

Draft I: Proposed Revisions to the *Handbook 2024*

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS

October 24, 2024

OFFICIAL NOTICE. This constitutes the official notice of proposed revisions to the *Handbook* forwarded in advance as required by the CAAA Bylaws and ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Note: All proposed revisions are indicated in red.

Following the current comment period, a second proposal of these amendments will be presented to representatives of ACCPAS accredited institutions in December for further review and comment.

VOTE SCHEDULED. A final text of these proposed revisions will be presented to the CAAA Board of Trustees for a vote in January 2025.

Rationales for these changes are provided at the end of the document on page 5.

COMMENT PERIOD I

October 24–November 23, 2024

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Appendix I.A.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

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Appendix I.A., Specific Operational Standards for All Institutions for which ACCPAS is the Institutional Accrerator

I. Standards for Accreditation

G. Student Services

Amend I.G. as follows:

G. Student Services (*not applicable to community schools*)

Consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives, the institution shall provide a physical, philosophical, and human environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual, and personal development of students.

If the institution is a boarding school, the institution’s program of student services is derived from the relationship between specific goals for student development and the purposes of the institution. All types of services shall be available to all students. Student services shall be organized and managed by individuals with appropriate training, experience, and abilities. Institutions must provide an effective orientation program that acquaints new and transfer students with all aspects of the institution related to their course of study and their personal well-being. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to education, counseling, and professional care associated with the maintenance of physical and mental health. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to counseling covering personal, social, vocational, and financial issues.

If the institution administers a program of financial aid, such aid shall be provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner. Records shall be clearly documented. Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published criteria. The financial aid program must be audited at least once a year.

If provided, housing must be conducive to individual well-being and personal development. Housing controlled by or affiliated with the institution must meet recognized standards of health, safety, and security, and be appropriately staffed.

If provided, food service must meet recognized standards of nutrition, sanitation, and safety. Food services must be professionally administered and operated.

The institution must have policies regarding the kinds of information that will be included in the permanent record of students. It shall also have policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. Information-release policies shall respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of students and the institution.

The institution must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected or additional student charges associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

If a day or boarding school, the institution must maintain policies concerning student responsibilities and rights, including complaint procedures. These must be clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and administered fairly and consistently.

If a day or boarding school, the institution should provide opportunities for student leadership consistent with its mission, goals, objectives, and policies. Students should be encouraged to develop the abilities to work with people in as many settings and contexts as feasible. Opportunities to be involved in appropriate institutional decision-making processes are highly desirable.

Appendix I.D.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

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Appendix I.D., Distance Learning

4. Standards

b. Delivery Systems, Verification, and Evaluation

Amend 4.b. as follows:

b. Delivery Systems, Verification, and Evaluation

- (1) Delivery systems must be logically matched to the purposes of each program. Delivery systems are defined as the operational interrelationships of such elements as program or course content, interactive technologies, teaching techniques, schedules, patterns of interaction between teacher and student, and evaluation expectations and mechanisms.

- (2) The institution must have processes that establish that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives credit (if any). Verification methods are determined by the institution and may include, but are not limited to, secure login and password protocols, proctored examinations, and new or other technologies and practices.
- ~~(3) The institution must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected or additional student charges associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment in distance education programs.~~
- (3) ~~(4)~~ Specific opportunities for student evaluations shall be established throughout the time period of each course or program.

Rules of Practice and Procedure

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

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Rules of Practice and Procedure
Article VII., Substantive Change
Section 1. Procedure

Amend Article VII., Section 1. as follows:

Section 1. Procedure. Institutions are required to gain prior approval of substantive change occurring between regular accreditation visits. Substantive changes occurring during accreditation review periods are reported and considered as part of the self-study, on-site visit, and Commission review. ACCPAS also offers the opportunity for accredited institutions to receive an optional consultative review of proposed substantive changes by the Commission prior to submission of an official request for substantive change. Procedures and forms for substantive change may be obtained from the National Office.

Growth experienced by an institution sufficient to result in the requirement of a special review is defined in the agency's Substantive Change policy as being "significant" (see ACCPAS Handbook, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Article VII.). When considering the impact growth may have on an institution, many individual factors must be considered, including the availability of resources to support the growth, as well as related factors such as the size and scope of the arts unit, relationships and balances that must be maintained between size and scope (see ACCPAS Handbook, Standards for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools and Programs II.B.), and the effect growth will have on the institution's ability to continue to meet applicable standards as they pertain to operations and curricular programs. For this reason, ACCPAS considers each instance of growth, including, but not limited to, rapid enrollment growth, in light of the impact it has on these factors singly and in relationship. In the aggregate, conditions and texts associated with assessing the impact of growth for the purposes described constitute ACCPAS's operating definition and means for determining the significance of growth in specific instances.

Under certain conditions, on-site visits may be required at the discretion of ACCPAS.

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**Rules of Practice and Procedure
Article VII., Substantive Change
Section 2. Definition**

Amend Article VII., Section 2. as follows:

Section 2. Definition. “Substantive Change” includes but is not limited to:

1. Any fundamental change in the established mission, goals, or objectives of the institution or a major arts unit therein.
2. Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.
3. The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution.
4. The addition of or change to ~~amendment of~~ curricular programs that represent a significant departure from the existing offerings or educational programs, ~~in terms of either the content~~ or method of delivery, from those that were offered when ACCPAS most recently evaluated the institution. (These programs are normally considered in the Plan Approval process described in Article VIII. below.)
5. ~~Adding~~ **Starting** a branch campus or other program.
6. Other major changes that would impact continuing compliance with ACCPAS standards applicable to programs being offered.

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**Rules of Practice and Procedure
Article IX., Procedures for Reviewing Complaints Directed Against Institutions Accredited by ACCPAS
Section 2. Eligibility**

Amend Article IX., Section 2.B. as follows:

B. A complaint may be eligible for review if it:

1. Is presented in writing.

NOTE: Should a disability exist making it difficult to submit a complaint in writing, the complainant may contact the staff in the National Office to seek an appropriate accommodation.

2. Is forwarded to the ACCPAS National Office by U.S. Mail, ~~or~~ courier service, ~~or~~ through the ACCPAS email address dedicated to receive formal complaints. ~~Email,~~ Facsimile, and verbal transmissions are not acceptable.
3. Is signed by the complainant.

PLEASE NOTE: ACCPAS will not confirm receipt of or respond to complaints that do not meet the requirements outlined in items B.1., 2., and 3. above.

4. Includes a signed copy of the ACCPAS Official Complaint Form.
5. Presents itemized issues or concerns directly related to specific ACCPAS standards, rules, or the Code of Ethics as published in the ACCPAS *Handbook* and any addenda to the *Handbook* current at the time of the complaint, and includes specific, factual documentation corroborating each concern raised.

6. Presents evidence that the institutional review or grievance procedures available and applicable to the complaint and complainant have been completed or exhausted.
7. Is not subject to the criteria set forth in Section C. below.

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Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XI., Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accreditation

Section 10. Decision of an Appeal

Amend Article XI., Section 10. as follows:

Section 10. Decision on an Appeal. After following procedures established by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (see Section 2. of this Article above), the appeals committee’s final decision shall be either to (a) deny the appeal and sustain the decision of ACCPAS, or (b) sustain the appeal and remand the decision to ACCPAS for reconsideration explaining the basis for the decision to remand, including, but not limited to, any amendments to the original decision proposed by the appeals committee. In making its final decision, **which will be provided in written form**, ACCPAS must act in a manner consistent with published ACCPAS standards and procedures, and with due consideration of all written findings and recommendations of the appeals committee accompanying its decision to remand.

The final decision of the appeals committee ~~will shall~~ be distributed **in written form** to the arts executive and the chief executive officer of the institution and to the Chair of ACCPAS.

An institution’s continuing disagreement with a final decision of the appeals committee to deny the appeal shall be settled by arbitration in accordance with the Rules of the American Arbitration Association. Arbitration considers only items (a) and (b) of the Grounds for Appeal outlined in Section 4. of this article.

NOTE: Rationale for Changes

The rationale for the changes proposed above is as follows: To align with federal regulations and guidelines.