

*How to Prepare for
NCASES Accreditation:
Accreditation Says It All*

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NCASES



The National Commission for the
Accreditation of Special
Education Services

the accreditation arm of NAPSEC

NCASES Was Created by NAPSEC because...

growth in the number of special education agencies has resulted in

- need to maintain quality control within private special education schools
- need to maintain and improve quality in the industry

NCASES Was Created Out of...



increased national concern for accountability and for rights of persons with disabilities.

Accreditation-

- assists students and families in selecting a quality agency.
- identifies agencies worthy of financial support.

Mission Statement



- To insure that a set of standards exists that allows special education agencies to voluntarily validate their purpose by being measured against national standards relative to the best current practices available in special education.

NCASES Leadership



- Commission of nine members
- who are experts in the field of private special education
- with demonstrated leadership and advanced training

NCASES Commission Duties



- **Oversee all processes of NCASES**
- **Review and revise standards**
- **Review survey reports**
- **Make all accreditation decisions**

Features of NCASES Accreditation



- Published objective guidelines & materials
- Self-study
- Review by practicing, experienced, trained educators with oversight by nine-member Commission
- Option of integrated survey with Council on Accreditation (COA)
- Validated relevant & challenging standards

Accreditation Standards



- Standards Manual
 - Consists of nine chapters of standards
 - First eight chapters apply to all agencies
 - Last chapter is applicable when particular services are offered by the agency (Specific Program/Service Standards)

Accreditation Standards



- Specific Program/Service Standards
 - Special Education within Residential Settings
 - Education Support Services
 - Educational Diagnostic/Evaluation Services
 - Transition Services for Postsecondary Programs

Accreditation Standards



- Core (45) versus Non-Core Standards (200)
- Core Standards
 - Deemed as critical for a quality program
 - Compose 45 of those standards applicable to all programs
 - Appear in bold type
 - Program must be in compliance with 80%

Accreditation Standards



- Core (45) versus Non-Core Standards (200)
- Non-Core Standards
 - Deemed as important for a quality program
 - Compose 200 of those standards applicable to all programs
 - Appear in standard type
 - Program must be in compliance with 80%

Why Seek NCASES Accreditation



- Promotion of culture of excellence and validation of desirable practices
- Comparison by experts in the field against best-practice standards
- Opportunity for self-assessment
- Recognition and fundraising enhancement
- Potential savings of time and money in doing integrated COA survey

Accreditation Eligibility



- Have been in operation at least two years
- Provide special education services
- Provide services eligible for accreditation
- Provide services in defined, identifiable programs
- Directly employ staff to provide services
- Have appropriate state licensure/approval

Accreditation Steps

- Letter requesting application packet
- Application completed and submitted
- Self-study submitted four weeks before Site Review Team Visit
- Visit by Site Review Team
- Site Review Team written report received
- Response to written report (if required)
- Accreditation decision by Commission

Accreditation Process

Self-study Phase



- Organization confirms strong leadership commitment
- Accreditation preparation committee formed
- Sub-committees established to focus on specific sections of standards
- Self-study form completed and submitted

Accreditation Process

On-site Review



- Visits last two and one-half days (Mon - Wed) (slightly longer for integrated COA survey)
- Reviewers provide verification of organization's compliance with standards

Preparation



- Time
- Players
- Role of Leadership
- Attitude
- Survey Timing
- Organization
- Creativity

Site Review Team Visit



- Attitude
- Players
- Schedule
- Hospitality
- Process
- Daily Staff Debriefing

Accreditation Process

Follow-up to On-site Review



- Review Site Review Team's written report and submit written response, if needed

Scoring of Standards

- **Full Compliance:** compliance is unequivocal & readily documented “to the letter of the law”
- **Substantial Compliance:** compliance is demonstrated with some deviation from standard or documentation of full compliance is not available or appropriate “to the letter of the law”
- **Non-compliance:** compliance cannot be demonstrated

Accreditation Outcomes



- Accreditation
- Deferral
- Denial
- Probationary Period (for Reaccreditation applicants only)
- Suspension of Accreditation