

Welcome to Institutional Authorization



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Today's Topics

- **What is Institutional Authorization?**
- **Institutional Authorization Roles & Responsibilities**
- **Types of Authorization and Exemptions from Authorization**
- **Institutional Authorization Timeline & Process**
- **Institutional and Consumer Complaints**
- **Institutional Authorization Regulation Change Projects**



What is Institutional Authorization (IA)?

- An educational credential is valid if it is awarded by an entity with legal credential-granting authority.
 - In Alaska, the Commission administers the statutes and regulations concerning postsecondary education.
- States use various terms such as licensure, authorization, approval, etc. The term “Authorization” is commonly used to encompass the formal state conferral of credential-granting authority.



IA Staffing Levels



IA Roles & Responsibilities

- **Compliance with Statutes & Regulations- Standards**
- **Consumer Protections**
- **Student Records**



IA Standards

Academic and Resources

- Instructor qualifications
- Facility/equipment descriptions
- Mission & vision
- Curricula
- Credit or clock hour requirements
- Student support services
- Course catalog
- Student handbook
- Tuition and fee schedule
- Admission requirements
- Graduation requirements

Licensure & Governance

- Governing board or organizational structure
- Articles of incorporation
- Accreditation information
- Licenses from other boards, agencies, or commissions
- Business licenses

Consumer Protection

- Student grievance policies
- School closure/teach-out plan
- Surety bond
- Audited financial statements
- Tuition refund policy
- Student record procedures
- Annual Reporting
- Advertising, marketing, and recruiting practices



Types of Authorization

■ Authorization

- Degree Granting Institutions (non-UA)
- Career & Technical Institutions

■ Exemption

- Statute (K-12, Recreational)
- Regulatory (Short Course, Flight, Online)
- Special Action via Commission Action (UA, AVTEC)



State Authorization Reciprocity⁸ Agreement (SARA)

- An agreement between member states to provide a voluntary, regional approach to state authorization of postsecondary distance education.

- **Participating Alaska Institutions:**
 - APU
 - Charter College
 - UAA
 - UAS
 - UAF



IA Application Timelines

■ Authorization

- Required 90 days prior to next regularly scheduled Commission Meeting

■ Exemption

- New applications have no application deadline unless assigned by Commission staff. Institutions are required to submit a new application prior to expiration of most recently issued Exemption.



Commission Staff Review Process – Authorization Applications

- **Initial Review-** Ensures the completeness of the Authorization application. If the application is incomplete or additional information is requested, staff contact the Institution.
- **Compliance Review-** Ensures compliance with applicable Statutes and Regulations.
- **Site Visit-** On-site evaluation to ensure alignment between submitted materials and the real world implementation to meet applicable standards.

When all reviews are complete, Staff submits a recommendation to the Commission for consideration at the next scheduled Commission meeting.



Administrative Approvals

- Commission staff have authority to approve non-significant changes, such as change in curriculum, instructional delivery method, senior management, and program modifications (program/course titles, hours, costs).
 - For accredited institutions, accrediting bodies may require state approval prior to reviewing changes. Accrediting bodies have both substantive and non-substantive policies regarding changes.
 - Commission staff may approve an Administrative Approval request, or condition the request with other considerations or approvals from accrediting and/or regulatory bodies.



Commission Staff Recommendations

- The historical metrics used by Commission staff to make recommendations for **up to three years**:
 - Timely and complete application submittal
 - Evidence of ongoing financial and administrative health
 - Instances of violation of Authorization requirements during the most recent Authorization period
 - Good standing with other governing agencies



Commission Staff Recommendations

- The historical metrics used by Commission staff to make recommendations for **up to five years**, in addition to metrics listed on previous slide:
 - Accreditation in good standing with an Institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education;
 - Institutional Title IV participation in good standing, including absence of a high-risk default rate (if the institution participates in Title IV);
 - Institutional Alaska Student Loan participation in good standing, including absence of a high-risk default rate (if the Institution participates in the ASL Programs);
 - No findings of institutional violation of Authorization requirements during the most recent authorization period; and
 - Annual evidence of ongoing financial and administrative health, as documented in annual reports to the accrediting agency or other Commission-approved reports.



Potential Commission Actions

- Authorization
 - Up to 18 months for Initial Authorization.
 - Up to five years for Renewal of Authorization.
 - Conditional Authorization at Initial Authorization, Renewal of Authorization, or when the changes occur from the most recent Authorization action.
 - Deferring Action
 - Denial of Authorization*
 - Suspension of Authorization*
 - Revocation of Authorization*
- * Due to violation of Alaska Statutes



Ongoing Requirements & Reporting

- **Annual Reporting- Due December 1 annually.**
- **Amendments**
 - New Program
 - New Location
 - New Mission
 - Alteration to current location
- **Renewal of Authorization**



Institutional and Consumer Complaints

- An individual who has exhausted the institution's grievance process may make a formal written complaint to the Commission.
- Verbal complaints and complaints which have not previously been through an institutional review are generally treated as informal complaints.
- Based on the nature and severity of the complaint, staff may advise the complainant to follow the grievance policy and monitor that process, or initiate an investigation.
- A complaint may also be initiated by the Commission or by the attorney general. The commission has broad investigative powers regarding complaints.



Student Records

- **Preservation of Closed School Student Records**
- **Access to Records**
- **Validating Records**



Validating Records

Sheldon Jackson College

Registration No. [REDACTED]
The Board of Regents of The Sheldon Jackson College,
on the nomination of the faculty, has conferred upon

[REDACTED]
The Degree of
Bachelor of Business Administration

Major in Business Administration

Together with all honors, rights and privileges belonging to that degree.
In witness whereof, this diploma is granted, Given at Sitka in The state
of Alaska, this Tenth day of July in 2018.

Paul S. Quinn
President of the College

Shawny
Chairman, Board of Governors



Joann Culbertson
Chancellor

Samuel L. McBride
Vice President Secretary



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How we reported our story on the fabricated resume of now former Anchorage health director Joe Gerace

By Casey Grove, Alaska Public Media - Anchorage and Curtis Gilbert & Lex Treinen, American Public Media and Alaska Public Media -
August 10, 2022

Gerace did tell me where he claims to have gotten his master's in business administration: a place called Henry Cogswell College in Everett, Washington. But that's impossible. The school didn't give out MBAs when Gerace said he went there. It was a tiny school, just 200 students or so. Henry Cogswell College went out of business in 2006. And the college sent all its student records to an office in Washington State government, so that alumni could still get their transcripts. We asked that office to look through all of their files for us, and they have no record of Gerace ever going there. So that totally didn't check out.



IA Regulation Change Project (Completed)

- Research began in 2016, new regulations became effective September 2022.
- Streamline Authorization process:
 - Aligned fees with services*
 - Oversight of institutional financial health, consumer protection, and
 - Increased consistent monitoring of institutional changes
- *Institutions have reported high levels of satisfaction with new Renewal of Authorization application, which was previously duplicative of the Initial Authorization application.*



IA Regulation Change Project (Future)

- **Evaluating appropriate surety bonding levels and financial soundness benchmarks**
 - Exploring Student Tuition Recovery Funds
- **Updating student complaint process**
- **Defining authority for Exemption action for suspensions and revocation.**
- **Clarity updates to sections from last regulation change project**



Other Future IA Projects

- **Credit Card Payment Option**
- **Alumni Survey**
- **Continued improvements and streamlining of application materials and website**



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ACAC

Training & resources for FAFSA and college & career planning

Success Center

1:1 and group guidance for FAFSA, scholarships, & college/career

Scholarships & Grants

Alaska Performance Scholarship
Alaska Education Grant

PK-12 Resources

Early Career Explorers
Kids2Careers

Institutional Authorization

Consumer Protection

Financial Literacy & Loans

Student
Family
Refinance

AKCIS 360

Create Personal Learning & Career Plans, interest inventories, resume building, & more

Promotes access to and success in education & career training beyond high school

Questions?



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