

**CHAPTER 52. ACCREDITING
ORGANIZATIONS—STATEMENT OF POLICY**

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Source

The provisions of this Chapter 52 adopted September 24, 2004, effective September 25, 2004, 34 Pa.B. 5267, unless otherwise noted.

§ 52.1. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the policies of the State Board of Education (State Board) regarding applications made by accrediting organizations for approval under section 5 of the Private Academic Schools Act (24 P. S. § 6705).

§ 52.2. Process.

(a) The Department will administer the process governing application by an accrediting organization seeking approval under section 5 of the Private Academic Schools Act (24 P. S. § 6705) and establish administrative policies regarding recognition of school accreditation by accrediting organizations in accordance with an agreement between the State Board of Education (State Board) and the Department.

(b) The Department will make a recommendation to the State Board regarding all applications that have been fully processed, but the final decision to approve or disapprove an application of an accrediting organization under section 5 of the Private Academic Schools Act rests solely with the State Board.

Source

The provisions of this § 52.2 amended April 11, 2008, effective April 12, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 1727. Immediately preceding text appears at serial page (306289).

§ 52.3. Application.

An application for approval as an accrediting organization under section 5 of the Private Academic Schools Act (24 P. S. § 6705) should include the following elements.

- (1) *Information specific to the applicant accrediting organization and its operations.*
 - (i) Staffing capacity.
 - (ii) Personnel expertise.

- (iii) Affiliations, location of home office and relationship to operation in this Commonwealth.
 - (iv) Policies, including complaint and disclosure processes.
 - (v) Annual report.
 - (vi) Fee schedule.
 - (vii) Scope and types of programs for which authority to accredit is sought, including grade level.
 - (viii) Other information as the Department might deem appropriate.
- (2) *Criteria for accreditation.* The application should include a statement of the applicant's criteria for accreditation, including formally adopted and incorporated standards guiding all aspects of an accredited school's operations. The criteria should include information regarding:
- (i) Philosophy, mission, goals, objectives and benchmarks.
 - (ii) Governance and leadership.
 - (iii) Organizational design and staffing.
 - (iv) Educational programs, specified by type of school and grade level.
 - (v) Policies available for areas such as student reporting (confidentiality), safety, parental participation and notification, and complaint and disclosure processes.
 - (vi) Technology capabilities.
 - (vii) Student services.
 - (viii) Student activities.
 - (ix) Facilities—health and safety.
 - (x) Finances, including, for example, latest audit, budget, fees, available revenue sources, and the like.
 - (xi) Assessments of student learning.
 - (xii) Planning.
 - (xiii) Insurance.
 - (xiv) Teacher or faculty qualification, or both, (background, work experience, expertise, certification, and the like).
 - (xv) Other information related to criteria for accreditation.
- (3) *Clearly defined candidacy review.* The application should include a description of a clearly defined process for review of candidates for accreditation, including the following:
- (i) Elements.
 - (ii) Time in operation before being eligible for accreditation.
 - (iii) Measurement standards.
 - (iv) Procedure.
- (4) *Site visits.* The application should include a description of the organization's policy and procedures regarding site visits, including:
- (i) Elements to be evaluated and methods of evaluation.
 - (ii) Required documentation.
 - (iii) Unannounced inspections permitted.

- (iv) Policies.
- (v) Community involvement program.
- (5) *Self-study, evaluation and plan of action.* The application should include a description of the organization's policies and methodologies regarding an accredited educational institution's obligation to engage in self-study and its reporting obligations, the periodic evaluation of the accredited institution, and corrective plans of action (including time frames for completion).
- (6) *Accreditation renewal and monitorship.* The application should include a description of the organization's policies and procedures regarding:
 - (i) Identification cycle time—total and periodic reviews.
 - (ii) Reporting of findings to the Department.
 - (iii) Periodic reporting to the Department, including notification of non-compliance issues.
- (7) *Additional information.* The Department may require additional information it deems necessary from the applicant.

§ 52.4. Reporting.

- (a) An approved accrediting organization annually should make a report to the Department that includes a summary of its accreditation activity, including a listing of schools that have been accredited, the fees collected, its visitation schedule, and other information that the Department might deem appropriate.
- (b) Accrediting organizations should make an immediate, one-time report to the Department regarding each educational institution that has gained or lost accreditation.

§ 52.5. Expiration and renewal.

- (a) Authority to accredit schools will expire 5 years from the date of approval by the State Board of Education but may be renewed by the State Board every fifth year.
- (b) The accrediting organization seeking renewal will prepare a self study, evaluation and plan of action and submit it to the Department 6 months prior to the expiration date.
- (c) The Department will review the material, request additional information if necessary and recommend the State Board approve or deny renewal.

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