

Academic Affairs Policy 2.13

Program Accreditation

1. General Policy on Program Accreditation

The Board of Regents recognizes accrediting agencies that it considers as mandatory, recommended, or optional for eligible programs offered by two- and four-year institutions of higher education and the Louisiana Technical College. A program that is eligible for accreditation by an agency that is considered **mandatory** must be accredited for continued program approval. The Board of Regents encourages institutions to obtain accreditation of programs that are eligible for accreditation by an agency that it **recommends**, but the accreditation is not essential for continued program approval. Accrediting agencies that are not considered as mandatory or recommended by the Board of Regents are considered **optional**, and the Board of Regents encourages institutions with eligible programs to evaluate the importance of those accreditations to its students.

A master listing of approved academic program accrediting agencies and related Regents' accreditation requirements is available below.

2. Criteria for Mandatory Accreditation of Programs

Unless exempted by the Board of Regents, accreditation of a specific program will be deemed mandatory if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) The program prepares students for employment in occupations or professions that Louisiana and/or a significant number of states require licensure by an examination and for which graduation from an accredited program is one of the qualifying criteria to sit for the exam;
- b) The program prepares students for employment in occupations or professions that require graduation from an accredited program for employment and/or advancement in the occupation or profession;
- c) Accreditation of the program is deemed critical for students to be admitted to a more advanced degree program; and
- d) Accreditation is deemed mandatory by the Board of Regents because of the critical nature of the program and its importance to the state and/or because accreditation is important for national credibility and recognition.

3. Unaccredited Programs That Are Eligible for Accreditation by an Agency That Is Classified as Mandatory by the Board of Regents

The Board of Regents will stipulate in its motion of approval for all new degree programs with mandatory accreditation a date certain for achieving accreditation. Typically, accreditation will be required within three to five years from the date of program implementation depending on such factors as program length and specific requirements set forth by the accrediting agency. In arriving at the required date for accreditation, the staff will consult with the affected university or college prior to action by the Board of Regents.

4. Actions of Accreditation Agencies

An institution must report all disciplinary actions, such as warning, probation, or withdrawal of accredited status, and a brief explanation of the conditions and/or deficiencies that resulted in the action to the Board of Regents upon receipt of the official notification of the action by the agency. The institution must submit a copy of the institution's response to the report regarding disciplinary action of

an accrediting agency, along with a copy of the original report of the agency, to the Board of Regents.

5. Exemption from Routine Program Review by the Board of Regents

A program that has a current accreditation status and is not on warning or probation by an agency that is recognized as either mandatory or recommended will ordinarily be exempt from routine Board of Regents program reviews. Special or extenuating circumstances may prompt review of a particular program in a particular institution or a statewide review of a specific program or programs.

6. Reporting of the Accreditation Status of Programs

Each academic program record maintained by the Board of Regents notes the *last* and *next* review dates for the respective program's accreditation cycle (if applicable). It is incumbent upon each campus (both two- and four-year institutions) to keep this information current by sending updated copies of accreditation reports to Regents' Academic Affairs staff. There will be periodic reviews done by staff (every few years or so) requesting updated accreditation status information in those instances where approval has lapsed. Documentation should include actions taken by accrediting agencies since the last review.

7. Removal of Mandatory Classification of an Accrediting Agency

An agency classified as a mandatory on the Board of Regents' list of recognized accrediting agencies will retain that classification unless it is removed by action of the Board on a recommendation from the Academic Affairs staff. Such a recommendation will generally result from a determination, through an appropriate review of the staff and the Council of Chief Academic Officers, that the agency's policies, practices, and/or actions are inappropriate and/or fail to meet the highest professional standards.

8. Accreditation of Engineering and Engineering Technology Programs

Accreditation of a program is generally considered mandatory for engineering and engineering-related technology programs. The following policies will be used to determine the appropriate accrediting agency for programs in CIP Codes 14 and 15 that are eligible for accreditation:

- i. All degree programs in CIP Code 14 Engineering must be accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET);
- ii. All Engineering Technology Associate of Science, Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Science degree programs in CIP Code 15 must be accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET);
- iii. All Technology Associate of Applied Science programs and non-Engineering Technology Bachelor of Science degree programs in CIP Code 15 must be accredited by the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE – formerly NAIT) or an equivalent appropriate accrediting agency, if available;
- iv. Baccalaureate degree programs in Engineering and Engineering Technology are exempt from mandatory ABET accreditation when the institution's masters degree program in the same discipline has already obtained ABET accreditation; and
- v. Associate degree programs in Engineering and Engineering Technology are exempt from mandatory ABET accreditation when the institution's bachelors degree program in the same discipline has already obtained ABET accreditation.