

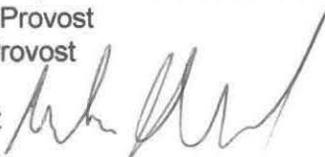
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Office of Academic Affairs
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508-4614

November 13, 2006

To: Academic Deans and Community Campus Directors

CC: Elaine P. Maimon, Chancellor
Renee Carter-Chapman, Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships
Tom Miller, Assistant Provost
Doug Causey, Vice Provost

From: Mike Driscoll, Provost 

Subject: External accreditation of academic programs

Accreditation or approval of academic programs by external agencies is held by more than 20 UAA degree or certificate programs. While most of the value of these approvals is realized by program faculty and students, there are aspects of program accreditation that affect the college and the institution. It is essential, therefore, that decisions to pursue initial accreditation or to reaffirm program accreditation or approval include the approvals of the college dean or director and the Provost. The attached guidelines outline the issues that should be addressed in the decision process. Departments proposing to pursue program accreditation should consider each of these issues or explain why they are not applicable to their proposal. All communication from UAA programs to external agencies should be routed through the office of the college dean or director and the Office of Academic Affairs. Involvement of those offices must occur prior to any commitments being made, and early enough in the process so that a careful review can be accomplished before deadlines arrive.

Thank you for your attention to this. If we can provide additional assistance or clarification in this process please let us know.

UAA Program Accreditation Guidelines

Accreditation or certification of academic programs may be sought by the departments and colleges within UAA. Often the external accreditation of programs can provide tangible benefits to the program, its students and the university. However, program accreditation imposes some expenses, risks and obligations on the institution. While the activities associated with obtaining program accreditation are supported and accomplished primarily in the college, the decision to pursue separate programmatic accreditation is always made in consultation with the Provost. Faculty and department chairs should direct all communications with external accrediting agencies through their dean or director and the Provost. In reviewing a proposal to initiate or renew accreditation it is important that all are informed about the particulars that will influence the final decision. Some of those are listed below.

Considerations: These are issues that should be considered in the decision to proceed with initial or renewed accreditation for an individual program. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive. Please note any other issues that bear on your particular decision.

1. The Agency
 - Who are they and who are they associated with?
 - What is their status within a discipline or industry?
 - Are they associated with any professional or learned societies?
 - Are they recognized or approved by a governmental agency?
 - Other features
2. Eligibility – Who may apply and what is the unit for accreditation
 - a. Institutions
 - Colleges and universities with regional accreditation
 - Colleges and universities with other accreditations (specify)
 - Trade schools – (determining characteristics)
 - Businesses
 - Others
 - b. Programs, departments or colleges
 - Programs that award academic credit, certificates and degrees
 - Training programs that do not offer academic credit.
 - Departments that offer programs
 - Colleges that offer the programs
 - Others
3. Benefits – describe the benefits to the students and the institution in offering or graduating from an accredited program.
 - a. To the Students
 - Access to academic programs or financial aid
 - Access to employment or advancement in professions
 - Access to grants or fellowships
 - Other student benefits

- b. To the University
 - Ability to participate in local, state or national activities
 - Access to grants, research or service awards
 - Ability to collaborate with similar institutions
 - Ability to endorse graduates for professional positions, exams or advancement
4. Liabilities – list any liabilities or perceived deficiencies that should be addressed as part of the accreditation application or renewal. Consider the age and performance of the program; the number and stability of the faculty; the size and stability of the supporting revenue stream; the current and projected demands for the program and its graduates and services; the availability, amount, age and condition of required facilities and equipment; and the stability of required collaborations within the community, academy or industries served.
5. Standards - A review of the standards should indicate what is required of the institution and the department in terms of
 - a. Curriculum
 - b. Faculty
 - c. Facilities
 - d. Placement of graduates
 - e. Assessment
 - f. Recordkeeping
 - g. Other institutional or departmental characteristics
6. Process – What process is used to initially obtain and later reaffirm programmatic accreditation
 - a. Application process
 - b. Timelines for initial and continuing preparation and reporting
 - c. Extent of self study
 - d. Internal and external audits and reviews
 - e. Site visits
 - f. Frequency of reaffirmation
 - g. Costs – initial and recurring
 - h. Reporting – initial and recurring

The proposal for program accreditation should be accompanied by an **implementation plan and a budget** that detail sources and uses of revenue and expenses and clearly indicate those with responsibility to ensure continued compliance with accreditation requirements. Costs associated with program accreditation are the responsibility of the college or department.