Separately Accreditable Institutions

Background:

Each of the U.S. regional accrediting commissions adopted a policy similar to the following policy for institutions operating inter-regionally. In addition, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education applies the policy to institutions operating solely within the Middle States region.

Policy:

An educational site located in a region other than that of the home campus of the accredited institution (the “home region”) must seek separate accreditation in the region where it exists (the “host region”) if it functions independently of operational control of the home campus of the college or university. An educational site located within the Middle States region also must seek separate accreditation if it is operationally independent of the home campus of the college or university.

An educational site will be deemed operationally independent and accreditable by the host region when it meets criteria such as:

The educational site:

1. has, under governing body policy, substantial financial and administrative independence from the home institution, including matters related to personnel;
2. has a full-time chief administrative officer;
3. is empowered, under governing body policy, to initiate and sustain its own academic programs;
4. has degree-granting authority in the state or jurisdiction where it is located.

The Commission of the home region determines whether a site is separately accreditable and the accreditation status of that site. The host region will review any educational sites identified as operationally independent in keeping with its policies and procedures for applying institutions. If possible, a host regional accreditor will accredit separately accreditable sites by transfer of accreditation as “full, faith and credit” from a sister regional accreditor without treating the site as a new candidate institution.
A site identified as separately accreditable will continue to be included in the accreditation of the home college or university until it achieves separate accreditation, as long as the separately accreditable site makes timely progress toward separate accreditation. Failure to do so may result in a negative accreditation action or removal of accreditation for the entire institution. Because the separately accreditable site was previously included in the accreditation of another accredited institution, accreditation may be removed for that site without a Commission vote of “show cause” for removal of accreditation.

If the separately accreditable site is located in the Middle States region, the Commission will notify the institution that the site must be separately accredited. If determined to be appropriate by the Commission, the site will be accredited only if it meets the Commission’s requirements, policies, and procedures for applicant institutions.

Nothing in this policy is intended to require the home region to accredit a separately accreditable site in another region or in the home region. For example, a site may no longer be sufficiently within the control of the home institution to be included in its accreditation, even if it does not meet the accreditation requirements of the regional accreditor in the host or home region.

Off-campus educational sites, regardless of location, not found to be operationally independent are included in the accreditation of the home campus. The operational independence of such sites is periodically reviewed under this policy.

Not adopted by other regions and applying only to those institutions operating within the Middle States region, the following differences between the site and the main campus also may indicate that an institution is separately accreditable:

- different mission;
- different demographics of the student body;
- different degrees offered; or
- students may complete the entire degree at that site without attending another site of the institution.