

Accreditation and CSN

The College of Southern Nevada is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Accreditation is the primary means by which colleges and universities assure students and the public that quality education is being delivered. NWCCU's Standards for Accreditation define the quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvements expected of accredited institutions. In addition to assuring quality, accreditation also serves to govern eligibility for federal funds, facilitate ease of student transfer among institutions, and engender public confidence in higher educational institutions, particularly among employers of the institution's graduates. Regional accreditation agencies develop standards establishing a minimal level of performance expectation. The NWCCU identified two overarching standards: One – Student Success and Institutional Mission and effectiveness, Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity. These standards can be found on the Accreditation webpage.

The accreditation process requires colleges and universities to conduct a self-assessment to determine if and how well their institutional mission is being achieved and how compliant the institution is in meeting the standards. The NWCCU uses a seven-year cycle to collect data and reports on institutional effectiveness. This reporting consists of periodic on-site evaluations and annual progress reports for interim years. In preparation for an accreditation visit, institutions conduct a self-study to assess their compliance with the standards. A team of external reviewers, during year three and seven of the accreditation cycle, visit the institution to validate compliance with the standards. The accreditation process encumbers institutions to accurately assess and document their level of actual performance as compared to the expected level of performance.

Institutional accreditation affects accreditation at the program level. At CSN, there are programs that choose to participate in specialized accreditation to assure curriculum content and student abilities are sufficient for employment, certification, or licensure within specific industries. Examples include

nursing, physical therapy assisting, occupational therapy assisting, paramedic medicine, heating ventilation and air conditioning, electronic engineering technology accounting and business, paramedic medicine, culinary arts, dental assisting and hygiene, early childhood education among others. If the institution were to fail to meet institutional accreditation standards, these specialized programs would be at risk. The awarding of programmatic accreditation is confirmed only if the institution is regionally accredited. Programmatic accreditation is essential and assures prospective employers of the quality of education received by program graduates in programs such as air conditioning, and automotive.

Monitoring institutional compliance with accreditation standards is an ongoing activity. Since accreditation status affects CSN's ability to receive federal funding as well as assure transferability for our students, the efforts to maintain accreditation is vital to the functioning of CSN.