



Student Forums
February 21 & 22nd, 2018
Your College and Accreditation

Oregon Coast Community College is pursuing independent accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Currently, OCCC's programs and services are accredited through an agreement with Portland Community College. There are three phases on the path to independent accreditation: Applicant, Candidate & Accredited Independently.

- January 8, 2016, Oregon Coast Community College was granted Applicant status as a Candidate for Accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).
- OCCC is now engaged in our next phase towards accreditation, completing our self-evaluation to apply for initial **Candidacy**. NWCCU has scheduled their evaluation visit to occur April 9-11, 2018.
- **Students are encouraged to attend a Student Only Forum with the evaluators on April 9th, 4:00 PM (with food!)**

What is NWCCU Accreditation? What does it mean for students in general?

Regional accreditation is a process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public. For students, attending a college with regional accreditation means

- Access to federal financial aid (Pell Grants and Loans, and Work Study)
- Assurances that credits earned will be accepted for evaluation for transfer to another institution (always up to the receiving institution what will count)
- Currently, OCCC students are considered by NWCCU to be PCC students (so you have these benefits, except for Federal Work Study)
- Once the College earns Candidacy, it will still be 3-5 years before we can be independent.

What does it mean for OCCC students? How will things be different when the college is independently Accredited?

- Academic records, including diplomas, will be from OCCC
- Students will no longer have to navigate both the OCCC and PCC systems for records and financial aid.
- OCCC faculty will have more flexibility in choosing textbooks (like OERs) and designing the courses they teach.
- Access to Federal Work Study
- College can invest locally the \$\$ currently being spent to pay for the contract with PCC.
- College address (and emails) will be oregoncoastcc.edu

TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

Institutional accreditation is granted by a regional accrediting agency within a scope of authority approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Institutional accreditation applies to the institution, not individual programs or units within the institution.

Specialized accreditation of certain professional schools and individual educational programs is granted by a number of national organizations, each representing a professional area such as business, law, engineering, or nursing. Though each of these organizations has its distinctive definitions of eligibility, criteria for accreditation, and operating procedures, accreditation by a specialized accrediting agency is one means of assuring quality of the accredited programs.

What will the evaluators ask students about?

That is totally up to the evaluators, but might include some of the following:

- What has been good about your experience at OCCC? Not so good?
- When you need help at the College, do you know where to go?
- What kind of resources are available at the college to help you reach your goals?
- What has been your experience with your classes? Do you believe you are receiving an excellent education?
- What has the advising experience been for you?
- Are there opportunities to do things with or through the college beyond going to class?

We know that most of you will not still be at OCCC when we do reach independent accreditation. These changes will not occur in time to benefit you. Back in the early 2000's, students like you supported the efforts to secure the facilities which we all enjoy today, your participation will be another act of "paying it forward" to benefit the students who will come after you. Thank you for taking the time to participate today. I hope you can be there on April 9th at 4:00 PM.