
Council of

Regional Accrediting Commissions

Statement on Changing Accreditors

Today's accreditation holds institutions accountable to rigorous standards, focused on quality, value, and student success. Accreditation offers the advantages of independent peer review that meets strict federal standards established by Congress and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Central to the accreditation model are notions of steady oversight of institutions, shared commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, and participation in the federal-state-accreditor triad, and the ability to choose among recognized accreditors.

In 2019, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) supported regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education that would make it simple for an accrediting agency to change its scope to remove geographic boundaries. Today, each of the Commissions comprising C-RAC continues to engage with institutions in its historic region, while also allowing an institution from any other state or region to seek accreditation. That new accreditation would require that the institution comply with the Higher Education Act and applicable regulations, be in good standing with its current accreditor, and meet the requirements of the accreditor from which it wishes to seek accreditation. The option to move to another accreditor is thus already available.

C-RAC is deeply concerned that some states have passed or are considering laws or regulations compelling their public institutions to change accreditors every cycle – which is not based on sound educational or policy reasons – and could bar them from continuing to be recognized by the historic accreditor for their region, or in the future from its chosen accreditor.

C-RAC believes that states should not mandate policies that require a change in accreditor for institutions. Institutions should be able to consider the accreditor that best suits its institutional goals and values from among those recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Institutions and accrediting agencies must follow the Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education in considering a change in accreditor.

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