



New England Commission of Higher Education

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Policy on the Meaning of Candidacy

The Candidate for Accreditation program offers certain postsecondary institutions the opportunity to establish a formal, publicly recognized relationship with the New England Commission of Higher Education. Candidacy is a status of affiliation which indicates that an institution has met the Commission's *Criteria for Candidacy*, is progressing toward accreditation, but does not currently meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*. Only accredited institutions are members of the Association.

Attainment of candidacy does not ensure eventual accreditation. A candidate institution has a maximum period of five years, from the effective date of candidacy, within which to achieve accredited status.

Candidacy is the normal route to accreditation. It is the Commission's expectation that unaffiliated institutions will first seek candidacy. However, long-established institutions believing themselves in compliance with all the Commission's criteria for accreditation may petition the Commission for permission to forgo candidacy.

It is not mandatory that candidate institutions remain in that status for the maximum period of five years. However, early applications are appropriate only when encouraged by the results of evaluation visits and Commission action.

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