program's continued adherence to NACEP's Standards, staff will inquire further with the program and report to the Commission.

Based on its review of the staff report, the Commission may send a monitoring letter requesting the program to provide further information on the identified policies and/or procedures.

#### **G. Substantive Change**

Substantive changes to accredited programs should be included in the annual report. An important aspect of accountability is Commission

oversight of program changes that may impact concurrent and dual enrollment best practices.

## **VIII. Integrity**

NACEP requires integrity throughout its accreditation process. The Accreditation Commission's policies, procedures, and decisions are founded on the integrity of the institution. An institution does not operate with integrity if it makes false or inaccurate representations to the Accreditation Commission, including the withholding of information, or fails to provide timely information. Such conduct may result in sanctions, including revocation or denial of accreditation by NACEP.

### **A. Sanctions for Programs during the Accreditation Process**

#### **1. Denial of Accreditation**

If a review team determines that evidence presented by an applicant is false or misrepresentative of actual practices, evidence, or policies on campus, the team will report their findings to the assigned Accreditation Commissioner. The concern will be reviewed by the Accreditation Commission's Chair, Vice Chair, and Member at Large. If a review of the findings and provided documents reveals false or misleading statements, an institution's application for accreditation will be denied. Institutions would not be allowed to withdraw their application. Institutions who are denied for this reason cannot reapply for accreditation for at least 3 years.

To appeal a denial based on integrity, the applicant must appeal in writing within 30 days to the NACEP Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall assemble a three-person appeals panel comprised of representatives of NACEP-accredited programs who have experience with the accreditation process. These panel members cannot be current Commission members or have participated in the Peer Review Team for the program that is appealing.

The decision of the Appeals Panel on any Appeal shall be final and reported back to the Commission and Board of Directors.

## **B. Sanctions for Currently Accredited Programs**

Below is the progression of disciplinary actions 1-3.

### **1. Notice of Suspected Non-Compliance**

A program may be sent a Notice of Suspected Non-compliance upon discovery of potential non-conformity with NACEP's Standards or for failure to comply with the Commission's Policies and Procedures, including failure to provide requested information in a timely manner. For failure to comply with the Commission's Policies and Procedures, a program may receive up to two additional warnings before being placed on probation depending on the severity of the non-compliance. A program has up to 30 business days to complete a written response to each Notice. Prior to voting to place a program on probation due to a finding of non-compliance, the Commission may request a Monitoring Report and/or Site Visit.

### **2. Probation**

If the Commission decides by a majority vote that a program is out of compliance with one or more of NACEP's Standards or has failed to comply with the Commission's Policies & Procedures, it will be placed on probation. Decisions on probation status are publicly announced and posted on the NACEP website. A Commission decision to place a program on probation is considered an Adverse Accrediting Action subject to appeal.

The Commission will provide a written report describing its findings and the necessary steps that a program must take in order to retain full NACEP accreditation. A program may be placed on probation for no longer than twelve months and may not seek renewal of accreditation while on probation.

The Commission will assign a Site Visit Team to conduct a site visit to the program during the probationary period. The site visit will afford the

program the opportunity to demonstrate its progress toward correcting the identified non-compliant policies and/or procedures. The Site Visit Team will review documentation, conduct pre-arranged interviews and provide specific feedback and advice to the program. The Site Visit Team will report its findings to the Commission to inform its deliberations on the program's accreditation status. The program will pay all reasonable expenses associated with the site visit.

A program on probation will be required to submit a written Monitoring Report prior to the end of the probationary period providing evidence that the identified areas of non-compliance have been addressed. The Commission may request that the program submit additional Monitoring Reports to show progress toward addressing non-compliance.

While on probation, a program may request an in-person or virtual meeting with the full Accreditation Commission. At the end of the probation period, the Commission will decide by majority vote whether to remove probation or ask the program to Show Cause as to why its accredited status should not be revoked.

### **3. Revocation**

The Commission will decide by majority vote to ask a program to Show Cause as to why its accreditation status should not be revoked. Although unusual, in certain circumstances a program may be requested to Show Cause without having previously been placed on probation. Decisions to Show Cause are publicly announced and posted on the NACEP website.

A program has up to 30 business days to complete a written response to the request to Show Cause. A Site Visit to the program will be required if not already conducted during a probationary period, or if requested by the program. Prior to the Commission voting to revoke a program's accreditation, the program may request an in-person or virtual meeting with the full Accreditation Commission.

Decisions to revoke accreditation are publicly announced and posted on the NACEP website, and will be conveyed to appropriate state authorities and regional institutional accrediting bodies. A Commission decision to revoke a program's accreditation is considered an Adverse Accrediting Action subject to appeal.

## **IX. Application Process**

### **A. Timeline**

The accreditation review process begins after applications are submitted and ends after the Accreditation Commission decision meeting the following spring. Institutions must submit the online NACEP pre-application by the published deadline. See NACEP website for current application deadlines.

### **B. Self-Study**

The self-study functions as an assessment mechanism to evaluate and analyze program objectives and performance. It provides an opportunity for concurrent enrollment partnerships to become more innovative, strengthen policies and practices, and institute greater transparency and consistency.

During the self-study, programs typically assemble a team of individuals involved in concurrent enrollment from a variety of perspectives (e.g. program staff, participating faculty, registrar's office, academic affairs, and institutional research.). The team reviews the manner in which the program implements all NACEP standards, develops implementation plans for any standards not yet in place, and identifies the evidence and documentation necessary to complete an application.

During the self-study, prospective applicants are encouraged to access NACEP's self-study resources to strengthen their concurrent and dual enrollment partnership program. The self-study concludes once the program is able to ensure and document that all NACEP standards are being

met.

A concurrent or dual enrollment partnership wishing to become accredited or renew its accreditation should begin its self-study one to two years prior to submitting the Intent form.

### **C. Pre-application Process**

Concurrent enrollment partnership or college provide faculty model programs seeking accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships must submit a pre-application the year they plan to submit an accreditation application. The pre-application gauges a program's readiness to apply and requests information such as:

#### **Concurrent Enrollment Program Endorsement**

- Institutional characteristics
- Program size
- Courses offered for concurrent enrollment, organized by discipline
- Contact information
- Any other information requested by the Commission
- Completed Coversheets for the following standards: Program Description, F2, F3, S3, S4, A1, C3, P1, P2, E2

#### **College Provided Faculty Model Endorsement**

- Institutional characteristics
- Program size
- Courses offered for college provided faculty model, organized by discipline
- Contact information
- Any other information requested by the Commission
- Completed Coversheets for the following standards: Program Description, F2, S3, S4, A1, C2, P1, P2, E2

Upon receipt of the pre-application, the program will be invoiced an Accreditation pre-application Fee.

#### **D. Candidacy Review**

Completing the pre-application signals to NACEP that a college intends to prepare an accreditation application that year, ensures that NACEP can contact the program with important updates about the accreditation process, and triggers a Candidacy Review. Immediately after a pre-application is submitted, a member of the Accreditation Commission will conduct a Candidacy Review to determine whether the program is ready to submit a complete accreditation application. As part of the Review the Commissioner will approve or modify the program's proposed list of disciplines used to organize the application.

During the Candidacy Review, the Commission will determine whether to:

- Approve the pre-application, allowing the applicant to prepare and submit a full application;
- Not approve the pre-application, thus the applicant will not be eligible to submit a full application until the following application cycle; or
- Provisionally approve the pre-application due to outstanding concerns. In this case the applicant will be assigned an Accreditation Advisor to assist with preparing the rest of the application if the applicant wishes to apply this cycle. There will be a service fee for the Accreditation Advisor to cover the person's time working with the applicant. The Advisor will inform the Commission if s/he determines that the applicant is ready to submit an application in the cycle or not.

#### **E. Submitting an Application**

Applications are built electronically and submitted via a NACEP-provided password protected website. To facilitate peer review, applications must follow NACEP's Requirements for Preparing Electronic Accreditation

Applications. The Requirements are sent to all programs that pass Candidacy Review.

**A complete application consists of:**

- A program description, including a description of the university or college context within which the program operates
- A complete NACEP cover sheet for each standard, explaining how the applicant fulfills the standard and describing the evidence submitted
- For each NACEP standard, evidence showing the program meets or exceeds the standard. The evidence includes comprehensive descriptions with contextual detail as well as sample documents illustrating that appropriate processes, policies and procedures are in place to ensure continued implementation.

Upon receipt of application, the program will be invoiced an Accreditation Application Processing Fee.

**X. Accreditation Fees**

Accreditation fees are established each year by the NACEP Board of Directors.

Each time a concurrent or dual enrollment partnership applies for accreditation, the Pre-application, Application Processing, and Site Visit Fees apply. Accreditation fees are non-refundable, even if accreditation is not awarded or a program withdraws prior to the completion of the review.

**XI. Peer Review Process**

**A. Screening**

Each application received by the deadline will be assigned a Coordinating Commissioner who will screen for completeness. If an essentially complete application lacks one or two pieces of required evidence, the Commissioner

may request additional documentation before a Peer Review Team is assigned. If an application is deemed incomplete and not ready to be reviewed, it will be withdrawn from consideration. Screening determines presence or absence of documentation; no judgment of quality is made during screening.

#### **B. Peer Review**

Each application is evaluated by a team of at least two to three peer reviewers appointed by the Accreditation Commission, one of whom is an experienced reviewer. The review team thoroughly analyzes each application and deliberates through conferencing. An application's reviewers come from outside the institution seeking accreditation, its service area, and its state. At least one member of each peer review team is from a similar type institution as the program being reviewed, e.g., private or two-year public. The team is either lead by a coordinator or a Review Facilitator.

Coordinating Commissioners provide review teams with ongoing support as the teams evaluate whether the application includes enough documentation of the type that fulfills the intent of each standard. Because there is great variation in institutional terminology and partnership programming, reviewers may request more information and documentation in order to clearly understand how a program is ensuring that NACEP's Standards are met. It is normal for a review team to request additional materials from an applicant.

Applicants attending the NACEP National Conference each fall are expected (subject to scheduling) to participate in an interview with their Peer Review Team and the Coordinating Commissioner to help the peer review team get a better understanding of the applicant's program and to clarify for the applicant what materials the review team is requesting. If the applicant does not attend the annual NACEP conference, the Peer Review Team and the Coordinating Commissioner will conduct a remote interview with the

applicant.

NACEP does not typically conduct site visits as part of initial accreditation reviews, though it reserves the right to request a site visit if there are areas that can best be clarified in person. The cost of such site visits will be borne by the program under review.

Reviewers record their standard-by-standard discussions and findings on a report form. After considering all the evidence, the team coordinator, with input from the team, completes the Review Rubric and submits it to the Accreditation Commission.

Applicants are not informed of the Team's findings. The Review Rubric is a scoring of each standard as not met or met. For each assigned applicant the Coordinating Commissioner completes a Commissioner's rubric, which also states if the standard was met or not met. The Review Rubric and Peer Review Team's Application Review Form are used by the Accreditation Commission in deciding whether to accredit or deny the applicant.

Applicants may withdraw from consideration at any time prior to the Commission's decision.

### **C. Commission Action**

At the spring Commission meeting, each applicant's Coordinating Commissioner presents the Review Rubric and the Team's Application Review Form to the Commission. All review team work products and application components are available for evaluation. The Commission will determine by a simple majority vote whether applications are denied or approved.

For first-time accreditation applications, three possible outcomes exist: approve, defer, or deny. For re-accreditation applications, three possible outcomes exist: approve, deny, or a one-year accreditation extension.

A defer of an initial accreditation application may be utilized when an initial applicant minimally meets the majority of the standards but falls short in a small number of areas. Initial applicants must demonstrate significant progress on the unmet standards by a fall date determined by the Commission and submit all final evidence by an early spring date determined by the Commission. The Commission has the option to assign a two-person Site Visit Team to conduct a site visit during the deferment year.

A one-year extension of accreditation may be utilized when a re-accreditation applicant minimally meets the majority of the standards but falls short in a small number of areas. Re-accreditation applicants must demonstrate significant progress on unmet standards by a date set by the Commission and submit all final evidence by a date set by the Commission. The Commission will assign a two-person Site Visit Team to conduct a site visit to the re-accreditation applicant's campus during the one-year extension.

The site visit will afford the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate that its flagged policies and/or procedures are meeting NACEP's accreditation standards and/or that recent improvements are bringing it closer to NACEP's expectations. The Site Visit Team will review documentation, conduct pre-arranged interviews and provide specific feedback and advice to the program. The Site Visit Team will report its findings to the Commission to inform its deliberation on the re-accreditation application. The re-accreditation applicant will pay all reasonable expenses associated with the site visit. Any additional expenses incurred by the site visit team will be covered by NACEP. The Commission will vote by May 1 to re-accredit the program or to deny. One-year extensions cannot occur two years in a row.

Accredited and re-accredited programs will receive a report from the

Commission, outlining areas of commendation as well as any recommendations from the review team.

In the case of a denial, a letter of notification will be sent to the applicant. Detailed reasons for the denial shall be provided. The applicant will have an opportunity to request reconsideration or make an appeal.

## **XII. Public Disclosure**

The names of applicants and outcomes will be publicly posted on the NACEP website, along with accreditation and probationary status.

Accreditation applications are submitted and reviewed in confidence by peer reviewers, who shall not disclose any nonpublic information.

Nonpublic information is information that the reviewer gains by reason of reviewer service, and that the reviewer knows or reasonably should know has not been made available to the general public. A reviewer shall not use nonpublic information for personal gain, or for the personal gain of friends, relatives or any institution with which the reviewer is affiliated.

## **XIII. Commitment to Cooperation**

The NACEP Accreditation Commission recognizes the role of institutional integrity, equality, and reliability to meet the educational needs of people. The Commission recognizes that government and other private organizations have overlapping responsibilities that promote quality education. Consequently, the Commission shall work in a spirit of cooperation with government agencies, regional and national accrediting bodies, and other members of the accrediting community.

## **XIV. Appeals and Complaints**

### **A. Accreditation Reconsideration and Appeal**

The following guidelines apply to an institution seeking reconsideration or an appeal of an Adverse Accrediting Action regarding their NACEP

Accreditation application or status.

An Adverse Accrediting Action could be any of the following decisions by the Commission:

- i. Denial of accreditation or re-accreditation,
- ii. Placement on probation,
- iii. Revocation of accreditation,
- iv. Requirement that the program be reviewed as individual campuses rather than as a system, or
- v. Postponing action on an accreditation decision

**B. Grounds for Reconsideration or Appeal**

- i. An institution may request Reconsideration of an Adverse Accrediting Action when the institution has clear and convincing evidence that the Adverse Accrediting Action was based on incorrect or misinterpreted evidence. Adverse Accrediting Actions will be reconsidered only once.

An institution may Appeal an Adverse Accrediting Action when the institution has evidence that one or more members of the review team, Accreditation Commission, or the Board of Directors failed to follow procedures and/or demonstrated bias or prejudice. An appeal will be investigated only once.

**C. Request for Reconsideration or Appeal**

Upon receiving notice of an Adverse Accrediting Action subject to reconsideration or appeal, the institution shall receive a copy of these procedures.

Within sixty (60) days after receiving notification of an Adverse Accrediting Action, a written request for reconsideration or appeal must be submitted to the Chair of the Accreditation Commission, care of the NACEP National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships PO Box 578 Chapel Hill, NC 27514 [accreditation@nacep.org](mailto:accreditation@nacep.org).

A Request for Reconsideration will be based primarily on the evidence previously submitted by the institution to the original accreditation review team. The request can include additional explanation or justification for each standard which the reviewers indicated the institution had not adequately demonstrated adherence to, including additional documentary evidence supporting the justification.

A Request for Reconsideration will be based on the policies and practices of the institution's concurrent enrollment partnership at the time of the application or academic year described in the Adverse Accrediting Action and cannot propose any substantially new changes to the program.

A Request for an Appeal shall describe how one or more members of the review team or the Accreditation Commission failed to follow procedures and/or demonstrated bias or prejudice.

**D. Procedures for Reviewing a Request for Reconsideration**

The Chair, Vice Chair, and Member at Large shall review each Request for Reconsideration and issue a written decision whether to grant reconsideration within thirty (30) days of receiving the request.

Upon granting reconsideration, the Chair shall appoint a Reconsideration Review Team. The Reconsideration Review Team shall consist of three approved peer reviewers from accredited programs who have not previously served as reviewers of the program subject to the Adverse Accreditation Action, including at least one Commissioner.

The Reconsideration Review Team shall review the record in its entirety, including the Request for Reconsideration and all materials, correspondence, and reports previously submitted by the institution and the original accreditation review team.

The Reconsideration Review Team shall report their findings and recommendation to the Commission within ninety (90) days of receiving the Request for Reconsideration.

The Commission shall take action based on the report of the Reconsideration Review Team at the next regularly scheduled or special meeting.

**E. Procedures for Reviewing a Request for Appeal**

The Board of Directors shall assemble a three-person appeals panel comprised of representatives of NACEP-accredited programs who have experience with the accreditation process. These panel members cannot be current Commission members or have participated in the Peer Review Team for the program that is appealing.

The decision of the Appeals Panel on any Appeal shall be final and reported back to the Commission and Board of Directors.

**F. Complaints**

The Commission considers complaints about accredited programs and programs undergoing initial accreditation review. Complaints are intended to inform the Commission when there are documented systemic problems with how an accredited concurrent enrollment program, or one seeking accreditation, implements NACEP's accreditation standards.

Complaints are not intended to be used to involve NACEP in disputes between individuals and member institutions. For complaints such as these, existing institutional grievance procedures should be utilized. The Commission will not interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters, such as admission standards, grades, granting or transferability of credits, or contractual relationships with schools.

A formal written complaint must be submitted to the Chair using NACEP's "Complaint Information Form." Complaints must include documentation of noncompliance with one or more of NACEP's accreditation standards. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

Upon receiving a complaint, the Chair, Vice Chair, and Director of Accreditation will determine whether to refer it to the full Commission for discussion or investigation. If the compliant is moved forward, the Chair will appoint a small investigatory committee to review the compliant and report to the full Commission regarding findings and suggested action.

A copy of the complaint will be provided to the program for comment, with source redacted. Within 60 days after acknowledging receipt for the complaint, the Commission will provide notification to the complainant of the Commission's investigation.

#### **XV. Amendments**

Revisions to this document shall be made by a simple majority vote of the Commission.