
Policy on the Meaning and Criteria of Candidacy

The Candidate for Accreditation program offers certain postsecondary institutions the opportunity to establish a formal, publicly recognized relationship with the New England Commission of Higher Education. Candidacy is a status of affiliation which indicates that an institution has met the Commission's criteria for Candidacy and it is progressing toward accreditation with a reasonable likelihood of success, but it does not currently meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*. Although only accredited institutions are members of the Commission, all credits and degrees earned and issued by an institution holding candidacy status are considered by the U.S. Department of Education to be from an accredited institution.

Attainment of candidacy does not ensure eventual accreditation. A candidate institution has a maximum period of five years, from the effective date of candidacy, within which to achieve accredited status.

Candidacy is the normal route to accreditation. It is the Commission's expectation that unaffiliated institutions will first seek candidacy. However, long-established institutions believing themselves in compliance with all the Commission's criteria for accreditation may petition the Commission for permission to forgo candidacy.

It is not mandatory that candidate institutions remain in that status for the maximum period of five years. However, early applications are appropriate only when encouraged by the results of evaluation visits and Commission action.

Criteria for Candidacy

To be granted Candidate for Accreditation status an applicant institution must demonstrate that it:

1. meets the Requirements of Affiliation;
2. has, with the intention of meeting the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*, effectively organized sufficient human, financial, learning, and physical resources into educational and other activities so that it is accomplishing its immediate educational purposes;
3. has established and is following realistic plans to acquire, organize and appropriately apply any additional resources needed to comply with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation within the candidacy period;
4. has established a teach-out plan, approved by the Commission, in accordance with the Commission's Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements.
5. meets the Commission's standard on *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*.

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