

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

BOOK — For Institutions

Seeking Initial or

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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ACCREDITATION PROCESS BOOK for ACBSP PROGRAMS

This book provides information for business, business related, and accounting programs pursuing accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). It contains important process information that is required to successfully accomplish ACBSP accreditation. The accreditation process and the standards and criteria for accreditation continue to evolve as part of ACBSP's guiding principle of continuous improvement. The policies and procedures described in this publication are subject to change by the governing body responsible for approval of these changes. Please contact ACBSP offices or go to the ACBSP website, www.acbsp.org, to be certain this is the most recent version.

**ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR BUSINESS
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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Distinctions Between Institutional and Program Accreditation.....	1
Distinctions Between Member Institutions and Accredited Institutions.....	1
Publications Resources Available	2
ACBSP Conferences and Resources Available	2
Regional Meetings Resources Available	3
Staff Resources Available	3
Accreditation Policies.....	4
Accreditation Governance	4
Compliance with Accreditation Standards.....	4
Accreditation Processes	4
Accrediting Associate Degree Programs at an ACBSP School with Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Programs	4
Privacy of Accreditation Process.....	5
Confidentiality Requirement	5
Conflict of Interest	5
Five-Year Limit on Candidacy	5
Informing the Public	6
Accreditation Timetable.....	6
Accreditation Evaluation Process Timetable Example.....	6
System-wide Accreditation	8
Cost of Accreditation — Business.....	9
Cost of Accreditation — Accounting.....	10
Obtaining Separate Accreditation of Accounting Not Concurrent with Accreditation of Business Programs	10
Letter of Application for Separate Accreditation of the Accounting Program	11
Candidacy	11
Appointment of a Mentor.....	11
Annual Progress Reports	11
Designation of a Commissioner	11
Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire	11

Self-Study	11
Site Team Visit.....	12
Actions Taken by Board of Commissioners	12
Effective Date of Accreditation in Accounting	12
Maintenance of Accreditation	12
Accreditation Eligibility.....	12
ACBSP Membership.....	12
Other Eligibility Requirements	13
Submitting the Application for Candidacy	13
Letter of Application for Candidacy Status	13
Candidacy Process.....	13
Candidacy Status	13
Appointment of a Mentor and Mentoring Activities.....	14
Fees During Candidacy — Mentor.....	15
Reports During Candidacy — Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire.....	15
Reports During Candidacy — Action Plan.....	16
Reports During Candidacy — Annual Report	16
Recommendation to Proceed to Self-Study	16
Self-Study Report	16
Preparation of Self-Study.....	17
Faculty Credentials Committee for Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Programs ...	17
Evaluation Site Team Visit.....	18
Evaluation Team Appointment.....	18
Preparing for the Site Visit	18
Consensus Call.....	19
Site Visit Schedule.....	19
Evaluation Team’s Responsibilities	19
Following the Site Team Visit.....	20
Action by The Board of Commissioners.....	20
Accreditation Committee Review	20
Accreditation Granted	21
Accreditation Granted with Notes.....	21
Accreditation Granted with Conditions.....	21
Accreditation Action Deferred	21

Accreditation Withheld.....	22
Final Steps.....	22
The Process for Maintaining Accreditation	23
Quality Assurance Report.....	23
Status Report on Notes and Conditions	24
Special Visits	24
Reporting Institutional Changes	24
Adding a Branch Campus	24
Closing a Branch Campus.....	25
Adding or Closing a Site	25
New Degree Programs	25
Program Termination.....	26
Change of Institution’s Name or Location	26
Change of Ownership.....	26
Closing of Institution.....	27
Voluntary Withdrawal by an ACBSP-Accredited Institution.....	27
Actions Taken While Accredited.....	27
Probation.....	27
Withdrawal.....	28
Withdrawal of Accounting Accreditation	29
Appeal Process	29
Public Concerns and Complaints Process.....	30
Informal Resolution Procedure	31
Formal Resolution Procedure	31
Promoting Your Accredited Status.....	33
<i>Use of Logo</i>	33
Publications.....	33
A Guide for Students	33
A Guide for Employers	34
Website	34
Mini Gonfalons	34
Lapel Pins	34

Introduction

This introduction provides an overview of accreditation for those seeking to understand program accreditation. The contents can be especially valuable for those seeking to make the case for accreditation on their campus.

Distinctions Between Institutional and Program Accreditation

Accreditation is the process by which an institution voluntarily undergoes an independent appraisal of its education activities. There are two types of accreditation:

- institutional and
- program

ACBSP accredits programs. ACBSP does not provide institutional accreditation. Institutional accreditation is an important consideration for students. Many organizations use institutional accreditation to accept degrees or credit. ACBSP program accreditation does not guarantee a degree will be accepted or recognized.

Institutional accreditation is typically provided by one of the six regional accrediting organizations for schools in the United States. For schools outside the United States, the national or regional government will often recognize the institution and give the authority for that institution to grant degrees.

ACBSP is a programmatic accrediting organization that reviews the quality and integrity of business degree programs. In addition to accreditation of all business programs, ACBSP also offers separate accreditation of accounting programs. Accreditation in accounting is optional and separate and requires the business programs to establish and maintain business accreditation. It does not imply the accounting program is not accredited as part of the accreditation of business programs but demonstrates that the accounting program has met additional standards. Accreditation by ACBSP is based on an independent evaluation of an institution's business school programs by a group of professionals which includes faculty and academic administrators in the field of business education.

In order to pursue ACBSP accreditation, an institution must be accredited by one of the six regional accrediting organizations. Institutions outside the United States must present, with the application for membership, a certified translation of an official document from an appropriate government organization in their country stating recognition, accreditation, and/or their right to grant degrees. This documentation and additional justification of quality, such as accreditation by national and international accrediting bodies or quality assurance organizations, may be required upon entering candidacy. ACBSP does not offer membership or business program accreditation to institutions with national accreditation such as that offered by Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) or the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC).

Distinctions Between Member Institutions and Accredited Institutions

ACBSP maintains three categories to describe institutions that have paid dues to join ACBSP.

- All institutions enter as members of ACBSP and may refer to their business programs as a Member Only of ACBSP.

- Upon making a decision to become accredited and after approval of the application the business program may state it has entered candidacy for accreditation and can be referred to as a Candidate for Accreditation.
- Once the process for accreditation concludes, an institution may say the business programs that were identified in the self-study are accredited.

The ACBSP website (www.acbsp.org) is updated regularly as institutions, and the business programs change from one status to another.

Publications Resources Available

In addition to this book which describes accreditation processes, several other publications are referenced in this book and on the ACBSP website, www.acbsp.org.

- ***Application for Candidacy for Accreditation Form and Cover Letter (Word document)***
This document allows you to prepare and send the application form and letter without retyping from a printed or PDF document.
- ***Estimated Costs for Accreditation*** — This two-page document provides approximate budgeting and cost information for the accreditation process.
- ***Accreditation Standards and Criteria for Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Schools*** — This document presents the standards and criteria for institutions to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards.
- ***Accreditation Standards and Criteria for Associate Degree Schools*** — This document presents the standards and criteria for institutions to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards.
- ***ACBSP Standards and Criteria for Demonstrating Excellence in Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Accounting Programs*** — This document is used by schools pursuing separate accreditation of the accounting program within the business school or program.

ACBSP Conferences and Resources Available

There are two conference each year. The first conference is held in a major city in the United States during the month of June. The second conference is held in a major city outside the United States every November. The conferences offer workshops on the accreditation process and content of accreditation standards and criteria, an opportunity to meet individually with ACBSP staff to discuss specific issues and questions and to meet with the mentors and members of the Board of Commissioners. Some features of the conference include:

- **Pre-Conference Workshops:** Offered most years just prior to the Conference, these sessions usually focus on accreditation process and standards, some of which may be offered during the conference (see the description below). This is an ideal way to learn more about accreditation processes and standards and criteria if your schedule does not permit attending the conference or you want to attend other concurrent sessions during the conference.
- **Meeting of the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Commission:** This meeting takes place in June. This is the annual meeting of all Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree institutions, where business that relates to the accreditation process is conducted.

This includes adopting changes in the standards, election of members to the Board of Commissioners, recognition of schools entering candidacy, and other business. All Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree members may attend and vote, regardless of their accredited status.

- **Meeting of the Associate Degree Commission:** This meeting takes place in June. This is the annual meeting of all Associate Degree institutions, where business that relates to the accreditation process is conducted. This includes adopting changes in the standards, election of members to the Board of Commissioners, recognition of schools entering candidacy, and other business. All Associate Degree members may attend and vote, regardless of their accredited status.
- **Accreditation Concurrent Sessions:** These educational tracks are offered during the conference and focus on a review of the standards and criteria, best practices used by business programs in achieving and maintaining accreditation, a review of the reaffirmation of accreditation processes, and training sessions for site evaluators and mentors. The specific sessions offered vary from year to year.
- **One-On-One Sessions:** These sessions take place at the conference in June. Conference attendees may set appointments to meet individually with a member of the Board of Commissioners and/or staff during these 15- to 30-minute sessions. This is a time for your specific questions and discussions as you seek or maintain accredited status.
- **Accreditation Banquet:** This banquet takes place at the conference in June. This banquet includes the recognition of all schools that have achieved initial accreditation or have achieved reaffirmation of accreditation during the past year.
- **Networking Opportunities:** In addition to the networking that occurs during scheduled sessions, there are ample opportunities to set appointments with specific individuals involved in accreditation processes and visit exhibitors that offer services and products to assist you along the path toward maintaining accreditation.

Regional Meetings Resources Available

ACBSP membership is divided into geographic regions. Every year, each region conducts a meeting. Many regional meetings include presentations on accreditation processes by member institutions or by an ACBSP staff member. Both institutions seeking accreditation and those that are accredited benefit. Members may attend a meeting in another region. The cost to attend a regional meeting is often lower than the cost to attend the ACBSP Conferences.

Please check the Regions landing page at www.acbsp.org for dates, locations and registration procedures for each regional meeting.

Staff Resources Available

The ACBSP staff is always available to assist individuals from business programs that are considering accreditation or are in the process of accreditation. The staff includes a Chief Accreditation Officer that leads the overall effort, Associate Director of Accreditation, and Accreditation Coordinators. Other staff at the ACBSP office may be able to respond to your questions and requests for information.

Accreditation Policies

Accreditation Governance

The Accreditation Governance Board assist each Board of Commissioners in establishing, documenting and periodically reviewing broad accreditation policies and procedures essential to accomplishing the objectives and appropriate functioning of the two Commissions and the administration of the accreditation staff.

The governance of the accreditation process for associate degree and baccalaureate/graduate degree institutions is the primary responsibility of the elected Board of Commissioners for the Associate Degree Commission and the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Commission. The Boards of Commissioners are responsible for determining eligible institutions to be accredited and for all accreditation decisions.

Accreditation standards (including changes) are initiated by the Board of Commissioners and must be approved by the institutional members of ACBSP (also known as the Commission). Interpretation of the standards is the sole responsibility of the Board of Commissioners.

Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Business schools and programs are expected to comply with the membership approved accreditation standards of ACBSP. The self-study report prepared by the business program should demonstrate that the compliance does exist.

Business programs can request a deviation from a standard. The deviation may be prompted by the unique mission of the institution or the business programs or by other extenuating circumstances, such as government or union requirements.

When a deviation is requested, it is necessary to include the request in the self-study report and provide a written justification for the request. Deviations are not routinely granted – they must be truly an exception that is justified and one that does not dilute the quality of the business programs. For further information, contact the ACBSP accreditation staff.

Accreditation Processes

Accrediting Associate Degree Programs at an ACBSP School with Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Programs

Institutions seeking accreditation of associate degree programs that are integrated into baccalaureate programs must address the Curriculum Summary Criteria 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 from the Associate Degree Standards and Criteria Book for:

- the professional components criterion 6.2
- general education criterion 6.3 and
- the major criterion 6.4

Table 6 - Curriculum Summary will be used for each associate degree program seeking accreditation. Place the table in an addendum to the Baccalaureate/Graduate Self-Study. A separate self-study and site visit is not required. This information will be evaluated by the Associate Degree Board of Commissioners to determine if the associate degree programs should be accredited based on the Baccalaureate/Graduate degree Board of Commissioners accreditation decision.

Baccalaureate institutions seeking accreditation for its associate degree programs must include at least one representative (evaluator) on the site visit team from the Associate Degree Board of Commissioners when the associate degree programs are taught as separate programs, at different locations and with faculty designated to teach only associate degree courses. The requesting institution must submit a self-study based on the "Accreditation Standards for Associate Degree Schools and Programs."

Privacy of Accreditation Process

All reasonable efforts will be made by ACBSP to protect the confidentiality of the information gathered and reviewed during the accreditation process. The accreditation decisions made by the Board of Commissioners and the basis for the decisions must be made public. It should be noted, that legal requests for information pertaining to an institution's accreditation process involving ACBSP may require certain disclosures unforeseen at the time this document was prepared.

Confidentiality Requirement

Only evaluators, staff and commissioners of ACBSP ("Qualified Persons") who need to know the confidential information may review the confidential information. ACBSP will require all such Qualified Persons to abide by this confidentiality requirement. All evaluators sign an agreement outlining their ethical responsibility pertaining to conduct before, during and after an accreditation site visit with which they are involved. This means that matters pertaining to an accreditation visit are not to be discussed in public and are to be treated confidentially. The Board of Commissioners also requests that all ACBSP accreditation materials (e.g. - Feedback Report, etc.) be maintained by the accredited institution as confidential information.

Conflict of Interest

Every reasonable effort will be made to have commissioners, staff and evaluators excluded from involvement in the accreditation process in which they have had, or might sometime have in the foreseeable future, a professional or personal conflict of interest. ACBSP policy requires that all active commissioners and board members of ACBSP remove themselves from any of the Council's discussions about their own institution's accreditation and all other institutions where they have a relationship that could involve a conflict of interest. A signed conflict of interest statement is requested annually of all active commissioners.

Five-Year Limit on Candidacy

The institution must complete the accreditation process within five years of beginning candidacy, be granted an extension of candidacy, or be dropped from candidacy.

Informing the Public

In communicating with the public, business programs must accurately distinguish between programs that have achieved accredited status and those that have not. This is accomplished through brochures, catalogs, websites or other means of effective public communications.

The business programs must routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance, including business student achievement, such as graduation rates, retention, licensure, job placement, etc., A link should be easily accessible and identifiable within a minimal number of website pages, specifically located on the business unit website as in this example. [http://www.jjc.edu/programs/business/ Select Graduation Retention Rates](http://www.jjc.edu/programs/business/Select%20Graduation%20Retention%20Rates) in the middle of the page.

ACBSP must inform the public of required information based on CHEA Standards for recognition such as: the basis for accreditation decisions made by the Boards of Commissioners, accommodations for international programs, program responses to any adverse accreditation decisions, etc. Accreditation decisions are posted at www.acbsp.org under a section called Accreditation Decisions after the two meetings per year, held in April and November.

Accreditation Timetable

The two questions most often asked at the start of the process are: “What is the timetable for accreditation?” and “What is the cost to achieve accreditation?” The short answer is 24-30 months and \$12,500, if an outcomes assessment process is in place. A longer time will be required if an outcomes assessment process or other processes are not in place. If the programs are pursuing accreditation of the accounting program at the same time as accreditation of all business degrees, the time answer is typically the same and the cost will increase to approximately \$15,000. Cost will vary depending on many factors, including the size, number of campuses, readiness to achieve accreditation, the speed at which the programs wish to move through the process and other factors. ACBSP always looks to the programs to establish a timetable that suits their own needs.

Accreditation Evaluation Process Timetable Example

- The process begins with completion of the Application for Candidacy. At this time, the programs are considered candidates for accreditation. For our purposes here, we assume the application is submitted in the fall and the accounting program is pursuing separate accreditation at the same time.
- A mentor will be assigned.
- The accreditation coordinator and team begin work on the preliminary questionnaire in the online reporting portal. The work is shared with the mentor and Chief Accreditation Officer through the portal.
- The mentor provides feedback on opportunities to improve.
- The accreditation coordinator and team develop an action plan to close the gaps.
- If the accreditation includes concurrent business and accounting accreditation, the accounting programs will provide input to the separate accounting preliminary questionnaire. A separate mentor for the accounting accreditation is not required as it is with the business programs accreditation.
- The accreditation coordinator and team will decide if they want the mentor to travel to the campus for face to face feedback.

- Work begins on the timetable and plan of work outlined in the action plan. The mentor must recommend, and the Chief Accreditation Officer must approve, that the school is ready to begin self-study. We assume this occurs by spring, following the start of work in the fall.
- The mentor and the Chief Accreditation Officer will coordinate the time frame in which the business programs will submit the self-study, and the business programs will send in an Intent to Submit a Self-Study Form.
- Under one scenario, the school is determined to be ready to begin the self-study immediately, with the self-study completed by December 15th.
- Under another scenario, the school determines that a year or more is required. In this case, work on the self-study is not concluded until the next July 15th. Either of these cases is considered fast and most programs can anticipate when more time is required to prepare a successful self-study. Inform the mentor the self-study is ready for review in the online reporting portal.
- For schools outside the United States, the self-study loaded into the online reporting portal must be in English.
- Intent to Submit a Self-Study Form must be received by
 - September 1st for a December 15th submission, or
 - March 1st for a July 15th submission.
- An evaluation site-visit team is assigned to an institution after ACBSP headquarters receives the Intent to Submit a Self-Study form.
- Visits are scheduled each February and March, and permit review and action by the Board in April.
- Visits in September and October would permit review and action by the Board in November.
- The team of evaluators receive access to the self-study four weeks prior to the site-visit.
- A consensus call will be made by the team to discuss strengths, opportunities for improvement, and site-visit issues two weeks prior to the visit.
- The mentor and the assigned commissioner will be invited to participate in the call.
- The team chair should share site visit issues with the campus accreditation coordinator.
- The site team visits the campus and files a feedback report to ACBSP within ten business days following the visit.
- The findings of the evaluators are first reviewed by the ACBSP staff for completeness and then access is provided to the business program accreditation coordinator for review.
- The president's response is provided in the reporting portal at least ten business days prior to the meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
- The Board of Commissioners review the self-study, evaluators' report and institutional response by the president at its meeting each April or November to consider accreditation requests and to award accreditation to those institutions that are in compliance with ACBSP standards.
- Action by the Board of Commissioners is informally reported to the institution immediately following the meeting. The formal notice of board actions taken can take up to two months to complete. As ACBSP is a proponent of continuous improvement, most institutions receive accreditation with conditions and notes.

- Accreditation is effective immediately. Accredited status can be released to the public after all expenses are paid.
- Accredited business programs receive their accreditation certificate during the accreditation banquet at the conference held every June. The celebration will be in June, although many programs will have held that status for several months.

In our example, one school achieved accreditation in approximately 18 months, beginning in the fall and receiving approval by the Board the following April. In the other scenario, the process required two years. The time spent by the business programs preparing to conduct the self-study is the major factor in this process and is determined in coordination with the business program accreditation coordinator, business program team, mentor and ACBSP staff.

System-wide Accreditation

ACBSP offers accreditation for individual campuses and system-wide accreditation. Typically, the main campus of the system enters membership and there is no requirement for branch campuses to join into membership unless there is a desire to receive member benefits at these branch campuses. The cost of annual dues is \$2,000 for the main campus.

At the point the accreditation is sought, the branch campuses must be brought into membership as candidates for accreditation. Exceptions are created for campuses that are not prepared to undertake the accreditation process. They should not be brought into candidacy until they are prepared to undertake the process. Extraordinary efforts must be taken by these campuses and the main campus to clearly state the accreditation preparation status or lack thereof.

The definitions of what comprises campuses and sites where education programs are offered are as follows:

- **Main Campus:** Educational institutions which offer business courses or programs at several locations must declare one of these locations to be the Main Campus.
- **Branch Campuses:** A Branch Campus is defined by ACBSP as a teaching location that is:
 - Geographically located away from the main campus;
 - permanent in nature;
 - offers courses in business programs leading to a degree;
 - has its own administrative or supervisory organization;
 - has its own budget; and
 - hires its own faculty, with or without the support of personnel from the main campus.
- **Educational Site:** An Educational Site is defined by ACBSP as:
 - A site other than a branch campus or other instructional site;
 - geographically located away from the main campus;
 - geographically located away from the branch campus; and is
 - supported with faculty and administration from another campus.
- **Other Instructional Sites:** An instructional site is an off-campus site, other than a Branch Campus or an Educational Site, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit. These sites may include, but are not limited to, high schools, corporations, community centers, and churches.

Educational sites and other institutional sites are not considered campuses as outlined in this document. Their programs and degrees are reviewed as part of the review of the campus to which they are attached. Certain policies and practices make it viable for a system to bring into membership and accreditation as many campuses as are ready for accreditation:

- The cost for annual membership for the main campus remains \$2,000 prior to accreditation or \$2,600 upon entering candidacy. The cost for branch campuses is \$1,000. Branch campus cost is capped at 50 campuses. One invoice is submitted to the main campus.
- Any online campus is considered part of the main campus.
- The system may bring into accreditation as many campuses as are prepared for accreditation at one time by payment of the standard \$2,500 fee. As other campuses are added in any given year, the \$2,500 fee is required for a group or individual campuses and the accreditation process undertaken.
- Under certain circumstances, new campuses may be added to the system. They are not required to undertake the accreditation process as long as the system-wide policies that apply to all campuses at the time of accreditation are applied to these campuses.
- Recognition of accredited status is provided for all campuses on the ACBSP website, where all campuses are listed with designation as candidates and then later as accredited.
- Each campus designates a CHAMPION and CO-CHAMPION. However, the variety of all member benefits is delivered to all individuals on the campus.
- During the candidacy for accreditation process, it is advisable that a person be designated to assist with providing required information to the lead campus coordinator. This person may be a CHAMPION or a CO-CHAMPION.
- One self-study is conducted for all campuses, alleviating the need for multiple self-studies for each campus.
- One site-visit is conducted with an expanded team, larger than the typical team. The visit typically begins and concludes at the main campus with visits to other campuses carried out by individual site team members during the middle of the week.
- The expense is greater than a one campus site-visit but dramatically less per campus than a typical visit. It is not mandatory for all campuses to be visited.
- Once all existing campuses are accredited, any new branch campus may be added using a process described in the section, reporting institutional changes.
- Upon granting of accreditation, all campuses in attendance at the Annual Conference will be recognized with one framed certificate of accreditation for the entire system. An unframed certificate can be sent to each campus desiring to receive a certificate for framing.

Cost of Accreditation — Business

The costs related to obtaining accreditation by ACBSP will vary from institution to institution because of location and expenses for visits by the mentor and site visit team.

It is recommended the cost of accreditation be allocated over a three-year period. ACBSP will work with the business programs and the timetable set forth in the action plan to properly prepare invoicing and payment consistent with the budget set forth by the business programs.

The costs shown are subject to change. They do not include the prorated or annual membership dues, nor do they include the costs for individuals to attend the regional meeting or the ACBSP Annual Conference.

Application Fee	\$ 2,500
Mentor Visits & Consultations	\$ 2,000
Site Visit Travel (three evaluators)	\$ 2,400
Site Visit Honorarium (three days)	\$ 1,950
Site Visit Food and Lodging	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
TOTAL	\$10,850

A \$4,000 site-visit deposit is required prior to the site visit. ACBSP will pay each evaluator individually after they file an expense claim and attach receipts for the site visit expenses. An honorarium of \$850/visit is provided to the chair of the site visit team and \$550/visit to other members of the site visit team. The business program is responsible for reimbursing ACBSP on a timely basis for additional expenses. Any unexpended funds are returned to the business programs.

Cost of Accreditation — Accounting

Accounting accreditation can be obtained at the same time the business programs is pursuing business accreditation or as a separate process. Both scenarios are described below. The same requirements with regard to site visit fees paid in advance, expense reimbursement and other details described in the previous section apply.

The separate evaluation requires the expense of a separate site visit based on two persons for three days. If conducted concurrently, one additional evaluator is added to the site visit team, and the honorarium provided to the chair increases to \$1000/visit.

Table of Estimated Costs for Separate Accounting Accreditation

	<u>CONCURRENT</u>	<u>NON-CONCURRENT</u>
Application Fee	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250
Mentor Visit & Consultations (recommended)	\$ 0	\$ 1,000
Site Visit Travel (one additional/two evaluators)	\$ 800	\$ 1,600
Site Visit Honorarium (three days)	\$ 700	\$ 1,350
Site Visit Food and Lodging	\$ 700	\$ 1,200
Estimated TOTAL	\$ 3,450	\$ 6,400

Obtaining Separate Accreditation of Accounting Not Concurrent with Accreditation of Business Programs

The most typical pursuit of separate accreditation of the accounting program will be as part of the initial accreditation or reaffirmation process. However, some business programs that currently have accreditation based on their current business programs accreditation may wish to use a process not concurrent. A separate procedure has been established and mirrors the other content in this document.

At no time is it to be inferred that the accounting program, as part of the business programs, does not have an accredited status when the business programs is accredited. The separate accreditation exists only to show the programs has met a set of standards separate from, and in addition to, the business programs accreditation. If the separate accreditation is not achieved, there is no change in the accredited status of the business programs or the accreditation of the accounting program as part of the accreditation of the business programs.

Letter of Application for Separate Accreditation of the Accounting Program

The process begins with a letter to the Chief Accreditation Officer. See the example letter at the end of this book.

Candidacy

Upon submittal of the letter, fees and approval by the ACBSP staff, the accounting program may officially use the title of “Candidate for Accreditation in Accounting.”

Appointment of a Mentor

Unlike the accreditation process for the business programs where appointment of the mentor is required, a mentor is not required for this process. However, it is recommended for the non-concurrent process. The ACBSP staff will be pleased to provide more information, including candidates for mentors. The cost mirrors the cost of the mentor for the business programs. Please refer to the mentor section of this document for additional details.

Annual Progress Reports

The mentor and the representatives from the candidate school will update ACBSP with an annual status report due in September of each year.

Designation of a Commissioner

Standard operating procedures are distributed to the nominating committee to consider when nominating new members to the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners, to ensure an accounting person is on the Board. The accounting person will be assigned, or closely follow, the review of applications and materials related to the separate accreditation in accounting. Each institution, whether following a concurrent or a non-concurrent process will be assigned a commissioner, similar to the process for accreditation of the business programs.

Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire

A preliminary site visit is not required, although the mentor or staff may seek clarification excerpts from the preliminary questionnaire prepared for the business programs when the concurrent process is used.

Self-Study

The self-study process mirrors the process of the business programs. The separate accounting accreditation required a completed separate accounting programs self-study using the separate accounting standards and criteria for accreditation. For additional information, refer to that section of this document. Since portions of the business programs self-study could be used in

this self-study, the length of time between the two self-studies and applicability of this information will be contributing factors in determining the time and resources required to complete the self-study.

Site Team Visit

The site team visit for the non-concurrent process includes two persons. The cost for the team visit is described in the previous section on Costs of Accreditation — Accounting. The timetable and process for the separate accreditation in accounting site visit team is like that of a visit by a team for accreditation of the business programs.

Actions Taken by Board of Commissioners

Institutions using a concurrent process will have review and action of the accounting program accreditation considered immediately following action on the accreditation of the business programs. They will be two separate actions. The actions taken are identical to those described in that section of this document. Institutions using the non-concurrent process will be considered and acted upon at the meeting with the actions taken identical to those described in this document. ACBSP will inform the public of decisions on accreditation status through the ACBSP website.

Effective Date of Accreditation in Accounting

Accreditation in Accounting begins with official notification from ACBSP. Your success in having achieved accreditation will be celebrated at the next Annual Conference, when a professionally framed certificate will be awarded during the Accreditation Banquet.

Maintenance of Accreditation

Institutions using the non-concurrent process will be provided accreditation for a period of less than 10 years. The exact date will be coordinated to the next scheduled reaffirmation of the business programs. During the time period between initial accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation, separate accounting programs accreditation requires separate Quality Assurance Reporting on the accounting program.

Accreditation Eligibility

ACBSP Membership

To be eligible for consideration to become accredited, the business programs must be a member of ACBSP. For membership to be granted, three conditions must be met:

- The institution must be accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies or, if the institution is located outside the United States, the institution may submit a certified translation of an official document from an appropriate government organization in its respective country stating recognition, accreditation and/or the institution's right to grant degrees. At the current time, ACBSP does not recognize accreditation from national accrediting agencies, such as the Accrediting Council of Independent Career and Technical Colleges.

- The business programs must pay the appropriate membership dues. The annual and pro-rated dues amounts are as follows:

	Membership Only
July 1 - June 30	\$2,000.00
October 1 - June 30	\$1,500.00
January 1 - June 30	\$1000.00
- The business programs must submit a Member Enrollment Form listing a CHAMPION for the business programs, a CO-CHAMPION, important information about the institution and a listing of all those designated to receive member benefits.

Other Eligibility Requirements

In addition to membership, prior to applying to enter candidacy for accreditation, the institution must:

- Have offered (a) degree(s) in business for at least two years and have graduates.
- Have a publicly-stated purpose appropriate to a college or university that has been approved by the institution’s governing body (i.e. Regents, Trustees, etc.).

Submitting the Application for Candidacy

Once the school determines it does meet the eligibility requirements, an application for candidacy is submitted. Following acceptance into membership, the business programs must verify it has reviewed the eligibility requirements and submit:

Letter of Application for Candidacy Status

The process is described as follows:

- The letter and appropriate application for accreditation must be authorized in writing by the CEO/president/rector/director of the institution.
- If the accreditation is for a multi-campus system, the letter should indicate how many campuses are included for accreditation and list them specifically. If campuses are excluded, they should be listed, and a reason provided as to why they are being excluded. This letter should include an explanation of the ways in which you will communicate to the public what is not accredited.
- Payment of half of the initial accreditation fee of \$1,250 (\$1,875 if pursuing accounting accreditation concurrent with business accreditation) must accompany the application materials. The initial application fee is applied toward the \$2,500 fee for business accreditation or \$3,750 if accounting accreditation is pursued concurrent with business accreditation. The fee is refundable if it is determined the institution was not eligible or cannot proceed with the accreditation process based on the content of the application and course catalog. The remaining balance of the accreditation fee may be paid at any time but must be paid before accreditation is granted.

Candidacy Process

Candidacy Status

Upon review and approval of the application documents, the business programs become a “Candidate for Accreditation” and is in “candidacy status.” This title may be used in communicating the business program’s status to the public. If accounting accreditation is being pursued concurrent with, or separate from, accreditation of the business programs, the

accounting programs may use the title “Candidate for Accreditation in Accounting.” A special logo is available from ACBSP for the school to use in promoting its candidacy status.

A word of caution is in order at this point. While ACBSP wants to actively help the business programs achieve accreditation, and while it has established this program for that purpose, ACBSP is not in a position to guarantee that the business programs will receive accreditation by becoming a Candidate for Accreditation. The expectations, however, are that the business programs will successfully achieve accreditation. Candidates for Accreditation are held to all of the standards for accreditation.

Appointment of a Mentor and Mentoring Activities

After receiving notice of being granted candidacy status, ACBSP will assign a mentor for the business programs and, if applicable, determine, in cooperation with the head of the business programs, the need for an additional mentor for the separate accounting accreditation. The institution and ACBSP will mutually agree upon mentors.

Contact information will be provided to the mentor and the designated person (institutional contact), as specified in the application for candidacy. The mentor and the institutional contact person should communicate as soon as possible about expectations on timing to complete the preliminary questionnaire and any support the business programs require from the mentor. The mentor and institutional contact person should communicate approximately once a month to determine the requirements needed to assist with the accreditation process and monitor the progress along the timeline suggested by the business programs.

The institutional contact person will inform the mentor the preliminary questionnaire is ready to be reviewed. The mentor should review the information and provide feedback to the business programs using the online reporting portal. This is normally done within one month after receipt of the questionnaire.

The mentor and the institutional contact person should discuss the feedback and prepare a timeline and an action plan to improve any processes identified by the mentor. Communication with the mentor and the institutional contact person should occur at least once a month to determine the progress on the action plan.

When the mentor believes the action plan has progressed sufficiently to allow the business programs to conduct a self-study that can meet the ACBSP standards, the mentor will notify ACBSP on or before March 1st for an July 15th self-study submission, or on or before September 1st for a December 15th self-study submission.

Please note that the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners expects to see a minimum of three assessment cycles, with results. Grades and CGPAs cannot be used for assessment results. Evidence of improvements made to educational processes, based on the results, must be reported. If the institution does not have the necessary three assessment cycles or no evidence of improvements, the mentor and ACBSP staff will not authorize the business programs to move forward with the self-study.

ACBSP staff will notify the institutional contact person with the timelines for submittal of the self-study after notification by the mentor that the business programs are ready to write their self-study. The institutional contact person will complete the Intent to Submit a Self-Study Form and send it to ACBSP.

The business programs should send the mentor each section of the self-study to review after the section is completed. Feedback will be provided to the business programs. Suggested improvements can include providing sufficient data and information to show evidence of improving educational processes and, whenever possible, including the data or data summaries in the self-study document rather than in the appendices.

The mentor and commissioners may be invited to participate in the consensus call with the site-visit team.

Fees During Candidacy — Mentor

The costs related to having the mentor include an honorarium of \$500 per year and reimbursement of travel expenses. During the first year, if a visit to the school is not required, and work is done via e-mail and phone, the mentor is paid an honorarium of \$500 for desk time upon completion and submittal of an expense report. The mentor is not paid for desk time in subsequent years, only for visits to the campus. If more than one day of honorarium per year is requested, it must be approved by the program accreditation coordinator in candidacy and ACBSP prior to the mentor visit.

The mentor must submit documentation of an expense report to ACBSP the same calendar year of the expense. Late reports may not be accepted due to budgeting constraints. ACBSP takes responsibility to provide payment to the mentor and the business programs take responsibility to reimburse ACBSP in a timely manner.

Reports During Candidacy — Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire

Once the candidacy letter and application have been received, the ACBSP office and mentor will ensure the institution receives, or has previously received, access to *Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire* and the *Standards and Criteria* through the online reporting portal. If accounting accreditation is being pursued, an additional required document is *ACBSP Standards and Criteria for Demonstrating Excellence in Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Accounting Programs*.

The first report submitted for business accreditation is the *Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire* responses. The responses are provided by members of the business programs in candidacy. ACBSP anticipates that this will be submitted within the six months following appointment of the mentor.

The accreditation coordinator notifies the mentor when the responses to the preliminary questionnaire are ready to be reviewed in the online reporting portal. The mentor provides feedback on the responses and may schedule a visit to the institution to review the materials submitted.

The results of the preliminary review should not be construed as an approval or rejection of accreditation – it is simply a test of readiness for accreditation.

Reports During Candidacy — Action Plan

A valued option is for the accreditation coordinator and team to develop an action plan based on mentor feedback to the *Preliminary Site Visit Questionnaire*. The action plan includes a description of what needs to be accomplished and a timetable for completion.

It is also an ideal opportunity to outline the anticipated costs of accreditation, a plan for budgeting expenses and for anticipating the expenses for which ACBSP will invoice and require payment. If accounting accreditation is being pursued concurrent with business accreditation, the action plan should address both proposed accreditations.

Reports During Candidacy — Annual Report

The business programs in candidacy should submit an annual candidacy report to the ACBSP office in September. If accounting accreditation is being pursued concurrent with business accreditation, the annual report should address both proposed accreditations. The annual report will address progress in meeting the accreditation standards and set forth a timetable for meeting program deficiencies.

The mentor or mentors will also file an annual mentoring report to the ACBSP office in September of each year regarding progress and will inform ACBSP of anticipated readiness for proceeding to the self-study.

Recommendation to Proceed to Self-Study

The institution must receive a recommendation to proceed to the self-study or self-studies from the mentor or mentors, with concurrence of the Chief Accreditation Officer before starting the self-study process.

The Chief Accreditation Officer, or designated staff, will coordinate the timeline for submitting the self-study. The business programs, or accounting programs, must submit an Intent to Submit a Self-Study Form to the ACBSP accreditation staff to be placed on the site-visit schedule.

This must be received by September 1st to be on the December 15th accreditation cycle, or by March 1st to be on the July 15th cycle. The self-study for accreditation should take place within five years of the date on the application for candidacy.

Self-Study Report

While still in candidacy, the accreditation process enters a key stage with the beginning of the self-study. The institution may not proceed with a self-study until after it has been given permission to do so. The purpose of the self-study is for the business programs and the accounting program to demonstrate and record that it is in compliance with the ACBSP accreditation standards or to outline activities that will lead to achievement. Typically, it takes the accreditation coordinator and team about six months to prepare the self-study and enter it in the online reporting portal.

Preparation of Self-Study

The self-study documents must be loaded into the online reporting portal in English. The report will be examined, and the necessary arrangements will be made for a team of trained evaluators to access the report.

The self-study includes specific responses to all ACBSP accreditation standards criteria. It should include a candid assessment of the business program's strengths and weaknesses regarding each criterion, including whether it complies with the standards and criteria, or how it will comply with the standards and criteria, with a timetable. Unique characteristics of the business programs not referenced in responses to individual standards, but which are significant in making the case for accreditation, should be set forth and highlighted in the overview section of the self-study document.

Applicants are encouraged to ask questions throughout the preparation of the self-study. The ACBSP staff is more than willing to help.

Faculty Credentials Committee for Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Programs

If the business program administration is unable to determine whether the business faculty has credentials that meet the faculty qualifications standard, the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners has established a Credentials Committee to make such determinations. The purpose of this committee is to assist the business programs in determining if a faculty member is academically, professionally or minimally qualified — for faculty who may have out-of-field doctorates or a unique combination of education and experience.

Requests for review of one to four full-time faculty members or part-time faculty (adjuncts) in an institution's business programs must be sent electronically to the ACBSP headquarters and will be processed on a timely basis. Normally it takes about 30 days for the business programs to receive a response.

A faculty review by the Credentials Committee cannot be conducted unless there is a complete portfolio on each faculty member. A portfolio consists of the following electronic documents:

- Vitae (current)
- Transcripts of all graduate work. Graduate courses that relate to the discipline(s) in which the faculty member is teaching should be highlighted and separately identified. Transcripts of undergraduate work should also be included if needed to meet qualifications. The listing of these courses should be presented in a manner that allows the reader to evaluate the content of the course (course description).
- A statement describing the teaching experience of the faculty member, including an analysis of the quality of teaching that is performed — student learning outcome assessments, peer evaluations, student evaluations, etc. (Two-page limit)
- A statement describing the faculty member's professional experience as it relates to the enhancement of teaching in the discipline(s) taught within the business programs. (two-page limit)
- A statement describing the faculty member's consulting experience as it relates to the enhancement of teaching in the discipline(s) taught within the business programs. (two-page limit)

- A completed Faculty Credential Review Spreadsheet provided by ACBSP. The spreadsheet is also available for download from the ACBSP website. The faculty member's name and requested level of qualification, as well as the discipline and/or course levels being sought, should be completed in the top portion of the spreadsheet.

All materials are to be submitted electronically to reports@acbsp.org. There should be one portfolio submitted for each faculty member being reviewed. In compiling the portfolio, substance in the narrative is more important than length. There is a 10-page limit. All materials submitted in the portfolio will be kept by the Credentials Committee and will not be returned to the institution or individual.

Evaluation Site Team Visit

ACBSP will assemble a well-balanced team of trained program evaluators to conduct a site visit. ACBSP selects visiting team members from a pool of well-qualified individuals who have experience in the Council's evaluation process. The person designated as the chair of the team will be responsible for ensuring that the visit is conducted objectively. The size of the team (usually three members) and the qualifications of its members are determined by the type of institution being evaluated and the programs offered by that institution. If the accreditation is for a system of campuses, the size and length of the visit may increase. If accounting accreditation is being pursued concurrent with business accreditation, one additional team member may be added to participate in review of the business programs accreditation and to focus on the accounting self-study report. This person has a background in requirements for accreditation of accounting programs. If accounting accreditation is being pursued separate of the business programs, the site team may be comprised of two individuals.

Evaluation Team Appointment

To minimize potential conflicts of interest, ACBSP will try to the best of its ability to construct evaluation teams that do not include former employees or a close relative of a former employee, a graduate of the institution, someone having previously expressed a personal opinion, or someone who is in the immediate competitive area of the institution. The institution will be aware of proposed appointees and be provided an opportunity to object to anyone designated to serve on the evaluation team.

After the site visit dates are agreed upon and the team is appointed, the program accreditation coordinator and team chair, in cooperation with ACBSP staff, will be responsible for all logistical arrangements, including, but not limited to: hotel reservations, a meeting room on campus for team meetings, announcements of the arrival of the visiting team, and arrangements for the visiting team to meet with key administrators, faculty, students, alumni, business advisers, and community groups. These arrangements will be coordinated with the chair of the ACBSP site visit team and ACBSP staff, typically the associate director of accreditation or the accreditation coordinator.

Preparing for the Site Visit

Access to the self-study report will be provided to each member of the evaluation team and to a member of the Board of Commissioners assigned to the institution by ACBSP through the online reporting portal.

Team members are expected to carefully examine all materials received from ACBSP and the institution prior to the site visit. The chair will establish which team member will be responsible for writing specific portions of the report.

Consensus Call

About two weeks prior to the site visit, a consensus call is conducted with all team members. The assigned member of the Board of Commissioners and the mentor are invited to participate in the call. Contact may be made with the institution by the site team chair or commissioner following this consensus call to share site visit issues, request information, or raise specific questions to be discussed during the visit.

Site Visit Schedule

The precise length of the team's visit will depend on the location(s), size and number of programs offered by the institution. The schedule is typically as follows: first day - arrival; second and third day - extensive meetings; and fourth day - departure in the afternoon. It may take extra days for extensive off-campus sites and system-wide accreditation.

In conjunction with the institution's accreditation coordinator, the team chair is responsible for working on logistics, agenda, gathering information, etc. The chair also keeps team members informed about how the site visit arrangements are progressing and communicates the team's arrival and departure times. Team members will usually arrive the afternoon before the first day of the official visit. The chair will notify team members of the time and place of their first team meeting. At this meeting, the chair will review specific plans for the visit and generally organize the team to ensure a successful visit.

Evaluation Team's Responsibilities

During its first day on campus, the team should meet with the president of the institution, the head of the business programs and others as deemed appropriate. The team begins the process of evaluation by considering the business programs in its entirety.

As representatives of ACBSP, the evaluation team is responsible for verifying the information in the self-study report and evaluating the business programs to help determine whether the standards for accreditation are met.

The team should try to accumulate as much pertinent information as it can and use sampling techniques where appropriate to review the accumulated data. The team's findings should reflect its collective judgment about the clarity of mission of the business programs and the ability of the business programs to deliver a quality educational experience to its students.

A final team meeting will be held during the last day of the site visit at which time the team will seek to reach agreement on the proposed content of its report. At this same meeting, the team chair should finalize plans for an exit interview with the head of the business programs and the head of the accounting program if separate accreditation in accounting is being pursued. The head of the business programs should not be surprised by information presented at the exit interview. At the exit interview, the team chair will provide the institutional representatives with an oral summary of the major points that will be in the team's written report, no more than ten top strength and ten top opportunities for

improvement. The team chair will make it clear in the exit interview that the Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on accreditation. The team is not to express any opinions as to whether the programs will be accredited — that is the sole prerogative of the Associate Degree Board of Commissioners and the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners.

Following the Site Team Visit

The findings of the evaluators are first reviewed by the ACBSP staff for completeness and then access is provided to the institutional representative (CEO/President/Rector/Director) to respond to the evaluators' feedback report. A response by the institutional representative is provided in the online reporting portal within ten business days of receipt of the feedback report. It then becomes part of the material reviewed by the Board of Commissioners.

Action by The Board of Commissioners

The Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Board of Commissioners is comprised of 12 elected Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree members of ACBSP and one public member, appointed by the board. The chief accreditation officer is an ex-officio member of the Board (non-voting).

During the accreditation cycle, the Board of Commissioners reviews the self-study materials, the evaluation team's feedback report, and the institution's response and determines:

- If the team's report is complete and supported with factual information,
- if the team's findings support the granting of accreditation, and if the institution's response to the team's report is substantially in agreement with the team's report. If not, the commissioners will obtain clarification of conflicting information.

Accreditation Committee Review

The Associate Degree Board of Commissioners is comprised of 9 elected Associate Degree members of ACBSP and one public member, appointed by the board. The chief accreditation officer is an ex-officio member of the Board (non-voting).

The Accreditation Committee is composed of Associate Degree Commissioners. The chairperson of the Accreditation Committee may request the presence of any individual(s) that could provide information of a substantive nature to the proceedings.

The Accreditation Committee reviews the evaluation team's report and the business program's response:

1. To determine if the team's findings support the granting of accreditation; and
2. To evaluate the business program's response to the team's report, especially if there is substantial disagreement between the business program's response and the team's report.

After careful review of the visiting team's findings, the response of the business program, and other relevant materials, the Accreditation Committee makes its recommendations to the Board of Commissioners concerning action on the application for accreditation of business programs.

After careful review of the self-study report, the visiting team's findings, the response by the institution, and other relevant materials, the Board of Commissioners decides of whether the business programs meet the accreditation standards of ACBSP. The Board of Commissioners renders one of the following actions on the institutional requests for accreditation:

Accreditation Granted

Accreditation shall be granted to those business programs judged by the Board of Commissioners to be in compliance with the ACBSP accreditation standards. The programs must have paid its current membership dues and the site visit expenses before accreditation can be promoted. The program will be notified, in writing, of its accreditation status.

Business programs must accurately distinguish between programs that have achieved accredited status and those that have not in all public communication. This is accomplished through brochures, catalogs, websites or other means of effective public communications. ACBSP will also list this information on our website, www.acbsp.org.

Accreditation Granted with Notes

Business programs found to be in compliance with ACBSP standards, but not some of the criteria, may be accredited "with notes." Notes represent concerns of the Board of Commissioners and until those concerns are dealt with by the institution and accepted by ACBSP, the progress on improving the process to remove the notes must be submitted to ACBSP every two years.

Accreditation Granted with Conditions

There are occasions when the Board of Commissioners may grant "Conditional Accreditation." This means that most standards are met, but there are some deficiencies in fully meeting all the ACBSP standards. For example, if multiple criteria regarding student learning outcome assessment are not fully met, a condition could be placed on the student learning outcome assessment standard.

The president/rector or person in a similar position of the institution has pledged that the deficiencies will be remedied within a four-year time frame. Progress on improving the process to remove the conditions must be submitted to ACBSP every two years, asking for a review so the conditions can be removed.

When deemed necessary, a commissioner will visit the campus and make a determination of whether the deficiencies have been corrected. The report of these findings is made at the April or November Board of Commissioners meeting for its final disposition. Requests for a one-year extension, with justification, may be considered or the program accreditation will be placed on probation for one year. If the deficiencies are not corrected within the time allowed, the institution will be notified that its conditional accreditation status has been rescinded and its current status is unaccredited.

Accreditation Action Deferred

When an institution is found to be in noncompliance with several of the ACBSP standards, the Board of Commissioners may defer action until a later date (usually within three years) pending remedial action and/or receipt of additional information. The reasons for the deferral will be stated in writing by the Commissioners, along with an invitation to respond. A deferral is, in

effect, a ruling of no action at that time, and therefore cannot be appealed. This action differs from conditional accreditation in two main respects: first, the noncompliance areas are extensive; and/or second, adequate information concerning compliance with standards was not included in the self-study document or other related documents.

When an institution has corrected the deficiencies that caused the deferral, the institution is required to write a letter notifying ACBSP of the corrective action it has taken. A Commissioner may then be assigned to make a one-day visit to validate that the deficiencies have been eliminated.

Each April and November, the Board of Commissioners meets to review removal of deferred status, and therefore requests should be sent to ACBSP headquarters several months in advance of the Board of Commissioners Meeting in April or in November. The institution will be notified of the Commissioners action after the meeting.

Accreditation Withheld

Accreditation withheld applies to an initial or new application for accreditation. If accreditation is withheld, the Board of Commissioners will give written reasons for the denial of the application. The applicant can present its case, including new evidence, in a fair and impartial hearing before the Board of Commissioners at its next scheduled meeting. The procedures for this type of hearing are as follows:

- The request for such a hearing must be made within 15 days of the date of notification of the denial, it must be in writing, and it must be signed by the chief executive officer of the institution. The arguments and reasons in support of the request must be limited to the points enumerated in the written statement of denial.
- The institution may present only evidence not already considered. The institution may send one or more representatives, including legal counsel, to present its argument contesting the action taken by the Board of Commissioners. ACBSP records and subsequently transcribes all proceedings of this type for its own use.
- Based on the kind of new evidence presented, the Board of Commissioners may affirm, modify, or reverse its previous decision to deny accreditation. If the previous action of denial is upheld, the denial becomes final and no further remedy is available to the institution for the period of one year, after which the institution may reapply for accreditation.

Final Steps

Following action by the Board, the institution is notified of the final action and made aware of any remaining fees due as a result of the accreditation process. Upon payment of final fees and any membership dues, the accreditation is granted. The business programs will be notified, in writing, of its accreditation status. ACBSP will inform the public of decisions on accreditation status through the ACBSP website.

ACBSP staff will then invite the champion, co-champion, and others to join in the celebration of all member institutions that have been granted initial accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation during the current academic year. This occurs at the ACBSP Annual Conference in June and includes attendance at the Accreditation Banquet and at a special breakfast.

The Process for Maintaining Accreditation

While the certificate of accreditation is formally presented at the Annual Conference each June, the effective date of the accreditation begins earlier with the issuance of a letter notifying the institution they have achieved accredited status. If accounting accreditation has been achieved, two certificates are issued. At no time is it to be inferred that the accounting program as part of the business programs does not have an accredited status when the business programs is accredited. The separate accreditation exists only to show the programs have met a set of criteria in addition to the business program accreditation requirements. At that time the institution may begin to promote its accredited status.

Accreditation is granted for ten years. During this time, the business programs and the accounting program will be required to file Quality Assurance (QA) Reports year four and year eight and to notify ACBSP of certain actions taken that may impact the accreditation status. If notes or conditions are part of the accreditation, these must be addressed every two years and the continued services of a mentor can be offered. For all institutions, the timetable for these reports is tied to the official date of accreditation rather than the Annual Conference where the granting of accreditation is celebrated.

Quality Assurance Report

Members from the institution agree to abide by the accreditation policies and procedures of ACBSP by successfully completing the process of accreditation. The accredited business programs keep ACBSP fully informed of activities being conducted in the business programs periodically as determined by the Board of Commissioners.

The Boards of Commissioners determined the Quality Assurance Report (QAR) will be used to provide evidence of continued compliance with the seven ACBSP standards. QARs are due year four and year eight of the ten-year accreditation period and reported using the QAR template in the online reporting platform.

The QAR is the one of the primary tools used to keep ACBSP informed of how the public is routinely provide reliable information on their performance, including student achievement.

In addition to requiring quality assurance reports, ACBSP reserves the right to conduct special visits to, or request specific reports from or about, accredited business programs at any time. These are rendered under conditions within a time frame to be decided by ACBSP. Refusal of the business unit to respond to, or cooperate with, such requests shall be grounds for suspension or revocation of its accreditation status or grounds for some type of conditional accreditation.

If, at any time, ACBSP has substantive evidence that an institution is in danger of having its eligibility status with a government agency that establishes requirements for educational institutions or regional accrediting body withdrawn or made conditional, ACBSP may direct a special visit to that institution's business school or program. The specified purpose of such a visit will be to ensure that the students attending the institution are not being harmed academically because of the institution's alleged noncompliance with requirements of the government agency or the regional accrediting body.

Status Report on Notes and Conditions

If business programs have notes or conditions on accredited programs, they must provide a Status Report on Notes and Conditions year two and year six of the ten-year accreditation. The Status Report is a focused report on progress made to remove any notes or conditions. There is a Status Report on Notes and Conditions template in the online reporting portal.

Special Visits

In addition to requiring quality assurance reports, ACBSP reserves the right to conduct special visits to, or request specific reports from or about, accredited business programs at any time. These are rendered under conditions within a time frame to be decided by ACBSP. Refusal of the business unit to respond to, or cooperate with, such requests shall be grounds for suspension or revocation of its accreditation status or grounds for some type of conditional accreditation.

If, at any time, ACBSP has substantive evidence that an institution is in danger of having its eligibility status with a government agency that establishes requirements for educational institutions or regional accrediting body withdrawn or made conditional, ACBSP may direct a special visit to that institution's business school or program. The specified purpose of such a visit will be to ensure that the students attending the institution are not being harmed academically

Reporting Institutional Changes

This section provides the details on how member institutions are to provide ACBSP with information concerning substantive institutional changes that impact their business school or program which have occurred since the institution received accreditation from ACBSP. Substantive changes need to be set forth in a letter to ACBSP prior to implementation. These institutional changes will also be included in a quality assurance report after implementation.

Approval and/or acknowledgement of all substantive changes are required by ACBSP. This section also explains the procedures ACBSP will follow in approving such changes.

Adding a Branch Campus

It is the responsibility of the main campus to notify ACBSP and to undergo a preliminary visit by ACBSP before identifying a branch campus as having accredited degree programs. Failure to notify ACBSP prior to initiation of a branch campus that offers business courses and degrees may jeopardize the institution's accreditation status.

The main campus shall provide:

- Rationale for initiation of the branch campus and other information about business programs
- degrees awarded
- faculty qualifications
- learning resources
- physical and financial resources

- admission and graduation requirements
- compliance with state law evidencing authority to operate
- number of students
- administrative arrangements and
- other information ACBSP may request

Permanent accreditation of degree programs at a branch of an institution can come only after an evaluation visit, which must take place within six months of the opening of the branch. Only the Board of Commissioners in a regular session may designate permanent inclusion of degree programs at a branch campus as a part of the institution's accreditation. Under certain circumstances, new campuses may be added to a system as described on page 7. They are not required to undertake the accreditation process as long as the system-wide policies that apply to all campuses at the time of accreditation are applied to these campuses.

Upon granting accreditation to a branch campus, the ACBSP website is updated and respective entities are notified of the accredited status of the campus. A certificate suitable for framing and placement in a prominent location on the campus will be provided upon request. During the next dues billing cycle, the appropriate dues amount for the campus will be added to the dues billing statement given to the main campus. The amount will not exceed 50% of the annual dues.

Closing a Branch Campus

It is the responsibility of the main campus to notify ACBSP of the closure of any branch campus. ACBSP staff will act to remove the campus name from the ACBSP website and adjust all future dues billing. The Board of Commissioners will be notified at their next scheduled meeting. On a rare occasion, the main campus will be asked for the rationale by staff or by Board action.

Adding or Closing a Site

It is the responsibility of the main campus or any branch campus to notify ACBSP of the opening of an educational site or instructional site that plans to offer business courses. Because it is a site, no further action is required. It is not necessary for ACBSP to provide an update to the website or adjust dues billing. The institution should update its various printed materials and website to show the site offers accredited programs. It is the responsibility of the main campus or any branch campus to notify ACBSP of the closing of an educational site or instructional site.

New Degree Programs

If a business school or program expands or plans to expand its curriculum by offering new degrees, new majors or concentrations, or a new emphasis after it has been accredited, then ACBSP must be notified during the early stages of the program planning and expansion. If the new degree is at a level currently accredited by ACBSP, then report information on:

- student enrollment
- program objectives
- instructional resources
- facilities and equipment
- faculty qualifications
- admissions requirements
- graduation statistics

- core professional components (CPCs) and
- outcomes assessment processes and results

If the new degree is at a higher level than what is currently accredited, the school must complete a self-study to add the degree. New degree programs, majors or emphases must be in effect for at least two years and have graduates before accreditation will be granted.

If the new program is determined to be substantially different from other programs offered by the institution, ACBSP, at its discretion, may direct a new visit to be conducted. If, as a result of a new program visit, ACBSP determines that the overall quality of an institution is being diminished, the institution may be scheduled for a complete reevaluation.

Program Termination

A decision by an accredited business school or program to voluntarily terminate a part of the business program should be communicated to all interested parties which include, but are not limited to, students, governmental agencies, the local community, and ACBSP.

New students should not be allowed to enroll in any program that is scheduled to be terminated if they cannot complete their work prior to the closing date for which public notice has been given. The institution is obligated to continue to offer appropriate courses, including prerequisites, so that the currently enrolled students will be able to complete the program. For this purpose, the period of time need not extend beyond sufficient time for students already enrolled, and maintaining normal academic progress, to complete the program.

Change of Institution's Name or Location

ACBSP should be notified immediately if an institution is contemplating changing its name and/or physical location.

Change of Ownership

The transfer of ownership or a major change in the controlling mechanism of an institution is considered to be a substantive change. ACBSP will handle changes of this nature as follows:

- **Automatic Discontinuation.** Any change in ownership or control of an institution automatically results in immediate discontinuation of accreditation by ACBSP. Reinstatement of accreditation may be regained only upon application to and reconsideration by ACBSP. Because this discontinuation decision occurs without action or prior approval by ACBSP, this change of status does not constitute withdrawal of accreditation and is not a negative action.
- **Reinstatement.** When automatic discontinuation occurs, the accreditation may be reinstated at the discretion of ACBSP. The reinstatement will occur according to terms and conditions that it has established or may establish at that time. The burden of application for reinstatement is entirely upon the institution. The Chief Accreditation Officer of ACBSP has authority to grant a temporary reinstatement of accreditation for a period of time sufficient to allow for the consideration of all appropriate documentation. The temporary reinstatement period is not to exceed 12 months.

- **Effect.** Until the application for reinstatement (either permanent or temporary) has been granted, the accreditation of the institution is in abeyance. If the reinstatement is withheld, the matter shall be treated as a deferral or a denial.

Closing of Institution

When ACBSP receives information, from whatever source, that an institution has ceased to operate, it shall immediately take steps to verify the information. If an institution has ceased to function, the grant of accreditation is summarily suspended. Such action is authorized without prior notice or hearing and with immediate public notice.

The institution shall be notified in writing of the suspension at its last known address. If no petition to lift the suspension is received within 60 days of this notification, the suspension automatically becomes a revocation.

Voluntary Withdrawal by an ACBSP-Accredited Institution

There may be reasons for an ACBSP-accredited institution to withdraw from ACBSP membership and thereby lose its accredited status. The most typical reason is failure to pay the required dues amount. ACBSP requests that the institution place this type of action in writing and forward it to ACBSP headquarters.

The institution is then required to make a public statement of its withdrawal and to strike any reference to ACBSP accreditation from its catalog and other public documents.

Actions Taken While Accredited

Probation

When an accredited institution is found to be in noncompliance with the ACBSP standards, the Board of Commissioners may declare the accreditation of that institution to be probationary. Probation is a serious status that places the institution's accreditation in jeopardy and may be preliminary to the consideration of withdrawal. The Board of Commissioners will inform the institution in a written statement of the reasons for probation, along with an invitation to respond. A commissioner on the Board of Commissioners will be assigned to work with the institution to satisfy the conditions for the removal of probation. Probationary status requires a decision regarding continued accreditation by the Board of Commissioners within one year of the Board's action.

It is a principle of the Board of Commissioners that accreditation brings with it the good faith understanding by the accredited institution that continued accreditation requires that the institution remain in compliance with the standards and concurs with ACBSP's Principles of Accreditation. Consequently, probationary action may occur when an institution is determined by the Board of Commissioners to be out of compliance with the standards or with the policies and procedures of ACBSP. This may include, but is not limited to, situations where an accredited institution:

- Demonstrates a consistent pattern of non-compliance with the standards.
- Fails to remove conditions of accreditation within the allotted time frame.
- Fails to respond to directives or information requested by the Board.

- Fails to comply with ACBSP directives with regard to promotional materials, and/or public perception of accreditation.
- Demonstrates other significant inconsistencies with ACBSP accreditation policies and procedures.
- Meets any of the conditions listed as reasons for suspension. During the probationary period the institution maintains its accreditation status.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal of accreditation differs significantly from withholding of accreditation; withholding denies an institution something it is seeking, while withdrawal takes away something the institution already has, i.e., accreditation. Accreditation may be withdrawn by ACBSP through two types of actions: (1) suspension of accreditation and (2) revocation of accreditation.

Suspension of accreditation may occur when, in the judgment of ACBSP, an institution no longer substantially complies with the Standards of ACBSP. A judgment of suspension will always specify the time, conditions and terms by which an institution may regain accreditation through correction of the conditions that led to the suspension.

Listed below are several, but not all, of the reasons for suspension:

- When any component of an accredited business school or program is thoroughly examined and found not to be in compliance with current ACBSP standards.
- When Quality Assurance reports filed by the accredited school or program fail to conform to ACBSP reporting requirements.
- When any substantial or significant changes in the operation, structure, governance, ownership, control, location, facilities or programs of the institution are made without notification to ACBSP.
- When the institution fails to respond to inquiries or to cooperate in completing arrangements for a scheduled evaluation.
- When the institution has deviated from standards or directives of ACBSP.
- When the institution fails to file a Quality Assurance report on a timely basis as required by ACBSP.
- When the institution has failed to pay its annual membership dues or accreditation fees.

Outright revocation of accreditation rarely occurs except in cases where the institution fails to pay the appropriate dues and fees amount required to maintain accreditation. Other than nonpayment of dues and fees, revocation most often follows suspension by ACBSP, and thereafter, the failure of the institution to correct deficiencies noted by ACBSP. A judgment of revocation by ACBSP requires that the institution begin anew the process of accreditation in order to regain it.

In all cases where accreditation is subject to withdrawal, either by suspension or revocation, the institution is afforded the following procedural guarantees:

- Opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Commissioners on all material issues in controversy.

- Written prior notice of the proceedings, the charges levied, and the standards by which the institution is ultimately judged.
- A right of appeal as set forth in the section titled “Appeal Process.”

Withdrawal of Accounting Accreditation

In case of the withdrawal of the accreditation of the business unit, any separate accreditation for the accounting program is withdrawn. The separate accreditation in accounting cannot exist except in institutions which have, and maintain in good standing, accreditation of the business unit.

Appeal Process

Certain appeal procedures have been established for institutions whose accreditation is subject to withdrawal. These procedures are intended to provide due process to institutions claiming to be aggrieved by the withdrawal actions but do not apply to decisions by ACBSP to withhold accreditation by means of denial of application.

An institution must file an appeal with ACBSP, signed by the chief executive officer of the institution, making the appeal within 15 days after withdrawal notification by ACBSP. An appeal of withdrawal of accreditation by ACBSP must be on the grounds that such a decision was:

- Arbitrary, capricious or otherwise in substantial disregard of the standards or procedures of ACBSP, or
- Not supported by substantial evidence in the record upon which the Commissioners based the withdrawal action.

The Board of Appeal has no jurisdiction or authority concerning whether or not the accreditation standards and procedures are reasonable. Nor will the Board of Appeal consider any evidence that was not in the record for review by the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Appeal is a separate, independent appeals body established by ACBSP for the purpose of hearing appeals by institutions whose accreditation has been withdrawn. The Board of Appeal serves as another level of due process for institutions whose accreditation has been withdrawn.

The Board of Appeal is comprised of five individuals, each of whom must be a business faculty member or academic administrator of an ACBSP member institution in good standing. The appointment is made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of ACBSP which will also appoint the chair of the Board of Appeal. Terms of appointment are also set by the Executive Committee. The qualifications of each member appointed to the Board of Appeal must include knowledge of, and experience with, the accreditation process. An appointee may not be currently serving as a Commissioner.

The Board of Appeal is empowered to review, upon notice of appeal by an institution, the withdrawal of accreditation of that institution. The Board of Appeal has the authority to:

- Affirm the decision of the Board of Commissioners.

- Remand the case to the Board of Commissioners with recommendations for further consideration if it finds the appeal to have been well-founded or justified.

When a case is remanded to the Board of Commissioners, the recommendation of the Board of Appeal shall not bind or limit the Board of Commissioners in any way.

When the decision of the Board of Commissioners is affirmed by the Board of Appeal, the appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of upon issuance of the Board of Appeal's decision. An appeal remanded to the Board of Commissioners by the Board of Appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of when the Board of Commissioners takes final action on the remand.

Briefs may be submitted prior to the hearing by the institution and the Board of Commissioners in a manner prescribed by the Board of Appeal. The Chair, or the member of the Board of Appeal designated in the Chair's absence, will preside at the hearing. The Chair will rule on all procedural matters.

The hearing shall be as informal as possible and appropriate under the circumstances. The institution may waive personal appearance, in which case the matter will be handled solely on the basis of the submitted briefs.

Every decision must have the concurrence of a majority of the Board of Appeal. Within a reasonable time following the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Appeal shall issue a written statement of the decision along with its reasons for the decision and recommendation, if any, to the Board of Commissioners. Dissenting opinions may be filed. The majority opinion, with any dissenting opinions will be furnished to the institution and the Board of Commissioners.

Publication of the decision is the responsibility of ACBSP; however, it has no authority to withhold publication. The appealing institution shall bear the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

- Travel, housing and subsistence for the members of the Board of Appeal participating in the review, and
- Cost of the hearing room.

An appeals deposit of \$2,000 must be made with ACBSP at the time the described appeals notice is filed. This deposit shall be applied to the expenses to be paid by the institution, as described above. Prior to the hearing, ACBSP may increase the amount of the deposit required to meet a realistic estimate of expenses involved should they be likely to exceed \$2,000.

Public Concerns and Complaints Process

This policy provides two avenues in which to pursue a complaint—an informal resolution procedure and a formal resolution procedure. An individual may utilize this policy to process a complaint about ACBSP, or any business program accredited by ACBSP. The assistant director of administration has established a mechanism for tracking all formal complaints. Individuals seeking information regarding the process of complaint resolution may consult with any of the following individuals for advice and assistance. Contact information for these individuals is

available on the ACBSP website under the tab “About ACBSP” using the link for “Contact Us.”

- Assistant Director of Administration
- Executive Director
- Chief Accreditation Officer/CAO
- Associate Director of Accreditation

Informal Resolution Procedure

Complainants are required first to seek informal resolution of their grievances or concerns with the person or entity that is the subject of the complaint. This informal procedure is intended to encourage communication between the parties involved, either directly or through an intermediary, to facilitate a mutual understanding of what may be different perspectives regarding the act or directive prompting the complaint.

If the informal process does not result in the resolution of the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may utilize the formal complaint procedure.

Formal Resolution Procedure

The formal complaint shall be in writing and shall set forth a statement of the facts, the ACBSP policy or procedure allegedly violated, and the specific remedy sought. It must document that informal resolution has been attempted but failed. If possible, include documentation exchanged between the two parties.

The written complaint will be acknowledged within five business days. If an acknowledgement is not received, it is incumbent on the person submitting the complaint to immediately contact the ACBSP office to verify receipt or to determine the process for re-submittal.

The formal complaint normally shall be filed as follows:

All formal complaints shall be filed with the Assistant Director of Administration. The complaint will be logged in and given a control number. If the complaint concerns an accreditation issue, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chief Accreditation Officer. If the complaint concerns a Council issue, the complaint will be forwarded to the Executive Director. Each Director may select a representative, other than the one designated in this paragraph, to handle these complaints.

These individuals or their offices shall also continue to monitor and coordinate the complaint resolution process.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Director to whom the complaint was referred to shall, within ten (10) business days, forward a copy of the written complaint to the respondent. One extraordinary circumstance would be to consider the complaint beyond the scope of the ability for ACBSP to resolve, such as a grade dispute between a professor and a student. Another circumstance that will cause the complaint process to stop at any time will be upon discovery that there is pending litigation in a court of law or action underway that may cause such litigation to be filed. Under these circumstances the Director will confer with the complainant and document why ACBSP cannot be of further assistance.

Within ten (10) business days after forwarding the written complaint to the respondent, the Director will communicate with the complainant, requesting additional information, securing additional information in response to questions. The Director shall also communicate with the respondent and conduct such additional investigation as he/she deems necessary.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written recommendation shall be rendered via email within ten (10) business days of the communications unless an extension is mutually agreed upon by the parties. The recommendation shall be sent to the complainant and respondent. The written recommendation shall state the background information, the rationale for the recommendation, and the recommended remedy (if any). For monitoring purposes, a copy of the report shall be sent to the Assistant Director of Administration who received the initial complaint.

Promoting Your Accredited Status

Use of Logo

You and those at the institution are justifiably proud of obtaining this status. Based on practices at other institutions, we encourage you to display the ACBSP logo on your stationery, in brochures and on your business school website. The logo may also be used on transcripts for accredited programs. ACBSP offers two logos for use in promoting this status. Two separate logos may be used by those business programs that achieved separate accreditation of their accounting programs. The logos shown below are one-color; the logos are also available in two-color and are offered in a variety of formats from the ACBSP office or from the ACBSP website. Please call 913-339-9356 or send a message with your specific request to info@acbsp.org. Electronic files are provided in the press kits sent shortly after the institution receives notification from the Board of Commissioners and can be used to promote your accredited status.

Publications

ACBSP permits a wide range of wording to promote your accredited status. ACBSP staff can provide assistance in developing proper wording or approval of wording you develop, but it is not required. Some wording suggestions are as follows:

The (School of Business at Our University) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) based on standards that required our school to demonstrate teaching excellence.

The (School of Business) was accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) in (year) and must regularly demonstrate that it maintains the ACBSP standards of excellence.

The (School of Business at Our University) has achieved voluntary accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), demonstrating it has met standards of business education that promote teaching excellence.

You must accurately distinguish between programs that have achieved accredited status and those that have not. This is accomplished through brochures, catalogs, websites or other means of effective public communications.

Two brochures are available that help you communicate the value of ACBSP accreditation. These brochures are print-quality and available for your campus print shop to download and produce the needed quantity. The brochures can also be ordered directly from ACBSP. A third option allows you to customize the back panel of either brochure with your content and logo. Visit the "Promote Your Accredited Status" link under the Accreditation Tab at www.acbsp.org to order.

A Guide for Students

This brochure is written specifically for students considering which college or university is the best fit. It addresses the student, as well as anyone who might be advising the student on the benefits of choosing an ACBSP-accredited business program.

A Guide for Employers

This brochure outlines the benefits of hiring graduates from ACBSP-accredited business programs. It details how a core business curriculum required for ACBSP accreditation produces graduates who are ready to meet the challenges of a global marketplace.

Website

The website of the institution and the business programs will probably be the most visible way to promote your ACBSP accreditation. Nearly all institutions have a section devoted to “accreditation” where the regional accreditation of the institution is noted. This is one location for placement of the ACBSP logo and wording that notes which programs are ACBSP accredited and which programs are not.

Another location is the home page of the business school or program. Again, the logo or wording, such as “Accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs,” can be displayed. Since Web pages are interactive, it may be helpful to place a link to the ACBSP website. We recommend using the link: www.acbsp.org, which opens to our home page.

To view how other institutions have developed content on their Web page to promote their accredited status, visit:

Lindenwood University:

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=Lindenwood+University&s=all&id=177968#programs>

Gardner-Webb University: <http://gardner-webb.edu/academic-programs-and-resources/colleges-and-schools/business/assessment/index>

Webster University:

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=Webster+University&s=all&id=179894#programs>

Mini Gonfalons

Mini versions of the gonfalons used at the Accreditation Banquet during the ACBSP Annual Conference each year are available for purchase. There are four versions of the mini gonfalons. Each measures 22”w x 32”h. The cost is \$35 per gonfalon. This includes shipping and handling. Visit the “Promote Your Accredited Status” link under the Accreditation Tab at www.acbsp.org to order.

- Initial Accreditation - Associate Degree
- Initial Accreditation - Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree
- Reaffirmation of Accreditation - Associate Degree
- Reaffirmation of Accreditation - Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree

Lapel Pins

With the launch of a new logo and brand in 2010, ACBSP offers lapel pins to proudly display your accredited status. The pins are a gold-tone metal featuring the two-color “ACBSP Accredited” logo. The front of the pin is coated in enamel. Visit the “Promote Your Accredited Status” link under the Accreditation Tab at www.acbsp.org to order.



ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR BUSINESS SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS

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