REGIONAL VS NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

WHAT IT MEANS WHEN CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

US DEPT OF EDUCATION

COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION

OVERSEE

AGENCIES THAT

ACCREDIT

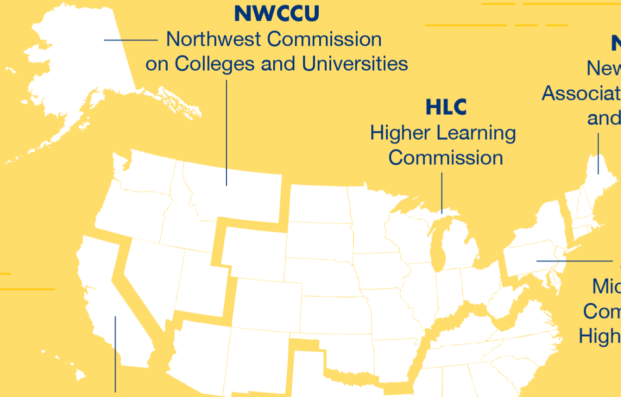
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

US COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

85% ARE REGIONALLY ACCREDITED

15% ARE NATIONALLY ACCREDITED AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

REGIONAL ACCREDITING AGENCIES



NWCCU
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

HLC
Higher Learning Commission

NEASC
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

MSCHE
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

WASC
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

SACS
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

REGIONALLY ACCREDITED VS NATIONALLY ACCREDITED

REVIEW METHODS

The most prestigious and widely-recognized type of accreditation; each agency reviews institutions in their own geographic areas

Compares institutions across the country with a similar career focus or curriculum (examples: nursing, art & design, skilled trades)

CREDITS

Accepted by both regionally- and nationally-accredited schools

ONLY accepted at other nationally-accredited schools

CORPORATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Eligible for all plans	Not always eligible
$ $ $ $ $	$ $ $
MAY BE MORE EXPENSIVE than nationally-accredited schools	**MAY BE LESS EXPENSIVE** than regionally-accredited schools
MOSTLY NON-PROFIT Fundraise through private donations, federal grants, legacy giving	**MOSTLY FOR-PROFIT** Earn revenue through enrollment or selling educational products
☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑	☑ ☑ ☑ ☐ ☐
STRICT STANDARDS More selective during the admissions process	**MORE RELAXED ADMISSION STANDARDS**

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION
AKA “specialized”or “professional”
accreditation

ACCREDITATION IMPACTS

FINANCIAL AID

CREDIT TRANSFERS

EMPLOYMENT

INSTITUTIONAL

ACCREDITATION

AND

TRANSFERRING CREDITS

ROUGHLY 1 IN 4 STUDENTS TRANSFER
to institutions outside of the state where they began their college journey

CAN I TRANSFER CREDITS BETWEEN NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS?

✓ YES!

REGIONAL → REGIONAL

REGIONAL → NATIONAL

NATIONAL → NATIONAL

✖ NO!

NATIONAL → REGIONAL

WARNING SIGNS

THAT AN INSTITUTION IS NOT ACCREDITED

Students are not eligible for federal financial aid

There are numerous complaints about the quality of the institution’s education

Has a name similar (but not exactly the same) as a well-known college or university

Credits are awarded for doing very little work

Drexel UNIVERSITY | ONLINE

SOURCES

https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home

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