



POLICIES

& PROCEDURES

MANUAL

**INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITING
COMMISSION FOR DIGITAL
EDUCATION (IACDE)**

IACDE Policies & Procedures Manual

**International Accrediting
Commission for Digital Education**
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International Accrediting Commission for Digital Education (IACDE)

Policies & Procedures Manual

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Policies and Procedures Manual

The International Accrediting Commission for Digital Education (IACDE) Policies and Procedures Manual defines the official policies, operational procedures, rights, responsibilities, and ethical standards that govern the accreditation process for institutions and programs.

This manual ensures transparency, consistency, fairness, and integrity in all accreditation activities. It serves as a binding framework for all applicant institutions, accredited institutions, peer reviewers, commission members, and IACDE staff.

Institutions seeking accreditation or maintaining accredited status are expected to review, understand, and adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

1.2 Authority of IACDE

The International Accrediting Commission for Digital Education (IACDE) operates as an independent accrediting body focused on assuring quality, innovation, and integrity in online, hybrid, and digitally enhanced education.

The IACDE Accreditation Commission holds the sole authority to:

- Grant, deny, reaffirm, place on probation, revoke, or withdraw accreditation;
- Issue official notices of accreditation status;
- Develop, revise, and enforce accreditation standards, policies, and procedures;
- Review complaints, appeals, and compliance matters.

The decisions and policies outlined in this manual are binding for all parties engaged in the accreditation process.

1.3 Amendments and Revisions

IACDE reserves the right to amend, revise, or update this manual, including the accreditation standards, eligibility requirements, fee schedules, and operational procedures, as needed to uphold best practices and fulfill its mission.

When substantive changes occur:

- IACDE will notify all applicant and accredited institutions via official communication;
- A reasonable transition period will be provided for institutions to achieve compliance with updated policies;
- Revised editions of the manual will supersede all previous versions.

Institutions are responsible for ensuring they comply with the most current version of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Section 2: Accreditation Process Policies

2.1 Application Procedures and Eligibility Verification

Institutions and programs seeking accreditation must submit a complete Accreditation Application and pay the required non-refundable Application Fee.

Applications are reviewed by IACDE staff to verify:

- Institutional or program eligibility;
- Alignment with IACDE's mission and scope;
- Initial operational readiness to support academic programming and learner outcomes.

Incomplete applications will not be advanced for review until all required documentation and fees are submitted. IACDE reserves the right to request additional information before proceeding with candidacy review.

Eligibility verification does not guarantee approval for candidacy or accreditation.

2.2 Candidate Status Granting Policies

Institutions or programs meeting preliminary eligibility requirements may be granted Candidate Status.

Candidate Status is a formal acknowledgment that the institution is on the path toward accreditation but has not yet demonstrated full compliance with all Core Accreditation Standards.

Candidate institutions must:

- Complete a comprehensive Self-Study within two (2) years of candidacy approval;
- Undergo a Peer Review evaluation;
- Maintain operational continuity and compliance with applicable standards during the candidacy period.

Institutions granted Candidate Status may publicly represent themselves as "Candidates for Accreditation" but must clearly distinguish this status from full accreditation.

Candidate Status may be withdrawn if an institution:

- Fails to make reasonable progress toward full accreditation;
- Fails to meet reporting or payment obligations;
- Violates ethical expectations or misrepresents its status.

2.3 Self-Study and Peer Review Expectations

All Candidate and accredited institutions are required to submit a Self-Study Report that:

- Provides comprehensive evidence of compliance with each Core Accreditation Standard;
- Reflects institutional self-assessment, improvement plans, and outcomes data;
- Includes all requested documentation and exhibits.

Peer Review evaluations are conducted virtually by trained IACDE reviewers and include:

- Review of the Self-Study and supporting documents;
- Virtual interviews with leadership, faculty, staff, and learners;
- Assessment of operational, academic, and student support effectiveness.

Peer reviewers operate independently and provide findings and recommendations without guaranteeing accreditation outcomes.

Institutions are expected to cooperate fully during peer review activities.

2.4 Decision-Making Policies

Final accreditation decisions are rendered by the IACDE Accreditation Commission based on:

- Self-Study findings;
- Peer Review reports;
- Institutional documentation and evidence;
- Compliance with Core Accreditation Standards.

The Commission may issue one of the following decisions:

- Grant Candidate Status;
- Grant Full Accreditation;
- Place an institution on Probationary Status;
- Deny accreditation;
- Withdraw accreditation.

Decisions are communicated formally in writing to the institution's leadership, and decisions become part of the institution's permanent accreditation record.

2.5 Accreditation Status Categories and Public Disclosure

Accreditation status categories include:

- **Candidate for Accreditation:** Institution has been determined eligible and is preparing for full accreditation review;
- **Fully Accredited:** Institution has demonstrated compliance with all accreditation standards;
- **Probationary Status:** Institution is accredited but must correct deficiencies within a specified timeframe;
- **Denied Accreditation:** Institution was not approved for accreditation after review;
- **Revoked Accreditation:** Institution's accredited status has been withdrawn for cause.

Institutions must represent their accreditation status accurately and update public materials within thirty (30) days of any change in status.

IACDE maintains an online public Directory of Accredited Institutions and Candidates, updated regularly.

Section 3: Institutional Responsibilities

3.1 Ongoing Compliance Requirements

All institutions granted Candidate or Accredited Status by IACDE are required to maintain continuous compliance with the Core Accreditation Standards and the policies outlined in this manual.

Institutions must:

- Operate consistently with their published mission and stated objectives;
- Deliver academic programs aligned with outcomes-based educational practices;
- Ensure qualified faculty and adequate learning resources are available to learners;
- Demonstrate responsible financial management and organizational integrity;
- Engage in continuous self-assessment and quality improvement initiatives.

Compliance is expected at all times, not solely at the time of peer review or reaffirmation. Failure to maintain compliance may result in monitoring, probation, or loss of accreditation.

3.2 Notification of Institutional Changes

Institutions are required to notify IACDE within thirty (30) days of any substantive change that may affect their accreditation status.

Substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in ownership, governance, or legal status;
- Significant changes in leadership (president, CEO, academic leadership);
- Addition or elimination of programs that affect the institution's mission or scope;
- Relocation or addition of instructional sites;
- Significant changes in financial condition, bankruptcy filings, or closure plans;
- Loss of licensure or regulatory approval where applicable.

Institutions must submit written notice and any requested supporting documentation for review. Failure to report substantive changes may result in corrective action.

3.3 Annual Reporting Obligations

All accredited institutions must submit an Annual Report each year, which includes:

- Updated institutional profile and contact information;
- Current student enrollment and graduation/completion rates;
- Financial health attestations or audits, where applicable;
- Updates on strategic initiatives, program expansions, or changes;
- Status updates on any conditions or recommendations from previous reviews.

Annual Reports are typically due by December 31 each year unless otherwise specified. Failure to submit timely reports may result in monitoring, probation, or suspension of accredited status.

3.4 Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Full Accreditation is granted for a term of five (5) years.

Prior to the expiration of the accreditation term, institutions must undergo a reaffirmation review process, which includes:

- Submission of a new Self-Study Report demonstrating ongoing compliance;
- Participation in a virtual peer review evaluation;
- Review and approval by the IACDE Accreditation Commission.

Institutions that fail to complete the reaffirmation process by the required deadline risk suspension, probation, or withdrawal of accredited status.

Section 4: Financial Policies

4.1 Application Fees, Accreditation Fees, and Maintenance Fees

IACDE requires the payment of specific fees at various stages of the accreditation process. These include:

- **Application Fee:** Non-refundable fee due at the time of accreditation application submission.
- **Candidate Recognition Fee:** Fee due upon approval for Candidate Status.
- **Full Accreditation Fee:** Fee based on institutional enrollment size, due at the time of Self-Study submission.
- **Annual Maintenance Fee:** Fee due annually after Full Accreditation is awarded to maintain active accredited status.

The official Fee Schedule, updated periodically, is published on the IACDE website and included in official accreditation materials.

Institutions are responsible for reviewing and complying with current published fees.

4.2 Refund Policies

All Application Fees and Candidate Recognition Fees are non-refundable under any circumstances.

Full Accreditation Fees may be partially refundable only if:

- The institution voluntarily withdraws from the accreditation process prior to assignment of a Peer Review Team; and
- A formal written withdrawal request is submitted to IACDE within thirty (30) days of Self-Study submission.

Refunds, when approved, are subject to administrative processing deductions and are not guaranteed.

Annual Maintenance Fees are non-refundable once invoiced, regardless of institutional changes or withdrawal.

4.3 Non-Payment Consequences

Institutions failing to pay required fees by established deadlines may face:

- Late payment penalties;

- Suspension of candidacy or accreditation status;
- Removal from the IACDE Accredited Institutions Directory;
- Ineligibility for reaffirmation or participation in future accreditation activities.

Accreditation decisions may be withheld, suspended, or revoked for non-payment of outstanding fees.

Institutions are responsible for maintaining current financial accounts with IACDE at all times.

Section 5: Complaints and Appeals

5.1 Institutional Rights to Appeal Accreditation Decisions

Institutions have the right to appeal adverse accreditation decisions rendered by the IACDE Accreditation Commission.

Appealable decisions include:

- Denial of Candidate Status;
- Denial of Full Accreditation;
- Placement on Probationary Status;
- Revocation or withdrawal of accreditation.

Institutions wishing to appeal must:

- Submit a formal written Notice of Appeal to IACDE within thirty (30) days of receiving the official decision letter;
- Clearly identify the decision being appealed and the grounds for appeal;
- Include supporting documentation or evidence.

Appeals are reviewed by an independent Appeals Committee not involved in the original decision.

The Appeals Committee's decision is final and binding.

During the appeal process, the institution's prior status remains in effect unless otherwise specified by IACDE.

5.2 Complaint Filing Against Institutions

IACDE accepts written complaints from students, employees, or third parties regarding accredited or candidate institutions that may be in violation of IACDE's standards, policies, or ethical expectations.

Complaints must:

- Be submitted in writing, signed, and dated;

- Include a clear description of the alleged non-compliance;
- Provide supporting evidence where available.

Anonymous complaints may be considered only if credible documentation is provided.

Complaints must involve issues directly related to IACDE standards or policies. IACDE does not resolve contractual, personal, or legal disputes not related to accreditation.

Institutions subject to complaints are notified and given an opportunity to respond.

5.3 Complaint Filing Against IACDE

Stakeholders may submit written complaints alleging that IACDE has violated its own standards, policies, or procedures.

Complaints against IACDE must:

- Be submitted in writing to the Office of Compliance;
- Provide specific facts, evidence, and references to policies allegedly violated;
- Be filed within sixty (60) days of the alleged occurrence.

Complaints are reviewed by the Compliance Officer and escalated to an independent review panel if warranted.

Findings and corrective actions, if any, are communicated to the complainant.

5.4 Confidentiality of Appeals and Complaints

IACDE treats all complaints, appeals, and related investigations as confidential to the extent possible.

- Information is shared only with individuals directly involved in the review or resolution process.
- Complainants, institutions, and staff must respect the confidentiality of all proceedings.

Retaliation against any party involved in a complaint or appeal process is strictly prohibited and may result in corrective action.

5.5 Review and Resolution Procedures

Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal:

- Acknowledgment of receipt is sent within five (5) business days;
- A preliminary jurisdictional review is conducted;
- If warranted, a formal investigation or appeals hearing is initiated;
- Both the complainant and the institution are notified of findings or decisions.

Resolution may include:

- Closure of the complaint with no findings;
- Issuance of recommendations for corrective actions;
- Imposition of sanctions, probation, or withdrawal of accreditation (for institutions);
- Corrective measures within IACDE's operations (for internal complaints).

Final actions are documented and maintained in IACDE's confidential records.

Section 6: Ethical Expectations and Conflicts of Interest

6.1 Ethical Conduct by Institutions

Institutions holding Candidate or Accredited Status with IACDE are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, honesty, and transparency in all institutional functions;
- Maintain truthful public representations of accreditation status;
- Provide accurate information in all reports, applications, and correspondence with IACDE;
- Uphold academic freedom, fairness, nondiscrimination, and respect for learner rights;
- Avoid deceptive marketing, admissions practices, and misrepresentation of programs or credentials.

Institutions found to be in violation of ethical expectations may be subject to sanctions, probation, or revocation of accreditation.

6.2 Ethical Conduct by Peer Reviewers and Staff

All individuals serving as Peer Reviewers, Commission Members, or Staff for IACDE are required to:

- Act with objectivity, professionalism, and fairness during evaluations and decision-making processes;
- Avoid conflicts of interest, favoritism, or bias in all accreditation activities;
- Maintain the confidentiality of all institutional information reviewed during the accreditation process;
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest prior to assignment to an accreditation review;
- Refrain from accepting gifts, favors, employment offers, or other inducements from applicant institutions.

Violations of ethical conduct expectations by peer reviewers or staff may result in removal from service and additional corrective actions.

6.3 Conflict of Interest Policies

A conflict of interest exists when a reviewer, commission member, or staff member has a direct or indirect personal, financial, professional, or institutional interest in an applicant or accredited institution that could compromise, or appear to compromise, objective judgment.

Conflict of interest situations include, but are not limited to:

- Current or past employment with the institution under review;
- Enrollment in courses or programs at the institution;
- Personal or familial relationships with institutional leadership or governing board members;
- Receipt of consulting fees, honoraria, or gifts from the institution.

Individuals with potential conflicts must:

- Disclose the conflict immediately;
- Recuse themselves from the review, evaluation, or decision-making process related to the institution in question.

Institutions must also disclose any known conflicts of interest that could impact the impartiality of their accreditation review.

6.4 Confidentiality and Records Retention

IACDE maintains strict confidentiality over:

- Institutional application materials, self-study reports, and review findings;
- Peer reviewer notes, recommendations, and communications;
- Internal Commission deliberations and decision records.

Confidential information may not be shared externally except:

- As required by law;
- As necessary to fulfill public disclosure obligations regarding accreditation decisions.

Records related to accreditation evaluations, decisions, appeals, and complaints are retained securely in accordance with IACDE's document retention policy, typically for a minimum of seven (7) years.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is considered a serious violation of IACDE policy and may result in sanctions or legal action.

Section 7: Revocation, Probation, and Withdrawal Policies

7.1 Revocation of Accreditation

IACDE reserves the right to revoke accreditation when an accredited institution:

- Fails to maintain compliance with Core Accreditation Standards;
- Engages in unethical, fraudulent, deceptive, or unlawful practices;
- Misrepresents its accredited status or falsifies information provided to IACDE;
- Fails to respond adequately to conditions placed during probationary monitoring;
- Refuses to cooperate with required annual reporting, monitoring reviews, or reaffirmation evaluations.

Revocation procedures include:

- Issuance of a formal Notice of Intent to Revoke Accreditation;
- Opportunity for the institution to submit a written response within thirty (30) days;
- Final decision by the Accreditation Commission after review of all evidence and responses.

Institutions whose accreditation is revoked must immediately cease public claims of accreditation and remove all use of IACDE seals and logos.

7.2 Probation Policies and Remediation

An accredited institution may be placed on Probationary Status if:

- It is found to be out of compliance with one or more accreditation standards;
- It fails to correct deficiencies identified during peer review, annual reporting, or monitoring activities.

During Probationary Status:

- Institutions must submit a corrective action plan with specific steps and timelines;
- Institutions must demonstrate measurable progress within a designated probation period, typically not exceeding one (1) year;
- IACDE may conduct interim reviews to assess progress.

Failure to address probation conditions may result in revocation of accreditation.

7.3 Voluntary Withdrawal of Accreditation

Institutions may voluntarily withdraw from candidacy or accredited status at any time by submitting a formal written Notice of Withdrawal to IACDE.

Upon withdrawal:

- Institutions must immediately cease using the IACDE name, seal, and accreditation references;
- Institutions are removed from the IACDE Directory of Accredited Institutions;
- Institutions must settle all outstanding financial obligations to IACDE.

Voluntary withdrawal does not preclude future reapplication, but institutions must meet all current eligibility requirements at the time of reapplication.

7.4 Reapplication After Withdrawal or Revocation

Institutions that have withdrawn voluntarily or had accreditation revoked may reapply for accreditation after a minimum waiting period of one (1) year.

Reapplication requires:

- Submission of a new Accreditation Application and applicable fees;
- Demonstration that deficiencies leading to withdrawal or revocation have been fully addressed;
- Completion of all standard candidacy, Self-Study, and peer review procedures.

IACDE reserves the right to require additional documentation or impose special conditions on reapplying institutions to ensure readiness for accreditation.

Section 8: Use of IACDE Accreditation Seal and Name

8.1 Authorized Use Policies

Institutions granted Candidate Status or Full Accreditation by IACDE are authorized to use designated seals and logos in accordance with official guidelines provided by IACDE.

Authorized uses include:

- Displaying the appropriate Candidate or Accredited Seal on official institutional websites, marketing materials, catalogs, and diplomas;
- Publicly stating the institution's accreditation status using accurate and approved language;
- Referencing programmatic distinctions earned through IACDE accreditation (if applicable).

Institutions must use only the official versions of seals and logos provided by IACDE and must adhere to size, color, and placement requirements to maintain brand consistency and integrity.

Use of the seal or accreditation references is limited to the time period during which the institution maintains active accredited or candidate status.

8.2 Misrepresentation and Unauthorized Use

Institutions are prohibited from:

- Misrepresenting their accreditation status, including implying full accreditation during candidacy;
- Using the IACDE seal, logos, or accreditation claims after candidacy or accreditation is withdrawn, revoked, or expired;
- Altering the design of official seals, logos, or accreditation statements;
- Misleading students, the public, or stakeholders regarding the scope of accreditation granted.

Misrepresentation or unauthorized use constitutes a serious violation of IACDE policy and may result in:

- Public notice of non-compliance;
- Probation, revocation, or denial of accreditation;
- Legal action where appropriate.

8.3 Corrective Actions for Misuse

If unauthorized use or misrepresentation is identified, IACDE may:

- Issue a formal Cease and Desist Order;
- Require immediate removal or correction of all improper materials;
- Impose sanctions, probation, or revocation of accreditation status.

Institutions failing to comply with corrective actions within a reasonable timeframe may face additional penalties and may be publicly listed as non-compliant.

Institutions are responsible for monitoring third-party vendors, marketing affiliates, and partners to ensure compliance with IACDE accreditation representation policies.

Section 9: Public Statements and Official Communications

9.1 Public Announcements by Accredited Institutions

Institutions granted Candidate or Accredited Status by IACDE must accurately represent their status in all public announcements, marketing materials, publications, and online communications.

Requirements include:

- Clearly distinguishing between Candidate Status and Full Accreditation;
- Using approved language to describe IACDE accreditation or candidacy;
- Ensuring that all statements regarding accreditation are truthful, current, and not misleading.

Institutions must update public materials within thirty (30) days of any change in accreditation status.

Misleading public statements may result in corrective actions, including public notice of non-compliance, probation, or revocation of accreditation.

9.2 Official Statements by IACDE

IACDE reserves the right to publish official statements regarding:

- Accreditation decisions, including candidacy, accreditation grants, probation notices, revocations, and withdrawals;
- Actions taken in response to non-compliance, misrepresentation, or other violations;
- Public notices of sanctions or corrective actions imposed on institutions.

Official communications may be posted on the IACDE website, published in official reports, or distributed to relevant stakeholders.

IACDE does not release confidential evaluation materials, Peer Review reports, or internal deliberations unless required by law or regulation.

9.3 Use of Data and Reporting Information

Institutions must consent to IACDE's use of submitted data, Self-Study information, Annual Reports, and accreditation review findings for the purposes of:

- Evaluating institutional compliance with accreditation standards;

- Aggregating non-identifiable data for research, benchmarking, or reporting on trends in digital education quality;
- Publishing directories of accredited and candidate institutions.

IACDE maintains confidentiality of sensitive institutional information but reserves the right to report aggregate outcomes data to the public to promote transparency and institutional accountability.

Institutions providing false, misleading, or incomplete data may face sanctions, including denial, probation, or revocation of accreditation.

Section 10: Contact Information

10.1 Official Communication Channels

All formal correspondence regarding accreditation, candidacy, application status, compliance matters, appeals, complaints, or policy inquiries must be directed to:

International Accrediting Commission for Digital Education (IACDE)

Office of Accreditation

8206 Louisiana Blvd NE, Ste B #10025

Albuquerque, NM 87113

United States

Email: info@iacde.org

Website: www.iacde.org

Institutions must maintain updated contact information with IACDE, including primary accreditation contacts, executive leadership, and mailing addresses.

Failure to maintain current contact details may result in delays in communication and compliance notifications.

10.2 Requests for Policy Clarifications

Questions or requests for clarification regarding the contents of this Policies and Procedures Manual should be submitted in writing to the IACDE Office of Accreditation.

IACDE will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the request within five (5) business days;
- Provide written clarification or interpretation of applicable policies;
- Update the Policies and Procedures Manual or publish official policy addenda as needed to ensure consistent understanding and application.

While IACDE is committed to supporting institutions throughout the accreditation journey, ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with each institution.

Institutions are encouraged to review the IACDE website regularly for the latest updates to accreditation policies, standards, and procedures.