



What does Accreditation mean?

Accreditation certifies - to other educational institutions and to the general public - that an institution meets established criteria or standards and is achieving its own stated objectives. WASC and the other five regional associations in the United States grant "institutional accreditation" after a comprehensive self-study followed by an on-site evaluation of the programs and services of the total institution. This means that all diploma or degree programs and educational activities offered by the institution are covered by the institution's accreditation.

The evaluation determines whether or not the institution qualifies for regional recognition. More importantly, periodic self-study and review promote improvement in educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

What is the Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS)?

The Accrediting Commission for Schools has the responsibility for accreditation of all schools below the college level in California, Hawaii, East Asia, and the Pacific Basin.

Included are elementary, junior high/middle, high, and adult schools whether public, private, or church-related. The Commission currently accredits over 2,900 such schools. A full term of accreditation is six years with a review.

Approximately 400 schools go through the accreditation process of self study and external team visits with subsequent Commission action each year, in order to be initially accredited or to renew a term of accreditation.

Why seek Accreditation?

Although accreditation serves as an indicator of quality for a school, the primary goal of accreditation is school self-improvement. The process involves three steps:

- An in-depth study and self-evaluation conducted by the school staff and community with the help of instruments developed for specific kinds of schools.
- On-site observation by a visiting committee of education professionals who validate the school report, evaluate its findings, and make a recommendation to the Commission for a term of accreditation.
- Commission study and discussion of the visiting committee's report, with subsequent action to grant, extend, or deny accreditation.

An Independent Public School

The Accrediting Commission for Schools requires the application of qualitative criteria and substantial documentation of student performance rather than mere confirmation of a school's adherence to minimum quantitative standards. Accreditation is granted when there is compelling evidence that the school is:

- Substantially accomplishing its own stated purposes.
- Meeting the Commission criteria for planning, organization, curriculum, assessment, and student support.
- Providing ongoing and stable financial, human, and physical resources adequate for delivery of the school's programs.
- Successfully promoting student learning in terms of explicit, adopted academic standards.