

Name: Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools	Meeting Date: 07/31/2019	Response Submit Date: 07/19/2019	Status: Final Review	Type: Compliance Report
--	------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official

on

Recognition Compliance Issues

Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
2. **Action Item:** Compliance Report
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** The accreditation of institutions with postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology programs in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to include the accreditation of postsecondary, non-degree granting institutions that offer all or part of their educational programs via distance education modalities.
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** N/A
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** July 31, 2019
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Renew the agency's recognition for three years
7. **Issues or Problems:** None

Executive Summary

Part I: General Information About The Agency

The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools (MS-CSS) is one of three Commissions of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Primarily an accreditor of secondary education institutions, the agency also accredits postsecondary, non-degree granting vocational institutions. These postsecondary education institutions provide training in vocational/technical careers within certificated and licensed professions such as automotive technology, computer networking, cosmetology and practical nursing.

The agency's current scope of recognition is for the accreditation of institutions with postsecondary, non-degree granting career and technology programs in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, including those that offer all or part of their educational programs via distance education modalities.

The agency's federal link is the Higher Education Act, Title IV federal student aid program. Therefore, the agency must meet the Secretary's separate and independent requirements.

Currently, the agency accredits fifteen postsecondary non-degree-granting institutions that use its accreditation to establish eligibility for Title IV federal student aid programs.

Recognition History

The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools was established in 1920. It was first recognized by the Secretary for the accreditation of public vocational-technical schools offering non-degree postsecondary education in 1988 and remained a recognized agency until July 1999 when it requested that its recognition be withdrawn.

The agency submitted a petition again for initial recognition in December 2003, and in 2004 the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity recommended and the Secretary concurred that the agency be recognized for a two-year period but required it to submit an interim report at its Fall 2006 meeting demonstrating compliance with the issues identified in the staff

analysis.

In December 2006, The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity reviewed and recommended that the Secretary accept the agency's report.

The agency submitted a petition again for continued recognition in June 2012 and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity recommended and the Secretary concurred that the agency's recognition continue and that it demonstrate compliance with a number of the Secretary's Criteria for Recognition. The issues fell primarily in the areas of required standards and their application, and required operating policies and procedures. Most of the citations in these areas are due to the lack of documentation demonstrating the application of specific policies or procedures, which is necessary for compliance, and the agency's amendments or revisions to its policies and procedures to meet the requirements resulting from the HEA amendments in 2010.

At its June 2014 meeting, The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity reviewed and recommended that the Secretary accept the agency's report.

In June 2017 the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity reviewed the agency's petition for continued recognition and recommended and the Secretary concurred that the agency's recognition be continued. It also requested that the Commission submit an interim report to demonstrate compliance with issues identified in the staff analysis. That report is the subject of this analysis. .

Part II: Summary Of Findings

602.15(a)(1) Staffing/Financial Resources

The agency must have the administrative and fiscal capability to carry out its accreditation activities in light of its requested scope of recognition. The agency meets this requirement if the agency demonstrates that--

(a) The agency has--

(1) Adequate administrative staff and financial resources to carry out its accrediting responsibilities;

ASL_MVC_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

602.15(a)(2) Competency of Representatives

(2) Competent and knowledgeable individuals, qualified by education and experience in their own right and trained by the agency on their responsibilities, as appropriate for their roles, regarding the agency's standards, policies, and procedures, to conduct its on-site evaluations, apply or establish its policies, and make its accrediting and preaccrediting decisions, including, if applicable to the agency's scope, their responsibilities regarding distance education and correspondence education;

ASL_MVC_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

Part III: Third Party Comments

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