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Draft Regulations for the Accreditation of Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

101.101 Purpose

101.102 Authority

These regulations are promulgated under the authority of the State Board of Education, under the designation of the State Board of Career and Technical Education. 24 P.S. § 18-1801. The State Board of Education has the power, and duty to adopt broad policies and principles, and establish standards governing the educational program of the Commonwealth. 24 P.S. § 26-2603. Further, technical institutes shall be established, operated and in all respects conform to standards prepared by the Department and adopted by the State Board of Career and Technical Education. 24 P.S. § 18-1841. Area career and technical school and technical institute attendance areas and standards for courses and equipment shall be in conformity with standards prepared by the Department and approved by the State Board of Career and Technical Education. 24 P.S. § 18-1841.

101.103 Definitions

SBCTE— The State Board of Career and Technical Education.

Department—The Pennsylvania Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

Institution – An organization seeking accreditation under this chapter.

101.104 Accreditation Application

- a) Institutions seeking accreditation under this Chapter shall file an Application with the Department on a form prescribed by the Board.
- b) The Application will, at a minimum, identify the number of programs operated by the Institution, the length of time that such programs have been

DRAFT

operated, and whether the Institution is currently accredited by any accrediting agency.

- c) No institution may seek accreditation under this chapter unless and until it has operated its programs for at least one year.

101.105 Standards of Accreditation

When determining if an institution is eligible for accreditation, the SBCTE will determine whether the Institution has demonstrated that:

[INSERT STANDARDS AS DETERMINED BY SBCTE]

101.106 Technical Visit

- (a) After receiving a completed application from an Institution, the Department will contact the applicant Institution and will schedule and hold an initial technical visit with the Institution.
- (b) During the initial technical visit, the Department will provide information and assistance regarding:
 - i. Standards and procedures of accreditation;
 - ii. Mandatory self-study requirements prerequisite to a site evaluation; and
 - iii. Timelines for program approval, self-study completion and submission, site evaluation and accreditation determination.

101.107 Self-Study

- a) After completing the initial technical visit, the applicant institution shall submit to the Department a self-study report in a format prescribed by the Board.
- b) The self study report shall include information sufficient to establish the following:

DRAFT

- (i) The institution has a strong leadership team which regularly reviews the vision/mission, budget, goals, and performance of the adult education program.
 - (ii) The institution develops programs based on labor market data and utilizes various methods to market the information to the community ensuring ethical practices. Potential students are well informed of the institution's programs and costs.
 - (iii) The institution informs the students of its policies, including policies on attendance, curriculum, grading, remediation, and completion. The institution also informs students of its complaint/grievance policy and possible earned awards to include industry credentials. The institution has in place a method to evaluate the students to include review and follow-up.
 - (iv) The institution employs qualified faculty and staff and provides support to the faculty and staff through orientation, professional development, and evaluations with follow through. The institution ensures the maintenance of its buildings and the safety of those that enter.
 - (v) The institution works with employers on their workforce needs, works with employers on the hiring of adult education students and surveys the employers who hire adult education students to ensure that needs have been met.
- c) The report shall include information sufficient to demonstrate that the Institution has considered how all stakeholders, including administrative staff, faculty, students, governing body, and employees, examined the strengths and limitations of the program.
- d) The Institution shall conduct, and the report shall include examples of, surveys of stakeholders. The report shall also include examples of the institution's responses to issues raised by those surveys.

101.108 Self Study Report Review

- a) Upon receipt of the self-study report submitted under .107, the Department will review the report and determine whether the institution has provided information sufficient to demonstrate that it can meet the accreditation criteria set forth in this chapter.
- b) Within six months of receipt of the self-study report, the Department will provide the institution with its comments or questions regarding the institutions' self-study report.
- c) If after the Department's review of the self-study report and the institution's responses to any questions, the Department is not satisfied that the institution can meet the accreditation criteria in this chapter, the Department will inform the institution that its application is denied, as set forth otherwise in this chapter.

101.109 Site Visit and Assessment

- a) If the self-study report demonstrates that the institution may meet the accreditation criteria set forth in this chapter, the Department will schedule a Site Visit and Assessment to be conducted at the institution's location. The Site visits will occur no sooner than six months after the institution's submission of the self-study report. Institutions should be prepared to dedicate at least three business days to the site visit. All lodging, travel, and subsistence expenses for non-PDE evaluators are the responsibility of the institution.
- b) Site visits will be conducted to ascertain the accuracy and completeness of the information submitted in the self-study report, and will address the following issues:
 - i. Document review
 - ii. Onsite Interviews
 - iii. Construction of Preliminary Report
 - iv. Presentation of preliminary findings report to institution officials.
 - v. clarification questions from institution

DRAFT

101.110 Preliminary Draft Report

- a) After completion of a site visit under this chapter, the Department will provide a preliminary draft report to the institution.
- b) The institution may respond to any findings and/or to file materials relevant to the facts and conclusions presented in the preliminary draft report within thirty days of the Department's issuance of that report.
- c) If the institution responds with comments and/or supporting documentation within 30 calendar days of the Department's issuance of the Report, the Department may update the preliminary draft report and will issue the Final Draft report.
- d) The Final Draft Report will contain the Department's accreditation recommendation. The Department will present the final draft report and accreditation recommendation to the Pennsylvania State Board of Career and Technical Education and will provide a copy of the final draft report to the Institution.

101.111 Decision on Accreditation

- a) Upon receipt of the Final Draft Report, the SBCTE will place the question of whether to grant or deny accreditation on the agenda of an upcoming regularly scheduled meeting.
- b) At the SBCTE meeting at which the question appears on the agenda, the institution may appear and offer comment regarding the Department's accreditation recommendation.
- c) After consideration of the Final Draft Report and the comment of the institution, if any, the SBCTE will grant full accreditation if the institution has demonstrated that it has met all requirements for accreditation and will continue to do so throughout the accreditation period.
- d) Full accreditation under this chapter is valid for five years.
- e) If the institution has made a minimal demonstration that it has met requirements for accreditation, but may not be capable of continuing to improve or maintain such standards, the SBCTE will issue a Probationary Accreditation with Stipulations.
- f) A probationary accreditation issued under this section is valid for one (1) year.

DRAFT

- g) If the SBCTE issues a probationary accreditation under this section it will clearly identify all issue(s) and action(s) that the institution must rectify to receive an unconditional accreditation.
- h) An institution receiving a probationary accreditation under this section must make the necessary corrective action(s) within one (1) year of the issuance of the probationary accreditation, and must submit to the Department a report describing the actions taken to rectify the issues identified in the probationary accreditation.
- i) The Department will provide a copy of the report submitted under subsection (g) to the SBCTE, along with the Department's recommendation on accreditation.
- j) If the SBCTE determines that the institution has corrected all issues raised in the probationary accreditation, the SBCTE will grant accreditation for four years from the date of its receipt of the institution's report.
- k) If the institution does not resolve the issues identified in the corrective action plan within the probationary period, the SBCTE will deny accreditation

101.112 Denial of Accreditation

If the institution has not demonstrated that it has met and will continue to meet the requirements of this chapter, the SBCTE will deny the application for accreditation.

101.113 Renewal of Accreditation

An institution seeking renewal of its accreditation shall submit a completed self-study to Pennsylvania Department of Education at least 6 months prior to current accreditation expiration date. Pennsylvania Department of Education staff will review the self-study and determine if the institution is ready for a site evaluation as otherwise set forth in this chapter.

Subchapter B.

102.101 Appeals

- a) Any institution aggrieved by a denial or revocation of full accreditation under this chapter may request that the SBCTE conduct an evidentiary hearing in accordance with 1 Pa. Code Part II.

DRAFT

- b) When an institution requests an evidentiary hearing, the SBCTE will assign the matter to a hearing officer who shall collect evidence and testimony sufficient to permit the SBCTE to issue an adjudication granting or denying accreditation, or granting probationary accreditation under this chapter.

102.102 Revocation of accreditation

If the institution has fails to sustain the requisite level of quality or fails to maintain other criteria set forth in this chapter, the Department may recommend, and the SBCTE may act to revoke the institution's accreditation. Institutions may appeal such revocation as set forth in 102.101.

Subchapter C Submissions by Accredited Institutions

103.101 Surrender of Accreditation

Institutions wishing to discontinue their Pennsylvania Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Education accreditation prior to expiration of its five (5) year term shall send to the Department a written request of termination which includes an effective termination date, and a final annual report. The institution shall also submit a teach-out plan outlining how the institution will work with the students to find reasonable opportunities to continue their education. The Department will provide the request and the Department's recommendation to the SBCTE. Upon the SBCTE's approval of the request and teach-out plan, SBCTE will notify the U.S. Department of Education and the institution that SBCTE no longer accredits the institution.

103.102 Additional Programs of Accredited Institution

An institution that seeks to add an additional program or programs to its operation must request approval from the SBCTE. If the additional program is approved, the Institution shall assure, in writing that the program(s) shall comply with all standards and criteria of the accreditation process and that the new program will abide by this chapter.

103.103 New Campus

An Institution that seeks to add a new campus shall complete a mini self-study and submit a self-study report to the Department. The mini self-study will address all factors of the self-study described in section 101.107, but will be limited to the new or additional campus' operations. The Department will schedule a site visit

DRAFT

will be scheduled to review the additional site to ensure it meets accreditation standards set forth in this chapter.

103.104 Annual Reports

a) By August 31 of each year, each accredited institution shall submit a report to the Department. The report shall describe the Institutions' maintenance of activities in support of each of the accreditation standards: organizational leadership; student stakeholder and public/community focus; leadership, program, students, facility/staff/facilities, and employees.

b) The Department will review each report for potential deficiencies. If the Department identifies any deficiencies, it will request that the Institution provide additional information regarding such deficiencies within 30 days.

c) If the Annual report and the Institution's response under this section reveals that they no longer meet the requirements for full accreditation, the Department will notify the institution that it has not met the standards and does not meet full accreditation.

d) An Institution identified under subsection (a) may submit a corrective action plan within 30 calendar days from the date of the letter. If the Institution fails to submit a corrective action plan, or if the corrective action plan fails to ensure that the institution will continue to meet the standards set forth in this chapter, the Department may recommend that the SBCTE rescind the Institution's accreditation.