

**TRANSNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN
COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**
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GENERAL INFORMATION

PURPOSE

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) is a voluntary, non-profit, self-governing organization of Christian postsecondary institutions. TRACS was established in 1979 to promote the welfare, interests, and development of postsecondary institutions through the accreditation process, whose mission is characterized by a distinctly Christian purpose as set forth in the Foundational Standards. While TRACS encourages each affiliated institution to develop its own distinctives, TRACS expects institutions to provide quality postsecondary education within the context of Christian values, with emphasis on high academic standards and spiritual development.

SCOPE

TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), as an institutional agency accrediting Christian postsecondary institutions (e.g. liberal arts colleges/universities, graduate schools/ seminaries, Bible colleges) that offer associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degrees. TRACS works closely with state higher education agencies in the accrediting process.

ROLE AND VALUE OF ACCREDITATION

TRACS accreditation is granted to higher educational institutions that are in compliance with its Standards and Evaluative Criteria within the Policies and Procedures established by the TRACS Accreditation Commission. In the United States, accreditation is voluntarily sought by institutions and is conferred by independent, autonomous bodies. Voluntary, non-governmental, institutional accreditation, as practiced by TRACS and other accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), is uniquely characteristic of American education. For purposes of determining eligibility for federal government assistance under certain legislation, the USDOE publishes a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies.

The two fundamental purposes of the accreditation process are: (1) to assure the quality and integrity of postsecondary institutions and (2) to assist the development and improvement of institutional higher learning. The Accreditation process involves continuous institutional self-evaluation, periodic self-study, long and short-range planning, and institutional research for the purpose of determining areas of strengths and weaknesses indicating effectiveness. Periodic peer evaluations by qualified professionals from other institutions serving on visiting teams serve to confirm that the institution is achieving its mission through compliance with the established Standards.

ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The TRACS Accreditation Commission is charged with the responsibility of enforcing all the accreditation policies as well as approving all institutions for Accreditation or Candidacy. The decision of the Accreditation Commission is final. The Commission is made up of eighteen members, including three public commissioners.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION

Institutions must be legally constituted as a non-profit institution if so operated. They must meet the legal requirements established by the State to operate as an educational institution, to maintain its functions, and to conduct its programs. The educational institution should attain a satisfactory degree of stability before it applies. Pre-requisites are determined through the Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs).

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The *Accreditation Manual*, which contains the Standards and Criteria, guide the accreditation process for those institutions seeking candidacy/accreditation. A copy of the *Accreditation Manual* may be obtained from the TRACS office.

ACCREDITATION CLASSIFICATION

Candidate (Pre-accredited) Status: Candidacy offers institutions the opportunity to establish an initial, formal, and publicly recognized membership with TRACS. Candidate institutions must satisfy the Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs). They must also demonstrate basic compliance with the TRACS Accreditation Standards that will, among other things, provide evidence of sound planning; adequate human, financial and physical resources and the potential to attain its goals within a five-year period. Following a successful staff visit, institutional self-study, and an on-site peer evaluation team visit, an institution may be awarded candidacy for a maximum of five years by the Accreditation Commission.

Accredited Status: Following an institutional self-study and an on-site peer evaluation team visit, accredited status may be granted for a period of five years by the Accreditation Commission to institutions that are in substantial compliance with the Standards and Criteria for accreditation.

The Accreditation Commission, after full deliberation and examination of all institutional and visiting team documentation, including self-study report, the visiting team report, and institutional response, may approve, defer, or deny an institution's application for candidate or accredited status.