



## Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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### *Administrative Procedures*

## **World Wide Web Policy**

[Effective January 22, 2010]

The World Wide Web provides the Middle States Commission on Higher Education with many opportunities to offer an array of information to member institutions, elected officials, the news media, and other interested citizens. Among the many items appearing on the official MSCHE website are institutional Statements of Accreditation Status; Public Disclosure Statements; online versions of Commission publications, forms, and policies; announcements of upcoming training opportunities for representatives of member institutions; copies of presentation materials from MSCHE annual conferences and other professional development sessions; resources to assist member institutions in such areas as student learning assessment and measurement of institutional effectiveness; answers to frequently asked questions about the accreditation process; staff listings and contact information; and other materials. Additional information may be posted on the official Commission website provided the information is directly related to the Commission's published Mission and/or can benefit member institutions.

### **Materials from External Sources**

When materials are posted on the website from persons who are not employed by the Commission, the MSCHE staff shall obtain written permission from the originator to post the materials. Items to be posted from outside sources typically will be from presenters at MSCHE-sponsored conferences, workshops, and meetings. Such materials must not have offensive content of any type. Further, while MSCHE carefully screens all information from external sources before it is posted on the website, the Commission assumes no liability or responsibility for errors of content or omission. The MSCHE Director for Communications and Public Relations shall maintain a file of the written permission received for materials that are posted on the Commission website.

### **Links to Other Websites**

On occasion the Commission may include on its website links to other websites. The following criteria shall apply to the non-MSCHE websites. They:

- Must be compatible with the MSCHE Mission Statement and Core Values
- Must not contain offensive material
- May be commercial or non-commercial in nature, though if commercial, the website must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:
  - It is the website of a current MSCHE sponsor or exhibitor
  - It is the website of a hotel or conference facility that will be the site of a MSCHE conference, workshop, or meeting
  - It is a website that provides appropriate information for participants in a Commission conference, workshop, or meeting (Examples: websites of convention and visitors bureaus, airport shuttle services, or museums in a city where a Commission activity will take place).

To protect the Commission, a disclaimer shall appear on the MSCHE website. This disclaimer shall read as follows: *Throughout this website MSCHE provides a variety of web links as a courtesy to our members. The Commission is not responsible for the content of these non-MSCHE websites nor does the Commission endorse in whole or in part the programs, products, or services described on such sites.*

### **Blogs and List servs**

There may be circumstances in which blogs or list servs are linked to the MSCHE website. Whether blog or list serv comments/announcements are posted by MSCHE employees, Commissioners, or on behalf of presenters from MSCHE-sponsored activities, the following rules shall apply. The blog or list serv must:

- Clearly indicate that the views presented are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect official views or policy of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- Respect MSCHE guidelines on confidentiality of information as well as federal privacy laws.
- Be respectful to the Commission, members of the MSCHE staff, and member institutions. Such blog or list serve writings must not contain derogatory or defamatory comments regarding anyone or any institution, organization, company, agency, or branch of government.
- Link to online references and cite original source materials, whenever possible.
- Be carefully checked for spelling.
- Preserve all posts for future reference.
- Respect copyright and fair use laws.
- Be relevant. The blogger (writer) or list serve author should write about what he/she knows.

It will be the responsibility of the person who has requested a blog to monitor the blog site on a regular basis and to immediately delete offensive or libelous material. The MSCHE Director for Communications and Public Relations shall also have the right to delete from the official MSCHE website any blog deemed to be offensive in nature, not consistent with the Mission and Core Values of the Commission, or not in compliance with this policy. The Director shall also monitor on a regular basis all posts on any MSCHE-sponsored list serv(s).

To obtain permission to post a blog on the MSCHE website, a member of the staff should obtain the approval of the MSCHE Director for Communications and Public Relations. Blog requests from Middle States Commissioners shall be presented to the MSCHE President. Blog requests from presenters at MSCHE conferences, workshops, and meetings shall be directed to the Director for Events and Training, who will consult with the Director for Communications and Public Relations. Once approved, all blogs will be established through the Director for Communications and Public Relations. Copies of all communications regarding blog requests and approval/denial of such requests shall be maintained by the Director for Communications and Public Relations.

### **Social Media**

There may be times when MSCHE finds it appropriate to have a presence on “social media” sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, or other such sites. Use of such sites will be for official MSCHE business only.

## **Procedures for Posting Materials to www.msche.org**

Posting materials to the official Commission website shall be done in the following ways:

***Statements of Accreditation Status and Public Disclosure Statements-*** Public Disclosure Statements are posted by the Accreditation and Volunteer Services unit of MSCHE via the Release One tool. Statements of Accreditation Status and directory data are automatically posted to the website via Release One following updating of the information by the MSCHE staff. However, Statements of Accreditation Status can be suppressed by members of the staff, particularly during periods immediately prior to and immediately following meetings of the Commission at which action may be taken on an institution's accreditation status.

***Staff Directory-*** This is updated via Release One. Changes to content in the Staff Directory are subject to approval by the Senior Director for Finance and Administration.

***Events-*** Event information is posted to the web by the staff of the Events and Training unit.

***Publications, Policies, News/Other News, Frequently Asked Questions, and About Us-*** Postings are done through the Communications and Public Relations unit.

***Evaluators-*** Information in this section of the web site is managed by the Accreditation and Volunteer Services unit.