

*Accreditation Commission for Programs  
In Hospitality Administration (ACPHA)*

## **Commission**

ACPHA™ consists of 12 Commissioners, including hospitality educators, executives from the lodging, restaurant and hospitality industry and members of the public at large. The Commission members meet twice a year to review, assess and evaluate two-year and four-year hospitality programs at colleges and universities across the United States.

## **Accreditation**

### **Definition**

Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or program that meets or exceeds established standards of educational quality. Accreditation is awarded based on a multi-year process of both an intensive self-study by faculty, students, alumni, and administrators, and a rigorous, extensive external audit by reputable hospitality executives and experts from higher education. This process validates the quality of the educational programs offered by a school.

The accreditation process ensures the quality of a school's curriculum and its relevance for today's business world. It also ensures that the school's faculty is qualified, and that the facilities and learning resources are appropriate for student learning and success in their future profession. Through this, the institution meets all the challenges of educating the industry's future leaders.

### **What does this mean to a student and graduate?**

By enrolling in an externally accredited institution, as opposed to others have not been equally validated or that are only self-certified, you can feel confident that you are being properly prepared for the business and hospitality world of the twenty-first century.

### **Purpose**

Accreditation serves as a vehicle that allows the program to examine itself in relation to a specific set of standards. The program is analyzed by objective outsiders, using the same set of standards and the stated program mission as a frame of reference. The analysis is designed to recognize and commend program strengths and to be open about the program concerns.

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to validate the quality of the institution or program and to assist in the improvement of the institution or program.

As a result, the accreditation process does not prescribe specific practices, but is concerned, from a qualitative standpoint, that:

- a. The program has clearly defined, appropriate objectives
- b. The program has established the conditions under which those objective can be achieved.
- c. The program is in essence achieving their objectives presently, and
- d. The program is able to continue to achieve its objectives in the foreseeable future.

Accreditation, which applies to institutions or programs, is to be distinguished from certification and licensure, which apply to individuals.

## **Objectives of Accreditation Process**

The material that follows represents the overall and specific objectives developed by the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA).

### **A. Definitions**

#### *Accreditation*

Accreditation is a communal self-regulatory process by which voluntary associations (1) recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed stated standards of educational quality; and (2) assist in further improvement of the institutions or programs. The first of these purposes is called quality-assessment; the second, quality-enhancement.

#### *Quality*

The quality of an entity or process cannot be determined by the possession of a fixed series of characteristics, but only in terms of the objectives or purposes it seeks to achieve. Quality, therefore, must be defined contextually. Educational quality thus requires determining (1) the appropriateness of institutional/program objectives, and (2) the effectiveness with which the institution/program is utilizing its resources to achieve these objectives.

#### *Standards*

Accrediting standards represent those generalized conditions or characteristics determined to be essential in order for objectives to be achieved. Standards are to be expressed qualitatively, be applicable to a diversity of institutions or programs, and must consider educational outcomes (outputs) as well as resources and processes (inputs). For standards to be valid, they must be capable of being derived from the educational objectives stated, and must be appropriate, clear, and explicit.

#### *Hospitality Administration*

Hospitality administration is defined as the decision-making process with respect to the proper allocation of resources to achieve the objectives of hospitality, i.e., the providing of food, lodging, and related services.

## **B. Overall Objectives of the Accreditation of Programs in Hospitality Administration**

1. To provide public assurance that programs in hospitality administration are of acceptable quality.
2. To provide guidance to programs in the continued improvement of their educational offerings and related activities.
3. To promote higher educational and ethical standards of professional education and enhance the public understanding of the hospitality field.

## **C. Specific Objectives of Hospitality Administration Accreditation**

To foster excellence in the field of hospitality administration by developing standards and guidelines for evaluating program effectiveness.

To ensure that the accrediting process recognizes and respects the diversity of programs in hospitality administration.

To ensure that the accrediting process evaluates not only the presence of essential resources and processes, but also the achievement of programmatic outcomes.

To require, as an integral part of the accrediting process, a programmatic self-study that is analytical, interpretive, and evaluative, and an on-site review by a visiting team of peers.

To encourage programs to view self-study and evaluation as a continuous internal obligation.

To provide counsel and assistance to both developing and established programs, including disseminating information between and among programs that will stimulate improvement of educational programs and related activities.

To ensure that the evaluation, policy, and decision-making processes reflect the community of interests directly affected by the accrediting body, including effective public representation.