

## **Clarion University of Pennsylvania Program Accreditation Processes**

**Approved by Dean's Council 1/30/08**

The following procedures apply to all programmatic accreditations at Clarion University.

### **Definitions**

Please refer to the definitions below as these clarify reporting and approval lines for units.

- Dean – Administrator for a College, Enrollment Management, University Libraries, or the Venango Campus
- Department – A unit within the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, or Student and University Affairs
- Chair – Manager for an Academic Department that reports to a Dean (i.e., Department Chair)
- Director –
  - For the Division of Student and University Affairs - Director for a Center within the Division of Student and University Affairs,
  - For the Division of Finance and Administration – Director for a program/unit within the Division of Finance and Administration
- Academic Program Director – For the Division of Academic Affairs, a director of an academic program. Depending upon where the academic program is administratively housed, the academic program director reports either to the department chair in which the program is housed administratively, an academic dean (if the program is not housed within a department), an associate or assistant vice president (if the program is not housed administratively within a college), or the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (if the program reports directly to a vice president).
- Assistant Vice President – Divisional Administrator reporting either directly to the Associate Vice President or the Vice President
- Associate Vice President – Divisional Administrator reporting directly to the Divisional Vice President
- Vice President – Divisional Administrator reporting directly to the President (i.e., Provost, Vice President for Student and University Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Assistant to the President for Social Equity)

## **Initial Accreditation Processes**

### **Notification of Desire to Pursue Accreditation and Determination of Accreditation Potential**

Chair, Director, or Academic Program Director notifies the Dean of a desire to pursue accreditation, Director notifies the appropriate Associate Vice President, Assistant Vice President, or Vice President of a desire to pursue accreditation.

If the Chair or Academic Program Director has not done this already for an academic program, the Dean contacts the Office of the Provost to verify that the accrediting body is recognized by the Office of the Chancellor.

Department reviews accreditation standards and makes initial assessment as to likelihood of attaining accreditation.

### **Official Request for Permission to Pursue Accreditation to the Provost or Vice President**

If the probability of accreditation is reasonable, the Chair, Director, or Academic Program Director sends a memorandum to the appropriate Dean, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President, or Vice President, who forwards his/her approval to the Provost/Vice President formally requesting permission to seek accreditation.

The memorandum must indicate why the department desires accreditation, the benefits of the accreditation to the university, and the likelihood that the accreditation effort will be successful.

The memorandum must also include the projected timeline and projected costs associated with the initial accreditation effort, as well as costs associated with accreditation maintenance. Information on other SSHE universities and nearby universities and colleges with the desired accreditation would be appreciated as well. A template that may be used for the accreditation request memorandum is attached.

### **Official Request for Permission to Pursue Accreditation to the President**

If approved, the appropriate Vice President will develop a cover memo to the President officially seeking permission to apply for accreditation. The cover memo will identify budgetary responsibility for each accreditation cost and summarize the accreditation request relative to presidential signature.

The President will make the final decision on the request to apply for accreditation. If approved, the signed cover memo will be copied to the Office of the Provost, and the appropriate Associate/Assistant Vice President, Vice President, Dean, Chair, Director, or Academic Program Director.

## **Request for Accreditation Candidacy Letter**

If approval is granted, the Chair, Director, or Academic Program Director sends an initial letter requesting accreditation candidacy to the appropriate Dean, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President, who forwards an approved candidacy request letter through the appropriate Vice President to the president for signature. Depending upon the requirements of the accrediting agency, the request for candidacy letter may be signed by the Chair/Director/Academic Program Director and the President, the President, or the Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President and the President. *No request for accreditation candidacy may be sent without the President's signature.*

## **Completing the Accreditation Application for Initial Accreditation**

As departments work on the accreditation application and supporting documentation, the appropriate Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President must be kept apprised of progress and must have sufficient opportunity to review and *approve* the application and supporting documentation before it is sent. The signature of the Dean or Associate/Assistant Vice President on an accreditation application signifies that the Provost/Vice President has also reviewed and approved the application. *No application for accreditation may be sent to the accrediting agency until there is a signature from the Dean or Associate/Assistant Vice President on file approving the application for transmittal.*

Departments must work with the appropriate Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President and the Office of Institutional Research as they record university and departmental statistics so that these match standard reports from the university.

The appropriate Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President must be provided with copies of all correspondence from the accrediting agency, and must approve all planning for the accreditation site visit. As well, the appropriate Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President must approve any rejoinders or other correspondence sent to the accrediting agency during or after the initial accreditation visit. *No correspondence may be sent to the accrediting agency until there is a signature from the appropriate Dean, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President on file approving such correspondence for transmittal.*

## **Recording Receipt of Accreditation**

When accreditation is received, a copy of the accreditation letter must be provided for the Provost and the Divisional Vice President. The letter that is sent to the Provost is filed as documentation for purposes of reporting to other external agencies, and it is used to update the university's web site that lists all university accreditations:

<http://www.clarion.edu/admin/academicaffairs/accreditations.shtml>.

### Periodic Accreditation Reporting

After an initial accreditation has been received, the appropriate Dean, Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President must be kept apprised of continuing accreditation reports and correspondence with the accrediting agency, and must be given sufficient time to review and *approve* correspondence from the university before it is sent to the accrediting agency. The Dean, Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President's approval of accreditation correspondence and renewal materials signifies that the Provost/Vice President has reviewed and approved such correspondence.

The Dean, Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Assistant Vice President must keep the Office of the Provost apprised of all accreditation activity. Requests for information or assistance, as well as questions regarding this process should be directed to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs who is the university's designated coordinator for accreditations.



**CLARION UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
Interoffice Correspondence**

**DATE:**

**FROM:** Chair/Director/Academic Program Director

**THROUGH:** Dean/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President

**THROUGH:** Provost/Vice President

**TO:** President

**RE:** Accreditation from \_\_\_\_\_

The [Department] is seeking permission to apply for accreditation from the [accrediting agency] for its program(s) in [title of program(s)].

Rationale for the Accreditation

Why department desires accreditation and why the proposed accreditation is a fit for the identified program(s)

For Academic Programs: Indication of whether or not the accrediting agency is on the State System list of recognized accrediting agencies. If the accrediting agency is not on the State System list, please indicate why this accreditation is important for the university.

Other PASSHE universities and nearby universities and colleges with the desired accreditation

Benefits that will accrue to the university from the proposed accreditation

Likelihood that accreditation effort will be successful

Projected Timeline for Accreditation Process

Projected Costs

Initial Costs (itemized)

Continuing Costs (itemized)

