

ACCREDITATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Effective for Evaluations During the
2004-2005 Accreditation Cycle

Incorporates all changes
approved by the
ABET
Board of Directors
as of
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Applied Science Accreditation Commission
Computing Accreditation Commission
Engineering Accreditation Commission
Technology Accreditation Commission

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Accreditation Policy and Procedure Manual
Effective for Evaluations during the 2004-2005 Accreditation Cycle

PLEASE NOTE:

- (1) SECTIONS BEGINNING WITH THE ACRONYMS EAC, TAC, CAC, OR ASAC INDICATE THOSE SECTIONS THAT APPLY ONLY TO THE INDICATED COMMISSION.
- (2) SECTIONS IN **BOLD** FONT ARE POLICIES ESTABLISHED BY THE ABET BOARD OF DIRECTORS. SECTIONS NOT IN BOLD FONT ARE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE ABET ACCREDITATION COMMISSIONS.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.A. Purposes -- Among the purposes of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (hereafter referred to as ABET), the following relate to accreditation.

- I.A.1. Organize and carry out a comprehensive process of accreditation of pertinent programs leading to degrees, and assist academic institutions in planning their educational programs.**
- I.A.2. Promote the intellectual development of those interested in engineering, technology, computing, and applied science professions, and provide technical assistance to agencies having professional regulatory authority applicable to accreditation.**

I.B. Responsibilities

I.B.1. ABET accomplishes its purposes through standing committees and commissions. The commissions include the: Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC), Technology Accreditation Commission (TAC), Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC), and Applied Science Accreditation Commission (ASAC). The accreditation commissions are charged with the following responsibilities:

I.B.1.a. The accreditation commissions shall propose policies, procedures, and criteria to the ABET Board of Directors for approval. The Board of Directors shall review policies, procedures, and accreditation criteria and may specify changes to be made in them to the appropriate accreditation commissions.

I.B.1.b. The accreditation commissions shall administer the accreditation process based on policies, procedures, and criteria approved in advance by the Board of Directors. The accreditation commissions shall make final decisions, except for appeals, on accreditation actions.

I.B.2. Procedures and decisions on all appeals to accreditation actions shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors

I.B.3. Accreditation decisions are based solely on the appropriate criteria, policies, and procedures as published by ABET. Other documents published by ABET or Participating Bodies are advisory in nature.

I.C. Objectives of Accreditation -- In keeping with the broad purposes of ABET, as given above, accreditation is intended to accomplish the following specific objectives:

I.C.1. To identify to the public, prospective students, student counselors, parents, educational institutions, professional societies, potential employers, governmental agencies, and state licensing or certification boards, specific programs that meet minimum criteria for accreditation.

I.C.2. **To provide guidance for the improvement of the existing and development of future educational programs in engineering, technology, computing, and applied science areas.**

I.C.3. **To stimulate the improvement of engineering, technology, computing, and applied science education in the United States.**

I.D. National Recognition -- ABET is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as the organization responsible for the accreditation of educational programs leading to degrees in engineering, engineering technology, computing, and applied science. The wide acceptance of the ABET list of accredited programs by organizations such as the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), by the relevant boards of licensure and certification, by the professional engineering and technical societies, by employers, and by the institutions themselves, is gratifying evidence of the cooperation and respect of the institutions and organizations concerned.

I.E. Historical Perspective -- The first statement of the Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD, now ABET) relating to accreditation of engineering educational programs was proposed by the Committee on Engineering Schools and approved by the Council in 1933. It was subsequently approved by the constituent member organizations of ECPD. This provided the basis for the accreditation of engineering programs now carried out by the Engineering Accreditation Commission.

I.F. In 1944, the ECPD appointed a Subcommittee on Technical Institutes. On October 5, 1964, this subcommittee became a standing committee of ECPD and established a basis for accrediting programs of the technical institute type, now designated as programs in engineering technology. These activities are now carried out by the Technology Accreditation Commission.

I.G. In 1976, the (then ECPD) Board of Directors authorized a "third accreditation committee" to review engineering-related and technologically-related programs. The ABET Board of Directors subsequently instituted the Related Accreditation Commission on October 14, 1983. In 2001, the name of this Commission was changed to the Applied Science Accreditation Commission.

I.H. An extended period of collaboration between the Computing Sciences Accreditation Board (CASB) and ABET culminated in 2000 when CSAB joined the ABET Board of Directors and ABET authorized creation of the ABET Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC) to accredit computer science programs.

I.I. Amendments and additions to the original ECPD and ABET statements have been adopted from time to time. The original statements and their amendments and additions are combined here into a unified statement of the policies and procedures that pertain to the accreditation of engineering, technology, computing, and applied science programs.

II. ACCREDITATION POLICIES

II.A. Institutions -- Accreditation of programs is accomplished under the following general policies.

II.A.1. **Programs will be considered for accreditation if they are offered by an institution of higher learning in one of the following categories:**

II.A.1.a. **Institutions currently accredited by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency or formally approved by a State authority recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.**

II.A.1.b. **Institutions holding appropriate approval by a State authority to offer only engineering, engineering technology, computing, or applied science programs or a**

combination thereof, and not offering programs in any other field or discipline; or other institutions offering programs whose accreditation would further the objectives of ABET.

II.A.1.c. Institutions that comply with II.A.1.a. and operate a branch campus under the direct supervision and control of the home campus, and conduct a program that is substantially equivalent to one located on the home campus.

II.A.2. When a multi-campus institution presents programs for accreditation, each campus will be considered as a separate institution in the evaluation process.

II.B. Programs

II.B.1. Educational programs leading to degrees rather than institutions, departments, or degrees are accredited. In order for a program to be accredited, all routes to completion of the program must satisfy the appropriate criteria.

II.B.2. Program Title - The title of an accredited program must be properly descriptive of the content of the program and be shown on the graduating student's transcript and in the institution's literature. An institution may not use the same program title to identify both an accredited program and a non-accredited program. Although the selection of program titles is the prerogative of the educational institution, the proliferation of program titles is discouraged because different titles for essentially the same programs are confusing or misleading to the public, including students, prospective students, and employers.

II.B.2.a. EAC - All engineering programs must include the word "engineering" in the program title (with the exception of naval architecture programs accredited prior to 1984).

II.B.2.b. TAC - All engineering technology programs must include the word "technology" as the final noun in the title. Preferred program titles would include the words "engineering technology".

II.B.3. A program is an organized educational experience that consists of a cohesive set of courses or other educational modules sequenced so that reasonable depth is obtained in the upper-level courses. A definite stem should be obvious in the program and, again, depth should be reached in pursuing courses in the stem. Furthermore, the program should develop the ability to apply pertinent knowledge to the practice of the defined area of the program. A program must also involve the broadening educational objectives expected in modern post-secondary education. Program criteria that define specific program requirements within the general disciplinary realm are developed by the participating bodies and the Commissions.

II.B.4. Programs to be considered for accreditation by ABET are college level programs that embrace engineering, technology, computing, or applied science. All programs include sound foundations in science and mathematics.

II.B.4.a. EAC - Programs accredited by EAC are those leading to the professional practice of engineering.

II.B.4.b. TAC - Programs accredited by TAC are technological in nature and are in the broad area of technical education between engineering and vocational education/industrial technology. Briefly, the differences between educational programs in engineering technology and industrial technology include type of faculty, use of facilities, mathematics and science sequence content, and degree of specialization. More faculty members with professional educational backgrounds appear to staff the present industrial technology programs, whereas a larger number with engineering or technological backgrounds staff the engineering technology programs.

II.B.4.c. CAC – Programs accredited by CAC are those leading to professional practice across the broad spectrum of computing disciplines.

II.B.4.d. ASAC - Programs accredited by ASAC are in the field of higher technical education,

with close practical and academic ties with engineering or applied science. The programs do not fall under the strict engineering or engineering technology definitions. The mathematics, basic sciences, and humanities content of the applied science programs are similar to those contained in engineering and engineering technology programs; however, some of the engineering science and engineering design components contained in a typical engineering program are replaced by applied science specialties. Certain programs may prepare graduates for practice at a professional level in an applied science specialty that cannot be classified as engineering or engineering technology. However, such programs derive their professional nature from specific professional entry curriculum requirements imposed by the program criteria.

II.B.5. Program Criteria - Some program titles imply a specialization within a broader educational area. Program criteria have been developed for many such areas of specialization. If a program title implies a specialization for which program criteria have been developed, the program must satisfy the applicable program criteria in addition to the general criteria.

II.B.5.a. ASAC - The ASAC will normally consider for accreditation only those programs for which applicable ASAC program criteria have been approved by the ABET Board of Directors.

II.B.6. Program Differentiation - The general criteria for accrediting programs address faculty, curriculum, students, administration, facilities, and commitment. Programs may be differentiated and separately accredited if there are differences in any of the above categories so that the configuration of one program offering is subject to judgments different from other patterns. Not only do different curricula and disciplines require separate accreditation, but the use of two or more substantially different faculties, facilities, student characteristics, or administrations within the same discipline implies that there are two or more programs, each of which may require separate accreditation.

II.B.7. Options - Alternative curricula within a program (commonly called options) leading to a degree in a sub-field of the major discipline may be accredited and listed as separate programs at the request of the institution. In such cases, the option must have been formally designated by the institution prior to the request for evaluation. It must conform to the general criteria and to any program criteria applicable to independent programs in the same curricular area as the option. The accreditation status of the option must be clearly identified and distinguished from any non-accredited options within the same major program and from any other programs.

II.B.8. Program Level

II.B.8.a. EAC - Engineering programs may be accredited at either the basic or advanced level. Accreditation at the advanced level requires compliance with the general basic level criteria, the general advanced level criteria, and appropriate program criteria. The choices of level of accreditation (either basic or advanced), the degree awarded, and the length of the program are left to the institution. A program may be accredited at only one level in a particular curriculum at a particular institution.

II.B.8.b. TAC - Engineering technology programs may be accredited at the associate or baccalaureate degree level. Differential criteria are specified as the minimum course requirements for each level. Programs may be accredited at both levels in any particular curriculum at a particular institution.

II.B.8.c. CAC – Computing programs are only accredited at the baccalaureate degree level.

II.B.8.d. ASAC – Applied science programs may be accredited at the associate, baccalaureate, or master’s degree level. Programs may be accredited at more than one level in any particular curriculum at a particular institution.

II.B.9. Program Breadth - Broad programs that will prepare a student to take advantage of as many

different career opportunities as possible are encouraged. Further, programs which omit instruction in a significant portion of a subject in which a professional in a particular field may reasonably be expected to have competence should not be accredited.

II.B.10. Evening and Off-Campus Programs -- Evening and off-campus programs may be accredited as integral with the regular on-campus day program if they follow the same curriculum, use the same or equivalent laboratory facilities and equipment, and are subject to the same supervision and control of academic standards. The institution must demonstrate that evening and off-campus programs are conducted to the same standards of subject matter coverage and rigor of student work and grading.

II.B.11. Specialty Programs - It is desirable to minimize the number of specially designated programs to be considered for accreditation.

II.B.12. Experimental or Innovative Programs -- **Recognizing the value of innovation and experimentation in educational programs and the possibility that such programs may have difficulty meeting specific quantitative criteria, innovative or experimental programs will be evaluated, on request, on the basis of their demonstrated ability to satisfy the intent of the appropriate criteria and to produce graduates fully qualified to enter the practice of the appropriate discipline. Programs are encouraged to adopt innovative procedures and approaches that meet the criteria and that improve the program.**

II.C. Application and Preparation for Visit

II.C.1. The Commissions of ABET are prepared to examine, for approval, any programs that appear likely to satisfy the appropriate criteria.

II.C.2. An institution that wishes to have any or all of its appropriate programs considered for accreditation may communicate directly with ABET. Arrangements will then be made for securing information by a self-study questionnaire and for an evaluation by a visiting team. It is suggested that an institution contemplating an accreditation evaluation for the first time contact ABET prior to making the formal request. This request should be made not later than January 31 preceding the academic year in which the campus visit is desired.

II.C.3. **The accreditation process is voluntary. Institutions are invited to submit programs without persuasion or pressure. Programs are considered for accreditation action only at the written request of the institution.**

II.C.4. Initial Evaluation - **An evaluation visit will be carried out and initial accreditation will be granted only if students have graduated from a program prior to the on-site visit. If it is determined that the program followed by these graduates is essentially the same as that reviewed, then accreditation may be extended to the graduates of the program in the academic year prior to the visit.**

II.D. Interpretation of Criteria

II.D.1. Considerable latitude in the choice and arrangement of subject matter in the curriculum is allowed. While the qualitative factors are more important than the quantitative assignment of credit hours to any particular area, the general principles outlined in the criteria will be checked closely by analyzing each particular curriculum. The coverage of basic information rather than the offering of specific courses is the important criterion.

II.D.2. Methods for delivery of instruction and their use are developing, and ways for evaluating the learning accomplishment are evolving as well. When a course offered as part of a program employs a method for delivery of instruction that differs from the more frequently encountered methods, e.g., lecture, discussion, laboratory, there must be a provision for evaluating the learning accomplishment to ensure that educational objectives are met.

II.D.3. EAC - Any program accredited by EAC must offer primarily an engineering curriculum with or without some modifier in its title. Therefore, the prime considerations in evaluating any engineering curriculum are: (1) that it is considered satisfactory as an engineering curriculum regardless of any modifying word or phraseology used in the title, and (2) that the curriculum or curriculum option merits the designation of the modifier. If a program title is identified with one or more of the fields for which program criteria have been approved, that program must also meet the requirements of any relevant program criteria.

II.D.4. As used in the criteria, the word *shall* or *must* indicates definite obligatory requirements that the Commissions expect as a minimum to be met for a program to be accreditable. The word *should* indicates more permissive recommendations that may have an effect on accreditation. The word *may* is permissive.

II.E. Evaluation

II.E.1. Evaluations are conducted to verify that the program under review is in compliance with the appropriate accreditation criteria. The evaluation of a program will include assessment of both qualitative as well as quantitative factors in the process leading to an accreditation decision.

II.E.2. Self-Study Report - An institution's educational programs will be initially evaluated on the basis of data submitted by the institution to ABET in the form of a Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Report must include information about day and evening programs, all incorporated options, and off-campus offerings.

II.E.3. On-site Visit - The Self-Study Report will be supplemented by an on-site visit by a carefully selected team representing ABET and its Participating Bodies. The purpose of the on-site visit is three-fold:

II.E.3.a. It should assess factors that cannot be adequately described in the Self-Study Report. The intellectual atmosphere, the morale of the faculty and the students, the stability and continuity of the faculty and the students, the caliber of the staff and student body, and the outcome of the education offered as evidenced by the character of the work performed are examples of intangible qualitative factors that are difficult to document in a written statement. For analysis prior to the visit, the institution will have provided the team with a random selection of graduates' transcripts from each of the programs under evaluation.

II.E.3.b. The visiting team should help the institution assess its strong as well as its weak points.

II.E.3.c. The team should examine in further detail the material compiled by the institution and relating to:

- II.E.3.c.(1) Auspices, control, and organization of the institution and of the college or division housing the program.
- II.E.3.c.(2) Educational programs offered and degrees conferred.
- II.E.3.c.(3) Maturity and stability of the institution and of the individual educational programs.
- II.E.3.c.(4) Basis of and requirements for admission of students.
- II.E.3.c.(5) Number of students enrolled in both the college or division as a whole and in the individual educational programs.
- II.E.3.c.(6) Teaching staff and teaching loads.
- II.E.3.c.(7) Physical facilities - the educational plant devoted to the educational program.

II.E.3.c.(8) Finances - investments, expenditures, sources of income.

II.E.3.c.(9) Curricular content.

II.E.3.c.(10) Representative samples of student work that reveal the spectrum of educational outcome. In order to make a qualitative evaluation of a program, it is necessary that the institution exhibit teaching materials such as course outlines and textbooks for all courses required for graduation. Sufficient examples of student work in technical, mathematics, and science courses must be available to the visiting team for the entire campus visit. The examples should show a range of grades for assignments, including homework, quizzes, examinations, drawings, laboratory reports, projects, and samples of computer usage in technical courses. Examples must also be presented to demonstrate compliance with the requirement for student competence in written and oral communications.

II.E.3.c.(11) Records of employment of graduates and, as appropriate, passage rates on nationally normed examinations to evaluate placement and performance in terms of the goals stated for each program.

II.E.3.c.(12) Student support services appropriate to the educational and career needs of the students. These include registration; tutoring; career and academic advisement; library, computing, and laboratory resources; and additional services appropriate to the institution's and program's mission and educational objectives. Student services must be sufficient to support the program, and there must be evidence of their use.

II.E.3.c.(13) Clearly stated expectations for learning and student achievement appropriate to the mission and educational objectives of the institution and program. Academic policies relating to student, such as admissions, probation, dismissal, grievances, and graduation requirements must be fair, equitable, and published. If academic policies for the program are different from or in addition to the institution's, those differences must be clearly stated. The criteria used by faculty to evaluate student work must be equitable, consistently applied, and clearly articulated to students, faculty, and staff.

II.E.3.d. The on-site visit team will examine all incorporated day, evening, option and off-campus offerings.

II.E.4. A comprehensive review is required to establish or continue the periodic accreditation of a program. A comprehensive review addresses all applicable criteria and consists of

II.E.4.a. the review of a Self-Study Report prepared by the institution,

II.E.4.b. an on-site review by an evaluation team, and

II.E.4.c. the preparation of a report by the evaluation team.

II.E.5. Comprehensive reviews must be conducted for each accredited program at intervals no longer than six years for continuous accreditation. Such comprehensive reviews will be conducted simultaneously for all accredited programs under the purview of the appropriate Commission and are known as a *general review*.

II.E.6. Interim reviews may occur between the periodic general reviews when weaknesses or deficiencies are noted in a prior review. An interim review will focus only upon the concerns, weaknesses, and deficiencies noted in the prior review. An interim review includes the preparation by the institution of a report that addresses the concerns, weaknesses, and deficiencies noted in the prior review. An interim review may include a focused on-site evaluation depending upon the nature of the concerns, weaknesses, and deficiencies noted in the prior review.

II.E.7. Evaluation teams for on-site evaluations will generally consist of a Team Chair and one Program Evaluator for each program being evaluated. Nevertheless, the minimum team size for a general review or an interim review following a Show Cause action is three persons. In the case where a program must satisfy more than one Program Criteria, there will generally be one Program Evaluator for each Program Criteria to be evaluated. For the following cases, the team size may be reduced accordingly: the focus of the evaluation is very limited, a very high degree of overlap exists between two programs being evaluated, or a joint evaluation is being conducted by two or more Commissions or agencies.

II.E.7.a. TAC and ASAC – Single program visits to programs seeking reaccreditation or initial accreditation may be conducted by a team of two persons. If only two team members are present the visit will be extended an extra day.

II.E.8. Team Chairs will generally be current members of the appropriate Commission. Program Evaluators will generally be selected from the approved list provided by the appropriate Lead Society.

II.E.9. The evaluation of an Interim Report provided by an institution in response to an Interim Report action will generally be performed by a current member of the appropriate Commission. This evaluator may seek assistance of appropriate Program Evaluators if needed.

II.E.10. An evaluation team may include observers at the discretion of the Team Chair and the institution.

II.E.11. A Draft Statement to the institution will be prepared for each evaluation conducted. This statement should contain a distinct section for each program evaluated. A Draft Statement will be provided to the institution. The institution will have an opportunity to submit a due process response to this draft statement. The draft statement will be revised to correct errors in fact or observation and any other information provided by the institution prior to the accreditation action. This revised statement will be the Final Statement to the institution.

II.E.12. The statement to the institution will generally include statements of the following types:

II.E.12.a. Statements of fact – example: This program has five full-time faculty members whose primary commitment is to the program.

II.E.12.b. Statements of compliance – example: The curriculum satisfies the applicable criteria.

II.E.12.c. Statements of concern – A concern indicates that a program currently satisfies a criterion; however, the potential exists for the situation to change such that the criterion may not be satisfied.

II.E.12.d. Statements of weakness – A weakness indicates that a program lacks the strength of compliance with a criterion to ensure that the quality of the program will not be compromised. Therefore, remedial action is required to strengthen compliance with the criterion prior to the next evaluation.

II.E.12.e. Statements of deficiency – A deficiency indicates that a criterion is not satisfied. Therefore, the program is not in compliance with the criteria.

II.E.12.f. Statements of observation – An observation is a comment or suggestion which does not relate directly to the criteria being used for evaluation but is offered to assist the institution in its continuing efforts to improve its programs.

II.E.13. The institution will have a fourteen-day period following the visit in which to respond to

feedback provided by the evaluation team to the institution during the visit.

II.E.14. Visit and Report

II.E.14.a. Each visiting team is selected, on the basis of the programs to be considered, from lists of qualified evaluators provided by the ABET member societies.

II.E.14.b. The team's factual findings are presented orally to the institution's chief executive officer or designee and such faculty personnel as he or she wishes to assemble. The opportunity is presented at this time for the correction of factual errors in the team's observations.

II.E.14.c. The visiting team reports its preliminary findings and recommendations in writing to the officers of the appropriate Commission for editing and transmission to the institution visited. A Draft Statement to the institution will be prepared by the visiting team and submitted for review to the institution. The resulting Final Statement will be submitted for review by the full membership of the appropriate Commission.

II.E.14.d. Between the time of the visit and the annual meeting of the appropriate Commission, the responsible administrative officer of the institution may submit to the Commission any supplemental information which he or she believes may be useful to the Commission in its consideration and appraisal of the visiting team's report. With reference to formal responses from institutions to the Draft Statements, the Commission will retain a flexible attitude but, in general, will base its accreditation actions on the status of the respective programs at the time of the on-site visit. The primary purpose of the response is to correct errors of fact or observation that were made at the time of the visit. Shortcomings existing at the time of the visit are considered to have been corrected only when the correction or revision has been made effective during the year of the visit and is substantiated by official documents signed by the responsible administrative officers. Where action has been initiated to correct a problem but has not yet taken full effect, or where only indications of good intent are given, the effectiveness of the corrective action, e.g., such as the employment of a new faculty member, the addition of new course work, the provision of additional funding or new equipment, must be evaluated by the appropriate Commission at the time of the next scheduled visit or interim report.

II.E.15. EAC - The reports of the visiting teams on programs in chemical engineering are viewed also by the Committee on Chemical Engineering Education and Accreditation of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, which transmits its recommendations to the EAC.

II.E.16. Such matters of broad institutional function as administration, student personnel services, library, arts and sciences, etc., are considered only with respect to services rendered to the programs being evaluated and are reviewed with different emphasis within institutions with regional accreditation versus those without such accreditation. When an institution not holding regional accreditation is visited, these areas are examined in depth within ABET policy.

II.F. Accreditation Actions

II.F.1. The final decision on accreditation rests with the appropriate Commission of ABET, which acts on the recommendations made to it by the visiting team and on consideration of the institution's response to the Draft Statement or, in the case of actions based on Interim Reports, on the institution's report.

II.F.2. Accreditation of a program is granted for a specific period, usually two or six years. The term of accreditation is subject to review for cause at any time during the period of accreditation. Accreditation is granted if current conditions are judged to be meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements. If, for any reason, the future of a program appears precarious or definite weaknesses exist, the accreditation will be granted for a shorter period, usually two years. Factors which might limit

the period of accreditation include uncertainty as to financial status, uncertainty due to the nature of the administrative organization, a need for additions to or improvements in staff or equipment, a new or changing curriculum, undue dependence upon a single individual, etc.

II.F.3. Accreditation for a full term of six years indicates that a program satisfies the published criteria of the Commission granting accreditation.

II.F.4. ABET does not rank programs. Programs are either accredited or not accredited. Accreditation actions indicate only the nature of the next review.

II.F.5. If an evaluation indicates that the future of a program appears precarious or that definite weaknesses or deficiencies exist, accreditation may be granted for a shorter period of time followed by an interim review.

II.F.6. The accreditation decision rests with the Commission conducting an evaluation of the program. This decision is based upon the information provided by the institution and the recommendations made to the Commission by the evaluation team.

II.F.7. A general review date will be established for all programs within an institution accredited by a particular Commission. This date will generally be established by the initial accreditation of the first program accredited within an institution by a particular Commission. This date will advance in six-year increments. All programs accredited within an institution by a particular Commission must be simultaneously evaluated by a general review at the time of the general review date.

II.F.8. The following actions are available to the Commissions.

II.F.8.a. NGR (Next General Review) – This action indicates that the program is in full compliance with the applicable criteria. This action is taken only after a comprehensive general review and has a typical duration of six years.

II.F.8.b. IR (Interim Report) – This action indicates that compliance with applicable criteria should be strengthened to ensure that the quality of the program will not be compromised prior to the next review. The nature of the weaknesses is such that an on-site visit will not be required to evaluate the remedial actions taken by the institution. A report focusing on the remedial actions taken by the institution will be required. This action has a typical duration of two years.

II.F.8.c. IV (Interim Visit) – This action indicates that compliance with applicable criteria should be strengthened to ensure that the quality of the program will not be compromised prior to the next review. The nature of the weaknesses is such that an on-site visit will be required to evaluate the remedial actions taken by the institution. This action has a typical duration of two years.

II.F.8.d. RE (Report Extended) – This action indicates that satisfactory remedial action has been taken by the institution with respect to weaknesses identified in the prior IR action. This action is taken only after an IR evaluation. This action extends accreditation to the next general review and, thus, has a typical duration of either two or four years.

II.F.8.e. VE (Visit Extended) – This action indicates that satisfactory remedial action has been taken by the institution with respect to weaknesses identified in the prior IV action. This action is taken only after an IV evaluation. This action extends accreditation to the next general review and, thus, has a typical duration of either two or four years.

II.F.8.f. SC (Show Cause) – This action indicates that a program has deficiencies such that the program is not in full compliance with the applicable criteria. An on-site visit will be required to evaluate the actions taken by the institution to remove the deficiencies. This action has a typical duration of one year.

II.F.8.g. SE (Show Cause Extended) – This action indicates that satisfactory remedial action has been taken by the institution with respect to deficiencies identified in the prior SC action. This action is taken

only after an interim SC evaluation. This action typically extends accreditation to the next general review and, thus, has a duration from one to five years.

II.F.8.h.NA (Not to Accredit) -- This action indicates that a program has deficiencies such that the program is in continued non-compliance with the applicable criteria. This action is usually taken only after a SC evaluation or the evaluation of a new, unaccredited program. Accreditation is generally not extended as a result of this action.

II.F.8.i. T (Terminate) – This action is generally taken in response to a request by an institution that accreditation of a program be terminated. The duration of this action is generally one year. Annual reports submitted by the institution may be the basis of extension of accreditation for a total period not exceeding three years.

II.F.9. A “not to accredit” action under “show cause” is effective as of the beginning of the academic year closest to September 30 of the calendar year following the year of the “not to accredit” decision by an accreditation commission or by the Board of Directors in appeal cases. The notification to the institution shall indicate: (a) that the termination supersedes the accredited status listing of the program in the current annual report and (b) that ABET expects the institution to formally notify students and faculty affected by the termination of the program’s accredited status, not later than September 30 of the calendar year of the “not to accredit” action. When accreditation of a program has been denied by a Commission and not reversed by the ABET Board of Directors on appeal, ABET will include a note in its next annual listing of accredited program indicating the date of expiration of accreditation.

II.F.10. From time to time, an institution may decide to discontinue a program. ABET will work with the institution to assure validity of accreditation until the desired discontinuation date, providing that the following steps are taken:

II.F.10.a. For programs being discontinued by the educational institution within the period for which accreditation has been granted, accreditation may be extended from the date of notification to the date of discontinuation on a year-by-year basis subject to acceptance by the appropriate Commission of a satisfactory continuation report by the institution.

II.F.10.b. For programs being discontinued on a specific date that is no more than three years beyond the current period of accreditation, the Commission may choose to extend accreditation to that specific date with a “Termination” action. A visit will be required to implement this action.

II.F.10.c. ABET will include a note in its next annual listing of accredited programs indicating the expected date of discontinuation of programs receiving a “termination” action.

II.F.11. A comprehensive evaluation of an institution’s total program under purview of an ABET Commission, including all programs accredited or seeking accreditation and the supporting and related offerings, will be held at intervals not exceeding six years. Interim accreditation periods of individual programs will not normally extend beyond the next scheduled comprehensive evaluation and accreditation date.

II.F.12. A list of programs which have been accredited by the Commissions of ABET is prepared annually and published in the ABET Accreditation Yearbook. The accreditation status of a program listed in the ABET Accreditation Yearbook applies to all graduates who completed the program during the preceding year. In order to keep the list dependable and up-to-date, re-evaluations based on campus visits are made as required at intervals of six years or less.

II.F.13. The functions of ABET are restricted by its Participating Bodies to the granting of accreditation and the publication of a list of those programs that are approved. It has no authority to impose any restriction or standardization upon educational programs, nor does it desire to do so. On the contrary, ABET aims to preserve the independence of action of individual institutions and, thereby, to promote the general advancement of engineering, technology, computing, and applied science

education.

II.F.14. Revocation of Accreditation - If, during the period of accreditation, ABET has reason to believe that a program is no longer in compliance with the criteria, the institution will be notified of such reason and will be requested to provide a response to ABET. If the response is not adequate, ABET may institute *revocation for cause* procedures.

Revocation for cause procedures begin with the notification of the institution as to the reasons why the *revocation for cause* procedures are being implemented. An on-site evaluation may be scheduled to determine the facts. A comprehensive document showing the reasons for revocation will be prepared and provided to the institution for its analysis and response. If the institution's response is not adequate, accreditation will be revoked. The institution is promptly notified of such action together with a supporting statement showing cause. This revocation constitutes a Not to Accredit (NA) action and may be appealed. Accreditation is continued until the appeal procedure has been completed.

II.G. Appeals

II.G.1. Appeals, requests for reconsideration, and requests for immediate revisits may be made only in response to not-to-accredit actions. Further, those appeals or requests for reconsideration may be based only upon the grounds that the not-to-accredit decision of the Commission was inappropriate because of errors of fact or failure to conform to ABET's published criteria, policies, or procedures. Only conditions known to the Commission at the time of the Commission's decision will be considered by ABET in the cases of appeals or requests for reconsideration. In the case of a request for immediate revisit, substantive improvements and corrective actions taken prior to the request and documented by the institution will also be considered.

II.G.2. In lieu of an immediate appeal, an institution may first request reconsideration or an immediate revisit. If such a request is denied, the institution may appeal the original not-to-accredit action. Requests for reconsideration or an immediate revisit must be made in writing to the Executive Director of ABET within 30 days of receiving notification of the not-to-accredit action

II.G.3. Appeals must be made in writing to the Executive Director of ABET within 30 days of receiving notification of the not-to-accredit action or notification of the denial of a request for reconsideration or an immediate revisit.

II.G.4. The Executive Director of ABET is available for consultation to determine the best course of action for the institution. Such consultation is strongly encouraged.

II.G.5. Immediate Revisit

II.G.5.a. A program that has received a not-to-accredit action may be a candidate for an immediate revisit if it will undergo substantive and documented improvement before the onset of the next accreditation cycle.

In such cases, the institution must submit a written request for an immediate revisit to the Executive Director of ABET within 30 days of receiving notification of the not-to-accredit action. This request must be accompanied by 10 copies of a report stating the actions already taken to eliminate the deficiencies cited in ABET's statement to the institution. This report should contain appropriate documentation of substantive improvements and corrective actions taken, and should support the request for a revisit. The institution is cautioned, however, that the extent to which corrective actions have not been made effective may make a revisit unproductive.

II.G.5.b. The Executive Committee of the appropriate Commission shall accept or deny the institution's request within 15 days of ABET's receipt of the institution's request for immediate revisit. This action will be based solely on the report and supporting documentation supplied by the institution in accordance with the nature of the deficiencies which led to the not-to-accredit action.

II.G.5.c. If the Executive Committee judges that an immediate revisit is not warranted, the request will be denied with a statement of reasons and a reiteration of the institution's right to pursue an appeal of the not-to-accredit action.

II.G.5.d. When an immediate revisit is granted by the Executive Committee, the institution shall be deemed to have waived its right to appeal either the original not-to-accredit action or the action that will result from the revisit. If the request for revisit is granted, the institution will be charged the regular visitation fee for the revisit.

II.G.5.e. If, following the immediate revisit, the Executive Committee, upon unanimous vote, judges that the institution is correct in its claim of substantive improvement, the Executive Committee may overturn the not-to-accredit decision and grant whatever accreditation action it deems appropriate, within the choices that were available to the Commission itself.

II.G.6. Reconsideration

II.G.6.a. A program that has received a not-to-accredit action may be a candidate for reconsideration if it can demonstrate that there were major, documented errors of fact in the information used by the Commission in arriving at the not-to-accredit decision.

In such cases, the institution must submit a written request for reconsideration to the Executive Director of ABET within 30 days of receiving notification of the not-to-accredit action. This request must be accompanied by 10 copies of a report specifying the major, documented errors of fact and how such errors contributed to the not-to-accredit action, along with substantiating documentation.

II.G.6.b. The Executive Committee of the appropriate Commission shall accept or deny the institution's request for reconsideration of the not-to-accredit decision within 15 days of ABET's receipt of the institution's request for reconsideration. This action will be based solely on the report and supporting documentation supplied by the institution in accordance with the nature of the deficiencies which led to the not-to-accredit action.

II.G.6.c. If the Executive Committee judges that reconsideration is not warranted, the request for reconsideration will be denied with a statement of reasons and a reiteration of the institution's right to pursue an appeal of the not-to-accredit action.

II.G.6.d. When a reconsideration is granted by the Executive Committee, the institution shall be deemed to have waived its right to appeal either the original not-to-accredit action or the action that will result from the reconsideration.

II.G.6.e. If, following reconsideration, the Executive Committee, upon unanimous vote, judges that the institution is correct in its claim of such error leading to an erroneous conclusion by the Commission, the Executive Committee may overturn the not-to-accredit decision and grant whatever accreditation action it deems appropriate, within the choices that were available to the Commission itself.

II.G.7. Appeal

II.G.7.a. Only not-to-accredit actions may be appealed. A notice of appeal must be submitted in writing by the chief executive office of the institution to the Executive Director of ABET within 30 days of receiving notification of the not-to-accredit action. This submission must

include the reasons why the not-to-accredit decision of the responsible accreditation commission is inappropriate because of either errors of fact or failure of the respective accreditation commission to conform to ABET's published criteria, policies, or procedures.

II.G.7.b. Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the President of ABET will select three or more members or past members of the ABET Board of Directors to serve as an appeal committee. At least one member of this committee will be experienced as a program evaluator and/or former member of the appropriate Commission. At least one member of this committee shall represent the Participating Body with curricular responsibility for each of the programs for which there is an appeal, unless said program is under the curricular responsibility of an ABET Commission. The President of ABET will designate one of the committee members as chair of the committee.

II.G.7.c. The appeal committee will be provided with copies of all documentation that has been made available to the institution during the different phases of the accreditation cycle, including the institution's due process response and other materials submitted by the institution or the Commission.

II.G.7.d. The institution is required to submit a response (normally one page) to the commission's executive summary previously sent to the institution. The institution may also submit other material it deems necessary to support its appeal. However, such materials must be confined to the status of the program at the time of the accreditation action of the Commission and to information that was then available to the Commission.

II.G.7.e. It is emphasized that improvements made to a program subsequent to the annual meeting of the Commission will not be considered by the appeal committee.

II.G.7.f. The respective Commission may submit written materials beyond the statement to the institution and the executive summary for clarification of its position. Such materials must be provided to the institution and appeal committee at least 60 days prior to the date of the committee's meeting. Any rebuttal by the institution must be submitted to the committee at least 30 days prior to the committee meeting.

II.G.7.g. The appeal committee will meet and consider only the written materials submitted by the institution and the respective Commission in determining its recommendation. Representatives from the institution and the Commission may not attend this meeting. The appeal committee's decision is limited to the options available to the Commission responsible for the not-to-accredit determination. The appeal committee's decision will be reported to the ABET Board of Directors in writing by the appeal committee chair. The decision rendered by the appeal committee is the final decision of ABET.

II.G.7.h. The institution and the Commission will be notified in writing of this decision, and the basis for the decision, by the Executive Director within 15 days of the final decision.

II.H. Changes During Period of Accreditation

II.H.1. It is the obligation of the institutional administrative officer responsible for ABET accredited programs to notify the ABET Accreditation Director of any significant changes which might affect the accreditation status of an accredited program including significant changes in:

- II.H.1.a. Program Title
- II.H.1.b. Faculty
- II.H.1.c. Curricular Objectives

- II.H.1.d. Curricular Content
- II.H.1.e. Student Body
- II.H.1.f. Administration
- II.H.1.g. Institutional Facilities
- II.H.1.h. Institutional Commitment
- II.H.1.i. Institutional Financial Status

II.H.2. A review process will be initiated as a result of notification by the institution or by a third party of significant changes that might affect the accreditation status of an accredited program. This includes notification that the institution offering the program is the subject of an interim or final action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency or by a State agency leading to the suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation, of pre-accreditation, or of the institution's legal authority to provide post-secondary education. The first step in the review process is that the institution will be asked to provide information to ABET in response to the allegations or actions.

II.H.3. The information provided by the institution need not be extensive but must provide sufficient detail about the change so that the effect of the change on the accredited program can be assessed.

II.H.4. The appropriate Commission Executive Committee shall review the information provided by the institution to determine if modification of the current accreditation action is needed. This determination shall be based upon the degree of certainty about whether the affected program continues to meet the appropriate accreditation criteria.

II.H.5. Upon receipt of notification of a significant change in an accredited program, the Accreditation Director will send copies of the information provided by the institution to two members of the Commission in appropriate disciplines and to the Commission Chair.

II.H.6. The two Commission Members will be asked to review the information provided and make recommendations to the Commission Executive Committee within 30 days. These Commission Members may request additional information through ABET Headquarters. The recommendation will be either that accreditation should be extended to the affected program for the duration of the current accreditation period or that the institution should be asked to request an immediate revisit to determine the accreditation status of the modified program.

II.H.7. The Commission Executive Committee will review this recommendation and make a final determination on behalf of the Commission within a timely manner.

II.H.8. The institution will be notified of this determination in a timely manner.

II.H.9. If an institution declines an immediate revisit, this action shall be cause for revocation of accreditation of the program under consideration.

II.H.10. ABET must be kept informed of program terminations and other significant changes in programs, staff, facilities, organization, enrollment, and other pertinent factors in institutions where programs currently are accredited. If an accredited program is terminated by an institution, accreditation by ABET is automatically terminated at the same time.

II.I. Complaints

II.I.1. **It is the policy of ABET to review all complaints received from any source, including students, against either an accredited program or ABET itself that are related to compliance with ABET's standards, criteria, or procedures and to resolve any such**

complaints in a timely, fair, and equitable manner. Furthermore, it is the policy of ABET to retain all documentation associated with any such complaint received against an accredited program for a period of not less than one accreditation cycle (typically six years), and for a period of not less than five (5) years for any complaints received against ABET itself.

II.I.2. Accredited programs must maintain a record of student complaints and upon written request make that record available to ABET.

II.I.3. ABET will not pursue complaints that are not in writing or that are anonymous. Receipts of all complaints will be acknowledged within fourteen (14) days.

II.I.4. ABET cannot assume authority for enforcing the policies of programs or institutions regarding faculty, professional staff, or student rights. ABET does not adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual grievances against a program or institution.

II.I.5. Complaints will be reviewed initially by the Executive Director. If the complaint is not within the purview of ABET, the complainant will be notified and no further action will be taken. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint to the appropriate Board, Commission or institutional authorities within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant will be notified within fourteen (14) days of the receipt whether the complaint falls within the purview of ABET and the next steps in the investigative process.

II.I.6. Complaints Against an Institution or its Programs

II.I.6.a. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint to the appropriate Commission and to the principal administrative officers of the institution with a request for an institutional response within thirty (30) days. The institutional response will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Commission within thirty (30) days of receipt of the institutional response.

II.I.6.b. If ABET determines that the institutional response satisfactorily addresses the issue or issues raised in the complaint, the matter will be considered closed. Within fourteen (14) days of the determination, the complainant will be informed in writing of the results of the determination.

II.I.6.c. In the event that an institutional response is not received by ABET within thirty (30) days of the request for the response, or if the response is not deemed to have satisfactorily resolved the issue, ABET may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including revocation of accreditation.

II.I.6.d. If the institution has released incorrect or misleading information regarding the accreditation status of the institution or program, the contents of visit reports and final statements, or the accreditation action taken by ABET, the institution will be required to make a public correction.

II.I.7. Complaints Against ABET

II.I.7.a. If the complaint is concerned with ABET's criteria, policies, or procedures or with the implementation of these, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint to the Executive Committee of the appropriate Commission or Board of Directors within fourteen (14) days of receipt.

II.I.7.b. If it appears that an ABET representative or an individual working on

behalf of ABET may have violated ABET's criteria, policies, or procedures, that individual will be asked to respond to the issues raised in the complaint within thirty (30) days. The appropriate Executive Committee will make its determination within thirty (30) days of receipt of the response. The complainant will be notified of the final action of the Executive Committee in writing within fourteen (14) days of the determination.

II.I.7.c. If ABET determines that a violation has occurred, ABET will counsel the responsible party and may take further action as circumstances warrant, up to and including termination as an ABET representative. If ABET finds that a violation of its policies or procedures has occurred which may have had an effect on the accreditation action, ABET may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including an immediate revisit to the institution.

II.I.7.d. Complaints against ABET employees will be handled in accordance with the ABET Employee Operations & Procedures Manual and may result in actions up to and including termination of employment.

II.J. Confidentiality of Information

II.J.1. Information supplied by the institution is for the confidential use of ABET and its agents, and will not be disclosed without the specific written authorization of the institution concerned.

II.J.2. The contents of all materials furnished for review purposes and discussion during the commission meetings are considered privileged information.

II.J.3. The contents of those documents and the accreditation actions taken may be disclosed only by staff and only under appropriate circumstances. All communications between institutions and evaluators or commissioners regarding final accreditation actions must be referred to ABET Headquarters.

II.K. Conflict of Interest

II.K.1. Service as an ABET board member or alternate, committee member, commission member or alternate, team chair, program evaluator, accreditation consultant, or staff member creates situations that may result in conflicts of interest or questions regarding the objectivity and credibility of the accreditation process. The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology expects these individuals to behave in a professional and ethical manner, to disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest, and to recuse themselves from discussions or decisions related to real or perceived conflicts of interest. The intent of this policy is to:

II.K.1.a. maintain credibility in the accreditation process and confidence in the decisions of the board of directors, committee members, commissioner members, team chairs, program evaluators, consultants and staff members;

II.K.1.b. assure fairness and impartiality in decision-making;

II.K.1.c. act impartially and avoid the appearance of impropriety.

II.K.2. Individuals representing ABET must not participate in any decision-making capacity if they have or have had a close, active association with a program or institution that is being considered for official action by ABET. Close, active association includes, but is not limited to:

- II.K.2.a. current or past employment as faculty, staff, or consultant by the institution or program;
- II.K.2.b. current or past discussion or negotiation of employment with the institution or program;
- II.K.2.c. attendance as student at the institution;
- II.K.2.d. receipt of an honorary degree from the institution;
- II.K.2.e. an institution or program where a close, family relative is a student or employee; or
- II.K.2.f. an unpaid official relationship with an institution, e.g., membership on the institution's board of trustees or industry advisory board.

II.K.3. Members of the ABET Board of Directors and staff members may observe an accreditation visit, but they are not eligible to serve as program evaluators or team chairs. Commissioner members are not eligible to serve concurrently on the Board of Directors; nor are members of the Board of Directors eligible to serve on an ABET Commission. Commissioner members, when seated as alternates to the Board of Directors, must recuse themselves on all issues relating to the Commission. Board liaisons to the Commissions serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commissions.

II.K.4. A record of real or perceived conflicts of interest will be maintained for all those involved in the accreditation process. Each individual will be provided with a copy of this record annually for the purpose of updating this record. Copies of the conflict of interest records will be provided to the individuals responsible for selection of team chairs and program evaluators.

II.K.5. All individuals representing ABET must sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality statement indicating that they have read and understand these policies. The policies on conflict of interest and confidentiality will be reviewed at the start of each commission and board of directors meeting.

II.K.6. Individuals must absent themselves from any portion of an ABET meeting in which discussions or decisions occur for which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest. Real or perceived conflicts may occur if there is:

- II.K.6.a. a close, active association with a program or institution;
- II.K.6.b. a financial, or personal interest; or
- II.K.6.c. any reason that the individual cannot render an unbiased decision.

II.K.7. The names of individuals who have recused themselves during a meeting for conflicts of interest will be recorded.

II.L. **Public Release of Accreditation Information**

II.L.1. Institutions are required to represent the accreditation status of programs accurately and without ambiguity.

II.L.2. Accreditation is based on satisfying minimum educational criteria. As a measure of quality, it assures only that an accredited program satisfies the minimum standards. The various periods or terms of accreditation do not represent a relative ranking of programs in terms of quality. At no point is an institution allowed to publish or imply the term or period of accreditation. Public announcement of the accreditation action should only relate to the attainment of accredited status. Because accreditation is specific to a program, all statements on accreditation status must refer only to those programs that are accredited. No implication

should be made by an announcement or release that accreditation by one of the ABET Commissions applies to any programs other than the accredited ones.

II.L.3. Direct quotation in whole or in part from any statement by a Commission of ABET to the institution is unauthorized. Correspondence and reports between the accrediting agency and the institution are confidential documents and should only be released to authorized personnel at the institution. Any document so released must clearly state that it is confidential. Wherever institution policy or state or federal laws require the release of any confidential documents, the entire document must be released.

II.L.4. The institution must avoid any implication that programs offered are accredited under program criteria against which they have not been evaluated. Where sub-designators such as “option”, “area”, “concentration”, or similar nomenclature are used for programs, the institution must clearly identify the program criteria under which accreditation has been obtained.

II.L.5. Information on a program published for students, prospective students, and the general public should provide sufficient definition of the program to show that it meets the appropriate ABET accreditation criteria. For example, if some fraction of the total elective courses must be taken in one curricular area in order for the criteria to be met, this requirement should be published, even though adequate counseling of students by faculty members may be shown to achieve the same objective.

II.L.6. College catalogs and similar publications must clearly indicate the programs accredited by the Commissions of ABET as separate and distinct from any other programs or kinds of accreditation. No implication should be made in any listing that all programs are accredited because of an institution’s regional or institutional accreditation. Accredited programs should be specifically identified as “accredited by the _____ Accreditation Commission of ABET, 111 Market Place, Suite 1050, Baltimore, MD 21202-4012 - telephone: (410) 347-7700.”

II.L.7. If an institution offers a non-accredited program at the same level in the same field as a program that is accredited by a Commission of ABET, the institution must indicate in the descriptions of its programs that are made available to the public that the non-accredited program is not accredited by a Commission of ABET.

II.L.8. Caution and discretion must be exercised by institutions in all publications and references to avoid ambiguity or confusion among engineering, engineering technology, computing, and applied science specialties. Where confusion exists, the institution must take positive steps in its publications and other media to help the public distinguish between engineering, technology, computing, and applied science programs.

II.L.9. If accreditation is withdrawn or discontinued, the institution may no longer refer to the program as being accredited.

II.L.10. ABET will publish a list of accredited programs only. Information as to whether a program or institution not on the accredited list had been under consideration by one of the Commissions will not be made available except to the appropriate officials of the institution in question.

II.L.11. The institution must make a public correction if misleading or incorrect information is released regarding the items addressed in Section II.L.

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