July 15, 2015

Dr. Richard Pattenaude
President and CEO
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear President Pattenaude:

At its meeting June 17-20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an Onsite Review of Ashford University (AU) April 8-10, 2015. Commission members also reviewed the Special Visit report submitted by Ashford prior to the visit and the institution's May 29, 2015, response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and with your colleagues Lorraine Williams, Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer; and Gregory Geoffroy, Board Chair. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

Upon granting Initial Accreditation to Ashford University in 2013, the Commission scheduled a Special Visit in spring 2015 to address six issues requiring continued attention. These issues, and the team's findings with regard to each, are as follows:

1. <u>Attrition, support for student achievement, and adequate levels of degree completion.</u> The team found evidence of progress in data-driven interventions supporting student success. However there appears to be limited alignment between the specific initiatives and their effectiveness. By the time of the next accreditation visit, significant improvement in these metrics is expected along with the evidence that links the university's interventions to student success. In addition, we expect the university to report their retention/graduation rates on their website in a more accessible format.

2. <u>Adequacy and alignment of resources with educational purposes.</u> The team found evidence of the prioritizing of resource allocations to academics and of budgets informed by program review action plans. The university is urged to continue to ensure that proportional expenditures are invested toward support of the academic functions, regardless of changing enrollments, and to have cycles of data in support of this priority by the time of the next review.

3. Adequacy of the Ashford faculty model and the role of faculty. The team found evidence of investment in full-time faculty as well as evidence of faculty leadership, faculty control of curriculum, and well-functioning faculty governance and development. The university is urged to continue that investment in full-time faculty and to avoid any degradation in the full-time faculty/student ratio. The Commission also urges continued faculty participation in the current curriculum review and revision.

4. Effectiveness of program review. The team found evidence of substantial progress in the volume of program reviews, their high quality, and resulting actions taken based on these reviews.

5. Assessing student learning and ensuring academic rigor. The team found evidence of progress in the development and assessment of learning outcomes at both the undergraduate and graduate degree level together with a culture of evidence supporting continuous strengthening of student learning and rigor.

6. Independence of the Ashford governing board. In an extended interview with the entire board, the team saw evidence of appropriate governance at Ashford: oversight by a strong Ashford board exercising appropriate responsibilities with autonomy, and a collegial relationship with Bridgepoint that clearly prioritizes student success.

The Special Visit team found substantial evidence that Ashford University continues to make sustained progress in all six areas recommended by the Commission in 2013.

The Commission endorses the findings, commendations and recommendations of the Special Visit team and wishes to emphasize the following area for further attention and development:

Trend Data to Evaluate Initiatives. By the time of the next Comprehensive Review, the university will have accumulated sufficient longitudinal data to be make appraisals of its various strategies around student retention and completion.

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Special Visit Report

2. Scheduled the Comprehensive Review with the Offsite Review in fall 2017 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2018.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Ashford University's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's

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action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Ashford University undertook in preparing for and supporting this Special Visit review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued participation in this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

MEP/ro

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
        Lorraine Williams, ALO
        Gregory Geoffrey, Board Chair
        Members of the Special Visit team
        Richard Osborn, Vice President

ASH1391

July 10, 2013

Richard Pattenaude
President and CEO
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear President Pattenaude:

At its meeting June 19-21, 2013, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that evaluated Ashford University April 1 – 5, 2013. The Commission also had available the materials prepared by the University for that review, as well as your letter, dated May 31, 2013, in response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and Board chair Gregory Geoffrey. Your comments were helpful to the Commission in understanding the changes made since its last action as well as since the recent team visit.

This review process was based on the reapplication of the University for initial accreditation following the denial of initial accreditation in June 2012. As more fully described below, the Commission has acted to grant Initial Accreditation to Ashford University for five years, until July 15, 2018; to make recommendations for further strengthening the University and sustaining its improvements; and to request a Special Visit in spring 2015 to monitor progress with respect to the recommendations made in this letter and the team report.

The Commission decision to deny initial accreditation in June 2012 was based on its finding that the University was not in substantial compliance with Commission Standards in six areas. In accord with the Commission Policy on Reapplication after Denial of Initial Accreditation, the Commission also determined that the University would be able to reapply and undergo a Special Visit in spring 2013. The Commission recognized that this was a very short period of time in which to address the concerns identified in its action letter of July 3, 2012, but also that the University was under a mandate from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), its current institutional accreditor, to relocate its central administrative offices and personnel from San Diego to the HLC region by summer 2013 if it were not granted accreditation by WASC.

The evaluation process. The evaluation process used for this Special Visit was extensive and involved multiple stages. Consistent with the Reapplication Policy, the University submitted a reapplication report. The report was reviewed by the 2012 team chair and myself as the designated WASC staff liaison to the

University to determine whether sufficient changes had been made since the June Commission action to warrant proceeding with a site visit in spring 2013. The University submitted its report in a timely manner, and our review determined that there was sufficient basis for proceeding with the site visit, though it was clear that there was not sufficient time for the University to produce evidence of the full impact of changes. Since the most current evidence possible was needed, WASC staff arranged for a preliminary off-site review, the purpose of which was to identify specific items of updated and new evidence. The goal was to enable the Special Visit team to conduct a thorough review of the six areas of concern identified in the Commission action letter of July 13, 2012.

The Special Visit team held its offsite review December 6, 2012. The review provided an opportunity for the team to meet with you personally, since you had only recently begun to serve as president of the University. The team identified a significant number of areas for further inquiry, requested additional evidentiary items to support its onsite review, and set a timeline for their submission. In addition, following the offsite review, two team members were given the assignment to work with University personnel responsible for collection and analysis of data on retention and graduation. This was necessary because the 2012 team did not find the University's data collection system and presentation of results to be consistent or effective, given the University's frequent enrollment periods. Moreover, a day was added to the onsite review to ensure ample time to review evidence, conduct interviews, and weigh the team's findings.

Summary of action. As discussed in greater detail below, the primary issues before the Commission were 1) whether the University had come into substantial compliance in the six identified areas; 2) whether it had demonstrated that new or planned changes in both 2012 and 2013 were having a positive impact in key areas; and 3) whether there was a basis to believe that changes made would be sustained and enhanced. While Ashford University is not a new institution, its significant growth as a primarily online institution is recent; the Commission reviewed the University under these circumstances and thus applied the criteria for Initial Accreditation. The Commission found that the University has responded to Commission concerns and judges that it is now in substantial compliance with Commission standards. As a result, the Commission has acted to grant Initial Accreditation. At the same time, while the University has begun to refocus its efforts on academic quality and retention rather than marketing, much remains to be done to demonstrate the achievement of a higher level of results. The Commission has established a monitoring process to verify continued progress and improvement in the University's achieving and going beyond the initial goals set by the University.

The Commission acted to accept the team report and recommendations. The report was sufficiently detailed so that the Commission does not need to reiterate the team's recommendations in this letter. The University is expected to address these recommendations, and your letter of May 31, 2013, asserts the University's commitment to do so. The Commission, therefore, has focused its own review on the six areas identified in its July 3, 2012 action letter; within those areas it has also identified additional concerns for the University to address:

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<u>Attrition, support for student achievement, and adequate levels of degree completion.</u> The Commission found in 2012 that Ashford was not in substantial compliance with Standard 2, especially Criteria for Review (CFRs) 2.10 – 2.14. Specifically, the Commission found that Ashford retention rates were unacceptable; that an effective system for tracking and reporting retention and attrition was not in place; and that, despite a number of steps only recently being taken, the University did not have adequate plans, timelines, or goals to rectify this situation.

The 2013 Special Visit team report described multiple steps the University has taken to address these concerns. Some of the steps, such as the REAL dashboard, have already demonstrated their value within the University and have the potential to become useful tools for other institutions. The University has evidenced through many steps taken since the 2012 action a commitment to significantly improve retention and degree completion; to track data effectively and to report results on a regular basis; to acknowledge when these efforts are not achieving desired results; and to continue to develop strategies to improve results. Thus, although the Commission still considers the current retention rate unacceptable, it finds that the steps taken by the University bring the University into substantial compliance with Standard 2.

The Commission wishes to emphasize that significant improvement in both first year retention and degree completion rates is still needed. The goals set by the University for improved retention rates provide only a starting point for greater improvement as the many new measures put into place are assessed to determine their effectiveness. Furthermore, as the team recommended, efforts to improve retention in the first year should be expanded to the entire student life cycle, and the University has indicated that it is moving to do so. The University will need to continue to study the impact of its changes and develop corrective measures as needed, since it already appears that not all changes are having a significant positive effect on persistence and completion; and to analyze and address factors that cause students to leave the University before completing their program of study. The University will need to focus beyond year to year retention to measuring degree completion rates for each of its programs utilizing an appropriate time to degree metric – benchmarked against peer institutions – for the types of students Ashford enrolls. (CFRs 2.10 – 2.14)

<u>Adequacy and alignment of resources with educational purposes.</u> The Commission found in 2012 that Ashford was not in substantial compliance with Standard 3, especially CFRs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.10, finding that insufficient resources were being allocated for academic programs and student support. In response, there has been a shift of significant allocations to student and academic support, along with a decrease in spending on marketing. To achieve the goals set by the University for improving retention and completion rates, adequate funding must be sustained. Indeed, funding for these efforts may need to be increased. While expenditures per student for student and academic support have also increased, the Commission will expect careful monitoring by the University as to whether additional expenditures per student are needed, with appropriate action taken. Enrollment has declined and personnel adjustments have been made accordingly; significantly, the ratio of students to advisors has been reduced to provide greater contact with students, and early warning systems have been introduced to identify those at greatest risk of dropping out. It will be important for the University to demonstrate that these

reallocations of resources are sustained and not one-time events, and that they lead to improved student success. (CFRs 3.1, 3.5)

Adequacy of the Ashford faculty model and the role of faculty. The Commission found in 2012 that Ashford was not in substantial compliance with CFRs 3.1, 3.4 and 3.11 due to an inadequate number of full-time faculty to support its large online enrollment, an insufficiently robust definition of the faculty's role in governance, and the lack of a clear role for the increasing number of faculty hires. The University has undertaken significant steps to address these concerns. The team reported that there are 217 full-time faculty in place; your letter of May 31 indicates that 40 more full-time faculty have been hired since the visit. You also indicated at the Commission meeting that the University's goal is for more than 300 full-time faculty to anchor the online portion of the University. There is a formal plan and ratio for adding these new full-time faculty; the faculty governance system has been further developed, with the faculty exercising appropriate control over the curriculum and academic policies; and there are clear statements of the faculty's role in the University, along with others involved in academic support. In addition, a faculty development plan is in place and funded to support faculty research on online learning. The Commission will expect the University to assess the effectiveness of this increased cohort of full-time faculty. This assessment should include the evaluation of both the ratio of full-time-to-adjunct faculty and the ratio of full-time faculty to students, given the large size of the University's online enrollments. Moreover, the Commission endorsed the team recommendations that faculty oversight of annual assessment and program reviews need to be more fully developed. The University will also need to further develop the faculty's role in ensuring rigor across course offerings, and in improving persistence and degree completion. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 2.7)

Effectiveness of program review. At the time of the 2012 review, the University was found to be at the "initial" stage of program review, with only a limited number of reviews completed. The 2013 Special Visit team reviewed all thirteen program reviews completed since the last visit and found that considerable progress had been made in addressing Commission concerns. The University had developed and implemented policies and procedures that reflect best practices in program review, and the entire process appears to be taken seriously throughout the institution. Data are effectively presented to support the process, qualified external reviewers are recruited to assess programs, and departments follow the recommendations resulting from both the self-studies and external reviews. The University will need to adhere to its schedule of program reviews to ensure that all programs come under review at the designated time since so many degree programs are new and have not yet been reviewed through this process. The team urged the University to address the recommendations regarding course sequencing found in several reviews, as well as issues related to consistency of quality of student work, especially the issue of variable quality of student contributions to online discussions. Reviews should also include benchmarking against parallel programs at other institutions where possible. The Commission expects the University to act on these team observations. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7)

Assessing student learning and ensuring academic rigor. The efforts of the University to complete and integrate assessments in online programs were just emerging in 2012; they were

found insufficient in relationship to the size and number of programs offered by the University, and serious questions were raised about quality and rigor across the University. New software programs to track the achievement of student learning outcomes were in place in only a small number of courses and not fully tested. The 2013 team found that substantial progress has been made in implementing an assessment system that is integrated across all programs of the University, that is faculty driven, and that employs a number of best practices to ensure achievement of learning objectives at multiple stages for each student. Software systems such as OASIS and Waypoint provide significant tracking information that is effectively used by faculty and student support teams. Learning outcomes are reviewed, updated, and linked to assignments throughout the curriculum. To address Commission concerns about academic rigor and course quality, the University has had more than 85% of its online courses reviewed by Quality Matters, and it relies on feedback from its assessment systems to review course offerings. Though progress has been made, more work remains to be done. The 2013 team reviewed 10% of the online courses and continued to find variability in the rigor applied to student online discussions and assignments. Given the scale of University operations online, the Commission has determined that this issue warrants continuing attention and significant further oversight by the faculty. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.6)

Independence of the Ashford Governing Board. In 2012 the Commission found that the role of the Ashford Governing Board was not clearly defined, and the Board's relationship with its parent entity, Bridgepoint Education, Inc., did not ensure adequate independence. Moreover, services provided by Bridgepoint raised concerns about lines of authority and responsibility, further limiting the ability of Ashford to control its academic and financial operations. The 2013 Special Visit team found that significant changes had been made to address these concerns. The Sixth Operating Agreement was adopted independent of incorporation in California and instituted a number of changes ensuring Ashford operational independence, including limiting the number of shareholders on the Board. A majority of Board members are no longer appointed by Bridgepoint Education, and a conflict of interest policy has been adopted. New Board leadership is in place and the full Board clearly intends to assert control over the academic and fiscal operations of the University. The University is now separately audited, and the Board has the authority to develop and oversee its own budget within clearly specified arrangements with the parent Bridgepoint. Services previously provided by Bridgepoint that blurred lines of authority and responsibility have been moved to Ashford, and Ashford's contracted services from Bridgepoint are clearly defined in a written agreement and are subject to review by both parties. In sum, the Ashford Board appears to be operating effectively and, engaging in appropriate oversight of the University's operations, and Bridgepoint Education has supported this significant transition of authority and responsibility. It will be important for additional members to be added to the Board and for the Board to develop and oversee clear goals for the University relating to persistence and completion, as well as quality assurance and rigor. (CFRs 1.6, 3.9)

Summary. Overall, the 2013 Special Visit team found a University in the process of transforming itself and striving to achieve a major culture change from a market-driven enterprise to a University committed to student retention and success. The team found enthusiastic support for

this shift, reflected in widespread commitment from the Board, administration, faculty and staff, as well as a significant reallocation of resources to align with this new vision. As the team found in its comprehensive and detailed report, the University has taken seriously and acted upon the concerns identified by the 2012 team and the Commission in its July 3, 2012, letter. At the same time, the Commission recognizes that these changes are recent and will require effective monitoring and a commitment to continuous improvement to allow the University to achieve its goals. Further steps are needed to strengthen these changes to ensure that they, and the underlying commitment of the University, are sustained over time. With the recent reduction in enrollment, it will be important for the University to continue to build out its infrastructure to support its current enrollment, to achieve higher completion rates and improved quality, and to manage any further expansion so the University does not again grow beyond its capabilities. In this regard, the Commission urges that time be allowed to absorb the rapid growth of the University over the past decade in terms of both students and programs. Caution should be exercised before adding new programs until the program review process has been completed for a majority of existing programs.

The Commission finds that the University has now come into substantial compliance with its Standards of Accreditation and has acted accordingly.

Commission action:

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the report of the Special Visit team;

2. Grant Initial Accreditation to Ashford University for five years, until July 15, 2018; and

3. Request a Special Visit in spring 2015 to monitor progress with respect to the recommendations made in this letter and the team report.

The Commission stipulates that this action encompasses the degrees being offered by Ashford University at the time of this action and as listed in Enclosure A. In keeping with the WASC Policy on Degree Level Approval, Ashford is currently designated as having an "I" (Individual) status for each of the degree levels currently being offered. This means that all new degree programs initiated by the University will require prior approval through WASC's Substantive Change process.

WASC will add the institution to its website listing of accredited institutions and invoice for membership dues from the date of the receipt of recognition of this action by the US Department of Education. The WASC database will reflect that the San Diego office is classified as the main campus. Correspondence from WASC will be addressed to this office.

This action permits the institution to designate the WASC Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities as its accreditor of record, subject to its voluntary withdrawal from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and receipt of acknowledgement by HLC and release of its relevant records to WASC. Ashford is advised to withdraw its accreditation from HLC and to name WASC as its accreditor of record for Title IV and other purposes. The effective date for the withdrawal should be concurrent with the date when the School Participation Management Division of the Department recognizes the change of accreditor, as will be communicated by the Department to Ashford. As soon as this date has been determined, it should be communicated to both WASC and HLC. Effective on that date, HLC will withdraw the institution's listing from its website and post a Public Disclosure Notice explaining the circumstances and indicting that Ashford University is now regionally accredited by the WASC Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

Accreditation status is not granted retroactively. Institutions granted the status of Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe the status publicly: ·

> Ashford University is accredited by WASC Senior College and University Commission, 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001

The phrase "fully accredited" is to be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.

As the University addresses the issues cited in this letter, it should be mindful of the expectations that it will need to meet at the time of its next comprehensive review, which will take place under the Standards of Accreditation and institutional review process published in the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*. These expectations build on past practice and will continue to emphasize student success, quality improvement processes such as assessment and program review, planning, and financial sustainability. The *2013 Handbook* also includes new foci: the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees, and more visionary institutional planning for the "new ecology" of learning. The University will be well served to familiarize itself with the *2013 Handbook* and to approach its challenges in ways that will address these expectations.
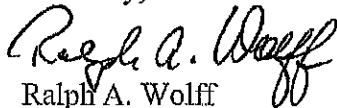
In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Ashford's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them. The team report and this action letter will also be posted on the WASC website immediately following its receipt by the institution. If the institution elects to publish a response to this action on its own website, WASC will publish a link to its response on the institution's website.

Finally, the Commission wished to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WASC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your support of our process.

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Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this action.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
President

RW/gc

Cc: Harold Hewitt, Commission Chair
Gregory Geoffrey, Ashford Board Chair
Liz Tice, ALO
Sylvia Manning, President, Higher Learning Commission
Garry Hays, team chair

Ashford Degrees 2011		
Name Of Major	**Degree Level**	**Modality**
Accounting	Bachelors	On-site
Adult Development	Bachelors	Distance Education
Applied Behavioral Science	Bachelors	Distance Education
Applied Linguistics	Bachelors	Distance Education
Biology	Bachelors	On-site
Business	Associate	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	On-site
Business Administration	Masters	Distance Education
Business Economics	Bachelors	Distance Education
Business Education	Bachelors	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	Distance Education
Business Leadership	Bachelors	On-site
Business Leadership	Bachelors	Distance Education
Child Development	Bachelors	Distance Education
Cognitive Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Communication Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Complementary and Alternative Health	Bachelors	Distance Education
Computer Graphic Design	Bachelors	On-site

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Computer Science and Mathematics	Bachelors	On-site
Consumer and Family Financial Services	Bachelors	Distance Education
Cultural Anthropology	Bachelors	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Bachelors	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Associate	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education Administration	Bachelors	Distance Education
Education	Bachelors	On-site
Education	Masters	Distance Education
Education and Public Policy	Bachelors	Distance Education
Education Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Elementary Education	Bachelors	On-site
eMarketing	Bachelors	Distance Education
English	Bachelors	Distance Education
English and Communication	Bachelors	On-site
English Language Learner Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Entrepreneurship	Bachelors	Distance Education
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	On-site
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Finance	Bachelors	On-site
Finance	Bachelors	Distance Education
Gerontology	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health and Human Services	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health and Wellness	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Care Administration	Bachelors	On-site

Health Care Administration	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Care Administration	Masters	Distance Education
Health Care Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Education	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Informatics	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Marketing and Communication	Bachelors	Distance Education
Health Science Administration	Bachelors	On-site
History	Bachelors	On-site
History	Bachelors	Distance Education
Homeland Security and Emergency Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Human Resources Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Instructional Design	Bachelors	Distance Education
International Business	Bachelors	Distance Education
Journalism and Mass Communication	Bachelors	Distance Education
Law Enforcement Administration	Bachelors	Distance Education
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	On-site
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	Distance Education
Library Science and Media	Bachelors	Distance Education
Military Studies	Associate	Distance Education
Military Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Natural Science	Bachelors	On-site
Operations Management and Analysis	Bachelors	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Masters	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Associate	Distance Education

Organizational Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Physical Education	Bachelors	On-site
Political Science and Government	Bachelors	Distance Education
Project Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Psychology	Bachelors	On-site
Psychology	Bachelors	Distance Education
Public Administration	Masters	Distance Education
Public Administration	Bachelors	Distance Education
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	On-site
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	Distance Education
Real Estate Studies	Bachelors	Distance Education
Service Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	Distance Education
Sociology	Bachelors	On-site
Sociology	Bachelors	Distance Education
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	On-site
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Supply Chain Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Sustainable Enterprise Management	Bachelors	Distance Education
Teaching and Learning with Technology	Masters	Distance Education

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IACBE

Membership Status

Ashford University
Forbes School of Business at Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123
USA

Website: www.ashford.edu

Membership Status: Accredited Member

An accredited member is an academic business unit that has successfully completed the IACBE accreditation review process and has business programs accredited by the IACBE.

Last Accreditation Review: July 2010

Next Accreditation Review: 2017

Board of Commissioners' Actions: The Board of Commissioners has required the Forbes School of Business at Ashford University to address issues in the following areas:

None

Accredited Programs:

The business programs in the following degrees are accredited by the IACBE:

- Master of Arts in Organizational Management

- Master of Business Administration

- Master of Public Administration

- Bachelor of Arts in Accounting

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Economics

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Information Systems

- Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship

- Bachelor of Arts in Finance

- Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Management

- Bachelor of Arts in International Business

- Bachelor of Arts in Operations Management and Analysis

- Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management

- Bachelor of Arts in Project Management

- Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration

- Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Marketing

- Bachelor of Arts in Service Management with specializations in:
  - Hospitality Enterprise
  - Mass Market Retail Enterprise
  - Non-Profit Enterprise
  - Restaurant Enterprise Management

- Bachelor of Arts in Sports and Recreation Management

- Bachelor of Arts in Supply Chain Management

- Associate of Arts in Business

July 15, 2015

Dr. Richard Pattenaude
President and CEO
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear President Pattenaude:

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Upon granting Initial Accreditation to Ashford University in 2013, the Commission scheduled a Special Visit in spring 2015 to address six issues requiring continued attention. These issues, and the team's findings with regard to each, are as follows:

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2. <u>Adequacy and alignment of resources with educational purposes.</u> The team found evidence of the prioritizing of resource allocations to academics and of budgets informed by program review action plans. The university is urged to continue to ensure that proportional expenditures are invested toward support of the academic functions, regardless of changing enrollments, and to have cycles of data in support of this priority by the time of the next review.

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3. <u>Adequacy of the Ashford faculty model and the role of faculty.</u> The team found evidence of investment in full-time faculty as well as evidence of faculty leadership, faculty control of curriculum, and well-functioning faculty governance and development. The university is urged to continue that investment in full-time faculty and to avoid any degradation in the full-time faculty/student ratio. The Commission also urges continued faculty participation in the current curriculum review and revision.

4. <u>Effectiveness of program review.</u> The team found evidence of substantial progress in the volume of program reviews, their high quality, and resulting actions taken based on these reviews.

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6. <u>Independence of the Ashford governing board.</u> In an extended interview with the entire board, the team saw evidence of appropriate governance at Ashford: oversight by a strong Ashford board exercising appropriate responsibilities with autonomy, and a collegial relationship with Bridgepoint that clearly prioritizes student success.

The Special Visit team found substantial evidence that Ashford University continues to make sustained progress in all six areas recommended by the Commission in 2013.

The Commission endorses the findings, commendations and recommendations of the Special Visit team and wishes to emphasize the following area for further attention and development:

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ASH1407

action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Ashford University undertook in preparing for and supporting this Special Visit review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued participation in this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

MEP/ro

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
        Lorraine Williams, ALO
        Gregory Geoffrey, Board Chair
        Members of the Special Visit team
        Richard Osborn, Vice President

WASC

WASC Senior College and University Commission

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Educational Programs ☐

Statement of Accreditation Status
Ashford University

☐ Print

8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123-1406
United States

OPEID ☐ : 001881

Telephone: 866-974-5700

Fax: 888-322-4098

URL: http://www.ashford.edu

Student Achievement URL ☐ :
http://assessment.ashford.edu/behind-numbers/institutional-data/cohort-retention...

Public Statement: None

Current Accreditation Status ☐ : Accredited

Most Recent Commission Action:
Friday, June 19, 2015

Staff Liaison ☐ : Geoffrey Chase

First Accredited ☐ : 2013

Main Campus | Branch Campus | Satellite | Standalone

ASH1409

Undergraduate FTE: 45,333

Graduate FTE: 5,889

Financial Structure Type ▢ : For Profit

Sponsorship ▢ : Proprietary with parent/board

Academic Calendar ▢ : Continuous

Distributes Federal Financial Aid: Yes

Commission Actions   Personnel   Locations   Degrees   Upcoming reviews

External Resources

Report New Degree Program

Degree ▲	Degree Level	Year Implemented	Modality
Accountancy	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Accounting	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Accounting	Bachelors	1982	On-site
Adult Development	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Applied Behavioral Science	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Applied Linguistics	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Biology	Bachelors	1997	On-site
Business	Associate	2006	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	1979	On-site

ASH1410

Program	Level	Year	Mode
Business Administration	Masters	2005	Distance Education
Business Economics	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Business Education	Bachelors	2001	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Business Leadership	Bachelors	2011	On-site
Business Leadership	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Child Development	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Cognitive Studies	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Communication Studies	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Complementary and Alternative Health	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Computer Graphic Design	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Computer Science and Mathematics	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Consumer and Family Financial Services	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Criminal Justice	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Cultural Anthropology	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Associate	2010	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education Administration	Bachelors	2008	Distance

			Education
Education	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Education	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Education and Public Policy	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Education Studies	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Elementary Education	Bachelors	1993	On-site
eMarketing	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
English	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
English and Communication	Bachelors	2007	On-site
English Language Learner Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Entrepreneurship	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	2007	On-site
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Finance	Bachelors	2011	On-site
Finance	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Gerontology	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Health and Human Services	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Health and Wellness	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Care Administration	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Health Care Administration	Bachelors	2007	Distance

ASH1412

			Education
Health Care Administration	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Health Care Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Health Education	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Informatics	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Information Management	Bachelors	2014	Distance Education
Health Marketing and Communication	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Health Science Administration	Bachelors	2006	On-site
History	Bachelors	2009	On-site
History	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Homeland Security and Emergency Management	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Human Resources Management	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Instructional Design	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
International Business	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Journalism and Mass Communication	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Law Enforcement Administration	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	1989	On-site
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Library Science and Media	Bachelors	2011	Distance

			Education
Military Studies	Associate	2010	Distance Education
Military Studies	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Natural Science (Bachelor of Arts)	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Natural Science (Bachelor of Science)	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Operations Management and Analysis	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Masters	2007	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Associate	2010	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Bachelors	2005	Distance Education
Physical Education	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Political Science and Government	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Professional Accounting	Bachelors	1997	On-site
Project Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Psychology	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Psychology	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Psychology	Bachelors	2005	Distance Education
Public Administration	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Public Administration	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	2007	On-site
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	2008	Distance

ASH1414

			Education
Real Estate Studies	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Service Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	2001	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	1993	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Sociology	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Sociology	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	2004	On-site
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Supply Chain Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Sustainable Enterprise Management	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Teaching	Masters	2003	Distance Education
Teaching and Learning with Technology	Masters	2005	Distance Education
Visual Art	Bachelors	2001	On-site

Statement Last Revised □ : May 25, 2016

May 19, 2016

Vickie Schray
Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs and Public Policy
Bridgepoint Education
13500 Evening Creek Drive North, Suite 600
San Diego, CA 92128

RE: *Withdrawal of Approval for GI Bill Benefits for Programs under Title 38 U.S.C. § 3672*

I am writing in response to your letter of May 8, 2016 regarding the authority of the Iowa State Approving Agency ("ISAA") to continue to approve Ashford University's ("Ashford") online programs for GI Bill benefits under Title 38 U.S.C. § 3672. We have reviewed the information provided in your letter. Nothing in your letter provides new or additional information that changes our position regarding the withdrawal of approval of programs for GI Bill benefits under Title 38. Ashford University has announced that it is closing the Clinton, Iowa residential campus on July 1, 2016. The Clinton residential campus is the campus which ISAA recognized and approved as the institution's main campus in Iowa. While we recognize that Ashford will continue to have an online servicing center in Iowa after that date, the main campus of Ashford University and the Chief Executive Officer are now both physically located in California. Under 38 C.F.R. § 21.4250(a)(3) if an educational institution offers a course by correspondence or independent study, rather than a resident course, only the State approving agency for the state where the educational institutions main campus is located may approve the course for VA training. Thus, Ashford should seek approval of these programs through the California State Approving Agency.

If it was not clear in our first letter, this letter will serve to notify you that effective June 30, 2016, your approval of academic programs for GI Bill Benefits is withdrawn. We strongly suggest that you seek approval through the State Approving Agency of jurisdiction for any location that meets the definition of a "main campus" or "branch campus" under 38 C.F.R. §§ 21.4250 & 21.4266 in order to ensure that student Veterans and other eligible beneficiaries are able to continue to receive benefits for pursuit of their chosen programs of education.

Grimes State Office Building - 400 E 14th St - Des Moines IA 50319-0146
PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988
www.educateiowa.gov
Championing Excellence for all Iowa Students through Leadership and Service **ASH1416**
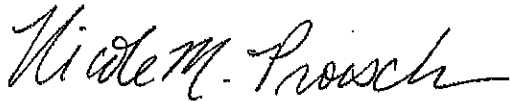
Any questions or concerns should be directed to Nicole M. Proesch, Legal Counsel, Office of the Director at the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319, or nicole.proesch@iowa.gov, or 515-281-8661.

Sincerely,

Nicole M. Proesch
Legal Counsel
Office of the Director
Iowa Department of Education

Copies to:

Mr. Bill Spruce, VA ELR
Marie George, VA ELR
Mr. Ryan Wilson, VA ELR – Iowa
Mr. Daryl Carson, VA ELR – California
Mr. Martin (Ray) Hawley, VA ELR – California
Dr. Lori Williams, University Provost, Ashford University
Mr. Conan Stanley, Director of Military Financial Services, Ashford University
Thomas Beasley, Consultant, Iowa Department of Education
Jeremy Varner, Division Administrator, CC, Iowa Department of Education
Dr. Pradeep Kotamraju, Bureau Chief, CTE, Iowa Department of Education
Meghan Gavin, Assistant Attorney General, Iowa Attorney General's Office
Michael Elisofon, Supervising Deputy Attorney, Office of California Attorney General

WASC

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Educational Programs ▢

Statement of Accreditation Status
Ashford University

▢ Print

8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123-1406
United States

OPEID ▢ : 001881

Telephone: 866-974-5700

Fax: 888-322-4098

URL: http://www.ashford.edu

Student Achievement URL ▢ :
http://assessment.ashford.edu/behind-numbers/institutional-data/cohort-retention...

Public Statement: None

Current Accreditation Status ▢ : Accredited

Most Recent Commission Action:
Friday, June 19, 2015

Staff Liaison ▢ : Geoffrey Chase

First Accredited ▢ : 2013

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📍 Main Campus   📍 Branch Campus   📍 Satellite   📍 Standalone

ASH1418

Undergraduate FTE: 45,333

Graduate FTE: 5,889

Financial Structure Type ☐ : For Profit

Sponsorship ☐ : Proprietary with parent/board

Academic Calendar ☐ : Continuous

Distributes Federal Financial Aid: Yes

Commission Actions   Personnel   Locations   Degrees   Upcoming reviews

External Resources

Report New Degree Program

Degree ▲	Degree Level	Year Implemented	Modality
Accountancy	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Accounting	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Accounting	Bachelors	1982	On-site
Adult Development	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Applied Behavioral Science	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Applied Linguistics	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Biology	Bachelors	1997	On-site
Business	Associate	2006	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Business Administration	Bachelors	1979	On-site

ASH1419

Business Administration	Masters	2005	Distance Education
Business Economics	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Business Education	Bachelors	2001	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Business Information Systems	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Business Leadership	Bachelors	2011	On-site
Business Leadership	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Child Development	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Cognitive Studies	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Communication Studies	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Complementary and Alternative Health	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Computer Graphic Design	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Computer Science and Mathematics	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Consumer and Family Financial Services	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Criminal Justice	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Cultural Anthropology	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education	Associate	2010	Distance Education
Early Childhood Education Administration	Bachelors	2008	Distance

ASH1420

			Education
Education	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Education	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Education and Public Policy	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Education Studies	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Elementary Education	Bachelors	1993	On-site
eMarketing	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
English	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
English and Communication	Bachelors	2007	On-site
English Language Learner Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Entrepreneurship	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	2007	On-site
Environmental Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Finance	Bachelors	2011	On-site
Finance	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Gerontology	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Health and Human Services	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Health and Wellness	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Care Administration	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Health Care Administration	Bachelors	2007	Distance

ASH1421

			Education
Health Care Administration	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Health Care Studies	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Health Education	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Informatics	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Health Information Management	Bachelors	2014	Distance Education
Health Marketing and Communication	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Health Science Administration	Bachelors	2006	On-site
History	Bachelors	2009	On-site
History	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Homeland Security and Emergency Management	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Human Resources Management	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Instructional Design	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
International Business	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Journalism and Mass Communication	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Law Enforcement Administration	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	1989	On-site
Liberal Arts	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Library Science and Media	Bachelors	2011	Distance

			Education
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Military Studies	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Natural Science (Bachelor of Arts)	Bachelors	2008	On-site
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Organizational Management	Associate	2010	Distance Education
Organizational Management	Bachelors	2005	Distance Education
Physical Education	Bachelors	2009	On-site
Political Science and Government	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Professional Accounting	Bachelors	1997	On-site
Project Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Psychology	Masters	2015	Distance Education
Psychology	Bachelors	2002	On-site
Psychology	Bachelors	2005	Distance Education
Public Administration	Masters	2009	Distance Education
Public Administration	Bachelors	2009	Distance Education
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	2007	On-site
Public Relations and Marketing	Bachelors	2008	Distance

ASH1423

			Education
Real Estate Studies	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Service Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Social and Criminal Justice	Bachelors	2001	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	1993	On-site
Social Science	Bachelors	2007	Distance Education
Sociology	Bachelors	2008	On-site
Sociology	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	2004	On-site
Sports and Recreation Management	Bachelors	2008	Distance Education
Supply Chain Management	Bachelors	2010	Distance Education
Sustainable Enterprise Management	Bachelors	2011	Distance Education
Teaching	Masters	2003	Distance Education
Teaching and Learning with Technology	Masters	2005	Distance Education
Visual Art	Bachelors	2001	On-site

Statement Last Revised ☐ : May 25, 2016

ASH1424

March 9, 2016

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
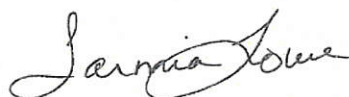San Diego, CA 92123

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) has approved Ashford University's Master of Public Health program. The program is 42 credits and received approval from the Commission on March 7, 2016.

In addition, the **seven bachelor's-level degree programs** listed below are approved under WSCUC's General degree level approval status. General approval permits Ashford to offer degree programs at the undergraduate level without prior approval from the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee and the Commission.

Name of Undergraduate Program	Credits	Proposed Start Date
Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Development with Differentiated Instruction	120	September 2016
Bachelor of Arts in Marketing	120	September 2016
Bachelor of Science in Computer Software Engineering	120	December 2016
Bachelor of Science in Human Services Leadership	120	October 2016
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	120	December 2016
Bachelor of Education Studies—Multiple Subject Credential	124	May 2017
Bachelor of Education Studies—Single Subject Credential	124	May 2017

Please let me know if anything else is required.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

ASH1425

June 3, 2014

Ms. Erica Smith
Manager, Licensing Unit
Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Ms. Smith:

This communication regards WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)'s approval of the Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management (BSHIM) at Ashford University. Ashford University is designated as an institution with "General" degree level (G-level) approval at the bachelor's level. General approval permits an institution to offer degree programs at the undergraduate level without prior approval from the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee and the Commission. The Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management, which is a 120 credit program with an anticipated launch of July 1, 2014, is approved under the General degree level approval status.

For your convenience, I have attached the University's G-level confirmation letter. Please advise if additional information is required.

Sincerely,

Marcy Ramsey
Accreditation Resources Coordinator
510-995-3164

cc: Dr. Lori Williams, Provost, Ashford University

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
PHONE: 510.748.9001
E-FAX: 510.995.1477
E-MAIL: wascsr@wascsenior.org
INTERNET: www.wascsenior.org

ASH1426

August 4, 2015

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: Bachelor of Science in Nursing - RN to BSN Program (Distance Education
Program)

Dear Dr. Williams:

This communication regards WASC Senior College and University Commission
(WSCUC)'s approval of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing - RN to BSN Program.
Ashford is designated as an institution with "General" degree level (G-level) approval
at the bachelor's level. General approval permits an institution to offer degree
programs at the undergraduate level without prior approval from the WSCUC
Substantive Change Committee and the Commission. The Bachelor of Science in
Nursing - RN to BSN Program, which is a 120 credit hour program with an
anticipated launch of January 1, 2016, is approved under the General degree level
approval status.

For your convenience I have attached the University's G-level confirmation letter.
Please let me know if anything else is required.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

ASH1427

February 26, 2014

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123-1406

Dear Dr. Williams:

By means of this letter I am confirming that Ashford University has been designated as having a "General" (or "G") degree level approval for bachelor's-level degree programs. The WASC Policy on Degree Level Approval Status delineates this designation as follows:

> **General Approval.** General approval permits an institution to initiate degree programs at the specified degree level(s) without prior review and approval by the Substantive Change Committee or the Commission. Institutions may qualify for general approval at a specified degree level if they have offered 10 or more degree programs at the specified degree level in five or more different disciplinary areas or fields for at least 10 years, and have demonstrated through the accreditation review process the quality of both the degree programs offered and the processes used to initiate, monitor and review degree programs at that level.
>
> The institution is responsible for reporting to the Commission any new degree programs initiated under its general approval as part of its Annual Report. The institution is also responsible for demonstrating, at the time of its comprehensive review, that it has monitored the quality of new programs through assessment, program review and other means that are linked to program improvement. In addition, the institution is responsible for identifying clear outcomes and quality performance indicators for each degree, which are regularly tracked to support review and improvement of degree programs individually, and programs offered at that degree level collectively.

We wish you continued success as you deliver these and other programs to your students.

Sincerely,

Richard Winn
Senior Vice President

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
PHONE: 510.748.9001
E-FAX: 510.995.1477
E-MAIL: wascsr@wascsenior.org
INTERNET: www.wascsenior.org

ASH1428

February 24, 2015

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: WSCUC Approval of Master of Arts in Special Education (Distance Education Program)

Dear Dr. Williams:

This communication regards WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)'s approval of the Master of Arts in Special Education (MASE) at Ashford University. The MASE is a 30 credit hour program and was approved by the Commission on February 11, 2015.

Please advise if additional information in required.

Sincerely,

Sharyl McGrew
Director of Substantive Change and Committee Relations

ASH1429

October 20, 2015

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: Master of Information Systems Management (Distance Education Program)

Dear Dr. Williams:

The WASC Senior College and University Commission has approved Ashford University's Master of Information Systems Management program. The program is 42 credits and received approval from the Commission on October 12, 2015.

WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. *All programs, courses and departments are included under this accreditation, including off- campus programs.*

Accreditation is an important form of institutional accountability designed to serve the higher education community, prospective and current students, their parents, and the general public. Accreditation certifies that an institution meets established standards and is achieving its own clearly defined objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and periodic review. Federal and state governments consider accreditation a reliable indicator of institutional quality.

WSCUC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions, and is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator

ASH1430

February 8, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to verify that WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits Ashford University. Ashford University was granted accreditation November 8, 2013 and continues to be accredited at present.
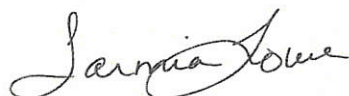
WASC Senior College and University Commission has approved Ashford University's Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education Leadership program. The program is 30 credits and received approval from the Commission on February 3, 2016.

WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. *All programs, courses and departments are included under this accreditation, including off-campus programs.*

Accreditation is an important form of institutional accountability designed to serve the higher education community, prospective and current students, their parents, and the general public. Accreditation certifies that an institution meets established standards and is achieving its own clearly defined objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and periodic review. Federal and state governments consider accreditation a reliable indicator of institutional quality.

WSCUC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions, and is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

ASH1431

March 9, 2016

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) has approved Ashford University's Master of Public Health program. The program is 42 credits and received approval from the Commission on March 7, 2016.

In addition, the **seven bachelor's-level degree programs** listed below are approved under WSCUC's General degree level approval status. General approval permits Ashford to offer degree programs at the undergraduate level without prior approval from the WSCUC Substantive Change Committee and the Commission.

Name of Undergraduate Program	Credits	Proposed Start Date
Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Development with Differentiated Instruction	120	September 2016
Bachelor of Arts in Marketing	120	September 2016
Bachelor of Science in Computer Software Engineering	120	December 2016
Bachelor of Science in Human Services Leadership	120	October 2016
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	120	December 2016
Bachelor of Education Studies—Multiple Subject Credential	124	May 2017
Bachelor of Education Studies—Single Subject Credential	124	May 2017

Please let me know if anything else is required.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

ASH1432

April 14, 2016

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: Master of Science in Instructional Design & Technology (Distance Education Program)

Dear Dr. Williams:

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSUCU) has approved Ashford University's **Master of Instructional Design & Technology** program. The program is 36 credits and received approval from the Commission on April 13, 2016.

WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions in California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands. All programs, courses, and departments are included under this accreditation, including off-campus programs.

Accreditation is an important form of institutional accountability designed to serve the higher education community, prospective and current students, their parents, and the general public. Accreditation certifies that an institution meets established standards and is achieving its own clearly defined objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and periodic review. Federal and state governments consider accreditation a reliable indicator of institutional quality.

WSCUC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions and is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator

ASH1433

May 19, 2016

Dr. Mihaela Tanasescu
Acting VP for Academic Affairs and
Ashford University
8620 Spectrum Center Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: Master of Science in Systems Engineering/Master of Science in Engineering in Systems Engineering (Distance Education Program)

Dear Dr. Tanasescu:
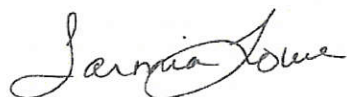
The WASC Senior College and University Commission has approved Ashford University's Master of Science in Systems Engineering/Master of Science in Engineering in Systems Engineering. The program is 36 credits and received approval from the Commission on May 16, 2016.

WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accredits baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions in California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands. *All programs, courses, and departments are included under this accreditation, including off-campus programs.*

Accreditation is an important form of institutional accountability designed to serve the higher education community, prospective and current students, their parents, and the general public. Accreditation certifies that an institution meets established standards and is achieving its own clearly defined objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and periodic review. Federal and state governments consider accreditation a reliable indicator of institutional quality.

WSCUC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions and is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Sincerely,

Tarmia Lowe
Accreditation Process Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

ASH1434

From: Marcy Ramsey <MRamsey@wascsenior.org>

Date: July 29, 2014 at 10:20:56 AM PDT

To: "Williams, Lorraine" <Lori.Williams@ashford.edu>, "Rogers, Cheryl" <Cheryl.Rogers@ashford.edu>

Cc: Richard Winn <rwinn@wascsenior.org>, Sharyl McGrew <smcgrew@wascsenior.org>, Marcy Ramsey <MRamsey@wascsenior.org>, "Pattenaude, Richard" <Richard.Pattenaude@ashford.edu>, "Crenshaw, Michelle" <Michelle.Crenshaw@ashford.edu>

Subject: WSCUC Sub Change Review - Commission Approval: AshU – Master of Accountancy and MA Psychology (Please print and retain for your records)

Dear ALO,

This email serves as official notice that the following proposal has been granted final approval by the WASC Senior College and University Commission:

ASHFORD UNIVERSITY

Master of Accountancy (Distance Education Program)

Master of Arts in Psychology (Distance Education Program)

DATE OF COMMISSION APPROVAL

July 28, 2014

Please print and retain this email for your records. You may also record this date of Commission Approval on your Substantive Change Action Report, which was previously sent with notification of Interim Approval.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Please fill the Program Implementation Form and return to the WSCUC office within 30 days of the program start date. Please note that the submission of this form is required to confirm the existence of the program and will trigger inclusion of the program on the Off-Campus/Distance Education area of the WSCUC website for purposes of financial aid eligibility verification by the U.S. Department of Education.

Link to form: http://www.wascsenior.org/content/program-implementation-form

If you have any questions, please contact your WASC Staff Liaison:

Richard Winn
rwinn@wascsenior.org

Marcy Ramsey
Accreditation Resources Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission

ASH1435

985 Atlantic Ave, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
510-995-3164

From: Ogden, Patricia
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2015 2:41 PM
To: Medlin, David; Purdie, Jennifer; Weisel, Sandra
Subject: Accounting and Psychology Approvals?

Hi, Do any of you have the final approval emails for Accounting and Psychology where Marcy sends an email and indicates that the programs were officially approved by the Commission (not interim approval...I found those on the shared drive)? I had them but I can't access them very easily now since the massive email archiving activity.
Thanks.

Pat Ogden
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT
ACCREDITATION SERVICES & COMPLIANCE

P. 858.668.2586 x4976
C. 858.774.6545
F. 866.923.3964

Bridgepoint Education
INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT ADVANCE LEARNING[SM]

From: Williams, Lorraine
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2014 12:33 PM
To: Marcy Ramsey
Cc: Rogers, Cheryl; Richard Winn; Sharyl McGrew; Pattenaude, Richard; Ogden, Patricia
Subject: Re: WSCUC Sub Change Review - Commission Approval: AshU – MS Criminal Justice (Please print and retain for your records)

Thanks very much, Marcy, for the official notification. We are very excited to launch this new program. Thank you for the commendations and recommendations, too. We will certainly continue to address the recommendations in our overall work and planning at AU.

Dr. Lori Williams
Provost, Ashford University
Sent from my iPad

On Oct 28, 2014, at 10:08 AM, Marcy Ramsey <MRamsey@wascsenior.org> wrote:

Dear ALO,

This email serves as official notice that the following proposal has been granted final approval by the WASC Senior College and University Commission:

ASHFORD UNIVERSITY

Master of Science in Criminal Justice

(Distance Education Program)

DATE OF COMMISSION APPROVAL

October 27, 2014

Please print and retain this email for your records. You may also record this date of Commission Approval on your Substantive Change Action Report, which was previously sent with notification of Interim Approval.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Please fill the Program Implementation Form and return to the WSCUC office within 30 days of the program start date. Please note that the submission of this form is required to confirm the existence of the program and will trigger inclusion of the program on the Off-Campus/Distance Education area of the WSCUC website for purposes of financial aid eligibility verification by the U.S. Department of Education.

Link to form: http://www.wascsenior.org/content/program-implementation-form

If you have any questions, please contact your WASC Staff Liaison:

Richard Winn
rwinn@wascsenior.org

ASH1437

Marcy Ramsey
Accreditation Resources Coordinator
WASC Senior College and University Commission
985 Atlantic Ave, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
510-995-3164

RESPONSE TO SECTION 3 OF ASHFORD UNIVERSITY'S ORIGINAL APPLICATION

Section 3 of CSAAVE's original application states the following in pertinent part:

Pursuant to 38 CFR 21.4270(b), an educational objective is one that leads to the awarding of a diploma, degree or certificate which reflects educational attainment.

For IHL programs, submit all of the following, where applicable:

1. Submit a copy of the program approval notification issued by the accrediting agency

2. Submit the most recent completion/placement rates filed with your accrediting agency.

3. Provide the standards for completion/placement rates as published by your accrediting agency.

Institutions not required to maintain completion/placement rates by their accrediting agency must provide documentation published by the accrediting agency substantiating this fact.

In response to Section 3.1 of this requirement, Ashford University provides copies of program approval notification letters from its accreditation agency, WSCUC.
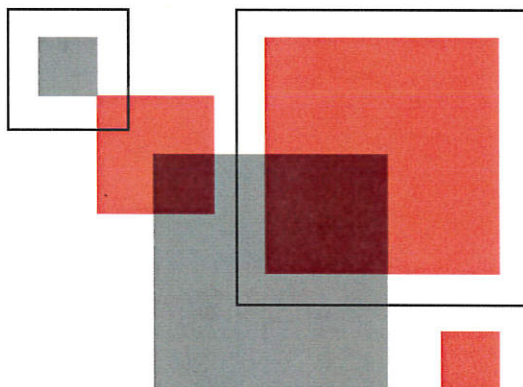
In response to Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this requirement, WSCUC does not publish standards concerning completion/placement rates for its member institutions or require its members to file completion/placement rates with the agency. The WSCUC *Handbook of Accreditation* requires its members regularly to review and assess student achievement metrics, including retention and graduation rates. For example, please refer to Sections 1.2 (at page 12) and 2.7 (at page 15) of the attached *Handbook*.
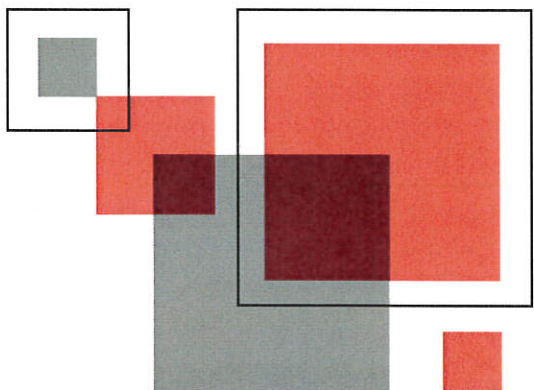
2013
Handbook of
Accreditation
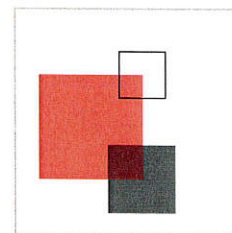
WSC Senior College and University Commission

ASH1441

Table of Contents

PART I: THE *2013 HANDBOOK* AND WASC ACCREDITATION

Introduction to the *2013 Handbook* of Accreditation

WASC's *2013 Handbook of Accreditation* is intended to serve a variety of readers: representatives of institutions accredited by the WASC Commission and those seeking accreditation; chairs and members of evaluation teams; those interested in establishing good practices in higher education; and the general public. The *2013 Handbook* has been designed to serve several purposes: to present the Commission's Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation; to guide institutions through the institutional review process; and to assist evaluation teams at each stage of review. Each major section is designed to stand alone; at the same time, it fits within the larger framework of the *2013 Handbook* as a whole. A glossary is included to clarify terminology.

WASC Senior College and University Commission is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation established for the purposes of accrediting senior colleges and universities in the region. All simple uses of "WASC" in this *Handbook* and related documents are intended as references to WASC Senior College and University Commission.

The Commission reserves the right to make changes to the *2013 Handbook* and all related policies and procedures at any time, in order to comply with new federal requirements or in response to new needs in the region. Institutions should refer to the Web site www.wascsenior.org for the most recent versions of all publications.

The *2013 Handbook* is copyrighted with a Creative Commons license (Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike) that allows sharing and remixing with attribution, but does not allow the work to be used for commercial purposes. It is the Commission's goal that through wide dissemination and application, the Standards and processes in this model of accreditation may inform and contribute to improved reviews and institutional practices.

The *2013 Handbook* is part of a more comprehensive system of support provided by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Supplementary information in the form of policies, manuals, and resource guides is available on the Commission's Web site and should be read in conjunction with this *Handbook*. The Commission welcomes suggestions for improvement of this *Handbook* and ways to make it, and the accreditation process itself, more useful to institutions, students, and members of the public.

WASC was originally formed on July 1, 1962 to evaluate and accredit schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Three separate accrediting commissions serve this region: one for schools, one for community and junior colleges, and one for senior colleges and universities.

WASC has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education since 1962 and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as a reliable authority concerning the quality of education provided by the institutions of higher education offering the baccalaureate degree and post-baccalaureate degrees.

At the time of adoption of this *Handbook*, the corporate structure of WASC Senior College and University Commission has been reorganized to meet a requirement of federal regulation. The reorganization did not affect the ongoing functioning of its commission, staff, or accreditation actions.

ASH1443

The Changing Context for Accreditation

A hallmark of U.S. higher education in the 21st century is the enormous diversity of its institutions, their missions, and the students they serve. Common across this diversity, however, is a widespread understanding that higher education represents both a public good and a private benefit. According to this understanding, higher education fosters individual development and serves the broader needs of the society and nation. Higher education has created the conditions for improving quality of life, solving problems, and enabling hope, which are essential to supporting economic prosperity and sustaining democracy in the United States. Accreditation is committed to the application of standards of performance, while affirming that high-quality education, irrespective of the different purposes of individual institutions, is in itself a contribution to the public good.

Accreditation has changed in form and substance as it has adapted to continuous social changes, increased global interdependence, and dramatic developments in information and communication technologies. The revisions to the Standards and institutional review process (IRP) described in this *2013 Handbook* have occurred within the context of these factors and reflect accreditation's responsibility to assure the public that institutions act with integrity, yield high-quality educational outcomes, and are committed to continuous improvement. Like earlier editions, the *2013 Handbook* is the culmination of years of exploration and commitment on the part of institutions and stakeholders from across the WASC region.

The *2001 Handbook* represented a significant break with the past, updating the review process's traditional formula and yielding a more engaged and creative endeavor. In doing so, it was a product of its times. The late 1990s was a period in which higher education embraced many important innovations—active and student-centered pedagogies, an explosion of educational technology, new roles for faculty, and new organizational forms. The approach to accreditation represented by the *2001 Handbook* and the *2008 Handbook* revisions reflected these conditions by creating a set of Standards and an institutional review process that put teaching and learning at the center through the core commitment to educational effectiveness. At the same time, institutions were encouraged to harness accreditation as a means to advance their own goals and priorities.

The *2013 Handbook* preserves and incorporates these values, even as additional factors in the operating environment for higher education demand attention. Students and their success continue to stand at the center of concerns about higher education accreditation. Thus accreditation seeks to establish standards and measurements of quality that ensure that students earn

degrees in a timely manner, and that those degrees have demonstrable meaning and currency within the society at large. That meaning should also extend to graduates' ability to be engaged citizens and to obtain productive employment.

A new context for higher education has formed the backdrop for the *2013 Handbook*. Colleges and universities have been under increasing pressure to become more accountable for student academic achievement; to be more transparent in reporting the results of accreditation; and to demonstrate their contribution to the public good. Accounting for quality is a matter of public trust, given the billions of dollars government provides higher education through direct investment in institutions, federal and state financial aid for students, and tax exemptions for public and non-profit institutions. These factors lie behind the WASC Commission's decision to rebalance the dual role of accreditation to support both public accountability and institutional improvement.

Another critical factor is the deteriorating fiscal environment within which colleges and universities must operate. Diminishing public funding for higher education and escalating operating costs have put pressure on public and private institutions alike. The *2013 Handbook* responds to financial concerns by establishing a more focused review process that shortens the time required for reaccreditation, while still providing adaptability in the review process.

With these revisions, the Commission calls upon institutions to take the next step on the assessment journey: moving from a focus on creating assessment infrastructure and processes to a focus on results and the findings about the quality of learning that assessment generates. Institutions are also asked to move from productive internal conversations about improving learning to engaging more deeply with other institutions and higher education organizations.
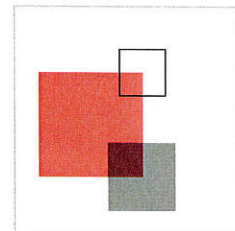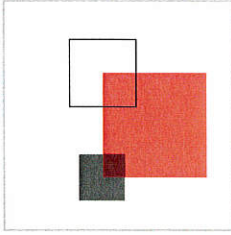
The Purposes of WASC Accreditation

The overriding purpose of WASC accreditation is to assure stakeholders that a WASC-accredited institution has been rigorously evaluated and that it meets or exceeds the criteria required to maintain accreditation. In addition, the accreditation process is designed to build a culture of evidence, promote a commitment to institutional improvement, validate institutional integrity, and provide feedback that improves the accreditation process itself.

WASC is one of seven regional accrediting agencies. Regional accreditation serves to assure the educational community, parents, students, employers, policymakers, and the public that an accredited institution has met high standards of quality and effectiveness. Students attending accredited institutions may be eligible to apply for U.S. federal financial aid. Accreditation also helps ensure that credits and degrees are generally recognized for purposes of transfer, admission to other institutions, and employment.

In many countries, the maintenance of educational standards is a governmental function; in the U.S., in contrast, accreditation is peer-driven and accrediting associations are funded by the dues of member institutions. Visiting teams comprising experts and representatives from similar institutions evaluate an institution for initial or continuing accreditation. No institution in the United States is required to seek accreditation, but because of the recognized benefits of the process, most eligible institutions have sought to become accredited.

Accreditation is committed to the application of standards of performance, while affirming that high-quality education, irrespective of the different purposes of individual institutions, is in itself a contribution to the public good.

ASH1445

Commission Code of Good Practice and Ethical Conduct
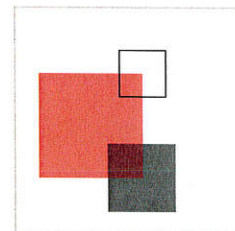
In carrying out its functions, the Senior College and University Commission has established a code of good practice and ethical conduct that guides its relations with the institutions it serves and with its internal organization and procedures. The Commission is committed to:

1. Apply with good faith effort its procedures and standards as fairly and consistently as possible.

2. Provide means by which institutions and others can comment on the effectiveness of the accreditation review process, standards, and policies, and to conduct ongoing and regular reviews to make necessary changes.

3. Provide institutions and the general public with access to non-confidential information regarding commission actions and opportunities to make informed comment in the development of commission policies. (see Policy on Public Access to the Commission)

4. Encourage continuing communication between the Commission and institutions through the accreditation liaison officer position at each institution.

5. Maintain and implement a conflict of interest policy for visiting teams, members of the Commission, and Commission staff to ensure fairness and avoid bias.

6. Value the wide diversity of institutions within its region and consider an institution's purpose and character when applying Commission standards.

7. Assist and stimulate improvement in its institutions' educational effectiveness.

8. Provide institutions a reasonable period of time to comply with Commission requests for information and documents.

9. Endeavor to protect the confidentiality of an institution's proprietary information.

10. With respect to the accreditation review process:

    a. Emphasize the value and importance of institutional self-evaluation and the development of appropriate evidence to support the accreditation review process.

    b. Conduct evaluations using qualified peers under conditions that promote impartial and objective judgment and avoid conflicts of interest.

    c. Provide institutions an opportunity to object, for cause, to the assignment of a person to the institution's evaluation team.

    d. Arrange for interviews with administration, faculty, students and governing board members during the accreditation review process.

11. With respect to Commission decisions on an institution's accreditation, provide opportunity for the institution to:

    a. Respond in writing to draft team reports in order to correct errors of fact.

    b. Respond in writing to final team reports on issues of substance.

    c. Appear before the Commission when reports are considered.

    d. Receive written notice from Commission staff as soon as reasonably possible after Commission decisions are made.

    e. Appeal Commission actions according to published procedures.

12. Request a written response from an institution or refer a matter to the next evaluation team when the Commission finds that an institution may be in violation of Commission standards or policies. If the Commission requests the institution to respond and the Commission deems such response inadequate, Commission staff may request supplemental information or schedule a fact-finding visit to the institution. The institution will bear the expense of such a visit.

13. Permit withdrawal of a request for candidacy or initial accreditation at any time prior to final action by the Commission.

14. Terminate accreditation or candidacy as provided in the Accreditation *Handbook*.
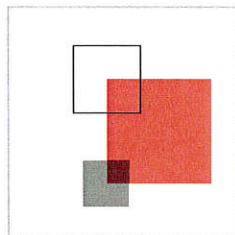
The Status of Accreditation

The status of accreditation indicates that an institution has fulfilled the requirements for accreditation established by this *Handbook*. This means that the institution has:

1. Demonstrated that it meets the Core Commitments;

2. Conducted a self-review under the Standards of Accreditation, developed and presented indicators of institutional performance, and identified areas for improvement;

3. Developed approved institutional reports for accreditation that have been evaluated by teams of peer evaluators under the relevant institutional review processes;

4. Demonstrated to the Commission that it meets or exceeds the expectations of the Standards of Accreditation;

5. Committed itself to institutional improvement, periodic self-evaluation, and continuing compliance with Commission Standards, policies, procedures and decisions.

Accreditation is attained following the evaluation of the entire institution and continues until formally terminated or withdrawn. It is subject, however, to periodic review and to conditions, as determined by the Commission. Every accredited institution files an Annual Report, is regularly reviewed for maintenance of accreditation, and undergoes a comprehensive self-review and evaluation at least every ten years. Initial accreditation, as a matter of Commission policy, requires institutional self-review and peer evaluation no more than seven years after the date of the Commission action granting such status. Neither accreditation nor candidacy is retroactive. (Under certain circumstances, the Commission may set the effective date of accreditation up to six months prior to the Commission's action. See How to Become Accredited on the Commission website.)

As a voluntary, nongovernmental agency, the Commission does not have the responsibility to exercise the regulatory control of state and federal governments or to apply their mandates regarding collective bargaining, affirmative action, health and safety regulations, and the like. Furthermore, the Commission does not enforce the standards of specialized accrediting agencies, the American Association of University Professors, or other nongovernmental organizations, although institutions may wish to review the publications of such agencies as part of the self-review process. The Commission has its own Standards and expects institutions and teams to apply them with integrity, flexibility and an attitude of humane concern for students and the public interest.

The Standards of Accreditation apply to all institutions in the region. For those seeking candidacy, the Standards must be met at least at a minimum level. For institutions seeking initial accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation, the Standards must be met at a higher level. The Standards define normative expectations and characteristics of excellence and provide a framework for institutional self-review. Depending upon the stage of development of the institution, some components of the Standards may be viewed as of greater or lesser priority.

ASH1447
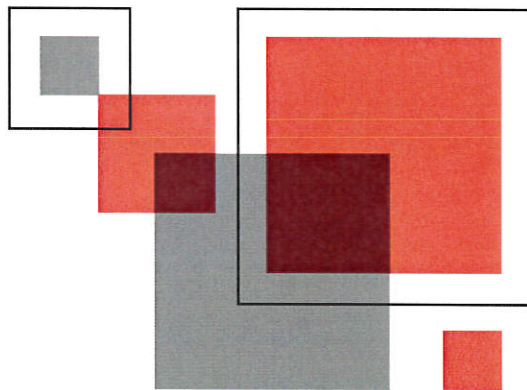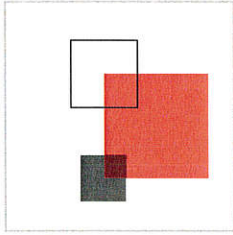
PART II: THE CORE COMMITMENTS AND STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

Overview

The Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation provide a foundation for institutional reviews and actions. The Core Commitments express the values underlying WASC accreditation, while the Standards build upon the Core Commitments, articulating broad principles of good practice. The Standards are explicated by the Criteria for Review (CFR), and the CFRs in turn are supported by Guidelines and Commission policies. Together, these elements provide a coherent basis for institutional review and at the same time assure quality and integrity.

Understanding the WASC Standards

The WASC process begins by calling upon institutions to ground their activities in three Core Commitments. By affirming these Core Commitments and taking ownership of the accreditation process, institutions create learning environments that continuously strive for educational excellence and operational effectiveness in order to serve both students and the public good.

Core Commitment to Student Learning and Success

Institutions have clear educational goals and student learning outcomes. Institutions collect, analyze, and interpret valid and reliable evidence of learning as a way of assessing student achievement and success. Institutions support the success of all students and seek to understand and improve student success.

Core Commitment to Quality and Improvement

Institutions are committed to high standards of quality in all of their educational activities. They utilize appropriate evidence to improve teaching, learning, and overall institutional effectiveness. Through strategic and integrated planning, institutions demonstrate the capacity to fulfill their current commitments and future needs and opportunities.

Core Commitment to Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability

Institutions recognize that the public has entrusted them with the critical responsibilities of upholding the values of higher education and contributing to the public good. They engage in sound business practices, demonstrate institutional integrity, operate in a transparent manner, and adapt to changing conditions.

Standards of Accreditation

The Standards of Accreditation consist of four broad, holistic statements that reflect widely accepted good practices in higher education. WASC institutions are diverse in terms of mission, character, and type. The Standards are broad enough to honor that diversity, respect institutional mission, and support institutional autonomy. At the same time, institutions must demonstrate that they are in substantial compliance with the four Standards and related Criteria for Review in order to become and remain accredited. The four Standards are:

☐ **Standard 1:** Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

☐ **Standard 2:** Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

☐ **Standard 3:** Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

☐ **Standard 4:** Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

Criteria for Review

Thirty-nine Criteria for Review (CFR) are distributed across the four Standards. The CFRs under each Standard provide more specific statements about the meaning of the Standard. The CFRs are grouped under headings that identify major aspects of institutional functioning. The CFRs are cited by institutions in their institutional report, by peer reviewers in evaluating institutions, and by the Commission in making decisions about institutions. Many of the CFRs are cross-referenced to allow for ease in identifying related and connected CFRs.

Guidelines

Where Guidelines are provided, they assist institutions in interpreting the CFRs by offering examples of how institutions can address a particular Criterion For Review. An institution is welcome to employ different practices from those described in a particular Guideline; in that case, the institution is responsible for showing that it has addressed the intent of that Criterion in an equally effective way.

Related Commission Policies and Resources

Following some CFRs are references to policies of particular relevance to those CFRs and any related Guidelines. Institutions are encouraged to become familiar with, and to review periodically, all Commission policies, which are binding on member institutions.

Following some CFRs are references to manuals and resource guides. WASC has published manuals on substantive change, how to become WASC-accredited, and procedures for international institutions that wish to pursue WASC accreditation. The procedures described in these manuals, like policies, are binding. Resource guides, offering principles and examples of good practice, address topics such as program review, transparency, graduate education, and the use of evidence. Resource guides are not binding; they are merely suggestive and intended to provide helpful information.

Current versions of WASC policies, manuals, and resource guides are available at the WASC website at www.wascsenior.org.
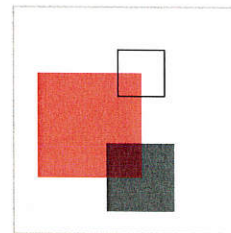
Colleges and universities have been under increasing pressure to become more accountable for student academic achievement; to be more transparent in reporting the results of accreditation; and to demonstrate their contribution to the public good.
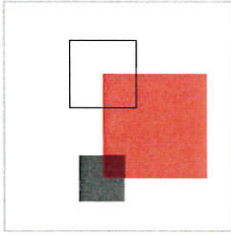
Understanding the WASC Standards

nstitutions accredited by WASC share a common set of commitments that focus on students, safeguard quality, and assure integrity, accountability, and transparency. Institutions demonstrate this commitment by adhering to the Standards of Accreditation. WASC institutions represent richness in diversity of mission, character, and type, and the WASC Standards are written in such a way as to honor that diversity by respecting institutional mission and preserving institutional autonomy. By affirming these Core Commitments, institutions create learning environments that continuously strive for educational excellence and operational effectiveness in order to serve the public good.
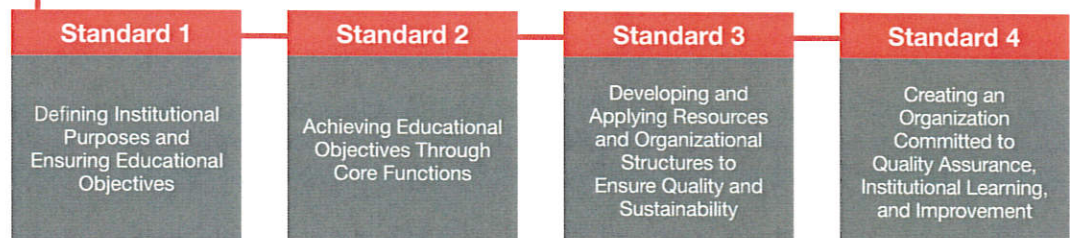
1. Core Commitments

The WASC process begins by calling upon institutions to ground their activities in three Core Commitments. By affirming these Core Commitments and taking ownership of the accreditation process, institutions create learning environments that continuously strive for educational excellence and operational effectiveness in order to serve both students and the public good.

☐ Core Commitment to Student Learning and Success

☐ Core Commitment to Quality and Improvement

☐ Core Commitment to Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability

2. Standards of Accreditation

The Standards of Accreditation consist of four broad, holistic statements that reflect widely accepted good practices in higher education. WASC institutions are diverse in terms of mission, character, and type. The Standards are broad enough to honor that diversity, respect institutional mission, and support institutional autonomy. At the same time, institutions must demonstrate that they are in substantial compliance with the four Standards and related Criteria for Review in order to become and remain accredited. The four Standards are:

Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4
Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives	Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions	Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability	Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

Standard 1

Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

☐ Institutional Purposes

☐ Integrity and Transparency

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, and its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

ASH1451

Students and their success continue to stand at the center of concerns about higher education accreditation. Thus accreditation seeks to establish standards and measurements of quality that ensure that students earn degrees in a timely manner, and that those degrees have demonstrable meaning and currency within the society at large.
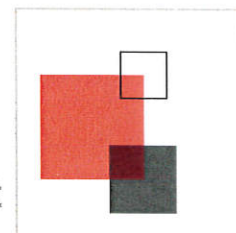
3. Criteria for Review

Thirty-nine Criteria for Review (CFRs) are distributed across the four Standards. The CFRs under each Standard provide more specific statements about the meaning of the Standard. The CFRs are grouped under headings that identify major aspects of institutional functioning. The CFRs are cited by institutions in their institutional report, by peer reviewers in evaluating institutions, and by the Commission in making decisions about institutions. Many of the CFRs are cross-referenced to allow for ease in identifying related and connected CFRs. Embedded cross references can help institutions orient and check themselves with reference to other Criteria For Review.

4. Guidelines

Where Guidelines are provided, they assist institutions in interpreting the CFRs by offering examples of how institutions can address a particular Criterion For Review. An institution is welcome to employ different practices from those described in a particular Guideline; in that case, the institution is responsible for showing that it has addressed the intent of that Criterion in an equally effective way.

5. Related Commission Policies and Resources

Following some CFRs are references to policies of particular relevance to those CFRs and any related Guidelines. Institutions are encouraged to become familiar with, and to review periodically, all Commission policies, which are binding on member institutions.

Following some CFRs are references to manuals and resource guides. WASC has published manuals on substantive change, how to become WASC-accredited, and procedures for international institutions that wish to pursue WASC accreditation. The procedures described in these manuals, like policies, are binding. Resource guides, offering principles and examples of good practice, address topics such as program review, transparency, graduate education, and the use of evidence. Resource guides are not binding; they are merely suggestive and intended to provide helpful information.

Institutional Purposes
Criteria for Review

1.1 The institution's formally approved statements of purpose are appropriate for an institution of higher education and clearly define its essential values and character and ways in which it contributes to the public good.

1.2 Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning.

See also CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 4.2

GUIDELINE: The institution has a published mission statement that clearly describes its purposes. The institution's purposes fall within recognized academic areas and/or disciplines.
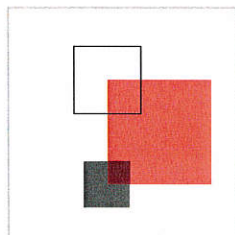
Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

☐ Institutional Purposes

☐ Integrity

☐ Transparency

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

Institutional Purposes

Criteria for Review

1.1 The institution's formally approved statements of purpose are appropriate for an institution of higher education and clearly define its essential values and character and ways in which it contributes to the public good.

GUIDELINE: The institution has a published mission statement that clearly describes its purposes. The institution's purposes fall within recognized academic areas and/or disciplines.

1.2 Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning outcomes.

See also CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 4.2

Integrity and Transparency

Criteria for Review

1.3 The institution publicly states its commitment to academic freedom for faculty, staff, and students, and acts accordingly. This commitment affirms that those in the academy are free to share their convictions and responsible conclusions with their colleagues and students in their teaching and writing.

GUIDELINE: The institution has published or has readily available policies on academic freedom. For those institutions that strive to instill specific beliefs and world views, policies clearly state how these views are implemented and ensure that these conditions are consistent with generally recognized principles of academic freedom. Due-process procedures are disseminated, demonstrating that faculty and students are protected in their quest for truth.

See also CFR 3.2, 3.10

1.4 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, its hiring and admissions criteria, and its administrative and organizational practices.

☐ Diversity Policy

GUIDELINE: The institution has demonstrated institutional commitment to the principles enunciated in the WASC Diversity Policy.

See also CFR 2.2a, 3.1

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Integrity and Transparency

Criteria for Review

1.5 Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

☐ Independent Governing Boards Policy ☐ Related Entities Policy

GUIDELINE: The institution does not experience interference in substantive decisions or educational functions by governmental, religious, corporate, or other external bodies that have a relationship to the institution.

See also CFR 3.6-3.10

1.6 The institution truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, services, and costs to students and to the larger public. The institution demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. The institution treats students fairly and equitably through established policies and procedures addressing student conduct, grievances, human subjects in research, disability, and financial matters, including refunds and financial aid

GUIDELINE: The institution has published or has readily available policies on student grievances and complaints, refunds, etc. The institution does not have a history of adverse findings against it with respect to violation of these policies. Records of student complaints are maintained for a six-year period. The institution clearly defines and distinguishes between the different types of credits it offers and between degree and non-degree credit, and accurately identifies the type and meaning of the credit awarded in its transcripts. The institution's policy on grading and student evaluation is clearly stated and provides opportunity for appeal as needed.

See also CFR 2.12

1.7 The institution exhibits integrity and transparency in its operations, as demonstrated by the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, sound business practices, timely and fair responses to complaints and grievances, and regular evaluation of its performance in these areas. The institution's finances are regularly audited by qualified independent auditors.

☐ Complaints and Third Party Comments Policy

See also CFR 3.4, 3.6, 3.7

1.8 The institution is committed to honest and open communication with the Accrediting Commission; to undertaking the accreditation review process with seriousness and candor; to informing the Commission promptly of any matter that could materially affect the accreditation status of the institution; and to abiding by Commission policies and procedures, including all substantive change policies.

☐ Compliance Checklist Policy

☐ Degree-Level Approval Policy

☐ Disclosure of Accrediting Documents and Commission Actions Policy

☐ Honorary Degrees Policy

☐ Legal Fees Policy

☐ Maintenance of Accreditation Records Policy

☐ Matters Under Litigation Policy

☐ Substantive Change Policy; Substantive Change Manual

☐ Unannounced Visits Policy

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