

Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status Policy

All candidate and accredited institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status in all formats – electronic or print. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

A. Advertising, Publications, Promotional Literature

1. Educational programs and services offered should be the primary emphasis of all advertisements, publications, promotional literature, and recruitment activities.
2. All statements and representations should be clear, factually accurate, and current. Supporting information should be kept on file and readily available for review.
3. Catalogs and other official publications should be readily available and accurately depict:
 - a. institutional mission and core themes;
 - b. entrance requirements and procedures;
 - c. basic information on programs and courses, with required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated;
 - d. degree and program completion requirements, including length of time required to obtain a degree or certification of completion;
 - e. faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately) with degrees held and the conferring institution;
 - f. institutional facilities readily available for educational use;
 - g. rules and regulations for conduct;
 - h. tuition, fees, and other program costs;
 - i. opportunities and requirements for financial aid;
 - j. policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment; and
 - k. academic calendar.
4. An institution is expected to include in its general catalog a clear and complete statement of its requirements for general education and/or related instruction, as appropriate.
5. The institution's catalogs and official publications describing career opportunities, should provide clear and accurate information regarding:
 - a. national and/or state legal requirements for eligibility for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
 - b. any unique requirements for career paths, or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described.
 - c. the caveat that certification obtained through the completion of all undergraduate and graduate professional programs does not imply or guarantee reciprocity or job attainment in another state or in another country.

B. Student Recruitment for Admissions

1. Student recruitment should be conducted by well-qualified admissions officers and trained volunteers whose credentials, purposes, and position or affiliation with the institution are clearly specified.
2. Independent contractors or agents used by the institution for recruiting purposes shall be governed by the same principles as institutional admissions officers and volunteers.
3. The following practices in student recruitment are to be scrupulously avoided:
 - a. ensuring employment unless employment arrangements have been made and can be verified;
 - b. misrepresenting job placement and employment opportunities for graduates;
 - c. misrepresenting program costs;
 - d. misrepresenting transfer of credit and acceptance of degrees attained at other institutions;
 - e. misrepresenting abilities required to complete the intended program; and
 - f. offering to agencies or individual persons money or inducements other than educational services of the institution in exchange for student enrollment. (Except for awards of privately endowed restricted funds, grants or scholarships are to be offered only on the basis of specific criteria related to merit or financial need.)

C. Representation of Accredited Status

1. The term “accreditation” is to be used only when accredited status is conferred by an accrediting body recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.
2. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation status or qualification not yet conferred by any accrediting body. Statements like the following are not permissible:
 - a. (Institution) has applied for candidacy with (accrediting body).
 - b. (Institution) is a Candidate for Accreditation with (accrediting body) and initial accreditation is anticipated.
 - c. The (Program) is being evaluated by (accrediting body) and accreditation is expected in the near future.
3. Any reference to state approval should be limited to a brief statement concerning the actual charter, incorporation, license, or registration given.
4. The Commission asks that the following statement be used by the institution for disclosing its accredited status on its website and in catalogues, brochures, advertisements, etc.

The following statement, in its entirety, must be used when an institution includes within its website, catalogue or other material a statement which will give the public a better idea of the meaning of regional accreditation:

_____ College (University) is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding an institution's accredited status by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Avenue N.E., Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052 (425) 558-4224 www.nwccu.org

Accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities refers to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities” or “this degree is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities” are incorrect and should not be used.

5. An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities:

_____ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution affiliated with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

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6. The accreditation status of a program should not be misrepresented by implying that institutional accreditation extends to accreditation of individual programs by that accrediting body. Accreditation granted by an institutional accrediting body references the institution as a whole. Institutional accreditation does not extend to accreditation of any particular program in the institution. Thus, statements like “this program is accredited by” or “this degree is accredited by” are incorrect and misleading when referencing an institutional accrediting body.
7. The institution needs to include a statement in its descriptions of all undergraduate and graduate professional programs to the effect that certification does not imply or guarantee reciprocity or job attainment in another state or in another country.

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