

ACCSC STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

RULES OF PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

SECTION XI – PILOT PROJECTS

Statement of Purpose

The Commission will consider suspension of certain accrediting standards and grant approval to a limited number of applicants that propose innovative pilot projects in career-orientated education and training. The proposed pilot projects must reasonably appear to contribute to such education and training, strengthen the school, and benefit students. The Commission may utilize the experience gained from such pilot projects to adjust and improve accrediting standards.

A. Eligibility

An applicant for a pilot project must be accredited by the Commission. An applicant for a pilot project cannot be operating under a Warning or Probation Order or subject to any form of reporting. The applicant school and its proposed pilot project must also be in compliance with federal, state, and local law.

B. Application

1. The Commission will consider an application for a pilot project in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. The educational significance of the proposal;
 - b. The diversity of the application pool in regard to geography, school size, and student population; and
 - c. The potential for contribution to the development of career-oriented education and training and of accrediting standards.
2. A determination by the Commission not to accept an application for a pilot project will be without prejudice to its resubmission at a later time or to the school's current accredited status.
3. An applicant for a pilot project must submit the following to the Commission:
 - a. A narrative statement demonstrating the applicant's eligibility and describing the pilot project in detail, and setting forth the accrediting standards for which a waiver is requested. The narrative should include a description of the specific objectives sought to be accomplished and an explanation of how the pilot project will strengthen the school, contribute to the development of career-oriented education and training, and benefit students.
 - b. A statement of the length of time necessary to implement the pilot project proposal and to assess its effectiveness. This statement should explain the basis of the school's projections.
 - c. A demonstration that the faculty, instructional material, equipment, and facilities that will be used in conjunction with the pilot project are sufficient to meet the objectives of the proposal. This demonstration must include Staff and Faculty Personnel Reports for all persons who will act in an instructional or administrative capacity in the pilot program and a detailed description of the instructional materials, equipment, and facilities that may be used.
 - d. A description of the jobs that students completing the training can reasonably expect to obtain; a projection of the number of students expected to enroll, complete the training, and obtain such jobs; and the basis for the applicant's projections.

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- e. An explanation of how the applicant will recruit and admit students, ensure that students are fully and accurately informed about the training to be provided, and determine that students have the capability to benefit from and succeed at the training. The school must demonstrate that students' health, safety, and welfare will be protected.
 - f. A financial showing that describes the funding for the pilot program and demonstrates that the applicant is able to support and complete the pilot program.
 - g. A certification statement, signed by the applicant or its authorized representative, that the information included in the application for a pilot project is true and correct.
4. The Commission will establish an appropriate fee to cover the costs associated with each pilot accreditation program

C. Evaluation

Concurrent with the submission of the information set forth above, the applicant must nominate an independent third party, with expertise in trade and technical education and training, to prepare a plan to review the information submitted to the Commission; to visit the applicant and, if feasible, the facilities where the pilot program will be conducted; and to otherwise evaluate the pilot program proposal. The applicant must promptly notify the Commission of its nomination of such evaluator and submit the evaluator's plan to the Commission. The Commission will review the evaluator nominated by the applicant and the plan for evaluating the application. The Commission may approve, modify, or reject the applicant's nomination and the plan of evaluation, and the Commission may require the selection of another evaluator acceptable to the Commission. The Commission may also require a team visit to verify the information supplied to the Commission and to develop a further understanding of the proposal. The findings of the evaluator and any on-site evaluation team will be set forth in a report that will be provided to the applicant and the Commission. The applicant will have the opportunity to respond to the report.

D. Commission Review

1. Upon consideration of the information provided pursuant to *Section XI (B), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*, the findings and assessment described in *Section XI (C), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*, and the applicant's response thereto, the Commission may grant approval for the proposed pilot program if it finds that the program can be reasonably expected to advance trade and technical education and training, strengthen the school, and be of benefit to students. The Commission has the discretion to grant pilot approval even though an applicant has not demonstrated conformity with other provisions of the *Standards of Accreditation*. However, the Commission will not consider a waiver request for the disclosure obligations or tuition refund policy requirements set forth in the *Standards of Accreditation*.
2. The Commission reserves the right to limit the duration of the pilot accreditation and the number of students who will be allowed to participate.
3. Pilot programs may be implemented only as approved by the Commission. Approval granted under this section may not be assigned or transferred without the prior approval of the Commission based upon the assignee's or transferee's satisfaction of *Section XI (A-C), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*, and such other provisions of this section as may be applicable.
4. The Commission may establish such other terms and conditions upon any approval granted under this section of the *Rules* as the Commission deems appropriate.

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E. Progress Report

After the grant of approval under this section, a progress report will be submitted to the Commission at the mid-point of the pilot program and at such other times as the Commission deems appropriate.

F. On-site Evaluation

Prior to the expiration of the term of the pilot program, an on-site evaluation team consisting of a member of the Commission or its designee and such other persons as the Commission determines appropriate will conduct an on-site evaluation of the pilot program. The on-site evaluation team will prepare a report to which the school will have an opportunity to respond.

G. Final Report

Within 180 days after completion of the term of the pilot program or such other time that the Commission sets, the school must submit a report to the Commission that describes the results of the pilot program. The report must state whether the objectives of the pilot program were achieved, explain the basis for assertions of success, analyze and explain why any objectives were not achieved, and provide recommendations for future efforts. The report must also state the number of students who enrolled, completed the training, and obtained employment and must include a detailed description of the positions in which students obtained employment. Proposals for amendment of accrediting standards, based upon the experience gained from the pilot program, may be made. The Commission may require supplementation of such report if additional time is needed to assess the results of the pilot program.

H. Renewal

Since the Commission will consider revisions to accrediting standards in response to successful pilot programs, approval granted under this section of the *Rules* will not be automatically renewed. Renewal of the pilot program may be granted by the Commission upon a showing that it was not feasible to complete the pilot program within its term or that a continuation of the pilot program is otherwise warranted. Such a showing must be submitted to the Commission at least 30 days prior to the completion of the term of the pilot program. The Commission will have the power to approve the request for renewal in accordance with these *Rules*.

I. Commission Decision

All Commission decisions related to a pilot project under this section of the *Rules* are final and are not subject to appeal.