



*ACCREDITING BUREAU OF HEALTH EDUCATION SCHOOLS*  
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## **ABHES BULLETIN**

**TO:** ABHES-Accredited Institutions and Programs  
Recognized Accrediting Agencies  
State Departments of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
Interested Parties

**FROM:** Florence Tate, Executive Director

**DATE:** July 6, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Final Revisions to Accreditation Manual - Effective immediately

The Commission of the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) considered carefully the comments received to its June 1, 2016, Call for Comment. The Commission acted to approve the attached final revisions to the 17th Edition of the Accreditation Manual, **effective immediately**. New language is underlined and deleted language ~~struck~~. These revisions include changes made in Chapter III, Chapter IV, and Appendix H.

Please note that additional comments received regarding other sections outlined in the June 1, 2016, Call for Comment will be reviewed by the Commission at its regularly scheduled Commission meeting being held July 17-18, 2016.

## CHAPTER III - GENERAL PROCEDURES (APPLIES TO INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS)

### Subsection 10 – Maintaining accreditation

To remain in an accredited status with ABHES, institutions and programs must respond to Commission directives, including responses to visitation reports, payment of fees (see Appendix H - Fees) or visit expenses, and submission of documents, including the complete Annual Report, supporting documentation, and financial statements. Failure to respond to directives by deadline dates identified by the Commission will result in a late fee assessment and may result in a show-cause directive or withdrawal of accreditation.

Institutions accredited by ABHES must submit audited financial and other statements to the Commission within six months after the completion of their fiscal year or 30 days after an audit is released, whichever is earlier. Audited statements must be prepared according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) on an accrual basis.

Annually the Commission reviews an institution's profitability and net worth in order to meet its financial capability. Minimally, an institution must submit an audited financial statement that evidences one or more of the following: a ratio of current assets to current liabilities that is at least 1:1 for the most recent operating year; a history of operating surpluses for the most recent two years; a positive net worth for its most recent operating year (i.e., total assets which exceed the institution's total liabilities).

The Commission will examine both parent and subsidiary/division/program financial statements for compliance. Even if subsidiary or department can prove compliance on its own, the Commission will defer to parent company financial statements in all cases including where entities cannot provide separate financial statements.

The Commission requires a signed affidavit from the parent company to affirm that the program, department, and/or entity will be supported by that company if it cannot demonstrate compliance on its own accord.

Note that In addition, the Commission may require the submission of other financial information to clarify the financial status of an institution (e.g. a financial plan, financial reporting, response to a show cause, teach-out plan or any combination of these reports).

ABHES reviews key student achievement indicators set forth in the Annual Report of every accredited institution and program and the key fiscal indicators set forth in the annual financial statements of every accredited institution.

Failure to demonstrate at least 70 percent retention rate for each program, a 70 percent placement rate for each program, or a 70 percent pass rate on mandatory licensing and credentialing examinations using the formula provided by ABHES in the annual report, as well as meet the state mandated results for credentialing or licensure required for employment raises a question whether accreditation requirements are being met.

Failure to meet accreditation requirements will result, at a minimum, in the institution or program being required to demonstrate that its has effectively analyzed the situation and taken measures to correct the deficiency through creation of an action plan. Failure to demonstrate compliance with the key financial indicators set forth in IV.B above of the Accreditation Manual will require result, at a minimum, with the requirement that the institution respond evidencing that it will meet its obligations to students and that it has a fiscally responsible plan to come into compliance with the ABHES financial requirements within a certain date

**ertain.**

ABHES also reviews student population growth by program compared to the previous reporting year. Any increase in the population of any program greater than 50 percent from the prior year must be explained by means of an appendix to the annual report that addresses the impact of the growth on (1) availability of resources including class sizes, classrooms facilities, laboratories, faculty, student services, and clinical education experiences, (2) program retention, (3) graduate results on required licensing or credentialing, and (4) program placement in the subject field.

Any failure to meet the student achievement requirements or financial indicators, or to show an adverse impact on the institution's or program's ability to comply with accreditation standards due to extraordinary enrollment growth, may result in the institution or program being directed to show cause why the institution or program should not have its accreditation withdrawn.

## **SECTION B – Institutional Changes**

### **Subsection 2 – Approval of substantive change**

**Substantive changes that must be approved prior to inclusion in a grant of accreditation are the following:**

(\* denotes a site visit required)

- a. Change in the established mission or objectives of an institution or objectives of a program;
- b. \*Change in legal status, ownership, or form of control;
- c. \*The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from the existing offerings of educational programs, or method of delivery, from those that were offered when ABHES last evaluated the institution (Note: currently accredited institutional members must adhere to the requirements for initial programmatic eligibility when adding a surgical technology program, which includes the submission of the Application for Programmatic Accreditation);
- d. \*The addition of programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation;

### **Subsection 4 – Additional requirements regarding specific changes**

#### **B. New Program Application**

The Application for New Program Approval following modifications to a program is required prior submission of an Application for New Program Approvalfor:

- a. A modification from a currently approved program to a higher degree
- b. A modification of more than 50 percent of program content (total hours or courses)
- c. The addition of a new program, or reactivation of a discontinued program

~~An institution or program seeking approval for the first time to add a program resulting in a higher level credential than that approved must undergo a verification visit within six (6) months of program approval.~~

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## **SECTION C - Commission Actions**

### **Subsection 2– Grant Subject-to**

The Commission may grant an initial or renewed grant of accreditation subject to receipt of documentation needed to verify compliance with a standard or policy. If, upon review, the documentation submitted does not provide the needed verification, the matter will be referred to the Commission for its consideration at the next commission meeting.

### **Subsection 4 – Program Specific Warning**

The Commission may issue a program-specific warning if it has substantive questions and concerns regarding the institution's compliance with ABHES standards and procedures relative to specific program(s) offered by the institution.

Being placed on a program-specific warning will require the institution to demonstrate why approval of the specific program(s) should not be withdrawn.

The Commission will review and evaluate the institution's response to the notice of program-specific warning and make determination that may include: (a) vacating the program-specific warning status; (b) continuing and/or expanding the program-specific warning status; (c) limiting program enrollment; (d) suspending program approval from one or more programs which prohibits the institution from enrolling or starting new students in the program(s) until the institution meets the terms and conditions established by the Commission; and/or (e) withdrawing the program approval from one or more programs.

## **SECTION E – Appearances, Hearings, and Appeals**

### **Subsection 1 – Program specific warning**

If the Commission issues an order requiring an institution to justify why a program should be included in the institution's grant of accreditation under III.C., Commission Actions, the institution has the opportunity to respond to the notification in writing or in person at the next meeting of the Commission, which may be conducted by teleconference. The Commission describes in writing to an institution the terms and conditions of the submission of the response to the warning notification.

Should an institution wish to be present at the Commission meeting to justify why approval of the program should not be withdrawn, it must pay the required fee (see Appendix H, Fees) and be present before a panel of commissioners who make a recommendation to the full Commission.

### **Subsection 1 2 – Show cause orders**

### **Subsection 2-3 – Appeals ~~to the appeals panel~~**

#### Appeal of final decision to remove program approval

If an institution appeals a final decision by the Commission to remove program approval from a grant of accreditation in accordance with the procedures outlined, the institution's file becomes the responsibility of an Appeals Panel. The program remains accredited while the appeal is pending. An institution has the burden of demonstrating on appeal that the decision of the Commission was erroneous.

The Appeals Panel is separate and independent from the Commission and serves as an additional level of due process for the institution. The Appeals Panel has no authority concerning the reasonableness of policies, procedures, or accreditation standards. It can affirm, amend, reverse, or remand the prior decision of the Commission as set forth below.

#### Appeal of final decision to not grant or continue accreditation

If an institution or program appeals a final decision by the Commission not to grant or continue accreditation in accordance with the procedures outlined, the institution's file becomes the responsibility of an Appeals Panel. An institution or program remains in an accredited status while its appeal is pending. An institution or program has the burden of demonstrating on appeal that the decision of the Commission was erroneous.

The Appeals Panel is separate and independent from the Commission and serves as an additional level of due process for the institution. The Appeals Panel has no authority concerning the reasonableness of eligibility criteria, policies, procedures, or accreditation standards. It can affirm, amend, reverse, or remand the prior decision of the Commission as set forth below.

If the Commission takes action withdrawing accreditation or denying initial accreditation or re-accreditation, or withdraws the approval of a program in the grant of accreditation, the following steps will be taken:

#### **c. Appeals Panel Selection; Processing of the Appeal**

For an appeal concerning removal of a program approval from an institution's grant of accreditation, the Appeals Panel consists of three members, at least one of which meets the criteria of a public member as set forth in section 4.6 of the bylaws. At least one member of the panel must meet the criteria of an administrator and one member must meet the criteria of an academician as set forth in section 4.5 of the bylaws.

For an appeal concerning institutional accreditation, the Appeal Panel consists of three members, one of which meets the criteria of a public member as set forth in section 4.6 of the bylaws. One member of the panel must meet the criteria of an administrator and one member must meet the criteria of an academician as set forth in section 4.5 of the bylaws.

For an appeal concerning programmatic accreditation, the Appeals Panel consists of four members, at least one of which meets the criteria of a public member as set forth in section 4.6 of the bylaws. At least one member of the panel must meet the criteria of an administrator and one member must meet the criteria of an academician as set forth in section 4.5 of the bylaws. One member of the panel must meet the criteria of a practitioner as set forth in section 4.6 of the bylaws.

## CHAPTER IV EVALUATION STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO INSTITUTIONALLY-ACCREDITED MEMBERS

### SECTION B – Financial Capability

*IV.B.1. An institution demonstrates that it has the financial resources to ensure continuity of operation and to fulfill its obligations to students and employees.*

The financial well-being of an institution requires regular oversight by management. The institution demonstrates~~There is demonstration that it has~~ revenues and assets ~~are~~ available to meet the institution's responsibilities, including continuity of service and the accomplishment of overall educational objectives. Institutions will submit audited financial statements. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to ratio of current assets to current liabilities for the most recent operating year; history of operating results; and net worth.

~~*IV.B.2. An institution demonstrates that it meets the minimum current ratio, profitability, and net worth requirements.*~~

Minimally, an institution's audited financial statements evidence the following:

- ~~a. A ratio of current assets to current liabilities that is at least 1:1 for the most recent operating year;~~
- ~~b. A history of operating surpluses for the most recent two years; and~~
- ~~c. A positive net worth for its most recent operating year (i.e., total assets which exceed the institution's total liabilities).~~

## APPENDIX H FEES

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC WARNING

<u>In-Person Appearance Fee</u>	\$3,000
<u>In-Person Commission Expense Fee</u>	\$3,000
<u>Teleconference Meeting Fee</u>	\$2,000

### SHOW-CAUSE

<del>Show-Cause</del> <u>In-Person</u> Appearance Fee	\$3,000
<del>In-Person Commission</del> Expense <del>Fee deposit (commissioners)</del>	\$3,000
<del>Show-Cause</del> <u>Teleconference Meeting Fee</u>	\$2,000