

## Accreditation

Every NWCCU Accredited institution is required to conduct a thorough self evaluation at specified intervals to address elements of the Eligibility Requirements and elements of the Standards for Accreditation as described below in the overview of the seven-year accreditation cycle. Note: It is assumed that accredited institutions have met Eligibility Requirement 1. At its discretion, the Board of Commissioners may also request that the institution provide additional reports at specified times or submit additional reports and host an on-site peer evaluation visit.

The number of peer evaluators is determined by the nature of the evaluation and characteristics of the institution. The institution is charged a fee for each on-site evaluator. (See the "Dues and Fees" section of the Commission's website for the current fee.) The Commission reserves the right to adjust the evaluation fee to fit unusual circumstances associated with on-site evaluations.

### Overview of the Seven-Year Accreditation Cycle

Because institutions of higher education are complex and dynamic systems that exist within changing environments, the accreditation self-evaluation process is designed to allow for flexibility and growth as institutions seek to maintain quality, implement improvement, and build stability and sustainability. The following outlines the seven-year self-evaluation process and demonstrates the integration of the Standards for Accreditation and the Eligibility Requirements within the process. This process of ongoing self evaluation ensures that the institution's responses to the Commission's accreditation criteria and the Commission evaluations of those responses remain current and relevant throughout the accreditation cycle.

Guidelines for the preparation of Self-Evaluation Reports are available on the Commission's website: [www.nwccu.org](http://www.nwccu.org).

### Institutional Self Evaluation

#### Year One

In year one of the seven-year accreditation cycle, the institution conducts a thorough self evaluation with respect to Standard One and Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3. Following the self evaluation, it prepares a Year One Self-Evaluation Report for submission to the Commission office.

#### Year Three

In year three of the seven-year accreditation cycle, the institution conducts a thorough self evaluation with respect to Standard Two and Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21. In doing so, it also updates its response to Standard One to ensure its response to Standards One and Two is current and relevant. Following the self evaluation, it prepares a Year Three Self-Evaluation Report for submission to the Commission office.

#### Year Five

In year five of the seven-year accreditation cycle, the institution conducts a thorough self evaluation with respect to Standards Three and Four and Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23. In doing so, it also updates its response to Standards One and Two to ensure its response to those Standards is current and relevant. Following the self evaluation, it prepares a Year Five Self-Evaluation Report for submission to the Commission office.

#### Year Seven

In year seven of the seven-year accreditation cycle, the institution conducts a thorough self evaluation with respect to Standard Five and Eligibility Requirement 24. In doing so it also updates its response to Standards One, Two, Three, and Four to ensure its response to those Standards is current and relevant. Following the self evaluation, it prepares a Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report for submission to the Commission office.

#### Commission Evaluation Procedures

NWCCU member institutions are not accredited permanently nor for a fixed number of years. Rather, accreditation must be reaffirmed periodically over a seven-year cycle following a process of self evaluation and peer evaluation. The Commission uses the following procedures in evaluating institutions for reaffirmation of Accreditation:

1. All peer evaluators are assigned from out-of-state Accredited institutions. In selecting evaluators, care is taken to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
2. For year one evaluations, a panel of peer evaluators conducts an off-site evaluation of the institution with respect to Standard One and Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3, and prepares a Year One Peer-Evaluation Report of findings and a Confidential Recommendation.
3. For year three evaluations, peer evaluators from other Accredited institutions and appropriate agencies study the institution's Year Three Self-Evaluation Report, conduct an on-site evaluation of the institution with respect to Standards One and Two and Eligibility Requirements 4 through 21, and prepare a Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report of findings and a Confidential Recommendation.
4. For year five evaluations, a panel of peer evaluators conducts an off-site evaluation of the institution with respect to Standards Three and Four and Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23, and prepares a Year Five Peer-Evaluation Report of findings and a confidential recommendation.
5. For year seven evaluations, peer evaluators from other Accredited institutions and appropriate agencies study the institution's Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report, conduct an on-site evaluation with respect to Standards Three, Four, and Five and Eligibility Requirement 24, and prepare a Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report of findings and a Confidential Recommendation.
6. For each evaluation, a draft of the Peer-Evaluation Report is prepared and sent to the institution's chief executive officer, who is given an opportunity to correct errors of fact.
7. The Peer-Evaluation Report is finalized and submitted to the Commission office.
8. Evaluators submit the Confidential Recommendation to the Commission. The Confidential Recommendation is advisory only.
9. Print and electronic copies of the Peer-Evaluation Report are sent to the institution's chief executive officer and Accreditation Liaison Officer.