



Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools,  
Colleges and Universities

## **PRIMER**

## WHAT IS PAASCU?

**P**AASCU stands for **Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities**. It is a private, voluntary, non-profit and non-stock corporation which was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on November 5, 1957.

PAASCU is a service organization that accredits academic programs which meet standards of quality education.

In November 1967, the Bureau of Education and Culture (now the Department of Education) officially recognized PAASCU and endorsed its work as an accrediting agency.

## IS PAASCU AFFILIATED WITH ANY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES?

**Y**es. Since 1991, PAASCU has been a full member of the **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**. As of 2005, INQAAHE is composed of 150 accrediting agencies coming from over 60 different countries. These agencies have also created regional networks, one of which is the **Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)**, with PAASCU being one of its active members.

PAASCU also has linkages with the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)**, which is a private, nonprofit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the United States, as well as CHEA International Quality Group (CIGQ) of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

## WHAT ARE ITS OBJECTIVES?

**P**AASCU's objectives are as follows:

1. To stimulate and integrate the efforts of institutions to elevate the standards of education in the Philippines.
2. To strengthen the capabilities of educational institutions for service to the nation.
3. To identify educational institutions which meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality.
4. To encourage and assist institutions which have the potential and interest to improve themselves through continuing evaluation and self-surveys.
5. To provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions and programs.
6. To provide a basis for institutional relationships, particularly in the transfer of students.

7. To provide guidance to students and parents in the choice of institutions and programs.
8. To attract financial aid from government and other sources for accredited programs and schools applying for accreditation.
9. To assist schools in their quest for regional and international recognition of their academic program; and
10. To network with national and international organization involved in quality assurance.

## WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

**A**ccreditation is...

- a concept based on self-regulation which focuses on evaluation and the continuing improvement of educational quality.
- a process by which institutions or programs continuously upgrade their educational quality and services through self-evaluation and the judgment of peers.
- a status granted to an educational institution or program which meets commonly accepted standards of quality or excellence.

## WHAT ARE THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ACCREDITATION?

**T**he basic characteristics of accreditation are:

- a) its prevailing sense of volunteerism;
- b) its strong tradition of self-regulation;
- c) its reliance on evaluation techniques;
- d) its primary concern with quality.

## WHY PRIVATE, VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION?

**I**n general, all educational institutions in the Philippines go through one form of accreditation - "recognized by the government." Government recognition is, however, inadequate for purposes of identifying and determining educational quality. Thus, private voluntary accreditation provides the opportunity for an educational institution to attain standards above those prescribed as minimum requirements by the government.

## WHAT ARE PAASCU'S STANDARDS?

**T**he Association does not impose arbitrary standards.

The survey forms developed by PAASCU identify principles and practices which are found in excellent institutions. The statements in the survey forms are more qualitative rather than quantitative. The Association does not have specific formulas to apply or particular patterns of organization to follow. The criteria and survey instruments are merely tools to help the school measure educational quality. They are intended to serve as a guide for institutions as they strive for excellence and for accreditors as they assess institutional achievement.

The standards reflect a realistic appraisal of the school's resources and their efficient utilization to help the institution achieve its goals.

## HOW ARE THESE STANDARDS MEASURED?

**M**uch emphasis is placed on the formulation of the school's purposes and objectives. Only when its goals are clear can the school discover the extent to which such purposes and objectives are being achieved.

Essential in the accreditation process is the self-survey made by an institution applying for accreditation. The self-survey is an analysis by its own staff of the institution's educational resources and effectiveness in relation to its own purposes and objectives.

PAASCU judges an institution not by comparison with other institutions but primarily by the degree to which each institution's own avowed purposes are matched by actual practice in the various areas being evaluated. Thus, a school is judged on the basis of the "total pattern" presented by it.

## WHAT AREAS ARE EVALUATED DURING THE SURVEY?

**D**uring the survey visits, the following areas are evaluated:

1. College/School Community Involvement
2. Faculty
3. Curriculum and Instruction
4. Library
5. Laboratories
6. Facilities
7. Student Services
8. Administration

On the Grade School level, the areas on School Community Involvement and Laboratories (nos. 1 and 5 above) are omitted; instead Student Activity Program is added.

For Graduate School programs, the areas on Faculty, Library and Administration are retained, while the other remaining areas specific to graduate programs are Curriculum and Instruction, Research, Students, and Other Resources.

For basic medical education programs, the areas evaluated are: Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Clinical Training/Service Facilities, Research, Students, Library, Administration, and Physical Plant & Other Resources.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROGRAM ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION?

“**P**rogram accreditation” refers to the accreditation of academic courses such as liberal arts, sciences, education or commerce. PAASCU’s policy extends accreditation by program. This means that individual courses of study, such as liberal arts, sciences, commerce and education are evaluated by PAASCU and given proper accreditation.

In contrast, “**i**nstitutional accreditation” refers to the accreditation of the school, college or institution as a whole. This focuses on the overall quality of the school, college or institution based on the quality of its core program offerings, namely Arts and Sciences, Education and Business. Institutional accreditation is anchored on program accreditation.

PAASCU accreditation of a high school or a grade school is considered program accreditation.

## WHICH PROGRAMS ARE ACCREDITED BY PAASCU?

**I**n 1957, PAASCU began accrediting in the tertiary level programs in Liberal Arts, Education and Commerce. Presently, PAASCU accredits the following programs:

1. Liberal Arts/ Sciences
2. Education
  - a. Elementary
  - b. Secondary
3. Business
4. Accountancy
5. Entrepreneurship
6. Information Technology Education
  - a. Computer Science
  - b. Information Systems
  - c. Information Technology
7. Nursing
8. Pharmacy
9. Medical Technology
10. Hospitality Management
11. Travel/Tourism Management
12. Social Work
13. Agriculture
14. Criminal Justice Education  
(Criminology)
15. Engineering
  - a. Chemical
  - b. Civil
  - c. Computer
  - d. Electrical
  - e. Electronics and Communications
  - f. Industrial
  - g. Manufacturing Engineering and Management
  - h. Mechanical
16. Radiologic Technology
17. Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy
18. Nutrition and Dietetics
19. Fine Arts
20. Basic Medical Education
21. Graduate Education
  - a. Arts and Sciences
  - b. Business Administration
  - c. Education
  - d. Nursing
  - e. Public Health

PAASCU began accreditation of secondary schools in 1965. The accreditation of elementary schools was started in 1971. The accreditation of integrated High School and Grade School units, or Basic Education, began in 2001.

In 1988, PAASCU began accrediting in the graduate level courses or programs in Liberal Arts/ Arts and Sciences, Education and Business Administration. And in 2003, PAASCU started accrediting Medical schools.

## **WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP IN PAASCU?**

**T**he accreditation process consists of several stages, each one identified with a particular status of the institution applying for membership. Each of these stages has certain requirements and qualifications which are described in detail on pages 11-14 of this primer. The first category is **applicant status**, followed by **candidate status**, and followed finally by **member status**.

## **THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

### **APPLICANT STATUS**

An educational institution committed to institutional self- improvement through the guidance of PAASCU may request to become an Applicant Institution.

#### **Requirements:**

- a. Application letter from the President or Director of the Institution, addressed to the PAASCU Board of Directors.
- b. Department of Education/CHED certificate of recognition
- c. Submission of the documents supporting the institution's case for acceptance should include the institution's objectives, history, organizational structure and by-laws, principal administrators, number of faculty members, number of students, and any other materials/brochures/ manuals/or other publications.
- d. Payment of an application fee.

#### **PAASCU'S Actions and Responsibilities:**

- a. Formal acceptance as an Applicant Institution.
- b. Assistance through School Improvement Program and Consultancy Services.

## **CCANDIDATE STATUS**

Candidate status is granted to institutions which have completed their preliminary surveys and are preparing for initial accreditation. Candidacy is not accreditation and does not assure eventual accreditation. It is an indication that an institution is progressing toward accreditation.

### **Requirements:**

- a. Completion of a Preliminary Survey Visit.
- b. Implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Survey Team.
- c. Completion of an Institutional Self-Survey using the PAASCU Survey Forms.
- d. Submission of the accomplished Self-Survey at least one and a half (1 1/2) months prior to Formal Survey Visit.
- e. An institution is on candidate status until such time that it meets the requirements of a Member Institution.

### **PAASCU'S Actions and Responsibilities:**

- a. Consultancy services, particularly during the Institutional Self- Survey process, are made available.
- b. Scheduling of a Formal Survey Visit upon request of the institution.

## **MEMBER STATUS**

A Candidate Institution which has fulfilled the requirements of accreditation may be granted Member status.

### **1. Requirements:**

- a. The Institution should receive a favorable rating after the Formal Survey Visit.
- b. The Institution should implement the recommendations of the Formal Survey Team.
- c. Payment of the membership fee.
- d. Favorable evaluation by PAASCU Formal Survey Team leads to the granting of initial accreditation for a period of three (3) years. With this, the institution becomes a full member of the Association. At the end, of the initial three-year accreditation period, the school undergoes another self-evaluation.
- e. Applies for re-accreditation if the second Formal Visit it favorable, then accreditation is awarded for a period of five (5) years.

### **PAASCU'S Actions and Responsibilities:**

- a. Consultancy services to strengthen the areas needing improvement.
- b. Assistance through school improvement program and services.

- c. Continued liaison with the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education.

## WHAT ARE THERE OTHER ADVANTAGES?

Membership in PAASCU:

1. gives the institution and its faculty a sense of direction based on a clearer self- image.
2. facilitates transfer of students.
3. provides guidance for parents and students in the choice of worthy schools.
4. lends prestige for member schools, justified by the possession of quality standards and the unremitting effort to maintain them at a high level.

## ARE MEMBER SCHOOLS ENTITLED TO ANY SERVICES?

**Y**es. The following services are available to member schools:

1. **Consultancy services**

PAASCU makes available to institutions its accreditation consultancy services to assist them in their institutional self-survey process and in their preparation for survey visits.

2. **Assistance to institutional programs**

Complementing the institution's own efforts at upgrading academic standards and in-service for administrative personnel, PAASCU organizes various training seminars, workshops and conferences in such areas as Instruction, Library Services, Student Services, Administration and College Community Involvement.

3. **Liaison and cooperation with the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education**

PAASCU seeks to assist members in identifying areas of liaison and cooperation with the Department of Education and CHED regional offices.

## HOW ARE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED BY CHED?

**F**or purposes of progressive deregulation and the grant of other benefits, CHED Order No.1 s. 2005 (Revised Policies on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education) classifies educational programs into:



1. **Candidate Status** - for programs which have undergone a preliminary survey visit and are certified by the federation/network as being capable of acquiring accredited status within two years;
2. **Level I Accredited Status** - for programs which have been granted initial accreditation after a formal survey by the accrediting agency and duly certified by the accreditation federation/network, effective for a period of three years;
3. **Level II Re-Accredited Status** - for programs which have been re-accredited by the accrediting agency and duly certified by the accreditation federation/network, effective for a period of three or five years based on the appraisal of the accrediting agency;
4. **Level III Re-accredited Status** - for programs which have been re-accredited and have met the additional criteria/guidelines set by the federation/network for this level;
5. **Level IV Accredited Status** - accredited programs which are highly respected as very high quality academic programs in the Philippines and with prestige and authority comparable to similar programs in excellent foreign universities.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES FOR THE VARIOUS LEVELS?**

### **A. Level I/ Level II:**

1. Full administrative deregulation, provided that reports of promotion of students and lists of graduates are available for review by CHED at all times.
2. Financial deregulation in terms of setting tuition and other school fees and charges.
3. Authority to revise the curriculum without CHED approval provided that CHED and Professional Regulation Commission minimum requirements and guidelines, where applicable, are complied with and the revised curriculum is submitted to CHED Regional Offices.
4. Authority to graduate students from accredited courses or programs of study in the levels accredited without prior approval of the CHED and without need for Special Orders.
5. Priority in the awards of grants/subsidies or funding assistance from CHED-Higher Education Development (HEDF) for scholarships and faculty development, facilities improvement and other development programs.
6. Right to use on its publications or advertisements the word "ACCREDITED" pursuant to CHED policies and rules.
7. Limited visitation, inspection and/or supervision by CHED supervisory personnel or representatives.

### **B. Level III:**

1. All the benefits for Level I/II.
2. Authority to offer new courses allied to existing Level III courses without need for prior approval, provided that the concerned CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO) is duly informed.

3. Privilege to apply for authority to offer new graduate programs, open learning/ distance education, extension classes and to participate in the transnational education.

### **C. Level IV:**

1. All the benefits for Levels I, II and III.
2. Grant of full autonomy for the program for the duration of its Level IV accredited status.
3. Authority to offer new graduate programs allied to existing Level IV courses, open learning/ distance education and extension classes without need for prior approval by CHED provided that the concerned CHEDRO is duly informed.

## **PAASCU ORGANIZATION**

PAASCU is governed by a 15-person Board of Directors elected at large by members during the Annual General Assembly. It has eight (8) Commission members each to perform its mandate. These are the Commissions on Graduate Education, Medical Education, Tertiary Education, Engineering and Architecture, Information Technology Education, Basic Education, Secondary Education, and Elementary Education. The Commission members are recommended during the General Assembly and appointed by the Board.

The Commissions plan and initiates projects for each level, revise survey instruments, and train accreditors and team chairs. Moreover, they review the reports of the survey teams before these are submitted to the Board.

PAASCU's day-to-day operations are handled by a Secretariat which is headed by an Executive Director. The Secretariat takes care of the logistics of the Survey Visits, invites accreditors, prepares reports and forms, and implements the projects of the Commissions.

Over a thousand volunteer accreditors from all over the country visit the institutions in accreditation team of six (6) to twelve (12) members depending on the number of programs being accredited.