

CMU Accreditation Impact Within the NAPP Process “Middle States”

Introduction of a new academic program – and even modification of an existing program – has many moving and variable components, as outlined on the Enrollment Services’ [New Academic Program Process \(NAPP\) website](#). Sometimes, there are accreditation matters that must be managed well in advance of the program launch date. This handout addresses considerations and impacts of Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) or “Middle States.”

Why is it necessary to have Middle States approval?

The decision to modify institutional offerings is an institutional prerogative and responsibility, however, MSCHE is obligated to ensure that any “[substantive change](#)” does not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet accreditation standards and requirements of affiliation.

Furthermore, when MSCHE action or notification is required, other actions flow from completion of such requirement – such as our ability to offer federal financial aid or to host international F-1 or J-1 students.

Carnegie Mellon was re-accredited in June 2018, valid through 2026; [Statement of Accreditation Status](#).

MSCHE Site Classifications and Terminology

During the NAPP consultation phase, a CMU colleague will determine whether any of the following three definitions are applicable to the new program.

1. **Additional Location.** A domestic or international location, other than a branch campus, that is geographically apart from the primary/main campus and at which the institution offers **at least 50** percent of the requirements of an educational program. CMU must submit information to MSCHE prior to operation, advertisement, or enrollment. *(34 CFR §602.22) Carnegie Mellon examples: CMU-Africa, CMU-Australia, MSCF-NY, CMU Portugal Locations, and others.*
2. **Other Instructional Site.** Any off-campus site, other than those meeting the definition of a branch campus or an additional location, at which the institution offers **one or more courses for credit**. Sites so designated do not require substantive change approval. However, substantive change approval is required to *reclassify* any other instructional site to or from a branch campus or additional location. *CMU examples: Heinz Washington DC office, Los Angeles Center in North Hollywood, CA, and others.*
3. **Branch Campus.** A domestic or international location of an institution that is geographically apart, independent of the primary/main campus. The branch campus is considered independent of the main campus if it is permanent in nature; offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and

administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority. (34 CFR §600.2) *Carnegie Mellon examples: Pittsburgh campus, CMU-Qatar, and CMU-Silicon Valley.*

The types of information that will be prepared and submitted to MSCHE include: type of change, institutional standing with other agencies, mission and objectives, explanation of the need for the proposed change, specific data to support the need for the change (such as student surveys, national trends, employment statistics), enrollment projections, financial analysis, timeline, etc.

Site Closure, Relocation or Reclassification

The Commission requires prior approval to close, relocate, or reclassify a site. Approvals from all necessary licensing, regulatory, or other legal entities must be provided. A site visit is required for the relocation of a main campus, all branch campuses, and additional locations when the institution has fewer than three approved additional locations.

A. Closure... requires prior approval if an institution intends to close a main campus, branch campus, or additional location. If the site provides 100 percent of at least one program, the institution must also provide a teach-out plan.... (34 CFR §602.24(c)(1)(iii)).

B. Relocation... requires prior approval if an institution intends to move an existing approved main campus, branch campus, or additional location to a new physical location. The institution must submit a substantive change request to *relocate* the site.

C. Reclassification.... requires prior approval if offerings at an existing site change enough to move the site into a new category (see definitions of branch campus, additional location, or other instructional site). The institution must submit a substantive change request to *reclassify* the site.

Academic program leadership at CMU will participate in a consultative process, providing all the necessary data and information to support such a change, so that the compliance liaison of CMU can prepare accurate and timely information for submission to the MSCHE. “Prior Approval” in all above cases suggests that the request will be submitted AND approved prior to any such change occurring. So, timing is critical in advance of decision-making.

New Academic Program Process (NAPP)

To add a new academic program or modify an existing one, view CMU’s [New Academic Program Process \(NAPP\)](#) webpage. CMU’s NAPP is divided into three phases: Academic Consultation, Administrative & Implementation, and Notification. The first step should begin 4-12 months in advance of the desired program offering.

Questions? Contact....

Lisa Krieg, *Associate Vice President and Director of Enrollment Services*

Accreditation Liaison Office (ALO) to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

Warner Hall A-19 | krieg@andrew.cmu.edu | 412-268-5399