



**Request For Information:**

**Accrediting North Carolina's Institutions of Higher Education**

December 20, 2023

## **Overview**

The University of North Carolina System (UNC), in conjunction with the North Carolina Community Colleges System, issues this Request for Information (RFI) seeking accrediting agencies interested in accrediting UNC constituent institutions and North Carolina community colleges.

In 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation prohibiting UNC constituent institutions and North Carolina community colleges from receiving accreditation by an accrediting agency for consecutive accreditation cycles unless the institution does not receive candidacy status at least three years prior to the expiration of its current accreditation. Under this new law, our colleges and universities must pursue a change in accreditors as their current accreditation cycles come to an end in the coming years.

We are therefore seeking information from the accreditation agencies listed below regarding:

1. Interest in adding our constituent institutions to their portfolio;
2. If so, the terms under and process by which our constituent institutions could pursue that accreditation.

We are seeking information from the following regional accreditors:

- Higher Learning Commission
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Commission on Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

## **Contact Information and Submission Details**

We have designated the following individuals as the point of contact for this RFI. Please include both of these individuals on your response<sup>1</sup>:

*UNC System Office*

Dr. David English, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer

[djenglish@northcarolina.edu](mailto:djenglish@northcarolina.edu)

919-962-2620

*North Carolina Community Colleges System Office:*

Dr. Brian Merritt, Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

[merrittb@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:merrittb@nccommunitycolleges.edu)

919-807-6982

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that responses to this RFI are considered public records under North Carolina law.

## **Response Deadline**

Please submit your responses via email to the points of contact via email above no later than February 29, 2024. If you have any questions about this RFI, please contact the points of contact directly.

## **Background Information**

The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. It encompasses 16 diverse four-year institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations. Each shares in the overall mission of the University. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society.

The mission of the North Carolina Community College System is to open the door to high quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to postsecondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing:

- a. education, training, and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and prebaccalaureate programs;
- b. support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry; and
- c. services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life.

North Carolina Session Law 2023-132 prohibits UNC constituent institutions and community colleges from receiving accreditation by an accrediting agency for consecutive accreditation cycles. This requirement applies to the institutional accreditor and does not apply to professional, graduate, departmental, or certificate programs that have programmatic accreditation. A link to the legislation is included in Appendix A.

Additionally, the law states that constituent institutions that are not granted candidacy status by any new regional accreditation agency at least three years prior to the expiration of its current accreditation may remain with its current accrediting agency. An overview of accreditation timelines for specific UNC constituent institutions and Community Colleges is included in Appendix B. UNC constituent institutions' accreditation expires in December and Community Colleges' accreditation expire in June under their current accreditor.

We are specifically looking for the following information:

- (a) Whether your agency is accepting new candidates for accreditation and whether your agency is interested in accepting applications for accreditation from UNC constituent institutions and North Carolina Community Colleges.
- (b) Whether your agency is interested in accrediting all UNC constituent institutions and North Carolina Community Colleges eligible for accreditation or only specific institutions.
- (c) What would be required of constituent institutions to apply for accreditation through your agency.

- (d) Timeline for applying for accreditation and maintaining accreditation (e.g., mid-cycle reviews) through your agency. In particular, please state the steps required to achieve candidacy status and the timeline for which those steps can be accomplished.
- i. Place special emphasis in your response on the timelines for the Classes of 2025, 2026, and 2027.
- (e) Costs to higher education institutions to receive and maintain accreditation through your agency.
- (f) Whether your agency has a process by which college or university systems may be accredited rather than institutions gaining and maintaining accreditation individually.

## **Appendix A**

### [Session Law 2023-132](#)

## **Appendix B**

### Accreditation Expiring in 2025

- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Catawba Valley Community College
- Guilford Technical Community College
- Mayland Community College
- Stanly Community College
- Surry Community College
- Wake Technical Community College
- Wilson Community College

### Accreditation Expiring in 2026:

- Isothermal Community College
- Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
- Wayne Community College
- Wilkes Community College
  
- UNC School of the Arts

### Accreditation Expiring in 2027:

- Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute
- Cape Fear Community College
- Craven Community College
- Durham Technical Community College
- Southwestern Community College
  
- UNC Chapel Hill
- Western Carolina University

Accreditation Expiring in 2028:

- Central Carolina Community College
- Coastal Carolina Community College
- McDowell Technical Community College

Accreditation Expiring in 2029:

- Beaufort County Community College
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Brunswick Community College
- Edgecombe Community College
- Haywood Community College
- James Sprunt Community College
- Martin Community College
  
- North Carolina Central University

Accreditation Expiring in 2030

- Carteret Community College
- Randolph Community College
- Robeson Community College
- Tri-County Community College

Accreditation Expiring in 2031

- Fayetteville Technical Community College
- Halifax Community College
- McDowell Technical Community College
- Nash Community College
  
- Elizabeth City State University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- UNC Pembroke
- Winston-Salem State University

Accreditation Expiring in 2032

- Cleveland Community College
- Gaston College
- Southeastern Community College

- Fayetteville State University

#### Accreditation Expiring in 2033

- Bladen Community College
- Davidson-Davie Community College
- Forsyth Technical Community College
- Johnston Community College
- Pamlico Community College
- Piedmont Community College
- Pitt Community College
- Roanoke-Chowan Community College
- Vance-Granville Community College
  
- East Carolina University
- UNC Asheville
- UNC Charlotte
- UNC Wilmington

#### Accreditation Expiring in 2034

- Alamance Community College
- Central Piedmont Community College
- College of the Albemarle
- Lenoir Community College
- Montgomery Community College
- Richmond Community College
- Rockingham Community College
- Sampson Community College
- Sandhills Community College
- South Piedmont Community College
- Western Piedmont Community College
  
- Appalachian State University
- North Carolina State University
- UNC Greensboro