

## Public Disclosures Policy

*Effective Date: September 1, 2019*

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#### I. Purpose

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE or the Commission) seeks to ensure that institutions publicly disclose consumer information in a manner that is honest and truthful. The purpose of this policy is to outline the Commission's requirements for member institutions related to public disclosure. See the accompanying document *Public Disclosures Procedures*.

#### II. Statement of Policy

The Commission shall require that member institutions publicly disclose truthful consumer information in accordance with Commission standards for accreditation, requirements of affiliation, policies and procedures, and federal regulation *34 CFR §602.16(a)(1)*. The Commission shall require that member institutions accurately represent their current accreditation phase, accreditation status, and scope of accreditation to the public, in accordance with federal regulation *34 CFR §602.23(d)*. The Commission shall require that member institutions correct any misleading information they have released, including information about their accreditation status with the Commission in accordance with federal regulation *34 CFR §602.23(e)*.

#### III. Procedures

The Commission staff will develop procedures as are necessary to ensure the consistent implementation of policies. See the *Public Disclosures Procedures*.

#### IV. Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy and/or procedures:

- A. Accreditation activity.** All activities (reviews, on-site visits, etc.) conducted by Commission representatives related to the institution's accreditation phase, accreditation status, or scope of accreditation occurring throughout the accreditation review cycle and during monitoring activities for a member or applicant institution.
- B. Accreditation materials.** All documentation related to accreditation activities including but not limited to the institution's written reports to the Commission, submitted evidence, team reports, institutional responses, confidential briefs, complaints or third-party comments, action notifications, substantive change requests, and any correspondence of record. Accreditation materials are treated as confidential by Commission

representatives, become part of the institutional record, and are retained in accordance with the Commission's *Maintenance and Retention of Commission Records Policy and Procedures*.

- C. Accreditation phase.** The stage of the institution in the accreditation lifecycle (applicant, candidate, accredited). The phase will also indicate if an institution is a *former* applicant, candidate, or accredited institution. Accreditation phase is posted on the institution's directory listing on the MSCHE website, with the exception of applicant institutions which are not displayed publicly in the institution directory.
- D. Accreditation status.** The member institution's standing with the Commission based on the most recent grant of candidate for accreditation status, grant of accreditation, reaffirmation, non-compliance, or adverse action taken by the Commission. Administrative, procedural, or substantive change actions do not affect the accreditation status of an institution. Accreditation status is posted on the institution's directory listing and the Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) on the MSCHE website.
- E. Commission representatives.** Individuals who represent or serve the Commission in any capacity including but not limited to peer evaluators, Commission staff, and Commissioners.
- F. Correspondence of record.** Any written communication or correspondence (including email) between the institution's key contacts and Commission staff and any correspondence between other agencies or related entities and the Commission staff related to an institution. Correspondence of record is confidential and part of the institutional record.
- G. Institution directory.** The Commission's online listing of institutions that currently have candidate for accreditation status with or are accredited by MSCHE. The institution directory also provides pertinent information about former candidate or accredited institutions.
- H. Institutional record.** The compilation of all documentation that the Commission has on file related to the institution including but not limited to accreditation materials, and any information received from the government or other quality assurance agencies related to the institution.
- I. Member institution.** All institutions that are accredited by MSCHE and all institutions that have been granted Candidate for Accreditation Status by MSCHE, that are in good standing with respect to payment of dues and fees, shall be institutional members of MSCHE. Accreditation and candidacy shall be established according to the standards for accreditation, requirements of affiliation, policies and procedures, and federal compliance requirements adopted by the Commission. (*MARCHE Bylaws Amended and Restated Effective as of July 1, 2019*)
- J. Related entity.** A non-accredited entity that shares decision making responsibility with the member institution's governing body. A related entity may be a corporate parent,

system administration or board, religious sponsor, funding sponsor (which, in some cases, may include an equity or investment fund), or other entity that can affect decisions related to accreditation. Related entities may include institutional or corporate layers or groups. Local, county, and state legislatures, other accreditors, local advisory boards, and government agencies are not considered related entities. Contractual arrangements in which the institution has a written contract for services with a non-accredited entity are not considered related entities.

**K. Scope of accreditation.** The institution's accreditation status covers a defined scope of educational offerings, including but not limited to credential levels, delivery methods, and locations which have been reviewed by the Commission during accreditation activities. Any substantive changes to the scope of accreditation must be reviewed through the substantive change review process before they will be included within the institution's scope of accreditation by the Commission.

**L. Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS).** The Commission's official public statement about each institution's current accreditation status. The SAS is a downloadable, printable statement with information about the institution, including but not limited to the institution's accreditation phase, accreditation status, scope of accreditation, and a history of the accreditation actions taken by Commission for the past ten years.

Number: P4.2

Version: 2019-09-01, APPROVED

Effective Date: September 1, 2019

Initial Approval Date: Approved by Membership August 5, 2019

Issued: 09/04

Revisions: March, 12 2008; June 25, 2009, November 18, 2010, August 18, 2014 (technical amendment); October 16, 2017 (substantive revision); September 1, 2019 (substantive revision);

Federal Regulations: *34 CFR §602.16(a)(1)(vii-ix) Accreditation and preaccreditation standards*

CHEA: Standard B.1 (2010)

Standards: *Requirement of Affiliation #8; Standard II Ethics and Integrity, criteria 3, 6, 8. Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, criterion 3; Standard IV Support of the Student Experience criterion 1.a.;*

Related Documents: *Accreditation Actions Policy; Accreditation Actions Procedures, Communication in the Accreditation Process Policy; Communication in the Accreditation Process Procedures; Transfer Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation; Teach-Out Plans and Agreements Policy; Teach-Out Plans and Agreements Procedures; Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations;*