

U.S. Department of Education Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official on Recognition Compliance Issues

Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Council On Occupational Education (1969 / 2011)
(The dates provided are the date of initial listing as a recognized agency and the date of the agency's last grant of recognition.)
2. **Action Item:** Petition for Continued Recognition
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** The accreditation and preaccreditation ("Candidacy Status") throughout the United States of postsecondary occupational education institutions offering non-degree and applied associate degree programs in specific career and technical education fields, including institutions that offer programs via distance education.
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** Same as above.
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** 06/23/2016
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Renew the agency's recognition for a period of five years.
7. **Issues or Problems:** None

Executive Summary

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Council on Occupational Education (COE) is a national institutional accreditor. Its current scope of recognition is for the accreditation and preaccreditation ("Candidacy status") throughout the United States of postsecondary occupational education institutions offering non-degree and applied associate degree programs in specific career and technical education fields, including institutions that offer programs via distance education.

COE was originally established in 1968 as a committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In 1971 the Committee became the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions. In 1995, the agency formally separated from SACS, adopted its present name, and began to accredit and preaccredit institutions throughout the United States.

COE currently accredits 534 institutions and 57 candidate institutions in 39 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. COE's accreditation enables the institutions it accredits to establish eligibility to participate in Title IV programs; thus it must meet the Secretary's separate and independent requirements.

Recognition History

The U.S. Commissioner of Education first listed COE as a recognized accrediting agency in 1969 under the name "Committee on Occupational Education Institutions." The former Secretary of Education last granted COE a recognition period of four years after deferring a decision on the agency's recognition in 2005, due to outstanding issues concerning the agency's review of institutions with distance education, its monitoring process, and its substantive change review process and review procedures. The former Secretary issued her decision letter in the Fall 2007, stating that the agency had sufficiently addressed those outstanding issues.

The last full review of the agency was conducted at the June 2011 National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI or the Committee) meeting. Department staff and the Committee both recommended, and the Secretary concurred, that the agency's recognition be continued that it submit a compliance report. Upon successful completion of the compliance report, the Spring 2016 petition is a renewal submission. Since the agency's last review, the Department has received three complaints (two of which have been resolved and one that is still undergoing review) and no third party comments. Department staff attended a site visit observation with the COE team in May 2016.

PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The agency meets the requirements of the Secretary's Criteria for Recognition.

PART III: THIRD PARTY COMMENTS

The Department did not receive any written third - party comments regarding this agency.