



# POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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| <b>TITLE:</b> | <b>Institutional and Specialized Accreditation</b> |
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## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The University policy is to attain specialized programmatic accreditation for all academic programs when required. Institutional accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) will be maintained in good standing. The University catalog and website provide information to the public about individual academic programs and their accreditation status.

## **PROCEDURE DETAILS:**

The responsibility for attaining and maintaining institutional accreditation is overseen by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness on behalf of the entire University. The responsibility for specialized accreditation is shared by the Program Director, Dean of the School/College where the program is structurally housed, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The procedure for ensuring the accredited program remains compliant with accreditor standards is shared as follows:

### **1. Program Director and Academic Dean**

The Program Director (PD), under the direct supervision of their Academic Dean, is responsible for obtaining initial accreditation for their program. In the event accreditation has already been attained, the PD monitors all requirements set by the accreditor, requests data, updates website and catalog information, maintains awareness of critical deadlines, plans ahead for typical accreditation obligations such as preparing self-study reports, substantive change reports, annual reports, and planning site visits. The Program Director works collaboratively with their Dean and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in meeting these requirements.

### **2. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is responsible for supporting Program Directors and Deans with data, internal review services, and ancillary support in all accreditation matters.

- All official written communication with accreditors should be reviewed by OIE prior to submission.
- All official correspondence with accreditors should be shared with OIE.
- A representative from OIE should be copied or otherwise made aware of ongoing conversations in regard to accreditation.

**Publish Policy Statement (CLICK ON BOX NEXT TO OPTION-SELECT ALL THAT APPLY):**

UNIVERSITY CATALOG

STAFF HANDBOOK

FACULTY HANDBOOK

STUDENT HANDBOOK

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Institutional Accreditation** is the recognition that an institution maintains standards requisite for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice. An approved, regional accrediting organization provides this service. The goal of regional accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality. *Formerly referred to as “regional” accreditation.*

**Specialized Accreditation** is generally administered by professional-oriented accrediting bodies and applies to an academic program within the institution. Though specialized accreditation focuses on a single program, it is just as important and respected as regional accreditation. Specialized accreditation ensures that students meet professional licensure requirements by reviewing the quality of curriculum and other aspects of the program. Most regionally accredited institutions choose to also accredit their individual academic programs to promote the quality of the educational experience. *Also referred to as “programmatic” accreditation.*

**EXCLUSIONS:**

N/A

**OFFICES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE POLICY:**

Academic Affairs, Academic Units with Specialized Programs, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

**HISTORY:**

The policy and procedure were initially created in March 2023, based on the existing policy at Goodwin University. OIE supports both Goodwin and the University of Bridgeport, requiring mirror policies.

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| <b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>                | March 2023                            |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICE (ONLY ONE):</b> | Office of Institutional Effectiveness |
| <b>REVIEW DATE:</b>                   | Annually during Summer                |