



**North Central Association –  
Commission on Accreditation & School Improvement  
(NCA CASI)**

**Policies and Procedures  
for Accreditation of  
Postsecondary Career Technical Institutions**

**Effective Date: November 11, 2011**

**NCA-CASI Accreditation Policies and Procedures for  
Accreditation of Postsecondary Institutions  
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**POLICY I: ACCREDITATION**

**1.01 Accreditation.**

In order to earn and/or maintain North Central Association - Commission on Accreditation & School Improvement ("NCA CASI" or "Agency") postsecondary accreditation, an institution must:

- a. Meet the NCA CASI accreditation standards, policies, and procedures.
- b. Host an external Quality Assurance Review (QAR) site visit team at least once every five years.
- c. Engage in continuous improvement.
- d. Submit all required annual accreditation reports.
- e. Pay required accreditation fees. Accreditation fees include an initial application fee, annual fees for accreditation services, and the visit fee for the cost of the accreditation on-site visit, as well as any special or follow-up visits that may be required.

The revision and adoption of the accreditation policies and procedures of NCA CASI shall be the responsibility of the NCA CASI Board of Directors.

**1.02 Purpose.**

NCA CASI accredits postsecondary (vocational) career technical education institutions as a gateway for these eligible institutions to participate in federal programs under Title IV and other parts of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

**POLICY II. TERM AND REQUIREMENTS OF ACCREDITATION**

**2.01 Term.**

An Institution is accredited for a five-year term, as long as the Institution continues to satisfy the conditions for accreditation: The institution:

- a. May voluntarily participate in the accreditation process but must adhere to the NCA CASI accreditation standards and policies, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.
- b. Conducts a Self Assessment analysis and hosts an external Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team at least once every five years following appropriate policies and procedures for:
  - 1) Initial Accreditation (Policy IV).
  - 2) Re-Accreditation (Policy V).
  - 3) Submits all required annual accreditation reports including (Policy XII).

- c. Pays annual accreditation fees (Policy I).

## **2.02 Additional requirements.**

In addition to satisfying the conditions outlined in 2.01, an institution must adhere to the following:

- a. **State Compliance Requirements.** The institution must be approved or accredited by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state. If an institution loses its approval or accreditation by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting/accountability agency within the state, it becomes subject to being dropped from accreditation in accordance with procedures outlined in this document.
- b. **Non-discrimination.** Institutions accredited by NCA CASI shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, or disabilities or act unlawfully in the administration of their educational policies, scholarship, admission, and loan programs.
- c. **Records retention.** Institutions are required to maintain and implement a records retention system that meets state and federal requirements for all operating, financial, personnel, and student records. The records retention system applies to paper and electronic records, includes appropriate back-up systems, and details consistent processes for records destruction. Institutions must identify processes for the ongoing access and maintenance of all relevant records in the event of institution closure.
- d. **Institutional integrity.** An institution is required to represent itself accurately in all aspects of the accreditation process. If an institution misrepresents itself, including accreditation status, to the public, has any condition that may be detrimental to the clientele of the institution, or falsely reports its compliance with the policies and standards for accreditation, the institution's accreditation can be dropped. If an institution's accreditation is recommended to be dropped, the institution shall be afforded due process in consideration of such action.
- e. **Substantive changes (Policy VIII).** An institution must report to NCA CASI Postsecondary Department any substantive change to the educational mission, governance, or programs of the institution, and institutional structure changes, (consolidation, reorganization, change of ownership, branch campuses, additional locations, and additional circumstances specified in Policy IX), at least sixty (60 days) prior to planned implementation after NCA CASI has accredited or pre-accredited the institution (through candidacy status), in order to ensure that the change does not adversely affect the institution's capacity to continue to meet Agency standards. The documentation report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact of the change on the quality of education in the institution to ensure the change does not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet the standards and policies. Policy VIII defines and lists the required documentation for analysis and approval action by the Board of Directors.
- f. **Program & staff information updates (Policy X).** In order to assure the institution's program and staff listing are up-to-date, program and staff changes must be reported to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department with appropriate documentation and explanation. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Department generates official program lists for institutions that participate in Title IV. Policy X identifies the steps and required documentation.

Changes in program hours must be less than 25% of the overall program and not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet the standards and policies OR the substantive change process identified in Policy VIII must be implemented for official approval process. Updates that must be reported but do not require approval include:

- 1) Program Name Changes
  - 2) Less than 25% decrease or increase in clock or credit hours
  - 3) Less than 25% decrease or increase in program length
  - 4) Staff change
- a. Credits. NCA CASI accredited institutions may accept and classify transfer credits earned from institutions that are accredited by a United States Department of Education- or State-recognized national, regional/trans-regional, or state accrediting agency without further validation based on the institution's policies and procedures governing such offerings. The institution's policies and procedures should be designed to ensure proper academic placement of the student.

An institution may accept credits from non-accredited institutions when validated by one or more of the following procedures: a review of the student's academic record, an analysis of a sending institution's curriculum, a review of a portfolio of student work, or through an assessment of scholastic performance. The receiving institution must maintain policies and procedures to govern the acceptance of credit from non-accredited sources.

An institution should provide prompt and accurate transcript services for students entering or leaving the institution in accordance with the institution's published policy. All policies and procedures regarding transfer credits, including criteria for acceptance of credits, will be made public by the institution. The institution must provide a list of all established articulation agreements to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.

- b. Contracted services with other Institutions. If NCA CASI's accreditation of an institution enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA programs, the institution may not enter into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers more than 25 percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.
- c. Title IV Financial aid audit updates. If NCA CASI's accreditation of an institution enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA programs, the institution must provide NCA CASI with results of the United States Department of Education Federal Financial Aid audit report if any adverse actions are identified within 30 days of receiving the report. Adverse actions that change the financial aid status of the institution will result in a review by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office with a recommendation to the NCA CASI Board of Directors to move to Accredited On Warning status.

The institution must submit a corrective action plan within 60 days to NCA CASI. The institution will remain in Accredited On Warning status for no more than six months. If the institution fails to provide the corrective action plan within 60 days or has been in Accredited On Warning status for six months, the institution will be moved to Accredited On Probation status. If corrective action is not resolved in compliance with the United States Department of

Education Financial Aid Office requirements, the institution will be dropped from accreditation after one year (having been on warning status for six months maximum and/or on probation status six months maximum). Upon notification by the federal Financial Aid Office of reinstated compliance, the institution will return to Accredited status. NCA CASI will notify the United States Department of Education and the institution of ongoing actions.

- d. Other accrediting agency or accountability system actions. The Institution must notify the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office within 30 days of any non-compliance actions or status changes related to other accrediting agencies or other accountability systems, including: State Departments, industry credentialing agencies, financial aid audits, or other accountability issues. A corrective action plan must be submitted detailing steps and timelines for returning to compliance status. The NCA CASI Board will review the noncompliance and action plans to determine if the institution complies with the NCA CASI standards and policies. Adverse action may be taken if the institution is noncompliant.

### **POLICY III. ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED STATUSES**

#### **3.01 Accredited Statuses.**

A member institution shall be classified in one of the following categories:

- a. Accredited. An institution shall be classified as Accredited when it performs at or above 80% on a rating scale of 0 to 100% regarding all standards and requirements of the accreditation process.

The compliance related required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team must be addressed immediately and any issues noted must be corrected within 12 months by the institution, as measured from the initial notification by NCA CASI that the institution must address these required actions. The Board of Directors may extend the time period only for good cause and documentation of progress. If sufficient progress is not noted within the noted time period, the Board of Directors shall move the institution to Accredited on Probation status or drop the institution's accreditation.

Any program related issues of concern that have been noted must be corrected within 12 months for programs lasting less than one year, 18 months for programs lasting at least one year but less than two years, or two years if the program is at least two years in length. The Board of Directors may extend the time period only for good cause and documentation of progress toward resolving the issues. If sufficient progress is not demonstrated within the noted time period, the Board of Directors shall move the Institution to Accredited On Probation status or drop the institution's accreditation.

All accredited status institutions will have required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team for continuous improvement purposes. Institutions must report their progress made to address these required actions for continuous improvement in the Accreditation Progress Report within two years.

- b. Accredited On Warning. An Institution shall be classified as Accredited On Warning when the Institution performs between 70% and 79% on a rating scale of 0 to 100% and, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, it meets the requirements of policies and standards, but indicators suggest that the institution needs to take immediate action to prevent falling into noncompliance.

An institution receiving an Accredited On Warning status will be required to develop and submit a plan to improve any required actions. The submitted plan will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. The plan shall be submitted within 60 days following the receipt of the notice of issues to be addressed. Progress will be monitored according to the timelines provided in the approved plan. Required actions will focus on area(s) of improvement so that the institution performs at or above 80% on the rating scale.

The compliance related required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team must be addressed immediately and any issues noted must be corrected within 12 months by the institution, as measured from the initial notification by NCA CASI that the institution must address these required actions. The Board of Directors may extend the time period only for good cause and documentation of progress. If sufficient progress is not noted within the noted time period, the Board of Directors shall move the institution to Accredited On Probation status or drop the institution's accreditation.

Any program related issues of concern that have been noted must be corrected within 12 months for programs lasting less than one year, 18 months for programs lasting at least one year but less than two years, or two years if the program is at least two years in length. The Board of Directors may extend the time period only for good cause and documentation of progress toward resolving the issues. If sufficient progress is not demonstrated within the noted time period, the Board of Directors shall move the Institution to Accredited on Probation status or drop the institution's accreditation. All accredited status institutions will have required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team for continuous improvement purposes. Institutions must report their progress made to address the required actions for continuous improvement in the Accreditation Progress Report within two years.

Institutions with any noted required actions must report their progress to address the required actions in the Accreditation Progress Report. The report is reviewed to ensure sufficient progress is made. If sufficient progress has been made and the required actions have been addressed, the institution's On Warning status may be removed. If the institution does not address the required actions or fails to submit a progress report, the Institution may be moved to Accreditation On Probation status. Depending on the progress achieved by the institution/institution system in addressing the required actions, additional progress reports may be required by NCA CASI.

### **3.02 Sanctions.**

**NCA CASI will notify the institution in writing of any adverse accrediting action or an action to place the institution or program on probation or show cause. The notice shall describe the basis for the action.**

- a. Accredited On Probation – Non-compliance. An Institution shall be classified as Accredited On Probation when the institution performs between 65% and 69% on a rating scale of 0 to 100%, and in the judgment of the Board of Directors, it fails to meet critical policies, standards, or requirements of the accreditation process and the resulting required actions identify an area(s) that seriously detracts from the quality of the institution's educational program and/or violates standards and/or policies; or

The Institution has been Accredited On Warning and has failed to address the required actions or submit a progress report; or

The Institution has been placed on Accredited On Probation status due to action by the Board of Directors determining noncompliance with critical policies, standards, or requirements of the accreditation process. These noncompliance actions include, but are not limited to, adverse annual reporting results; review of adverse actions taken by state or other programming accrediting agencies; noncompliance reported by the United States Department of Education Financial Aid audit process; and other concerns that would impact adherence to critical policies, standards, or requirements.

- b. Accredited On Probation – Action. The Board of Directors will designate a deadline for the institution to address the required actions or noncompliance issues to return to full compliance. Timelines for establishing the deadline is based on the longest program offered by the institution and is measured by the initial notification by NCA CASI that the institution is out of compliance. Compliance must be achieved within 12 months for programs lasting less than one year, 18 months for programs lasting at least one year but less than two years, or two years if the program is at least two years in length. The Board of Directors may reduce the deadline or extend the time period only for good cause and require documentation of progress toward capabilities of coming into compliance.

The institution will be notified within 30 days of Board of Directors Accredited On Probation action. The Institution has 60 days from the date of notification to provide a progress report with action steps and timeline to address the noncompliance(s). The Board of Directors may require periodic progress report updates. The report is reviewed to ensure sufficient progress is being made.

The compliance related required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team must be addressed immediately and any issues noted must be corrected within 12 months by the institution, as measured from the initial notification by NCA CASI that the institution must address these required actions. The Board of Directors may extend the time period only for good cause and documentation of progress.

All accredited status institutions will have required actions identified by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team for continuous improvement purposes. Institutions must report their progress made to address these required actions for continuous improvement in the Accreditation Progress Report within two years.

If the required actions have been addressed, the institution's On Probation status may be removed. If the institution does not address the required actions or fails to submit a progress report by the designated deadline, the deadline may be extended for good cause. An institution shall be deemed to be on “Show Cause Status” only in a case where the time periods prescribed in the regulations for coming into compliance are extended. Show Cause signifies that an institution has been asked to show cause why the accreditation should not be terminated by NCA CASI. Said show cause period shall not exceed 12 months and may be granted by NCA CASI’s Board of Directors only if the institution – prior to the expiration of the initially prescribed period for coming into compliance – requests an extension; provides evidence that it has made significant progress in coming into compliance; articulates a persuasive, good faith justification for the extension; and provides a realistic plan with specific action steps and timelines for coming into full compliance.

If the institution does not address the required actions or fails to submit a progress report by the designated deadline and is not granted “Show Cause Status”, the institution will be moved to Dropped status.

If the required actions have been addressed, the institution's On Probation status may be removed by recommendation of the Postsecondary Department Office and Board of Directors' action.

### **3.03 Non-accredited Status.**

There are three non-accredited statuses that may be conferred on an institution:

- a. **Applicant.** The institution has submitted formal application for accreditation but has not yet hosted the candidacy readiness visit. An institution may also be in the applicant category if it has submitted formal application, hosted a candidacy readiness visit, and been found by the candidacy readiness team and the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department not to have the capacity to meet the standards required to earn accreditation. An institution may remain an applicant for no more than two years. If the institution fails to achieve accredited status within said two-year period, the institution must wait two additional years and begin the process anew. During Applicant status, the institution pays full accreditation fees.

An applicant institution may not project future or expected accreditation status. All applicant institutions are not accredited until first pursuing and achieving candidacy status and then pursuing and achieving accreditation status, which are officially granted by the NCA CASI Board of Directors. In any public announcements regarding the institution's pursuit of accreditation, the institution must avoid any implication that applicant status equates with accreditation or automatically leads to accreditation. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office shall have full authority and discretion to deny applicant status to any institution determined by NCA CASI to be in violation of this policy.

- b. **Candidate (Pre-Accreditation).** The institution has submitted formal application and has hosted a candidacy readiness visit. The candidacy readiness team makes a recommendation to the Board regarding granting candidacy status. The Board reviews all materials related to the institution visit and makes a decision related to the candidacy status. An institution must remain in candidacy status for a minimum of one year, but no more than two years, unless granted an extension by the Board of Directors. However, the Board of Directors shall not extend the candidacy period beyond five years from the submission of the formal candidacy application. During candidacy, the institution pays full accreditation fees.

A candidate institution may not project future or expected accreditation status. Such an institution is not accredited until such status is officially granted. In any public announcements regarding the institution's pursuit of accreditation, the candidate institution must avoid any implication that candidacy status equates with accreditation or automatically leads to accreditation. If an Institution misrepresents itself, including accreditation status, to the public, has any condition that may be detrimental to the clientele of the Institution, or falsely reports its compliance with the policies and standards for accreditation, the institution's accreditation can be dropped. If an institution's accreditation is recommended to be dropped, the institution shall be afforded due process in consideration of such action.

- c. **Dropped.** The Institution:

- 1) Performs below 64% on a rating scale of 0 to 100% regarding the standards or requirements of the accreditation process; or
- 2) Finds it is no longer able to meet the standards and/or NCA CASI Postsecondary Accreditation Policies and notifies the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department that it wishes to have its accredited status dropped; or
- 3) Fails to pay accreditation fees; or
- 4) Has been Accredited On Probation and fails to make substantial compliance on the required actions within the timeframe established by the NCA CASI Postsecondary policies and procedures or review team recommendation; or
- 5) Has been found by NCA CASI to no longer adhere to the standards and accreditation requirements or procedures or fails to cooperate with any accreditation team investigation or request for information.

The dropped status is effective on the date of official action to drop the institution, subject to due process rights of the institution. An institution that has been dropped from accreditation must remove all references to its accredited status from institution diplomas, certificates, websites, buildings, literature, and the like.

A dropped institution may seek reinstatement within one year of receiving the dropped status. After one year, the dropped institution must reapply and follow the same procedures as new institutions.

### **3.04 Ongoing Monitoring of Accredited/Non-Accredited Status.**

The accredited/non-accredited status of an institution is regularly monitored by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and may be changed based on new or corrected information provided by the institution, external team review reports, reports from special visits, complaints submitted, or other sources. The institution may not be accredited or preaccredited if the institution lacks or fails to maintain legal authorization under applicable State law to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level. Institutions shall be required as part of the application for candidacy process and annual reporting process to affirmatively state whether the institution lacks or has failed maintain legal authorization/recognition to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level and/or accreditation from another recognized accreditation agency.

NCA CASI shall not grant initial or renewed accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution, or a program offered by an institution, if the NCA CASI knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of (1) a pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State; (2) a decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation; (3) a pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or (4) probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.

NCA CASI may grant accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution described in this section after providing to the Secretary of the Department of Education, within 30 days of its action, a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude NCA CASI's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation.

If the NCA CASI learns that an institution it accredits or preaccredits, is the subject of an adverse action by another recognized accrediting agency or has been placed on probation or an equivalent status by another recognized agency, NCA CASI shall, within 30 days of confirming the adverse action, probation or an equivalent action by another recognized agency, conduct a review of the institution to determine compliance with NCA CASI standards and policies to determine if NCA CASI should also take action or place the institution on probation or show cause.

If not required by other sections of the NCA CASI policies, NCA CASI shall, upon request, share with other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and recognized State approval agencies information about the accreditation or preaccreditation status of an institution and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited or preaccredited institution.

## **POLICY IV: PROCEDURES FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION**

### **4.01 Overview**

Institutions seeking initial accreditation must demonstrate that they meet the NCA CASI standards and policies, have the capacity to support institution improvement, and are committed to growth in student learning and organizational effectiveness. All institutions must achieve each phase of the process in the specified sequence. New Institutions must complete the process as follows: Inquiry designation, Applicant designation, Candidacy status with Board of Directors approval action, and Accreditation status with Board of Directors approval action.

### **4.02 General Guidelines.**

Following are general guidelines for all institutions seeking initial accreditation. The institution must:

- a. Offer non-degree granting postsecondary educational programs to students;
- b. Have been in operation for at least two years with demonstrated financial stability before it may be accredited;
- c. Complete the Inquiry process (Policy IV – 4.03);
- d. Complete the Application process (Policy IV - 4.04);
- e. Certify that it is approved or accredited by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state;
- f. Demonstrate that it has sufficient administrative and financial resources to support the educational opportunities offered to students;
- g. Comply with all United States Department of Education guidelines related to accreditation and the Higher Education Act;
- h. Adhere to all NCA CASI Postsecondary Policies and Procedures and accreditation standards;
- i. Attend required accreditation preparation training;

- j. Prepare for and participate in a technical readiness visit conducted by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department staff;
- k. Host an external candidacy team review visit within two years and complete the Candidacy Process (Policy IV - 4.05);
- l. Host an external accreditation team review visit within one to two years after achieving candidacy status and complete the Accreditation Process (Policy IV - 4.06);
- m. Re-apply if the institution does not host the external accreditation team review visit within the prescribed time period of three years.

#### **4.03 Inquiry Process.**

- a. An institution interested in accreditation must:
  - 1) Contact the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department;
  - 2) Review the Postsecondary Accreditation Policies and Procedures.
  - 3) Assure compliance with the above Policy IV - 4.02.
  - 4) Complete and submit the Potential Applicant Inquiry Form (Appendix A).
- b. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office:
  - 1) Determines if the institution meets the required minimum student achievement established criteria for completion, placement, and industry credential passage rates.
  - 2) Approves or disapproves continuation into the applicant process.

#### **4.04 Applicant Process.**

- a. An institution interested in applying to pursue the accreditation process must:
  - 1) Complete and submit the NCA CASI Application for Accreditation (Appendix B).
  - 2) Submit the first year annual fees plus the application fee.
  - 3) The new institution application fee applies to any new institution that is making application as a single institution. Institutions that apply as part of a group of institutions at the same time pay one application fee for the full group.
  - 4) Submit the past two years of audited financial statements for review.
- b. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office:
  - 1) Reviews documentation and determines applicant eligibility.

- 2) Designates the institution as an “Applicant,” which is a non-accredited status as identified in Policy III - 3.03.

#### **4.05 Applicants Preparing for Candidacy Status.**

- a. Postsecondary candidacy is a comprehensive process similar to the initial and/or reaccreditation process. The purpose of the candidacy process is to assure the Institution has the capacity to:
  - 1) Meet compliance with the NCA CASI accreditation standards and policies, including Policy IV - 4.02.
  - 2) Maintain compliance with accreditation standards and policies in order to pursue and continue future full accreditation status.
  - 3) Apply for eligibility to United States Department of Education Title IV and Higher Education Act (HEA) federal programs upon receiving candidacy status action for public and private non-profit institutions. Private for profit institutions must follow this process, but are not eligible for the Title IV application process until fully accredited. Accreditation is a separate process and does NOT guarantee access to Title IV financial aid and federal programs provided through the Higher Education Act (HEA).
  - 4) Assure the institution has the capacity to meet the standards, policies, and practices required in order to pursue and maintain the future designation of accreditation status.
  - 5) Support continuous institution improvement.
- b. The following steps are implemented for the candidacy status process:
  - 1) The institution designates an Internal Team Coordinator to provide leadership during the self assessment Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit processes.
  - 2) The Internal Team Coordinator and other institutional staff participate in updated training for the school community to engage in an in-depth self assessment of each of the NCA-CASI standards and indicators.
  - 3) The institution develops internal teams to review standards to conduct a critical analysis and prepare for the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
  - 4) The Internal Team Coordinator contacts the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to volunteer to serve on a Quality Assurance Review visit, if available.
  - 5) The internal team analyzes all aspects of the institution through the lens of the postsecondary standards, reviews documentation and process evidence as identified in the Postsecondary Evidence Guide and the Document Management Tool, and digitally links the document file into the Document Management Tool. These documents include, but are not limited to, school improvement plan and goals, policies, student achievement data, survey analysis, curriculum, assessments, publications, student, faculty and staff records, finances, and other pertinent documentation identified on the Document Management Tool and Postsecondary Evidence Guide for each standard and indicator.

- 6) The internal team prepares the Candidacy Self Assessment narrative based on the analysis of documentation and process evidence and adherence to the standards and indicators and student achievement.
- 7) The Internal Coordinator submits the “Visit Date Request Form” (Appendix 3) to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to schedule an Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) site visit.
- 8) The Internal Coordinator submits the Executive Institutional Summary and Candidacy Self Assessment containing quality narratives addressing compliance to postsecondary standards to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- 9) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office selects a trained Chair and two to four trained team members based on the enrollment and programming of the Institution, and diverse experience levels of team members, (Policy VI).
- 10) The Chair and the Internal Team Coordinator prepare the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Visit schedule with assigned Team Chair for two to three days.
- 11) The institution publishes an announcement of the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit to acquire public comment. Said notice must be published at least 60 days prior to site visit; allow a minimum of 30 days from the publishing of the notice for submission of comments. The notice must be published in the customary medium that the institution ordinarily uses to publish public notices and notify the public that comments may address any recommendation or comment regarding institution’s accreditation status.
- 12) Non-profit and profit institutions submit the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) audit for the past two years prior to the QAR team visit.
- 13) The institution is responsible for the travel, meals, and hotel costs of the Chair and team. (See Policy VI).
- 14) The Chair sends the Candidacy Self Assessment to team members for review.
- 15) The Chair and team members determine standard review assignments based on the expertise and experience of the team members.
- 16) The institution hosts the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
- 17) Team members evaluate the institution's adherence to the NCA CASI quality standards, assess the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provide feedback and required actions to help the institution improve and/or assure compliance.
- 18) Team members review the comprehensive Document Management Tool and the Candidacy Self Assessment for their assigned standard(s) and take notes in the Team Column in the Tool for drafting narratives.
- 19) Time permitting, internal stakeholder interviews and observations are conducted.

- 20) The Chair leads the team in deliberations to analyze the ratings for each standard through an analysis of the Document Management Tool quantifiable calculations rubric.
- 21) The QAR team identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement for each standard, any noncompliance areas, and overall commendations and required actions.
- 22) The QAR team provides an oral exit report to the institution identifying strengths, opportunities for improvement, commendations, and required actions.
- 23) The Chair writes a Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report and submits to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- 24) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report to the Postsecondary Reader Reviewer and the report is assigned to a Reader Reviewer for analysis.
- 25) The reviewed Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is returned to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- 26) The Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is submitted to the institution for review (Policy XVII – 17.05).
- 27) The institution submits comments to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and edits/corrections/deletions are discussed with the Chair and amended in accordance with the team's recommendations.
- 28) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits all documentation to the NCA CASI Board of Directors for review and action.
- 29) The NCA CASI Board of Directors action is posted for the public on the website and submitted to the United States Department of Education.
- 30) The institution receives a letter of notification of the candidacy status action or action to remain in Candidacy status along with the official copy of the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.
- 31) If not granted candidacy status, the Institution addresses all compliance issues prior to rescheduling a future Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.

#### **4.06 Candidacy Status Institutions Preparing for Accreditation Status**

Candidacy status institutions may pursue the accreditation status between one year and no more than two years from the candidacy visit:

- a. The Internal Team Coordinator and other institutional staff participate in updated training for the school community to engage in an in-depth self assessment of each of the NCA-CASI standards and indicators.
- b. The Internal Team Coordinator and other trained institutional staff contact the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to volunteer to serve on a Quality Assurance Review visit, if available.

- c. The internal team review standards to conduct a critical analysis and prepare for the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
- d. The internal team analyzes all aspects of the institution through the lens of the postsecondary standards. Review documentation and process evidence as identified in the Postsecondary Evidence Guide and the Document Management Tool. Digitally link the document file into the Document Management Tool. These include, but are not limited to, school improvement plans and goals, policies, student achievement data, survey analysis, curriculum, assessments, publications, student, faculty and staff records, finances, and other pertinent documentation identified on the Document Management Tool and Postsecondary Evidence Guide for each standard and indicator.
- e. The internal team addresses the required actions and suggestions for improvement in the Candidacy Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.
- f. The internal team prepares the Executive Institutional Summary and Self Assessment narrative based on the analysis of documentation and process evidence and adherence to the standards and indicators and student achievement.
- g. The Internal Chair submits the “Visit Date Request Form” (Appendix C) to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to schedule an Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) site visit.
- h. The Internal Chair submits the Self Assessment containing quality narratives addressing compliance to postsecondary standards to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- i. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office selects a trained Chair and three to six team members based on the enrollment and programming of the institution. The institution is responsible for the travel, meals, and hotel costs of the Chair and team (See Policy VI).
- j. The Chair and Internal Team Coordinator prepare the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Visit agenda with assigned Team Chair for three to four days.
- k. The institution publishes an announcement of the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit to acquire public comment. Said notice must be published at least 60 days prior to site visit; allow a minimum of 30 days from the publishing of the notice for submission of comments. The notice must be published in the customary medium that the institution ordinarily uses to publish public notices and notify the public that comments may address any recommendation or comment regarding institution’s accreditation status.
- l. Non-profit and profit Institutions: Submit the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) audit for the past two years prior to the QAR team visit.
- m. The Chair sends the Accreditation Self Assessment to the team members for review.
- n. The Chair and team members determine standard review assignments based on the expertise and experience of the team members.
- o. The Institution is responsible for the travel, meals, and hotel costs of the Chair and team (See Policy VI).

- p. The Institution hosts the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
- q. Team members use a triangulated process of review (document review, interviews, and observations) to evaluate the Institution's adherence to the NCA CASI quality standards, and assess the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance. Team members:
  - 1) Review the comprehensive Document Management Tool and the Candidacy Self Assessment for their assigned standard(s) and take notes in the Team Column in the Tool for drafting narratives.
  - 2) Conduct interviews with stakeholders (i.e. students, faculty, administrators, support staff, business/industry/agency advisory committee members, boards, community representatives, alumni). Interview questions emerge from the documentation review.
  - 3) Make observations of the learning environment, instructional practices, student interactions, facilities, instructional resources, and other visual evidence demonstrating adherence to standards and indicators.
- r. The Chair leads the team in deliberations to analyze the rating for each standard through an analysis of the Document Management Tool quantifiable calculations rubric.
- s. The team identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement for each standard, any noncompliance areas, and overall commendations and required actions.
- t. The team provides an oral exit report to the institution.
- u. The Chair writes an Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report and submits to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- v. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report to the Postsecondary Reader Reviewer and the report is assigned to a Reader Reviewer for analysis.
- w. The reviewed Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is returned to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- x. The Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is submitted to the Institution for review (Policy XVII – 17.05).
- y. The institution submits comments to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and edits/corrections/deletions are discussed with the Chair and amended as required,
- z. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits all documentation to the NCA CASI Board of Directors for review and action.
- aa. The NCA CASI Board of Trustee action is posted for the public on the website and submitted to the United States Department of Education.

- bb. The institution receives a letter of notification of the accreditation status action or action along with the official copy of their Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.
- cc. If the institution does not receive accreditation status, the institution remains in candidacy status and addresses the standards rated not evident and/or emerging prior to rescheduling a future Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit. The institution must achieve Accreditation status within 5 years of institution's submission of its accreditation application
- dd. If granted Accreditation status, the institution has two years to address the suggestions for improvement called required actions that have been suggested in the QAR report. These required actions are suggestions for improvements and do not impact compliance with standards and indicators and will be submitted through an Accreditation Progress Report (APR).
- ee. If granted Accreditation status, the institution must continue to comply with all NCA CASI standards, policies, and practices to maintain accreditation.

## **POLICY V. PROCEDURES FOR REACCREDITATION**

### **5.01 Overview.**

An institution is accredited for a five year term, as long as the institution continues to satisfy the conditions for accreditation as identified in Policy 2.01. An institution must pursue re-accreditation and conduct a Self Assessment analysis and host an external Quality Assurance Review (QAR) at least once every five years.

### **5.02 General Guidelines.**

- a. The Internal Team Coordinator and other institutional staff participate in updated training for the school community to engage in an in-depth self assessment of each of the NCA-CASI standards and indicators.
- b. The Internal Team Coordinator and other trained institutional staff contact the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to volunteer to serve on a Quality Assurance Review visit, if available.
- c. The internal team reviews standards to conduct a critical analysis and prepare for the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
- d. The internal team analyzes all aspects of the institution through the lens of the postsecondary standards. Review documentation and process evidence as identified in the Postsecondary Evidence Guide and the Document Management Tool. Digitally link the document file into the Document Management Tool. These include, but are not limited to, school improvement plans and goals, policies, student achievement data, survey analysis, curriculum, assessments, publications, student, faculty and staff records, finances, and other pertinent documentation identified on the Document Management Tool and Postsecondary Evidence Guide for each standard and indicator.
- e. The internal team analyzes the recommendations made in the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report from the past visit conducted five years ago.

- f. The internal team prepares the Self Assessment narrative based on the analysis of documentation and process evidence and adherence to the standards and indicators and student achievement.
- g. The Internal Chair submits the “Visit Date Request Form” (Appendix C) to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office to schedule an Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) site visit.
- h. The Internal Chair submits the Self Assessment containing quality narratives addressing compliance to postsecondary standards to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- i. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office selects a trained Chair and three to six team members based on the enrollment and programming of the institution. (See Policy VI.).
- j. The Chair and Internal Team Coordinator prepare the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Visit schedule with assigned Team Chair for three to four days.
- k. The Institution publishes an announcement of the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit to acquire public comment 30 days prior to the scheduled visit.
- l. Non-profit and profit institutions: Submit the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) audit for the past two years prior to the QAR team visit.
- m. The Chair sends the Accreditation Self Assessment to the team members for review.
- n. The Chair and team members determine standard review assignments based on the expertise and experience of the team members.
- o. The institution is responsible for the travel, meals, and hotel costs of the Chair and team (See Policy VI).
- p. The institution hosts the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.
- q. Team members use a triangulated process of review, (document review, interviews, and observations) to evaluate the institution's adherence to the NCA CASI quality standards, and assess the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance. Team members:
  - 1) Review the comprehensive Document Management Tool and the Candidacy Self Assessment for their assigned standard(s) and take notes in the Team Column in the Tool for drafting narratives.
  - 2) Conduct interviews with stakeholders (i.e. students, faculty, administrators, support staff, business/industry/agency advisory committee members, boards, community representatives, alumni). Interview questions emerge from the documentation review.
  - 3) Make observations of the learning environment, instructional practices, student interactions, facilities, instructional resources, and other visual evidence demonstrating adherence to standards and indicators.

- a. The Chair leads the team in deliberations to analyze the rating for each standard through an analysis of the Document Management Tool quantifiable calculations rubric.
- b. The team identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement for each standard, any noncompliance areas, and overall commendations and required actions.
- c. The team provides an oral exit report to the Institution.
- d. The Chair writes an Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report and submits to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- e. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits the Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report to the Postsecondary Reader Reviewer and the report is assigned to a Reader Reviewer for analysis.
- f. The reviewed Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is returned to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office.
- g. The Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report is submitted to the Institution for review (Policy XVII – 17.05).
- h. The institution submits comments to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and edits/corrections/deletions are discussed with the Chair and amended as required.
- i. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office submits all documentation to the NCA CASI Board of Directors for review and action.
- j. The NCA CASI Board of Directors' action is posted for the public on the website and submitted to the United States Department of Education.
- k. The institution receives a letter of notification of the accreditation status action or action along with the official copy of their Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.
- l. If granted Accredited status, the institution has two years to address the suggestions for improvement called required actions that have been suggested in the QAR report. These required actions are suggestions for improvements and do not impact compliance with standards and indicators and will be submitted through an Accreditation Progress Report (APR).
- m. If granted Accredited status, the institution must continue to comply with all NCA CASI standards, policies, and practices to maintain accreditation.

## **POLICY VI. PROCEDURE FOR CHOOSING VISITING TEAM MEMBERS & EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS**

### **6.01 Overview.**

The following guidelines are being provided to define the procedure for choosing qualified Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team members and Chairs to serve on candidacy site visits, as defined in policy 4.05; accreditation site visits, policy 4.06; and re-accreditation site visits, policy 5.02.

- a. Each Institution is expected to have two qualified staff members trained in the NCA CASI Postsecondary accreditation process to serve on evaluation teams reviewing other Institutions.
- b. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office selects the Chair and the team members based on these considerations. The number of team members is dependent on the institution enrollment, diversity of career technical program offerings, and type of expertise needed.
- c. All Chairs and team members must review the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policies and sign the Conflict of Interest form.

## **6.02 Team Member Roles and Responsibilities.**

- a. Each accreditation team shall be responsible for reviewing the degree to which the institution meets each standard and indicator. Detailed steps of the candidacy and accreditation process are defined in policy 4.05; accreditation site visits, policy 4.06; and re-accreditation site visits, policy 5.02.
- b. Special evaluations or periodic visits shall be conducted when in the opinion of the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office systemic changes may result in the institution not meeting standards. Chair and team members may be selected based on expertise aligned with the purpose of visit and focus of the change.

## **6.03 Guidelines for Selecting Qualified Team Members.**

- a. The accreditation team shall include members with expertise in postsecondary institution review, career technical programs, student services, and other areas as required by the program offerings of the institution. The team shall include practitioners and academic and administrative personnel. The definition of academic personnel is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary career and technical education in teaching and/or research. The definition of administrative personnel is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary career and technical program or institutional administration.
- b. Prior to serving as an accreditation team member, each person will undergo comprehensive training on the policies and standards for institutions approved for postsecondary education and the duties and responsibilities of the position. Updated online or in person training is required annually.
- c. In consideration of team selection for candidacy and site evaluation visits, the potential team members must meet one of the following qualifications to be considered as a subject area representative.
  - 1) Education pertinent to the subject area under consideration.
  - 2) Significant experience pertinent to subject area under consideration.

- 3) Appropriate credentials for licensure and/or certification pertinent to subject area under consideration.
- d. Institution administrators shall use these qualifications when selecting staff members to attend NCA CASI training for postsecondary institutions.

#### **6.04 Chair Roles and Responsibilities.**

Before team chairs may be appointed to lead a team for an on-site visit, they must not only participate in the training, but they must also have served as a Co-Chair at an onsite visit to gain the experiential learning needed to be successful as a team chair. Prior to serving in the capacity of accrediting team Co-Chair or Chair, each person will have:

- a. Served as an accreditation team member on at least one accreditation visit to be designated as a Co-Chair.
- b. Recommended by the chairperson of the team on which he/she served to be a Co-Chair.
- c. Undergone further comprehensive training on the standards, postsecondary policies, and the duties and responsibilities of the external team chair.
- d. Served as a Co-Chair.
- e. Participated in annual Chair update training is required.
- f. Received approval from the Postsecondary Office to serve as a Chair based on review of evaluations (Policy 6.03).

#### **6.05 Guidelines for Selecting Qualified Chairs.**

The Chair and Co-Chair responsibilities include:

- a. Assist in the coordination of the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) agenda, team member logistics, and communication with the Institution.
- b. Facilitate the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team process.
- c. Prepare the Exit Power Point.
- d. Write the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team report using the Template which includes the institution snapshot, and at a minimum the degree to which the institution meets each criterion; a section which reviews, evaluates, analyzes, and draws conclusions regarding student achievement; institution strengths and weaknesses; areas in need of improvement; areas out of compliance; the institution's improvement compliance review; and a candidacy or accreditation recommendation.
- e. Submit the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team report to the Postsecondary Office.
- f. Respond to communication with the Reader Reviewers to clarify Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.

- g. Respond to communication from the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office on Institution feedback on the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report.

#### **6.06 Evaluation of Team Members and Chairs.**

- a. Evaluations are collected from the institutions on team chairs and team members. These evaluations are analyzed by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and are used in making decisions about the composition of new teams to ensure the team chairs and team members are performing effectively.
- b. Chairs make recommendations for team members during the annual Chair training.
- c. The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Reports are evaluated by the Postsecondary Reader Reviewer process using the Reader Reviewer Form (Appendix D). Such evaluations are used to guide further training as well as to identify potential new team chairs and to remove individuals who are not effective. Each year, the evaluations are reviewed and used in decision-making to appoint new team chairs for the next year.

### **POLICY VII: DISTANCE EDUCATION OFFERINGS**

#### **7.01 Distance education definition.**

Distance education is defined by the United States Department of Education Guidelines (August, 2010) as “education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

- a. The internet.
- b. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices.
- c. Audio conferencing.
- d. Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (a) through (c).

#### **7.02 Equivalent Expectations.**

All programs offered through distance learning delivery methods are required to meet the same standards, policies, and student outcomes as programs offered in a traditional offering approach or setting.

#### **7.03 Acceptable Percentage of Distance Education Offering.**

At least 51% of the instruction offered at an institution must be campus-based and at least 50% of students must participate in campus-based instructional delivery. The educational facility must be sufficient in space and resources to support the requirements of distance education offerings.

#### **7.04 Distance Education Endorsement.**

In order for an institution to receive the distance education endorsement to provide distance education courses or programs, the institution must:

- a. Have completed the NCA CASI external team review and received accreditation in the past three years. If an accredited postsecondary institution has had an external team review more than three years ago, the institution must first undergo the comprehensive accreditation visit using the NCA CASI standards.
- b. Request in writing to be considered for accreditation that includes a distance education endorsement.
- c. Complete and submit a self study analyzing processes and documented evidence related to specific standards as identified on the Team Tool. Access to the Institution's online components must be included for external review.
- d. Submit non-refundable distance education review fee.
- e. Submit the Institution's most recent Technology Plan.

#### **7.05 Review of Distance Education Offerings.**

An institution offering distance education opportunities to students must illustrate that completion, placement, and licensure expectations are measured using the same method as programs offered in a traditional setting.

The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will assign a trained External Online Reviewer with distance education experience to review the distance education components on the self study through online exploration and email communication. The External Online Reviewer will examine the off-site distance education capabilities through the lens of the student to assure quality online learning, as well as for compliance to the standards. The External Online Review may require an additional onsite evaluation.

#### **7.06 Distance Education External Reviewers.**

Individuals who serve in the capacity of reviewing distance education opportunities for NCA CASI postsecondary institutions will complete training designed and implemented by the NCA Postsecondary Office and posted online on the extranet for distance education reviewers. All documentation identified on the Document Management Tool and referenced to in the Distance Learning Evidence Guide related to distance education will be reviewed, along with all policies related to distance education.

Individuals who serve in the capacity as a reviewer of distance education programs and components, both on and off-site, are required to attend training offered by NCA CASI related to external review of distance education programs, as well as required team member training for the candidacy and accreditation processes.

#### **7.07 Significant Growth/Decline in Distance Education Enrollment.**

Accredited institutions that offer distance education that experience an increase or decrease in student population by 50 percent or more within one institutional fiscal year shall report the growth or decline to

NCA CASI through the substantive change process. A rationale shall be provided regarding the significant change in population. If any such institution has experienced an increase in headcount enrollment of 50 percent or more within one institutional fiscal year, the agency must report that information to the Secretary within 30 days of acquiring such data.

#### **7.08 Verification of Student Identity.**

Institutions participating in distance education must have policies and practices in place to verify the identity of a student who participates in a class or coursework and to ensure and protect the identity of the distance education student.

In accordance with the United States Department of Education Guidelines (August, 2010) the institution must:

- a. Verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the Institution, methods such as:
  - 1) A secure login and pass code.
  - 2) Proctored examinations.
  - 3) New or other technologies and practices which are effective in verifying student identity.
- b. Additionally, institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

### **POLICY VIII: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCESS**

#### **8.01 Substantive Changes.**

A candidacy or accreditation status institution must report to NCA CASI Postsecondary Office any substantive change to the educational mission, governance, or programs of the institution, AND institutional structure changes, (consolidation, reorganization, change of ownership, branch campuses, additional locations, and additional changes described below , at least 60 days prior to planned implementation.

The institution must complete the Substantive Change Form (Appendix E) and attach required documentation as identified. The documentation of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact of the change on the quality of education in the institution to ensure the change does not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet the standards and policies change process and documentation requirements for analysis and approval by the Board of Directors.

The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and the NCA CASI Board of Directors will review the documented change to assure the institution continues to meet Agency standards at the next scheduled NCA CASI Board of Directors monthly meeting. The Board's decision to approve or disapprove the substantive change will be communicated to the institution. In all cases except for changes in ownership, effective dates for substantive changes shall not be retroactive. The effective dates for substantive changes shall be the date said changes are approved by the Board of Directors unless the institution provides a written request for a different future approval date. In the case of a change of ownership, the

effective date may be retroactive up to 30 days from the date the substantive change is approved by the Board of Directors.

## **8.02 Substantive Changes: Types, Documentation Requirements, & Approval Criteria**

Substantive change areas include, but are not limited to, the following changes and reported on the Substantive Change Form (Appendix E). The NCA CASI Board of Directors will review the required documentation and make the approval decision based on the identified criteria for each type of change.

- a. Mission or Objectives of the Institution.
  - 1) Defined. The mission or objective statement defines the institution's specific educational purpose; expresses organizational values and beliefs; and guides learning processes and student achievement success.
  - 2) Required documentation.
    - (a) Dates of request and anticipated implementation.
    - (b) New mission statement.
    - (c) Process used to develop and communicate new mission.
    - (d) Rationale for change.
    - (e) Explanation to assure mission change does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.
  - 3) Approval Criteria.
    - (a) New mission statement aligns with career technical postsecondary education.
    - (b) Process identified and viable.
    - (c) Change does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.
    - (d) The NCA CASI Board of Directors approves the mission/objective change if all criteria are met and the change does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.
    - (e) If the change impacts adherence to standards and policies, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office contacts the institution administrator for clarifications.
    - (f) If it is determined the mission or objective change does not align with the NCA CASI standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate Accredited On Warning, Accredited On Probation, or Dropped action in accordance to the criteria identified in Policy III.
- b. Legal status of the Institution.

1) Defined. Any change in legal status of the institution. The institution must be approved or accredited by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state. As identified in Policy 2.02 (a), if an institution loses its approval or accreditation by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting/accountability agency within the state, it will be dropped from accreditation in accordance with procedures outlined in this document.

2) Required documentation.

(a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.

(b) Compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

(c) Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.

(d) Business plan.

(e) Administrative capacity.

(f) Projected revenues.

(g) Projected expenditures.

(h) Projected cash flow.

(i) Rationale for change.

(j) Explanation to assure change in legal status does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

3) Approval Criteria.

(a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews all documentation for completion and review to assure change in legal status does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies. NCA CASI Postsecondary Office makes recommendation to NCA CASI Board of Directors to review and take action to approve.

(b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation is not included OR does not indicate approval, Institution accreditation will be dropped.

c. Form of Control (Governance Structure) of the Institution.

1) Defined. Any change in form of control or governance structure of the institution (See Policy IX).

2) Required documentation.

(a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.

- (b) Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.
- (c) Business plan.
- (d) Governance policies.
- (e) Organizational chart.
- (f) Projected revenues.
- (g) Projected expenditures.
- (h) Projected cash flow.
- (i) Rationale for change.
- (j) Explanation to assure change in form of control does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

3) Approval Criteria.

- (a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and schedules a technical assistance on-site visit to assure compliance with governance and leadership standards/indicators. Technical assistance on-site visit reviews all documentation and processes identified in the Artifact Evidence Guide for Governance and Leadership standard. A technical visit report is completed. If institution complies with standards and policies, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office recommendation continued accreditation action to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors reviews technical visit report and take action to approve or disapprove continued accreditation.
- (b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not indicate approval OR the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office determines the Institution does not meet the standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate Accredited Advised, Accredited On Probation, or Dropped action in accordance to the criteria identified in Policy III.

d. Ownership of the Institution

- 1) Defined. Any changes in the ownership of the institution (See Policy IX – 9.03).
- 2) Required documentation.
  - (a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.
  - (b) Certificate, license, and/or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.

- (c) Business plan.
- (d) Governance policies.
- (e) Organizational chart.
- (f) Projected revenues.
- (g) Projected expenditures.
- (h) Projected cash flow.
- (i) Rationale for change.
- (j) Explanation to assure change in ownership does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

3) Approval Criteria.

- (a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and schedules a technical assistance on-site visit to assure compliance with NCA CASI standards/indicators. Technical assistance on-site visit reviews all documentation and processes identified in the Artifact Evidence Guide for compliance with NCA CASI standards. A technical visit report is completed. If institution complies with NCA CASI standards and policies, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office shall recommend continued accreditation to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors reviews the technical visit report and will take action to approve or disapprove continued accreditation.
- (b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not indicate approval, and the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office determines the Institution does not meet the standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate Accredited Advised, Accredited On Probation, or Dropped action in accordance to the criteria identified in Policy III.

e. Program or Course Additions, Deletions, or Changes in Hours

- 1) Defined. The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from existing offerings of educational programs, or method of delivery, from those that were offered from the last Institutional evaluation. Course or program changes also include:
  - (a) 25%+ decrease or increase in clock or credit hours for successful completion of the program.
  - (b) 25%+ decrease or increase in program length for successful completion of the program.
  - (c) Method of delivery change.

(d) A change from clock hours to credit hours or credit hours to clock hours. Additional NCA CASI guidance concerning the Calculation and Reporting of Program Length in compliance with U.S. Department of Education's regulations as published in the Federal Register concerning program integrity pertaining to clock hour-to-credit hour conversion of academic credits to federal credit hours for determining Federal Student Financial Aid is attached hereto as Appendix H, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

(e) License or credential level change.

2) Required documentation.

(a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.

(b) Approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state if the agency requires approval.

(c) Program description and course sequencing.

(d) Labor market demand (if new program).

(e) Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credentials, if applicable and necessary include teach-out plan.

(f) Rationale for change.

(g) Complete list of programs with credit hours indicated (While the school may operate using credit hours, clock/contact hours must still be reported to NCA CASI)

(h) Conversion chart to explain.

(i) Explanation to assure change in programming does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

(j) Name of program being deleted, if applicable.

3) Approval Criteria.

(a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and compares program information to similar programs contained within the program database. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office recommends approval and NCA CASI Board of Directors takes action at the next scheduled monthly meeting. Following action, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will prepare an updated Program List and send to the school.

(b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not require an approval process, and the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation, analyzes the Postsecondary Program database program information identifying programs for all schools, and determines an approval decision and recommends to the NCA CASI

Board of Directors for action at the next scheduled monthly meeting. Following action, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will prepare an updated Program List and send to the school.

- (c) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency declines approval, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take action at the next scheduled monthly meeting to decline approval for the change. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will notify the school of the declined approval action.
- f. The addition of programs of study at a degree or credential (different from that which is included in the Institution's current accreditation or pre-accreditation - candidacy).
- 1) Defined. The certificate-granting Institution receives legal authority in the state to grant degree programs. Currently NCA CASI's scope includes only certificate-granting accreditation. Degree programs would not fall under the NCA CASI accreditation scope.
  - 2) Required documentation.
    - (a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.
    - (b) Approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state designating Institution ability to grant degrees.
    - (c) Degree program descriptions and course sequencing.
    - (d) Labor market demand (if new program).
    - (e) Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credentials.
    - (f) Rationale for change.
    - (g) Explanation to assure change in programming does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.
  - 3) Approval Criteria.
    - (a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office recommends approval and NCA CASI Board of Directors takes action at the next scheduled monthly meeting. Following action, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will prepare an updated Program List and send to the school.
    - (b) If recognized accrediting/accountability agency approves degree granting, but does not require a program and degree approval process, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation, analyzes the Postsecondary Program database program information identifying programs for all schools, and determines an approval decision and recommends to the NCA CASI Board of Directors for action at the next scheduled monthly meeting. Following action, the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will prepare an updated Program List and send to the Institution.

- (c) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency declines approval, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take action at the next scheduled monthly meeting to decline approval for the change. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will notify the school of the declined approval action.

g. Institution or Program Acquisition.

- 1) Defined. The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution. With the approval of the NCA CASI Board of Directors, a consolidated institution may claim continuing accreditation provided that at least one of the institutions involved in the consolidation was accredited at the time of the consolidation. There must be no break in accreditation. (See Policy IX – 9.01).

- 2) Required documentation.

- (a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.
- (b) Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.
- (c) Business plan.
- (d) Governance policies.
- (e) Organizational chart.
- (f) Projected revenues.
- (g) Projected expenditures.
- (h) Projected cash flow.
- (i) Rationale for change.
- (j) Operation, management and physical resources.
- (k) Personnel at the location.
- (l) Explanation to assure change in form of control and location does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

- 3) Approval Criteria.

- (a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and schedules a technical assistance on-site visit to assure compliance with all standards/indicators.
- (b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not indicate approval OR the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office determines the institution does not meet the

standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate action to require a technical assistance visit to determine next actions.

(c) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office must visit the Institution within six months.

h. Teach-out location

1) Defined. The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study, (Policy IX – 9.04).

2) Required documentation.

(a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.

(b) Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.

(c) Business plan.

(d) Governance policies.

(e) Organizational chart.

(f) Projected revenues.

(g) Projected expenditures.

(h) Projected cash flow.

(i) Rationale for change.

(j) Explanation to assure change in form of control and location does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

3) Approval Criteria.

(a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and schedules a technical assistance on-site visit to assure compliance with all standards/indicators, assess the stability of the teach-out location and the ability of the institution to meet the expanded obligations resulting from the teach-out agreement. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office must visit the Institution within six months to determine institutions compliance with NCA CASI standards and policies.

(b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not indicate approval OR the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office determines the institution does not meet the standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate action to require an immediate technical assistance visit before determining any action.

i. Contract with Non-Certified Title IV Institution

- 1) Defined. Any contract with an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, Higher Education Act (HEA) programs that offers more than 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.
- 2) Required documentation.
  - (a) Copy of contract agreement.
  - (b) Documented program offerings by institution not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs which are accepted as part of the accredited institution's educational programs.
  - (c) Other relevant documents, correspondence, and materials.
- 3) Approval Criteria.
  - (a) Program offerings by an institution not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs may not exceed 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's education programs and will be reviewed and analyzed to ensure the limits are adhered to and enforced.

j. Additional locations/campuses

- 1) Defined. Any institution planning to offer more than 50% of the coursework for one of its approved programs located at an additional location or campus (Policy IX – 9.03).
- 2) Required documentation.
  - (a) Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates.
  - (b) Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state.
  - (c) Business plan which contains a description of the programs to be offered.
  - (d) Description of physical resources.
  - (e) List of courses and programs.
  - (f) Projected revenues.
  - (g) Projected expenditures.
  - (h) Projected cash flow.
  - (i) Rationale for change.

- (j) Operation, management and physical resources.
- (k) Personnel at the location.
- (l) Explanation to assure change in form of control and location does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.

3) Approval Criteria.

- (a) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency documentation indicates approval, NCA CASI Postsecondary Office reviews documentation and schedules a technical assistance on-site visit to assure compliance with all standards/indicators. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office must visit the institution within six months after the establishment of the location.
- (b) IF recognized accrediting/accountability agency does not indicate approval OR the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office determines the institution does not meet the standards and policies, the NCA CASI Board of Directors will take the appropriate action to require an immediate technical assistance visit before determining any action.

k. Significant Growth/Decline in On-Campus Enrollment

Accredited institutions that experience an increase or decrease in the student population by 25 percent or excess of 100 students, which number is greater shall report the growth or decline to NCA CASI through the substantive change process. A rationale shall be provided regarding the significant change in population.

**8.03 Substantive Changes: Requiring an Interim Visit**

- a. Campus location addition or closing – Policy VIII – 8.02j.
- b. Change in governance structure - Policy VIII – 8.02c.
- c. Change in ownership – Policy VIII – 8.02d.
- d. Change in degree-granting status – Policy VIII – 8.02f.
- e. Significant growth in campuses, which is defined as 25% increase or excess of 100 students, whichever number is greater – Policy VIII – 8.02k.
- f. Substantive change in the mission of the institution -- Policy VIII – 8.02a.

**8.04 Substantive Changes: Requiring NCA CASI Board Action with Written Notification Verifying Approval to Include in Institution's Grant of Accreditation**

- a. Campus location addition or closing – Policy VIII – 8.02j.
- b. Change in Institutional mission or objectives – Policy VIII – 8.02a.

- c. Change in governance structure - Policy VIII – 8.02c.
- d. Change in ownership – Policy VIII – 8.02d.
- e. Program hours increase or decrease in excess of 25% of original program – Policy VIII – 8.02e.
- f. Change in degree-granting status – Policy VIII – 8.02f.
- g. Significant growth or decline in campuses, which is defined as 25% increase or excess of 100 students, whichever number is greater – Policy VIII – 8.02k.
- h. New program addition or deletion – Policy VIII – 8.02e.
- i. Distance learning delivery methodology in excess of 25% and less than 50% of the hours implemented in the program – Policy VII – 7.02.

### **8.05 Substantive Changes: Tracking and Monitoring**

Substantive changes are tracked, monitored, and analyzed in accordance with specific criteria for each type of change as identified in Policy VIII – 8.02. Substantive changes are tracked in a composite datasheet and documentation is digitally filed in the individual institution folder. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will analyze documentation and rationale, make recommendations and add to the NCA CASI Board of Directors agenda for appropriate action. NCA CASI Board of Directors shall have the authority to require comprehensive site visit to determine compliance of an institution seeking substantive where said substantive change requests are deemed by the board to warrant a comprehensive review with NCA CASI standards.

## **POLICY IX. INSTITUTION STRUCTURE**

### **9.01 Institution Consolidation or Reorganization.**

With the approval of the NCA CASI Board of Directors, a consolidated institution may claim continuing accreditation provided that at least one of the Institutions involved in the consolidation was accredited at the time of the consolidation. There must be no break in accreditation. As part of the approval process, the consolidated institution must have a full accreditation visit, including the preparation of a self-study, full on-site review, including preparation of a review team report and Board review of said report and Board decision whether to authorize the continued accreditation of the consolidated institution.

A new institution or institutions formed by reorganization of an accredited institution may continue accreditation with the approval of the NCA CASI Board. The new institution or institutions shall be expected to meet all membership requirements as fully as would any other member institution. As part of the approval process, the reorganized institution must have a full accreditation visit, including the preparation of a self-study, full on-site review, including preparation of a review team report and Board review of said report and Board decision whether to authorize the continued accreditation of the reorganized institution

### **9.02 Extension or Branch Campuses.**

Candidacy status or accreditation status shall be extended to branches only after a review of the business plan and a determination that the branch has sufficient educational, financial, operational, management,

and physical resources to meet the standards and policies *independent of the main campus*. **A branch campus shall have the same definition as provided in the regulations at 34 CFR 600.2.**

An extension campus of an institution can be accredited as part of the main campus provided the following conditions are met:

- a. The extension campus is under the direct supervision of the administrative head of the main campus institution.
- b. The extension campus serves students from the main campus (it does not serve students from more than one institution).
- c. The extension campus provides a program of services that are a part of the total educational program (it does not duplicate services or programs).
- d. The director or supervisor of the extension or branch campus reports directly to the administrative head of the main campus institution.
- e. The extension or branch campus operates under the same state education agency institution number as the main campus.

Any institution planning to develop a branch campus shall:

- a. Notify the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office within sixty (60) days of its decision to do so through the Substantive Change Process identified in Policy VIII – 8.02j.
- b. It shall submit a business plan which contains a description of the programs to be offered at the branch; projected revenues, expenditures and cash flow; and operation, management and physical resources.

Candidacy status or accreditation status shall be extended to branches only after a review of the business plan and a determination that the branch has sufficient educational, financial, operational, management, and physical resources to meet the standards and policies. Within six months of a change in ownership, a NCA CASI team shall visit the institution to determine the effect on the institution.

### **9.03 Change of Ownership.**

Any institution planning to change ownership shall:

- a. Notify NCA CASI Postsecondary Office within 60 days of its decision to do so through the Substantive Change Process identified in Policy VIII – 8.02 (d).
- b. It shall submit a plan that contains:
  - 1) Any changes in programs.
  - 2) Projected revenues, expenditures and cash flow.
  - 3) Changes in operation, management and physical resources.

Within six months of a change in ownership, an NCA CASI team shall visit the institution to determine the effect on the Institution.

#### **9.04 Additional Locations.**

Any institution planning to offer more than 50% of the coursework for one of its approved programs at an additional location shall:

- a. Notify NCA CASI Postsecondary Office within 60 days of its decision to do so through the Substantive Change Process identified in Policy VIII – 8.02j.
- b. The institution shall submit:
  - 1) A description of the programs to be offered at the additional location.
  - 2) Projected revenues, expenditures and cash flow.
  - 3) Operation, management, personnel and physical resources to demonstrate that it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to operate the additional location.

Approval shall be extended to the new location only after a review of the documentation and a determination that the additional location has sufficient educational, financial, operational, management, administrative, and personnel and physical resources to meet the NCA CASI standards and policies. A special site visit shall be conducted within six months of the establishment of the location. As part of its approval process, NCA CASI shall also review information from the original institution to determine if the original institution has the necessary fiscal and administrative capacity to operate the additional location.

In addition to any requirement described above, any institution that experiences the addition of two or more additional locations in a calendar year will be subject to an on-site visit to the additional locations to determine if the quality of the education being provided to students has been maintained. NCA CASI will define “rapid growth” as occurring where an institution experiences the addition of two or more additional locations in a calendar year. In such an event, such institutions will be subject to a comprehensive accreditation review, including site visits to the additional locations and the main location, to determine if the quality of the education being provided to students has been maintained and to review and verify the documentation provided in the substantive change process. Such visits will take place within six months of the establishment of the second location within a calendar year.

Any institution that operates more than three additional locations shall be required to host, at every location, an onsite review during every 5 year accreditation cycle.

#### **9.05 Teach-Out Plans and Agreements.**

- a. Any institution that is closing or discontinuing a program or closing the institution must submit to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office for approval, its teach-out agreement with other institutions accredited or pre-accredited (candidacy) by a nationally recognized agency.
- b. The teach-out agreement must ensure equitable treatment of students and assure students are provided all the instruction promised by the closed institution prior to its closure but not provided to the students because of the closure. The teach-out institution must be in close

geographic proximity to the closed institution and demonstrate compatibility and quality of its program content, structure, and scheduling to that of the closed institution. The teach-out institution must have the necessary experience, resources, and support services to serve students from the closing Institution or discontinued program.

- c. NCA CASI requires an institution it accredits or pre-accredits (candidacy) to submit a teach-out plan to the agency for approval upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
  - 1) The Secretary notifies the agency that the Secretary has initiated an emergency action against an Institution, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(G) of the Higher Education Act (HEA), or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(F) of the HEA, and that a teach-out plan is required.
  - 2) The agency acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation or pre-accreditation (candidacy) of the institution.
  - 3) The institution notifies the agency that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program.
  - 4) A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies the agency that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.
- d. NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and Board of Directors will evaluate the teach-out plan to ensure it:
  - 1) Provides for the equitable treatment of students under the criteria established by the agency.
  - 2) Specifies additional charges, if any.
  - 3) Provides for a notification process to the students of any additional charges.
- e. If NCA CASI approves a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another recognized accrediting agency, it notifies that accrediting agency of its approval. NCA CASI may require an Institution it accredits or pre-accredits (candidacy) to enter into a teach-out agreement as part of its teach-out plan.
- f. An institution accredited or pre-accredited (candidacy) by NCA CASI that enters into a teach-out agreement, either on its own or at the request of the agency, with another institution must submit that teach-out agreement to the agency for approval. NCA CASI approves the teach-out agreement only if the agreement is between institutions that are accredited or pre-accredited (candidacy) by a nationally recognized accrediting agency, is consistent with applicable standards and regulations, and provides for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring:
  - 1) The teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to:
    - (a) Provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the institution that is ceasing operations either entirely or at one of its locations; and

- (b) Remain stable, carry out its mission, and meet all obligations to existing students; and
- 2) The teach-out institution demonstrates that it can provide students access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances and that it will provide students with timely information about additional charges, if any.
- g. If an institution the agency accredits or pre-accredits (candidacy) closes without a teach-out plan or agreement, the NCA CASI shall work with the Department and the appropriate State agency, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charges.

## **POLICY X. PROGRAM AND STAFF INFORMATION UPDATES.**

In order to assure the institution's program and staff listing are up-to-date, program and staff changes must be reported to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department with appropriate documentation and explanation. These non-substantive change approvals do not require NCA CASI Board of Directors action due the changes are reflective of program and staff updates for record purposes and does not substantively impact the program.

### **10.01 Program Changes - Update Process.**

The NCA CASI Postsecondary Department generates official program lists for institutions that participate in Title IV.

- a. Program Name (Title of the program) Changes
  - 1) Identify the submitted and planned implementation dates.
  - 2) Complete the Update Form – Non-substantive Changes (Appendix F).
  - 3) Document the current program name, proposed program name, rationale for name change, and impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credentialing options.
  - 4) Submit form and documentation to NCA Postsecondary Office for review and approval.
  - 5) NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will notify the institution of the approved update and submit an updated program list.
- b. Changes in Program Hours (less than 25%)
  - 1) Program hour changes less than 25% decrease or increase in clock or credit hours OR program length AND the change does not result in adversely affecting the capacity of the Institution to continue to meet the standards and policies.
  - 2) The institution will complete the Update Form – Non-Substantive Changes (Appendix F).
  - 3) Document how the program is affected, rationale for change, and the impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credentialing options.

- 4) Submit form and documentation to NCA Postsecondary Office for review and approval.
  - 5) NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will notify the institution of the approved update and submit an updated program list reflecting the change in hours.
  - 6) IF the change in hours affects the capacity of the institution to meet the standards and policies or substantively changes the career technical program or industry credentials, the Institution must submit a Substantive Change form and follow the process identified in Policy VIII – 802 for processing and NCA CASI Board of Trustee approval action.
- c. Staff changes
- 1) Staff updates are processed through the online Accreditation Management System.
  - 2) Add staff changes including additions and deletions.
  - 3) Identify qualifications and credentials of the staff.

## **POLICY XI. PUBLIC REFERENCES TO ACCREDITATION STATUS**

### **11.01 Overview.**

In any public announcements regarding the institution's accreditation status, the accredited institution:

- a. Must avoid using the term "fully accredited." NCA CASI does not grant partial accreditation.
- b. Must avoid any future projection of the term of accreditation.

## **POLICY XII. ANNUAL REPORTING BY THE INSTITUTION**

### **12.01 Adherence to Standards.**

A member institution must satisfy conditions for continuing membership through continued compliance with the standards and an orderly and sustained plan for growth and development of its educational programs. These conditions will be reflected through a system of established annual reporting.

### **12.02 Submission of Annual Report.**

An institution desiring to continue accreditation shall submit an annual report and such supplementary information and reports as the NCA CASI Board of Directors find necessary in order to make accreditation decisions. The annual report is used to collect information on the following items:

- a. Institution demographics.
- b. Student Enrollment, including growth.
- c. Program offerings.
- d. Staff.

- e. Student achievement data related to completion, placement, and industry credential/licensure.
- f. Student loan default rates.
- g. Fiscal data, including Institutional Budgets and Audit Reports.
- h. Accreditation standards responses.
- i. Compliance to standards summary.

### **12.03 Review of Annual Report.**

- a. Each year the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will distribute the annual report forms with supplementary instructions, post training resources on the website, and offer online training.
- b. The online reporting window will be accessible for a four week period.
- c. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will check the receipt of reports and follow-up on institutions that have not completed or have incomplete reporting data.
- d. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will validate student achievement data with accrediting and state accountability systems, where data is available, and analyze the federal IPEDS data for completion found on the National Center for Educational Statistics website for postsecondary institutions.
- e. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will annually set student achievement rates for student completion, job placement and licensure pass rates at one (1) standard deviation below the mean of all NCA CASI postsecondary institutions.
- f. The NCA CASI Board of Directors shall review and vote to adopt the set student achievement rates for the year.
- g. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office shall review and report to the NCA CASI Board of Directors the name of any institution that has a Title IV student loan default rate higher than 25%.
- h. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will make an initial review of compliance and prepare reports for review by the NCA CASI-Board of Directors, with necessary action to be taken by the NCA CASI Board of Directors.
- i. The NCA CASI Board of Directors shall examine the annual report data and other member institution data in its annual review of the status of candidacy and accredited Institutions.
- j. The NCA CASI Board of Directors shall vote to place On Probation institutions falling below any of the three (3) established rates of student achievement and/or having student Title IV loan default rates higher than 25%.
- g. The NCA CASI Board of Directors will also review the annual reports of a sample of institutions that have no reported violations on an annual basis.

#### **12.04 Previously Reported Violations.**

Each candidacy or accredited institution in its annual report to the Agency is required to list all violations of standards cited the previous year and to indicate action that has been taken to correct the deficiencies and provide substantive evidence of the actions taken.

#### **12.05 Review of Financial Stability.**

- a. NCA CASI requires that all accredited and candidate postsecondary institutions submit audit results on an annual basis that has been prepared by an outside agency and in accordance with General Acceptable Accounting Principles (GAAP). The following procedure will be used when reviewing audits received:
  - 1) Public Institutions - NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and NCA CASI Board of Directors will review, on an annual basis, the independent audit data submitted by each candidate and accredited postsecondary institution using a criteria rubric. The staff will verify that the institution operates within its annual budget. The following documents will be reviewed as part of the submitted audit:
    - (a) Auditor's report.
    - (b) Balance sheet.
    - (c) Income and expense statement.
    - (d) Appropriate footnotes to the financial statements.
  - 2) Non-Public Institutions - NCA CASI Postsecondary Department office and NCA CASI Board of Directors will review, on an annual basis, the independent audit submitted by each candidate and accredited postsecondary institution using a criteria rubric. The staff will verify that the institution operates within its annual budget. The following documents will be reviewed as part of the submitted audit:
    - (a) Auditor's report.
    - (b) Balance sheet.
    - (c) Income and expense statement.
    - (d) Statement of cash flow.
    - (e) Appropriate footnotes to the financial statements.
  - 3) NCA CASI Postsecondary Department staff and finance personnel will review the submitted audit to test the three conditions below.
    - (a) Total assets are equal to or exceed total liabilities.
    - (b) Positive equity as illustrated on the balance sheet.

- (c) Positive net income as illustrated on the income statement.
- 4) The three conditions listed above will be applied to each branch campus.
  - (a) The Postsecondary Department will review audit documentation and make recommendations for the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will review and determine compliance.
  - (b) The Postsecondary Department will review audit documentation and make recommendations for the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will review the recommendations and determine any accreditation status decision based on audit compliance.

### **POLICY XIII. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RATES**

Institutions must meet student achievement expectations related to completion, program placement, and licensure exam pass rates.

#### **13.01 State and/or Industry Credential Agency Established Rates.**

If the institution or its programs are required to adhere to state-established or industry credential agency-required student achievement rates, -- including job placement, state licensure, and program completion rates -- NCA CASI will apply those rates; provided that composite rates shall be established by NCA CASI for institutions with multiple programs subject to different state or industry credential agency-required rates; and provided that the institution must also meet any applicable standards for Title IV eligibility established by the U.S. Department of Education for job placement rates or other measures of student achievement.

#### **13.02 State and/or Industry Credential Agency – No Established Rates.**

- a. NCA CASI will establish for each institution composite expected student achievement rates applicable to programs that are not subject to required student achievement rates established by the state or an industry credential agency. Such composite rates:
  - 1) Shall address job placement, state licensure, and program completion rates.
  - 2) Shall meet any applicable standards for Title IV eligibility established by the U.S. Department of Education for job placement rates or other measures of student achievement.
  - 3) Shall take into account student achievement rates for related fields or institutions; rates established in state plans under the Perkins Act; the institution's own prior achievement rates reported in its most recent annual report; and standards of nationally recognized program credentialing agencies.
- b. Notwithstanding paragraph 13.02a, an institution may establish its own student achievement standards. If it does so, NCA CASI shall review the institution's standards to ensure that they address job placement, state licensure, and program completion rates and are reasonable in light of related nationally recognized program credentialing agency standards and state standards for student achievement and shall review the institution's processes for collection and review of student achievement data for accuracy and for use in institutional improvement plans.

## **POLICY XIV. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In any public announcements regarding its accreditation status, the institution must disclose its status accurately and must include the name, address and telephone number for NCA CASI.

In any public announcements regarding the institution's accreditation status the candidacy status institution must avoid any implication that candidacy status equates with accreditation or automatically leads to accreditation.

Institutional integrity policy 2.02d identifies that an institution is required to represent itself accurately in all aspects of the accreditation process. If an institution misrepresents itself, including accreditation status, to the public, has any condition that may be detrimental to the clientele of the institution, or falsely reports its compliance with the polices and standards for accreditation, the institution's accreditation can be dropped. If an institution's accreditation is recommended to be dropped, the institution shall be afforded due process in consideration of such action.

## **POLICY XV. NCA CASI ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **15.01 Organizational Responsibilities.**

In carrying out its accreditation policies and procedures, NCA CASI is responsible for ensuring institution adherence to the standards and policies, conducting an external team review of every institution at least once every five years, reviewing all institution reports, granting, or denying accreditation status for institutions, responding to complaints by and about institutions or about NCA CASI, and maintaining accurate, complete, and timely records.

- a. Code of Ethics. In performing the responsibilities outlined above, all Directors, officials, employees, and agents of NCA CASI shall adhere to the NCA CASI Conflict of Interest and Ethics Code Policy.
- b. Gifts. NCA CASI Directors, officials, employees, and agents, including members of external team reviews and other agents of NCA CASI who provide services to institutions or review their compliance with accreditation standards are prohibited from accepting gifts, other than institution logo items of minimal value, from institutions.
- c. Investigations. In performing its duties, NCA CASI may investigate an accredited institution on any matter related to possible violations of standards and policies at any time. Investigations will only be initiated when supported by evidence and when they involve matters that could hinder or disrupt the educational effectiveness of the institution or ability of the institution to meet accreditation standards. All investigations shall be conducted with proper attention to due process, and the outcome of the investigation, including recommended actions, shall be reported to the NCA CASI Board of Directors for appropriate action.
- d. NCA CASI shall make publicly available the names, qualifications and employment affiliations of the principal staff members of NCA CASI by publication of the information on the NCA CASI website.

### **15.02 Organizational Recordkeeping.**

- a. Maintenance of and Public Access to Institution Records. NCA CASI maintains a record retention system which includes procedures for maintenance and access to Institutional records. NCA CASI maintains permanent records of institution accreditation status histories, including all decisions made throughout the institution's affiliation with NCA CASI regarding its accreditation, pre-accreditation, and substantive changes, including all correspondence that is significantly related to those decisions. In addition, NCA CASI retains all institution accreditation reports and documentation for a 10-year period, documenting two full terms of accreditation. NCA CASI makes available for public access the institution's accreditation status, term of accreditation, and date of initial accreditation on its website. NCA CASI makes available to the public upon request the institution's Quality Assurance Review Report, Accreditation Progress Report, and any special or interim accreditation reports.
- b. Record Maintenance

NCA CASI maintains complete and accurate records for each applicant, candidate, accredited, and dropped Institution:

- 1) NCA CASI's last full accreditation or candidacy review of each institution or program, including on-site evaluation team reports, the institution's responses to on-site reports, periodic review reports, any reports of special reviews conducted by the agency between regular reviews, and a copy of the institution's or program's most recent self-assessment.
- 2) Updated program data.
- 3) Substantive change tracking data.
- 4) NCA CASI correspondence with the institution.
- 5) United States Department of Education documentation.
- 6) State and agency accountability data and documentation.
- 7) Complaint/grievance, and appeal data.
- 8) Staff records.
- 9) Other documentation.

## **POLICY XVI: REQUIRED NCA CASI NOTIFICATIONS**

### **16.01 Notification of Accreditation Statuses.**

The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office shall submit the following documentation to the United States Secretary of Education, appropriate state agencies, and other appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time the institution is notified within five (5) days of the subject action. The public will be notified on the NCA CASI web page within 24 hours of institution notification.

- a. Written notification of a final decision to grant initial or continuing accreditation or candidacy status to an institution; final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate accreditation or candidacy status; final decision to take adverse action against an institution; final decision to

place an institution On Probation status; decision by an accredited institution to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or candidacy status; or decision by an accredited institution or program to let its accreditation or candidacy lapse. Any notification of adverse action shall be accompanied by documentation, a full explanation of the reasons for such action, and any comments submitted by the institution regarding the decision. All notifications will be made at the same time the institution is notified, which must be within 30 days of the final decision.

- b. A list of institutions approved for postsecondary education.
- c. A copy of its annual report.
- d. The name of any institution accredited by NCA CASI that NCA CASI has reason to believe is failing to meet its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse and NCA CASI's reasons for the concern. When the subject of notice under this provision concerns allegations of fraud or abuse, NCA CASI shall seek direction and approval from the Secretary or other relevant governmental agency prior to transmitting any communications concerning the allegations to the institution.
- e. Proposed NCA CASI policies, procedures, or standards that might alter its scope of recognition or compliance with USED requirements, including criteria for recognition.
- f. NCA CASI shall provide to the Secretary any and all requested information that may bear upon an accredited or pre-accredited institution's compliance with its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities, including the eligibility of the institution or program to participate in Title IV, HEA programs.
- g. NCA CASI shall review in a case by case basis any of the circumstances surrounding the contacts described in 16.01(d) or 16.01(f), and the need for the confidentiality of that contact. Upon a specific request by the Department, NCA CASI shall consider the contact confidential

## **16.02 Specific Regulatory Responsibilities of NCA CASI.**

NCA CASI shall comply with the following regulations for institutions it accredits:

- a. To have on record the self-studies, the on-site accreditation team reports, the institution's response to on-site reports, any reports of special reviews conducted between regular accreditation visits, and accreditation decisions for each Institution for the last two accreditation cycles.
- b. NCA CASI may conduct an unannounced on-site inspection at an institution that is approved for postsecondary education or training for the purpose of determining whether the institution has the personnel, facilities, and resources it claimed to have either during the previous on-site review or in subsequent reports to the agency.
- c. When an institution provides incorrect or misleading information regarding its accreditation status, content of accreditation visitation reports, or accreditation status, the institution will be notified that it is required to make a public correction of the information using the same vehicle as used for disseminating the incorrect or misleading information. Failure to comply will be grounds for adverse action against the institution.

- d. If notified by another accrediting agency or state agency that a postsecondary institution has lost its approval or accreditation, is the subject of an interim action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency and the action could potentially lead to the suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or candidacy; is subject of an interim action by a state agency potentially leading to the suspension, revocation or termination of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education; or there is threatened loss of accreditation and the due process procedures required by the action have not been completed, the NCA Board of Directors will review the decision of the other agency and take the information into account in making NCA CASI's own decision regarding accreditation of the institution. If, despite such notification, the NCA CASI Board of Directors grants accreditation or candidacy status to the institution, a thorough and reasonable explanation will be forwarded to the Secretary within 30 days of the action taken by the NCA CASI Board of Directors. The rationale for the decision will be consistent with standards and policies for accreditation. The institution may not be accredited or preaccredited if the institution lacks or fails to maintain legal authorization under applicable State law to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level. Institutions shall be required as part of the application for candidacy process and annual reporting process to affirmatively state whether the institution lacks or has failed maintain legal authorization/recognition to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level and/or accreditation from another recognized accreditation agency.

NCA CASI shall not grant initial or renewed accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution, or a program offered by an institution, if the NCA CASI knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of (1) a pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State; (2) a decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation; (3) a pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or (4) probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.

NCA CASI may grant accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution described in this section after providing to the Secretary of the Department of Education, within 30 days of its action, a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude NCA CASI's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation.

If the NCA CASI learns that an institution it accredits or preaccredits, is the subject of an adverse action by another recognized accrediting agency or has been placed on probation or an equivalent status by another recognized agency, NCA CASI shall, within 30 days of confirming the adverse action, probation or an equivalent action by another recognized agency, conduct a review of the institution to determine compliance with NCA CASI standards and policies to determine if NCA CASI should also take action or place the institution on probation or show cause.

If not required by other sections of the NCA CASI policies, NCA CASI shall, upon request, share with other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and recognized State approval agencies information about the accreditation or preaccreditation status of an institution and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited or preaccredited institution.

- e. The agency shall establish procedures for sharing accreditation information with other accreditation agencies and state agencies on a regular basis. Further, NCA CASI shall publish on its website a procedure by which other accrediting and State approval agencies may contact

the NCA CASI Vice President and request accreditation information regarding the status of the institutions accredited or preaccredited by NCA CASI.

- f. The following written materials must be maintained by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department and made available to the public upon request:
  - 1) Each type of accreditation and pre-accreditation (candidacy) it grants.
  - 2) The procedures that Institutions or programs must follow in applying for accreditation and pre-accreditation.
  - 3) The standards and procedures it uses to determine whether to grant, reaffirm, reinstate, restrict, deny, revoke, terminate, or take any other action related to each type of accreditation and pre-accreditation the agency grants.
  - 4) The institutions that the agency currently accredits or pre-accredits and, for each Institution, the year the agency will next review or reconsider it for accreditation or pre-accreditation.
  - 5) The names, academic and professional qualifications, and relevant employment and organizational affiliations of the members of the agency's policy and decision making bodies and the agency's principle administrative staff.

### **16.03 Standards Review and Application.**

At least once in every five years, NCA CASI shall conduct a comprehensive review of all postsecondary standards to ensure clarity, specificity, validity, reliability, consistency and adequacy for measuring quality of education and training provided by institutions it accredits, and relevancy to types of program and training needed by students.

- a. The review shall examine each of the Agency's standards and the standards as a whole.
- b. Research standards of several other accrediting agencies that accredit institutions especially those agencies with a primary accreditation focus on postsecondary, non-degree granting institutions (as opposed to program accrediting agencies).
- c. Analyze the United States Department of Education recent guidelines for accrediting agencies Section 602.16 standards requirements.
- d. The review process shall include a collection of information and input from a broad sample of current and past employers, professional associations, state agencies, licensing bodies, representatives of business and industry, and current students.
- e. Seek input from students, staff, business, agencies, and higher education to determine whether standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of training and meet the training needs of the students.
- f. These data identifying gap analysis and revision suggestions shall be used by the Standards Review Committee to revise the standards as appropriate.

- g. Drafts of the revisions shall be circulated to members of the same groups for feedback and further refinement. Any new or revised standard shall also be circulated to these groups for comment two months prior to their adoption.
- h. At no time will the interval between the availability of data from the standards review and the finalization of changes be more than 12 months.
- i. All comments will be reviewed before changes are adopted by the Board of Directors. The NCA CASI Board of Directors shall review and approve the adoption of new postsecondary standards.
- j. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will revise the Standards Manual, Postsecondary Evidence Guide, and Document Management Tool with the new standards.
- k. Resources will be posted on the website and used for training purposes.
- l. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will implement training.
- m. Review process for individual standards can be initiated at any time throughout the five year cycle.
  - 1) This process must begin within 12 months of the requested change.
  - 2) NCA CASI Postsecondary Office receives a comment from any constituency (Institution representative, business representative, public representative) expressing concern with a postsecondary standard.
  - 3) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office sends the interested party a Standard Request Form (SCRF) (Attachment G).
  - 4) The interested party returns the SCRF with a specific request for a standard change.
  - 5) The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office staff reviews the request and completes the SCRF.
  - 6) The SCRF is forwarded to the NCA CASI Board of Directors at the next scheduled meeting or conference call for action.
  - 7) Possible actions will be determined:
    - (a) The request is validated by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and will move forward for first review by the Board of Directors.
    - (b) The request expressed a valid concern but the standard was rewritten by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and will move forward for first review by the Board.
    - (c) After a thorough review by the NCA CASI Postsecondary staff and the NCA CASI Board of Directors, the current criterion was deemed appropriate at this time.
  - 8) The Standards Review Committee established by the Board of Directors will review the requested change and make a final determination.

- 9) A letter will be sent to the standard change initiator indicating the status of the request.
- 10) If the decision is either 7(a) or 7 (b), new or revised standard is recommended to the NCA CASI Board of Directors.
- 11) Upon NCA CASI Board of Directors approval, constituents of proposed changes will be notified.
- 12) NCA CASI Postsecondary Office will revise Standards Manual, Postsecondary Evidence Guide, and Document Management Tool.
- 13) Resources will be updated on the webpage.
- 14) Develop and implement training.

#### **16.04 Public Information.**

The agency shall make available to the public information regarding the accreditation status of member institutions.

- a. Each institution shall publish a public notification of regular accreditation visits and provide a venue for public input concerning its qualifications for candidacy or accredited status. These third-party comments shall be forwarded to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and made available to the accreditation team to use in making their accreditation status recommendation and to the Board of Directors in making accreditation decisions.
- b. The agency shall publish the type of accreditation and candidacy granted by the agency; procedures for applying for accreditation and candidacy; the standards and procedures used for determining whether to grant, reaffirm, reinstate, deny, restrict, revoke or take any other action related to each type of accreditation and candidacy; the names, academic and professional qualifications and relevant employment and organizational affiliations of the members of its policy and decision-making bodies as well as its principal administrative staff; the institutions currently accredited or in candidacy and the date when the Agency will review or reconsider the accreditation or candidacy of each institution.

#### **16.05 Default Rates.**

Institutions identified by the United States Department of Education, Office of Federal Financial Aid, as meeting a trigger level related to students who are in repayment who have defaulted, are required to submit action plans for improving the default rate to NCA CASI Postsecondary Department.

- a. The report submitted to NCA CASI Postsecondary Department must include the following elements:
  - 1) Institute default management plan.
  - 2) Action plan to reduce the default rate.
  - 3) All action taken by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) regarding the default rate.

- 4) Response to action letter received from USED regarding the default rate
- b. All institutions participating in student loan programs are to report the student loan default rates during the NCA CASI annual reporting cycle.

## **POLICY XVII: COMPLAINTS BY AND ABOUT ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS**

### **17.01 Written Complaints.**

Any complaints submitted by or about institutions or about NCA CASI must contain an original signature (except as noted in 17.02 below) and be submitted in writing. Complaints should be filed with [name official and address, including email address] All complaints should include the following information:

- a. The name, address, phone number, and other pertinent contact information of the complainant. However, anonymous complaints may be filed.
- b. Citation of the standard or policy violated, or, in the case of complaints directed at NCA CASI, of U.S. Department of Education regulations governing the recognition of accrediting agencies, 34 CFR Part 602.
- c. A description of the circumstances or events and any relevant documentation that support the complaint.
- d. A statement of relationship with the individual or institution involved, if the complainant is not the aggrieved individual or institution. Complaints concerning individual students will only be investigated or sent to the institution if the complaint is made or authorized by a student of majority age or by an individual that has the legal authority and right to represent the student.
- e. The name, address, and other contact information for the official at the institution that has been contacted by the complainant to resolve the problem or situation.
- f. Permission for representatives of NCA CASI to access any records concerning the complainant if such records are not available to the public.
- g. A statement of first-hand knowledge of the substance of the complaint, unless the complaint is supported by documents available to the public.

### **17.02 Complaints Regarding Child Abuse, Sexual Harassment, or Discrimination.**

Any complaint that identifies potential child abuse, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the part of a student or staff member, shall be forwarded immediately to the appropriate federal or state agency authorized to investigate such complaints. Unsigned complaints concerning potential child abuse, sexual harassment, or discrimination will be forwarded to the dean of student affairs or other similar official in the institution's organization. Findings by the appropriate agency may result in action by the NCA CASI Board of Directors.

### **17.03 Individual Grievances.**

Isolated and individual grievances between an institution and person are not adjudicated. Complaints of that nature, documented and signed by the person initiating the complaint, will be forwarded to the institution. The institution shall respond to the complaint within 30 days. A copy of the complaint and

the institution's response to it will be retained by the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department. If a complaint or series of complaints against an institution suggest a particular violation or pattern of violations which might affect the institution's ability to meet standards or policies, further investigation may be authorized and shall occur within sixty (60) working days of such authorization.

#### **17.04 Review of Complaints.**

Complaints that identify potential violations of NCA CASI standards or policies or, with regard to complaints directed at NCA CASI, federal regulations, will be reviewed.

- a. Complaints will be stamp-dated upon receipt and maintained in segregated files of the Agency.
- b. Assuming the complaint on its face states a potential violation, including a summary of relevant facts, within the scope of this policy, notice of the complaint will be given to the Institution (assuming the complaint is directed against an institution), with an opportunity to respond in writing. Complaints directed against the Agency will similarly be provided to Agency employees responsible for the complained of conduct (or lack thereof) for response. Complaints that do not state a potential violation (or include a summary of relevant facts) within the scope of this policy will be returned without prejudice to the complainant.
- c. If the institution or Agency employees contest the complaint, the complaint will be referred to a panel within the Agency that will be responsible for reviewing the complaint and response and, as necessary, investigating the complaint. In the case of a complaint directed at the Agency, the panel will not include employees responsible for the complained of conduct (or lack thereof). As appropriate, the panel may conduct a site visit to the institution or refer the complaint to an external review team that will be sent to the institution, provided the complaint is resolved within the timeframes described in the following subparagraph.
- d. An institution or Agency employees that are the subject of a complaint will have 30 days to respond to the complaint. If there is no response within this time frame or if the response indicates there is no material issue of fact, the [name of Agency official position responsible for resolving complaints] will notify the complainant of the Agency's decision no later than 60 days after a response is due or received, whichever is earlier. If the response raises material issues of fact, the [Agency official] shall establish a process for and timeline for resolving the complaint (subject to an opportunity for comment by the complainant and the institution or other subject of the complaint). In general, unless the complaint raises issues of first impression or issues that require extensive fact gathering, the Agency's policy is that complaints will be resolved within a period of 90 days after they are received by the Agency.
- e. If an institution fails to respond in a timely manner to the complaint or if the panel resolves the complaint in favor of the complainant, the panel will refer its decision to the cognizant official of the Agency for appropriate follow-up action. The panel's determination may result in changes to an institution's accreditation status. Any adverse actions regarding an institution's accreditation status will be processed in accordance with due process policies included in this document. The NCA CASI Board of Directors does not have civil authority to impose any order of settlement on an institution or its representatives. Complainants seeking a settlement, payment, or compensation should pursue their concern through appropriate channels under state or federal law.

#### **17.05 Institution's Response to Team Report.**

After reviewing the visiting team report, including the visiting team's recommendation, the administrator of the institution may send a formal written response to the corporate headquarters for NCA CASI. This formal response is optional; if the administrator agrees totally with the report and the accreditation recommendation, no response is required. If a response is prepared, copies should be sent to the team chair and each team member.

- a. If the institution chooses to respond, the response must provide the institution's comments on the team's findings. The response becomes part of the official record of the visit and becomes an integral part of the review process including the next accreditation visit to the institution.
- b. The institution must send its response to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office and team members within thirty days of receipt of the visiting team report. The NCA CASI Postsecondary Office should be notified if the institution expects any delay in submitting the response and, upon such notification, will determine whether an extended deadline shall be granted. If the Institution fails to submit a response by the deadline established, NCA CASI will move forward with the appropriate accreditation review process.

## **POLICY XVIII: RIGHT TO APPEAL**

### **18.01 Right to Appeal.**

An institution has the right to appeal any adverse action prior to the action becoming final. No adverse action, including dropping an Institution from accreditation, will be taken until the final disposition of the appeal.

### **18.02 Appeal Procedures.**

An institution wishing to appeal shall do so in accordance with the procedures set forth below:

- a. The institution shall file its intent to appeal an adverse action within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision. The intent to appeal shall be submitted to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department.
- b. The institution's written grounds for appeal shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice of proposed adverse action. The institution's written grounds shall set forth the basis for its appeal. Only evidence previously submitted to or in the possession of NCA CASI may be included in the submission. New evidence will not be considered.
- c. The Institution shall submit to the NCA CASI Postsecondary Department a bond for costs of the appeal in the amount of \$25,000 that accompanies the written grounds for appeal. After the costs of the appeal have been deducted from the amount of the bond, any unused portion of the bond shall be returned to the institution. If the costs of the appeal exceed the amount of the bond, the institution shall pay the additional costs to NCA CASI.
- d. A standing Appeals Panel Committee (APC) comprised of five impartial members who are knowledgeable about postsecondary education requirements shall be recommended by the NCA CASI Vice President, and confirmed by the NCA CASI Board of Directors. This committee shall include individuals with postsecondary career and technical experience who qualify as practitioners, educators/academics, and administrators. The definition of practitioner representative is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in the

practice in the area being evaluated. The definition of Academic representative is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary career and technical education in teaching and/or research. The definition of Administrative representative is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary career and technical program or institutional administration. At least two APC members shall be public representatives. Representatives of the public means a person who is not (1) an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited or preaccredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation or preaccreditation; (2) a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the agency; or (3) a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in section (1) or (2) of this definition. The members of the APC will serve staggered three year terms and shall adhere to the NCA CASI Conflict of Interest Policy. NCA CASI shall make publicly available the names, qualifications and employment affiliations of the Appeals Board members by publication of the information on the NCA CASI website.

- e. Three members of the APC will be randomly selected to serve on the Appeals Panel for any scheduled hearing. Any Appeals Panel that is empanelled to hold a hearing shall include a public representative, practitioner representative, educators/academics representative and administrative representative. Individuals may satisfy more than one category of representation on the panel. The panel may not include any member of the NCA CASI Board that took the proposed adverse action or any individual who holds any other appointed, paid, or elected position with NCA CASI. If the institution has good cause to believe that any member of the standing appeals body should not hear the institution's appeal, it shall notify the Vice President in writing of the basis for its objection at the time it submits its grounds for appeal. Objections to the composition of the panel shall be heard and ruled upon by the Chair of the NCA CASI Board of Directors in consultation with the Vice President. The Appeals Panel members will review the NCA CASI Code of Ethics and the NCA CASI Conflict of Interest Policy and sign the NCA CASI Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Statement prior to hearing any appeal.
- f. The Appeals Panel will conduct a hearing within sixty (60) days of receipt of the institution's intent to appeal. Prior to the hearing, both the Institution and NCA CASI may submit briefs or written materials to the panel, with copies to each other, in accordance with reasonable and equitable timelines established by the Panel. Both the institution and NCA CASI may be represented by counsel in the appeal, including at the hearing. Both the institution and NCA CASI may present evidence, including testimony of witnesses, and argument at the hearing but shall not have the right to cross-examine witnesses. Both the institution and NCA CASI must provide notice of the witnesses who it intends to testify and of the names and positions of persons who will represent it at the hearing at least 30 days prior to the hearing. The institution may request that the appeal hearing be transcribed. No audio-taping or video-taping of the appeal is permitted. The panel may visit the institution before or after the hearing to confirm information relevant to the appeal.
- g. All expenses of the appeal, including all expenses of the members of the Appeals Panel, are to be borne fully by the institution submitting the appeal.
- h. The Appeals Panel affirms, amends, reverses, or remands the proposed adverse action. If the Appeals Panel affirms, amends, or reverses the proposed adverse action, the Appeals Panel's decision is final and shall be implemented by the NCA CASI Board consistent with the Appeals Panel's decision or instructions.

- i. The Appeals Panel notifies the institution and NCA CASI in writing of the result of the appeal and the basis for the result.
- j. If the Appeals Panel remands the adverse action to the NCA CASI Board for further consideration, the Appeals Panel must identify specific issues that the NCA CASI Board must address. If, upon remand, the NCA CASI Board complies with the Appeals Panel's instructions, its decision on remand shall be considered final.
- k. Before a final adverse action decision, an institution may seek review of new financial information, in writing if all of the following conditions are met:
  - 1) The financial information was unavailable to the institution or program until after the decision subject to appeal was made.
  - 2) The financial information is significant and bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the agency. The criteria of significance and materiality are determined by the agency.
  - 3) The only remaining deficiency cited by the agency in support of a final adverse action decision is the institution's or program's failure to meet an agency standard pertaining to finances.

An institution or program may seek the review of new financial information described above only once and any determination by the agency made with respect to that review does not provide a basis for an appeal.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A**

Potential Applicant Inquiry Form (2 Pages)

Disclaimer: The most up-to-date form is located on the [www.ncacasi.org](http://www.ncacasi.org) website.

**NCA CASI • Career, Technical, and Postsecondary Accreditation  
Potential Applicant Inquiry Form**

Date:

We appreciate your interest in the NCA CASI postsecondary accreditation. Please complete the following information (click on the grey box to add information) and email to our office at nbarlow@ncacasi.org. We look forward to further discussing our accreditation process and assisting you in the continuous improvement endeavors of your organization. Thank you!

<b>Name of School/ Institution</b>	
<b>Street Address City, State &amp; Zip</b>	
<b>Phone Fax</b>	
<b>Web Address</b>	
<b>Years in Existence</b>	Year School Established
<b>Organization</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> For Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Not for Profit
<b>Number of Staff</b>	# Administrators # Instructors # Support Staff

Operating under the auspices of:

- County board of education
- School district
- State approval
- Other (describe)

Has this school operated under a previous name in the past five years?  yes  no

If yes, what name?

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>Administrator's Name</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Accreditation Contact Person</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	

**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**

<b>Postsecondary Students (Part-time) #</b>	<b>Postsecondary Students (Full-time) #</b>	<b>Postsecondary Business &amp; Industry Training Participants</b>

**POSTSECONDARY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

<b>Postsecondary Completion %</b>	<b>Postsecondary Placement %</b>	<b>Postsecondary Industry Credential Passage %</b>

**POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS OFFERED**

Program completion leads to a:  Certificate  Degree  Licensure (Check all that apply.)

List all programs currently offered at the institution.

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Clock Hours</b>	<b>Industry Credential</b>	<b>Name of Program Accreditor (if applicable)</b>

**ACCREDITATION EXPERIENCE**

1. Has institution been accredited through NCA CASI or SACS CASI in the past?  
 yes  no

If yes, was designation?  postsecondary  adult vocational  secondary

2. Was this institution accredited by another accrediting agency?  yes  no

If yes, name of accrediting agency (or agencies):

3. How did you learn about NCA CASI Postsecondary Accreditation?

4. Comments:

Thank you for contacting us! We will review your information and contact you regarding the next steps.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix B**

Accreditation Application Form (2 Pages)

Disclaimer: The most up-to-date form identifying fee requirements is located on the [www.ncacasi.org](http://www.ncacasi.org) website.

**NCA CASI**  
**Career, Technical, & Postsecondary Accreditation Application**

An institution applying for accreditation must complete this application and send it along with a nonrefundable application fee of \$350 and the first year's accreditation fees of \$2,500. All applications received prior to May 1 will be for the current fiscal year. Applications received after May 1 will be applied to the fiscal year beginning July 1. Questions: (888) 413-3669 Ext. #6978

**INSTITUTION INFORMATION**

Institution Name		
Institution Address		City/State/Zip/Country
Institution Mailing Address (if different from Institution address)		City/State/Zip/Country
Name of Principal or Head of Institution		
<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.		
Telephone Number		Fax Number
E-mail Address		Web Address
Grades Served	Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Professional Staff
Years in existence	Institution Governance: <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> For Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Not for Profit	
Institution Type:		

**FINANCIAL AUDIT**

Upon receipt of your processed application, we will contact you to discuss the next steps of the application process which involves training, preparing for, and hosting an on-site Readiness Visit. Postsecondary institutions are required to submit a financial audit covering the past two years and prepared by an outside agency according to GAAP, or as required by law. An independent audit is required on an annual basis and will be submitted during the annual report process.

**ACCREDITATION FEES**

Fees are for the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30. Each application must be accompanied by a check payable to NCA CASI for the first year's accreditation fees plus a \$350 application fee. All applicants, candidates, and accredited institutions pay annual accreditation fees. Note that all application and accreditation fees are non-refundable.

**Annual Accreditation Fee: \$2,500 + Application Fee: \$350 = Total: \$ 2,850.00**

Billing Name if different from Institution Name	
Institution's Billing Address	City/State/Zip/Country

## STATE AUTHORIZATION

Please answer the following questions pertaining to state authorization:

Has your institution ever been denied authorization by state agency?

Yes      No

Is your institution subject to pending or final state action or revoke/withdrawal accreditation?

Yes      No

If so, please attach all documentation regarding said action to this application.

## AUTHORIZATION

We, the legally constituted officials of the Institution/institution and state named in this application hereby express our official approval of the policies, standard, criteria, and regulations governing membership and accreditation in the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and Institution Improvement. We approve the application of the above named Institution/institution for membership in the Association; and if given favorable consideration, we agree to conform to all requirements. It is understood that the submission of the annual report by the Institution will constitute renewed acceptance of all NCA CASI standards established for Institutions of this class and will indicate the desire of the governing board to have the Institution continue accreditation by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and Institution Improvement. **(Signatures are required.)**

---

Signature of Board President

Date

---

Signature of Superintendent/Corporate Head

Date

I accept the responsibility placed upon me by the Board to pursue and maintain the membership of this Institution/institution in the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and Institution Improvement.

---

Signature of Head of Institution

Date

### Mail completed application and fees to:

#### NCA CASI Career/Technical & Postsecondary Education

Attn: Finance Department  
9115 Westside Parkway  
Alpharetta, GA 30009

To wire your application and accreditation fees, please contact 678.392.2285 x5625 for instructions.

### OFFICE USE ONLY

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Accreditation Status

Applicant

Candidate

Recommended for Accreditation – Comments:

Institution ID:

---

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX C**

Visit Date Request Form (1 Page)

**NCA CASI Postsecondary Accreditation  
Visit Date Request Form**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date Accreditation Expires \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Dates for NCA CASI Postsecondary Team Visit**

First Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Second Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Third Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Self Study Coordinator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of visit:**

- Candidacy Readiness
- Quality Assurance Review for continued accreditation
- Technical Assistance Visit

Would you prefer to have out of state team members?  Yes  No

What particular areas of expertise would you like to have represented on the visiting team?

*(i.e. Curriculum development, data analysis, survey construction, business/industry contacts, etc.)* \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose your method of reply: E-mail to: [bmason@ncacasi.org](mailto:bmason@ncacasi.org) or Fax to: 770.346.9260 or**

**Mail to:** Career, Technical, and Postsecondary Education Office  
Marshall University  
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive  
South Charleston, WV 25303

**Questions: Call Brenda Mason at 888.413.3669, extension #6978**

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX D**

Postsecondary Reader Reviewer Form (4 Pages)

**Postsecondary Reader Reviewer Form  
Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Report Analysis**

**Institution** \_\_\_\_\_ **City, State** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair** \_\_\_\_\_ **Chair Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**QAR Site Visit Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Status Recommended** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. QAR REPORT NARRATIVE ANALYSIS**

Completed  
"X"

**1. Provides substantive feedback to the school.**

- Provides positive feedback on strengths
- Provides suggestions and guidance on opportunities for improvement

Comments (If Applicable):

**2. Uses evidence as a basis for every comment**

Comments (If Applicable):

**3. Contains the appropriate level of detail.**

Comments (If Applicable):

**4. Uses Comments (If Applicable): that are developmentally appropriate for the school**

Comments (If Applicable):

**5. Includes a discussion of data used for meeting/not meeting the standard**

Comments (If Applicable):

**6. Uses praise freely for**

- Evidence of growth/improvement in student performance
- Evidence of improvement in school effectiveness
- Evidence of improved process efficiency

Comments (If Applicable):

**7. Makes suggestions**

- Based on experience and professional judgment without being prescriptive
- Are tied closely to clusters of indicators
- Include references to multiple standards when appropriate

Comments (If Applicable):

**8. Uses the following format**

- First paragraph: Introduction and description of evidence  
*Strengths:*
- Praise the school for its successes and strong practices
- Highlight those practices that address multiple indicators
- Use a variety of examples from evidence
- Build on strengths, making suggestions about expansion to other areas
- Provide examples on how the school can improve  
*Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement:*
- Provide suggestions for improvement that address multiple indicators
- Propose suggestions for building upon and leveraging strengths
- If any indicators are not evident, offer suggestions
- If the school does not meet the standard, provide strong suggestions for what is needed (these suggestions should be brought forward and appear as a recommendation earlier in the report)

Comments (If Applicable):

**II. SNAPSHOT ANALYSIS**

**1. Student Achievement Performance data**

- Completion
- Placement
- Industry Credential Passage Rate
- Aligns with Standard Rating
- Commendation noted (if greater than 90%)
- Required action (if less than 70%)

Comments (If Applicable):

**2. Enrollment**

Comments (If Applicable):

**3. Governance Approval**

Comments (If Applicable):

**4. Articulations**

Comments (If Applicable):

**5. Programs**

- Program Name
- State/Industry Credential
- Individual Program Accreditation (if applicable)

Comments (If Applicable):

### III. COMPLIANCE ANALYSIS

<b>Compliance</b>	<b>Compliant ("x")</b>	<b>Non- compliant ("x")</b>	<b>Compliance Comments (If Applicable): If Non-compliant: Verify non-compliance is addressed in QAR Report narrative and contained within a required action</b>
1. Admission policy			
2. Audit compliance			
3. Curriculum			
4. Faculty qualifications			
5. Facilities, Equipment & Supplies			
6. Program Length and objectives of credentials			
7. Recruiting practices reviewed			
8. Student Achievement			
9. Student complaint policy and tracking			
10. Student support services			
11. Teach Out agreement			
12. Title IV			
13. Transfer credit policy			

### IV. QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR) REPORT RATING

Please rate the degree to which the QAR Report reflects the quality statements listed. Use the following rubric as a guide for your ratings:

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Does not</b> meet the statement	<b>Minimally</b> meets the statement	<b>Sometimes</b> meets the statement	<b>Usually</b> meets the statement	<b>Consistently</b> meets the statement

**A. Substantive Content:**

1. **Overall Content:** Substantive content with enough detail to guide the Institution.
2. **Substantive Commendations:** The commendations are strong, include evidence and rationale, and are supported by the standard narratives.
3. **Substantive Required Actions:** The required actions are strong, include evidence and rationale, and are supported by the standard narratives.  
**Substantive Narratives:** The standard narratives describe how the Institution meets the intent of the standard and indicators based on evidence. Clear strengths and opportunities for improvement, linked to relevant indicators, are provided. The team’s rating accurately reflects the information provided in
4. **Alignment:** There is strong alignment across the commendations, recommendations, standard narratives, and the team’s accreditation status.

Rating

**B. Proper Writing Conventions:**

6. **Grammar & Punctuation:** Uses correct grammar and punctuation.
7. **Writing Style:** Is clear, flows well, and speaks with one voice.
8. **Spelling:** Uses correct spelling.
9. **Tone:** Uses a professional tone. Avoids personal bias and jargon.
10. **Formatting:** Is formatted correctly and consistently throughout each section.


**C. Snapshot:** All required performance data are identified.

**D. Compliance:** All compliance areas are addressed.

**TOTAL**

**Percentage**

Reader Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach additional comments and Chair correspondence documents)

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX E**

Substantive Change Form (3 Pages)

# Substantive Change Form

Career, Technical & Postsecondary Schools Accredited by NCA CASI

Instructions: Indicate on this form the type of change/changes being submitted by check-marking, highlighting, or bolding the *Type of Change*. **Approval must be granted by NCA CASI 60 days prior to implementation of the change.** Please e-mail documentation and/or rationale for changes as required below along with this completed form to [SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org](mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org). Substantive change forms submitted without appropriate documentation will be returned without consideration. All substantive changes must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Name of Institution:	
Today's Date:	Telephone:
Institution Address:	City, State, Zip:
Contact Person:	Email address:
Anticipated Implementation Date of Proposed Change:	
Type of Change	Required Documentation
<b>PROGRAM CHANGES</b>	
<b>Program changes are processed through the Accreditation Management System with required documentation e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org">SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org</a>.</b>	
Additional program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates,</li> <li>2. Approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state if the agency requires approval,</li> <li>3. Program description and course sequencing,</li> <li>4. Labor market demand (if new program),</li> <li>5. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credentials,</li> <li>6. Rationale for change,</li> <li>7. Explanation to assure change in programming does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies,</li> <li>8. Student licensing or credentials opportunities related to course completion</li> <li>9. Address the intent to make the program eligible for Title IV participation</li> </ol>
Change clock to credit hours OR Change credit to clock hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rationale for proposed change</li> <li>2. Complete list of programs with credit hours indicated (<i>While the school may operate using credit hours, clock/contact hours must still be reported to NCA</i>)</li> <li>3. Conversion chart to explain</li> </ol>
25% or More Change (Decrease OR Increase) in clock hours or credit hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program affected</li> <li>2. Rationale for change</li> <li>3. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
25% or More Change in Length of program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program affected</li> <li>2. Rationale for change</li> <li>3. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
Delete program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name of program being deleted</li> <li>2. Rationale for removal of the program</li> <li>3. Anticipated effect on students, including teach-out plan if necessary</li> </ol>
License or credential level change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program(s) affected and rationale</li> <li>2. License or credential</li> </ol>
Method of delivery change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program affected</li> <li>2. Rationale for change</li> <li>3. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
<b>CAMPUS CHANGES</b>	
<b>Campus changes require the following documentation to be e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org">SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org</a>.</b>	
Addition of branch campus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business plan which contains a description of the programs to be offered at the branch,</li> <li>2. Projected revenues,</li> <li>3. Projected expenditures,</li> <li>4. Projected cash flow,</li> <li>5. Operation, management and physical resources, and</li> <li>6. Personnel at the branch location.</li> </ol>

Addition of location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business plan which contains a description of the programs to be offered,</li> <li>2. Projected revenues,</li> <li>3. Projected expenditures,</li> <li>4. Projected cash flow,</li> <li>5. Operation, management and physical resources, and</li> <li>6. Personnel at the location.</li> </ol>
<b>GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, MISSION, OWNERSHIP CHANGES</b> <b>Governance, Leadership, Mission, OR Ownership changes require the following documentation to be e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org">SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org</a>.</b>	
Change in governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates,</li> <li>2. Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state,</li> <li>3. Business plan,</li> <li>4. Governance policies,</li> <li>5. Organizational chart,</li> <li>6. Projected revenues,</li> <li>7. Projected expenditures,</li> <li>8. Projected cash flow,</li> <li>9. Rationale for change, and</li> <li>10. Explanation to assure change in form of control does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.</li> </ol>
Change in Legal status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates,</li> <li>2. Compliance with federal, state, and local regulations,</li> <li>3. Certificate, license, or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state,</li> <li>4. Business plan,</li> <li>5. Administrative capacity,</li> <li>6. Projected revenues,</li> <li>7. Projected expenditures,</li> <li>8. Projected cash flow,</li> <li>9. Rationale for change, and</li> <li>10. Explanation to assure change in legal status does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.</li> </ol>
Change in Mission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dates of request and anticipated implementation,</li> <li>2. New mission statement,</li> <li>3. Process used to develop and communicate new mission,</li> <li>4. Rationale for change, and</li> <li>5. Explanation to assure mission change does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.</li> </ol>
Change of ownership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dates of request and anticipated/implemented dates,</li> <li>2. Certificate, license, and/or approval documentation from recognized accrediting/accountability agency in the state,</li> <li>3. Business plan,</li> <li>4. Governance policies,</li> <li>5. Organizational chart,</li> <li>6. Projected revenues,</li> <li>7. Projected expenditures,</li> <li>8. Projected cash flow,</li> <li>9. Rationale for change, and</li> <li>10. Explanation to assure change in ownership does not impact adherence to NCA CASI standards and policies.</li> </ol>
<b>NON-COMPLIANCE ACTIONS OR STATUS CHANGES from Program or other Accreditors.</b> <b>Actions from other accreditors require the following documentation to be e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org">SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org</a>.</b>	
Program or other accreditor status change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program or other accreditor report</li> <li>2. Submit action plan to correct non-compliances within 60 days of occurrence.</li> </ol>
<b>OTHER CHANGES</b> <b>Other changes require the following documentation to be e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org">SubstantiveChanges@ncacasi.org</a>.</b>	
Other Change Not Listed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appropriate Documentation</li> </ol>

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX F**

Update Form - Non-Substantive Change Form (1 Page)

## Update Form Non-Substantive Changes

Career, Technical & Postsecondary Schools Accredited by NCA CASI

Instructions: Indicate on this form the type of change/changes being submitted by check-marking, highlighting, or bolding the *Type of Change*. Please e-mail documentation and/or rationale for changes as required below along with this completed form to [SubChange@ncacasi.org](mailto:SubChange@ncacasi.org). Update forms submitted without appropriate documentation will be returned without consideration.

Name of Institution:	
Today's Date:	Telephone:
Institution Address:	City, State, Zip:
Contact Person:	Email address:
Anticipated Implementation Date of Proposed Change:	
<b>Type of Change</b>	<b>Required Documentation</b>
<b>PROGRAM CHANGES</b>	
Program changes are processed through the Accreditation Management System with required documentation e-mailed to <a href="mailto:SubChange@ncacasi.org">SubChange@ncacasi.org</a> .	
Program name change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Current program name</li> <li>2. Proposed program name</li> <li>3. Rationale for name change</li> <li>4. Changes to curriculum</li> </ol>
Less than 25% change of a <u>Decrease</u> in clock or credit hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Program affected</li> <li>5. Rationale for change</li> <li>6. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
Less than 25% change of an <u>Increase</u> in clock or credit hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program affected</li> <li>2. Rationale for change</li> <li>3. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
Less than 25% change in Length of program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Program affected</li> <li>5. Rationale for change</li> <li>6. Impact on student learning, outcomes, and licensing/credential options</li> </ol>
<b>STAFF CHANGES</b>	
Staff changes are processed through the Demographics Update Screen online – Please complete all fields that apply. (No documentation to e-mail.)	
Change in Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Position change/added</li> <li>2. Qualifications of new staff member</li> </ol>

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX G**

Standards Change Request Form (3 Pages)



### 3. Review

Date of PRC Review/Action		
PRC Recommendation to Board of Directors:	Change as requested	
	Change as edited	
	Add new standard	
	Delete current standard	
	No change – Return to initiator	
<p>PRC Comments:</p> <p>Rationale for Comments:</p>		

### 4. Standards Review Committee Review

Date of Standards Review Committee Review/Action		
Standards Review Recommendation to Board of Directors	Change as requested	
	Change as edited	
	Add new standard	
	Delete current standard	
	No change – Return to initiator	
<p>Standards Review Committee Comments:</p> <p>Rationale for Comments:</p>		

### 5. BOT First Review

Date of BOT First Reading	
---------------------------	--

BOTE Recommendation:	Change as requested	
	Change as edited	
	Add new standard	
	Delete current standard	
	No change – Return to initiator	

BOT Comments:

Rationale for Comments:

## 6. Review Cycle

Date of public comments posting:	
Date of return to PRC with public comments:	
Final PRC Action:	
Date to BOT:	
Final BOT Action:	
Date Standard Updated:	
Date Materials Requested:	

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix H**

Calculating and Reporting Program Length (2 pages)

## Calculating and Reporting Program Length

The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) defines a credit hour as equivalent to a minimum of each of the following: one semester credit hour for each 15 clock hours of lecture, 30 clock hours of laboratory, or 45 hours of work-based activities; or one quarter credit for each 10 clock hours of lecture, 20 clock hours of laboratory, or 30 clock hours of work-based activities. NCA CASI is aware that some postsecondary institutional licensing agencies approve courses and/or programs with the number of credit hours being calculated to as many as two decimal places. NCA CASI is also aware that the general practice in the postsecondary education community is to measure courses and programs in whole numbers of credit hours. The policy of NCA CASI is that the conversion of clock hours to credit hours for individual courses may be calculated to include a fraction or decimal but must not be inflated by rounding up. The sum of the course credit hours for a program must equal a whole number without rounding up.

### **Federal Credit Hour Conversion for Determining Federal Student Financial Aid**

On October 29, 2010 the U.S. Department of Education published in the Federal Register regulations on program integrity pertaining to clock hour-to-credit hour conversion of academic credits to federal credit hours for determining Federal Student Financial Aid.

#### **A. Academic and Federal Credit Hours**

Institutions may use credit hours to define an amount of work represented by verifiable student achievement of institutionally established learning outcomes. Based on the Carnegie Unit, one academic semester credit hour is based on 15 clock hours of lecture, 30 clock hours of lab work, or 45 clock hours of work-based learning. One academic quarter credit hour is based on 10 clock hours of lecture, 20 clock hours of lab work, and 30 clock hours of work-based learning. Academic credit hours specify “school time” only and do not indicate time students spend doing homework, research or other unsupervised learning activities. The federal regulations do not change these academic credit hour conversions, and an institution’s academic credit hours will not be affected by the regulations.

Credit hours are also used to determine the eligibility of an educational program for participation in federal financial aid programs. The Department of Education uses a different formula for calculating program eligibility to qualify for federal student financial aid. The Department’s formula is used to determine what may be called “federal” or “financial aid” credit hours, as opposed to the academic credit hours described above. Federal credit hours do account for time students spend doing homework, research or other unsupervised learning activities (herein referred to as “course prep” time).

The Department requires 37.5 clock hours of school time and course prep time for each semester credit hour and 25 clock hours of school time and course prep time for each quarter credit hour. Previously these conversion rates were set at 30 clock hours per federal semester credit hour, and 20 clock hours per federal quarter credit hour. The additional 7.5 clock hours for each semester credit, and 5 clock hours for each quarter credit are specifically intended to account for the addition of student course prep time. Only programs that are at least 900 clock hours in length, accounting for both school time and course prep time, may be eligible for the maximum allowable federal student financial aid.

#### **B. Documenting Course Prep Time for Federal Credit Hours**

Since course prep time is included in the calculation of federal or financial aid credit hours, institutions must have written policies and procedures for determining the amount of student work to be done outside of class. Assignments for homework or course prep work must identify specific learning objectives for each course as well as an approximate time required for completion. Furthermore, the work must be evaluated, graded and weighted appropriately in the determination of the final grade for each course. Institutions will be required to maintain documentation that course prep work assignments are completed and considered in determining the final course grade.

If current academic credit hours already include at least 7.5 clock hours of course prep work for each academic semester credit hour, or at least 5 clock hours of course prep work for each academic quarter credit hour, institutions must nonetheless document the nature, objectives, and time requirements for the homework, research or other unsupervised learning activities required for each course.

### **C. Clock Hour Programs**

Certain programs are required to be measured in clock hours, often by a federal or state regulatory board or agency. These programs may be required to measure student progress in clock hours in order to receive federal or state approval or professional licensure. In these cases, institutions do not have the option to convert clock hours to credit hours.

Institutions are responsible for securing information from the Department of Education and complying with regulations affecting eligibility for Federal Title IV, HEA student financial aid programs. NCA CASI instructions and guidelines are subject to change as the NCA CASI Board considers further implementation advisories from the U.S. Department of Education.

### **D. Responsibilities of Candidate and Accredited Institutions**

Institutions where programs are subject to the federal clock-to-credit hour conversion regulation must prepare and submit to NCA CASI an Update Form for each affected program (available in the Postsecondary Resources section on the NCA CASI extranet site at [www.ncacasi.org/extranet](http://www.ncacasi.org/extranet)).

Submitting an Update Form application is not considered a substantive change when total lecture, lab or work-based learning clock or credit hours increase by less than 25%. The Update Form must indicate the nature and estimated time requirements of the homework, research, or other unsupervised learning objectives assigned for each course in an approved program of study. Institutions that choose to increase lecture, lab or work-based activities in an approved program of study by 25% or more must submit a Substantive Change Form. The form must include documentation of compelling market demand for the proposed increase. All institutions with programs affected by the clock to federal credit hour conversion regulation must submit to NCA CASI their institutional policies and procedures for determining federal credit hours. Additionally, Update Forms or Substantive Change forms must be provided for each affected program.

**Clock Hour Definition** - A period of 60 minutes with a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction.