



ACCREDITATION PLAN

(for unaccredited in-state degree granting institutions of higher education only)

As defined by the Virginia Administrative Code, "Accreditation" means a process of external quality review used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and educational programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. This term applies to those accrediting organizations recognized by the United States Department of Education. (8VAC40-31-10).

A complete list of recognized accrediting agencies can be found online at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/print/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation.html>

Types of Accreditation

There are two basic types of educational accreditation: "institutional" and "specialized / programmatic". "Institutional" accreditation applies to the entire institution, indicating that each of an institution's parts is contributing to the achievement of the institutions objectives. "Specialized/Programmatic" accreditation normally applies to programs, departments, or schools that are part of a larger institution. Specialized/programmatic accreditation does not extend to any program supporting any other degree granted by the school. The school will need to obtain Institutional accreditation if the school will offer any additional degree not accredited by the specialized or programmatic accreditation agency. Use of two or more specialized or programmatic accreditation agencies will require the school to obtain Institutional Accreditation.

In order to remain eligible for certification, the postsecondary institution must secure, at a minimum, candidacy status or equivalent within three (3) years of its initial date of certification, and initial accreditation no later than six (6) years after initial certification.

Before SCHEV can certify any institution of higher education to operate in Virginia, and as required under 8VAC40-31-180, unaccredited in-state institutions that offer courses for degree credit must submit a plan of action for securing accreditation from an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. This plan will include but not limited to the following:

1. Name of the accrediting organization, and
2. The accrediting organization eligibility requirements, and
 - a. Demonstrate how you plan on meeting those requirements, and
3. Timeframe for accreditation.

Only Council may grant a change to an institution's accreditation plan.