

(UNCLASSIFIED)

INFORMATION PAPER

AHRC-PDE  
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SUBJECT: Counseling on Academic Institutions Accreditation Status

1. Purpose: To provide additional guidance on accreditation counseling provided to Soldiers by Army education personnel world-wide.

2. Facts:

a. Army education counselors have a vital role in properly advising Soldiers about available schools and degree programs that meet their educational and career needs. This counseling must be objective and informative, accurately describing the facts and other essential information designed to help Soldiers make independent and wise decisions about the direction of their educational pursuits.

b. Accreditation is awarded to ensure that educational programs provided by institutions of higher education meet acceptable levels of quality. Army education personnel must have an accurate understanding of 1) accreditation, 2) Department of Education procedures and criteria for the recognition of accrediting agencies, and 3) the differences between regional (agency covers a different section of the country), national (specific types of schools and colleges/career and technical schools) and specialized accreditation (program-based accreditation). Neither the Department of Education nor any other entity has a "gold standard" classification for accreditation.

c. The Department of Defense has advised Army leadership that some Army education counselors are making statements about accreditation, specifically national accreditation, that are inaccurate and ill-informed. These statements do not serve Soldiers' best interests.

d. Dismissing a nationally accredited school outright when advising a Soldier is not appropriate and it may not be in the best interest of the Soldier. Advice on choice between national and regional accreditation should be provided after discussion of 1) the Soldier's future goals, 2) completion of education at the same school or potential consequences of transferring credits to another institution, 3) desire to pursue further education after graduation, and 4) types of future employment. All schools reserve the right to accept or reject transfer credit regardless of the other institution's accreditation status.

e. Providing accurate and unbiased information about accreditation should be the primary objective of counseling sessions for Soldiers seeking guidance. Soldiers are best served when all personnel in the Voluntary Education community understand and convey what is meant by accreditation.

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