



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TITLE:	Institutional and Specialized Accreditation
---------------	--

POLICY STATEMENT:

The University policy is to attain specialized programmatic accreditations for all academic programs when required. Institutional accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) will be maintained in good standing. The University catalog and website provide information to the public about the accreditation status of the institution and individual academic programs.

PROCEDURE DETAILS:

Attaining and maintaining institutional accreditation is overseen by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness on behalf of the entire University. The responsibility for specialized accreditation is shared by the Program Director, Dean of the School/College where the program is organizationally housed, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The procedure for ensuring the accredited program remains compliant with accreditor standards is shared as follows:

1. Program Director and Academic Dean

The Program Director (PD), under the direct supervision of their Academic Dean, is responsible for obtaining initial accreditation for their program. In the event accreditation has already been attained, the PD monitors all requirements set by the accreditor; requests data; updates website and catalog information; maintains awareness of critical deadlines; and plans ahead for typical accreditation obligations such as preparing self-study reports, substantive change reports, annual reports, and planning site visits. The PD works collaboratively with their Dean and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in meeting these requirements.

2. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is responsible for supporting PDs and Deans with data, internal review services, and ancillary support in all accreditation matters.

- All official written communication with accreditors should be reviewed by OIE prior to submission.
- All official correspondence with accreditors should be shared with OIE.
- A representative from OIE should be copied or otherwise made aware of ongoing conversations regarding accreditation.

Publish Policy Statement (CLICK ON BOX NEXT TO OPTION-SELECT ALL THAT APPLY):

☒ UNIVERSITY CATALOG

☐ STAFF HANDBOOK

☐ FACULTY HANDBOOK

☐ STUDENT HANDBOOK

DEFINITIONS:

Institutional Accreditation is the recognition that an institution maintains standards requisite for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice. An approved, institutional accrediting organization provides this service. The goal of institutional accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality. (Note: In 2020, the U.S. Department of Education permitted institutional accreditors to engage outside of historical regional boundaries. Sometimes “institutional accreditation” might be followed by the phrase, “*formerly referred to as regional accreditation*”). Additional degree-granting authority is granted by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

Specialized Accreditation is generally administered by professional-oriented accrediting bodies and applies to an academic program within the institution. Though specialized accreditation focuses on a single program, it is as important and respected as regional accreditation. Specialized accreditation ensures that students meet professional licensure requirements by reviewing the quality of curriculum and other aspects of the program. Most regionally accredited institutions choose to also accredit individual academic programs to promote the quality of the educational experience. *Also referred to as “programmatic” accreditation.*

EXCLUSIONS:

N/A

OFFICES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE POLICY:

Academic Affairs, Academic Units with Specialized Programs, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

HISTORY:

Created February 2016
Reviewed by the department chairs and Program Directors Spring 2016
Approved by Cabinet November 2016
OIE Review No changes required May 2017
OIE and Provost Review September 2019
Updated with new logo and University January 2020
Revised for Clarity March 2023
Revised July 2025

EFFECTIVE DATE:	February 2016
RESPONSIBLE OFFICE (ONLY ONE):	Office of Institutional Effectiveness
REVIEW DATE:	March 2013