

## WHY IS COLLEGE ACCREDITATION IMPORTANT?

Not all colleges are accredited by agencies recognized by the federal government.

The most common type of accreditation of degree-granting colleges – from community colleges to large universities - is called “regional accreditation.” Each regional accreditor covers the colleges in one region of the U.S. Their websites list all colleges accredited by them and give other information such as the current status of the college’s accreditation and its degrees, students, and other locations.

The following are the 7 U.S. regional accreditors, with links to their websites:

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

<http://www.msche.org/>

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

<http://www.neasc.org/cihe/cihe.htm>

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission

<http://www.hlcommission.org>

Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities, Commission on Colleges and Universities

<http://www.nwccu.org/>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges

<http://www.sacscoc.org/>

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

<http://www.wascsenior.org/wasc/>

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

<http://www.accjc.org/>

Specific programs within a college may also be accredited by “specialized accreditors.” (See link below.)

[http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg8.html#NationalInstitutional](http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg8.html#NationalInstitutional)

**Accreditation assures you that:**

- **TEACHING** includes analytical, communication, and other basic “lifelong learning” college skills, expertise in the “major” field, and additional courses needed for the type of education it offers. Students’ learning is assessed.
- **FEDERAL FUNDS FOR STUDENTS** are available to students of colleges accredited by federally recognized accreditors.  
[http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg7.html#RegionalInstitutions](http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg7.html#RegionalInstitutions)
- **RESOURCES, FUNDING AND SERVICES** are available as needed, such as faculty, equipment, and student services.
- **CREDIT TRANSFER AND DEGREE ACCEPTANCE BY EMPLOYERS** and **OTHER COLLEGES** will probably be facilitated because a college’s accreditation is usually considered.
- **MANAGEMENT** is performed by appropriate staff.
- **EXPERTS** are used in reviewing the college, such as professors and college presidents.