REPRESENTATION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS FOR POST SECONDARY CAREER & TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS

All member institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, are expected to exhibit integrity and responsibility in representing an institution's status as an accredited institution or a candidate for accreditation.

Section 1: Representation of Accredited Status.

a. The term "accreditation" is to be used only when accredited status is conferred by Commission on Secondary Schools, which is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as institutional accreditor for Title IV purposes.
b. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation status or qualification not yet conferred by the Commission.
c. Statements such as the following are not permissible:
   "(Name of institution) has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools",
d. The phrase "fully accredited" may not be used, since no partial accreditation is possible.
e. When accredited status or Candidate for Accreditation status is affirmed in the institution's official publications, in print, via the Internet or other electronic transmissions, it should be stated accurately and fully in a comprehensive statement including:
   1) identifying the Commission by name, including the Commission's address and telephone number
   2) indicating the scope of accreditation as institutional in that the Commission does not accredit individual programs. Institutional accreditation includes all of the active programs at the time the accreditation decision was made.

Example for a Candidate Institution:

The XYZ Career and Technical Institute is a Candidate for Accreditation by the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. (267-284-5000) effective (date of the Commission's action).

A Candidate for Accreditation is an education institution that:

1) Has been in successful operation for at least one academic year;
2) Has satisfactorily met the MSA-CSS Standards for Candidacy (a subset of the Standards for Accreditation);
3) Has been offered and has formally accepted the offer of Candidacy for Accreditation;
4) Has had that acceptance affirmed by the President of the Commission; and
5) Reflects a willingness and readiness to participate in the self-study and accreditation process.

Example for an Accredited institution:

The XYZ Career and Technical Institute is accredited by the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. (267-284-5000).

f. Note that the Commission is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education for accrediting activities in certain secondary and post-secondary non-degree granting schools located inside or outside the United States, including but not limited to its states, commonwealths, and territories.
g. The accredited status of a component of the institution's educational program shall not be misrepresented.
    1) The accreditation granted by the Commission has reference to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, a statement like "this program is accredited" is incorrect and misleading. Institutions wishing to make a statement about the relationship of a program to the institution as a whole should state that the program is offered at an institution that is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 267-284-5000. The statement also should make clear that Commission accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of the programs offered.
    2) "Free-standing" institutions offering programs in a single field (e.g., a school of art, engineering, or theology), granted accreditation by the Commission alone, should clearly state that this accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of the programs offered.
    3) Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation must use the statement described above under Representation of Accredited Status. In addition, the institution must indicate the effective date (month and year) candidate status was granted.
h. The MSA-CESS logo is the property of the Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. Its use signifies that the institution is accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools. Institutions that are accredited by the Commissions are encouraged to use the MSA-CESS logo in the acknowledgement of their accredited status. If, at any time, an institution's accreditation is removed, it will be prohibited from using this logo.
i. The logo is available by request for use in an institution's publications, website, etc.

Section 2: Announcements Regarding Accreditation Status.

Announcements by Elementary and Secondary Institutions. Any elementary or secondary institution that has been granted a term of accreditation is authorized to use the phrase "Accredited for Grades ____ by either:

- The Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools;
- The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools; or
- The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools,

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267) 284-5000," on institutional publications, student transcripts, and institutional advertising until such time as accreditation has either lapsed or been removed.

The following may be used on the institution's letterhead: "Accredited for Grades ____ by either:

- The Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools";
- The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools"; or
- The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools"

Announcements by Postsecondary Institutions. Any postsecondary institution that has been granted a term of accreditation will use the phrase "Accredited for postsecondary, non-degree granting, career and technology programs by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267) 284-5000," on institutional publications, student transcripts, and institutional advertising until such time as accreditation has either lapsed or been removed.

The following may be used on letterhead: "Accredited for postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology programs by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools."

Section 3: Announcements Regarding Candidate Status. Any institution that has been offered and has accepted Candidacy for Accreditation is authorized to use on institutional publications, student transcripts, and institutional advertising until such time as the candidacy period has lapsed or the institution has achieved accredited status the phrase "Candidate for Accreditation by:

- The Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools";
- The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools"; or
- The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools"

Section 4: Member Institutions Misrepresenting Status.

When information is presented to the Commission(s) that an accredited or candidate institution is misrepresenting its status or otherwise engaging in unethical conduct, the Commission(s) shall review the circumstances and provide the institution with the opportunity to respond. If the evidence confirms that the institution is misrepresenting its status or otherwise engaging in unethical conduct, the Commission(s) will direct the institution to make public correction of the incorrect or misleading information via the same vehicle or a vehicle similar to that used to disseminate the misrepresented status information.

Should the institution continue to misrepresent its status or engage in unethical conduct, the Commission(s) will direct the institution to "show cause" why the institution's accreditation or status as a candidate for accreditation should not be removed. If, after receiving the show cause letter the institution continues to misrepresent its status of otherwise engage in unethical conduct, the Commission(s) shall take an action in accordance with MSA-CESS Policy: Accreditation Actions. If the Commission(s) acts to remove the institution's accreditation, the institution shall be notified of its right to appeal the decision in accordance with MSA-CESS Policy: Appeals from Adverse Accrediting Actions.

In the case of postsecondary institutions, any institution suspected of being out of compliance with the requirements and responsibilities included in the Commissions' policies, committing fraud, or abusing its accredited status shall be reported immediately to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Section 5: Nonmember Institutions Claiming Accreditation Status. The Commission(s) shall exercise all remedies provided by applicable statutes when institutions not accredited or offered candidacy by the Commission(s) inaccurately claim to be accredited by the Commission(s) or a candidate for accreditation by the Commission(s).