

WHY ACCREDITATION MATTERS

Don't waste your time and money. If that degree isn't from an accredited school, potential employers won't care that you have it.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- 1  Some accrediting organizations review colleges and universities; others examine specific academic programs such as law, medicine and engineering.

- 2  An accreditation evaluation includes an in-depth self-review by the school or program against a set of standards in areas such as faculty, student support services, finances, facilities, curricula and student learning outcomes.

- 3  In addition, an evaluation team of peer experts does an on-site evaluation of the institution.

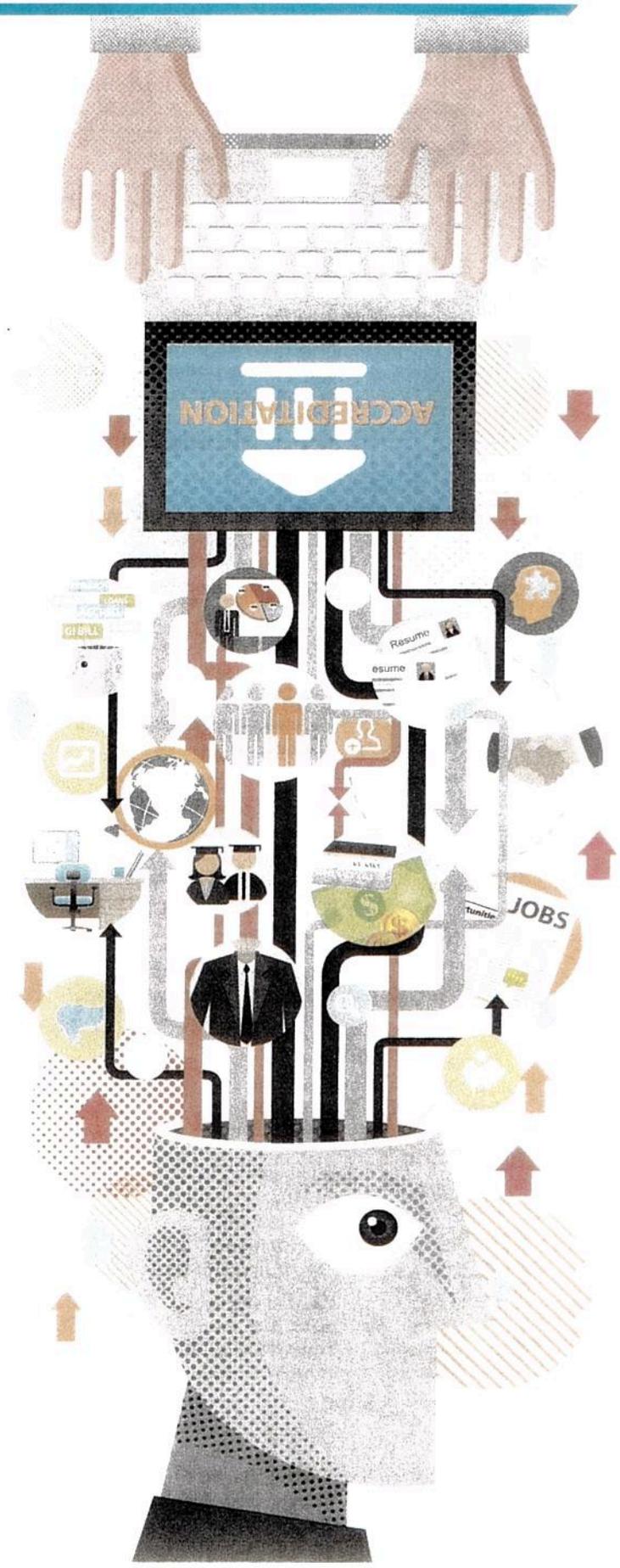
- 4  To retain accredited status, this review is repeated every three to 10 years.

REGIONAL AGENCIES

In the United States, there are six regional accrediting agencies, each covering a different section of the country:

- ▶ Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- ▶ New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- ▶ North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- ▶ Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- ▶ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- ▶ Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Individual programs or departments may be accredited by specialized – or program-based – accrediting organizations. ▶



WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1



You can't get federal grants, loans or other federal funds unless your college, university or program is accredited.

2



Many employers simply won't hire workers from non-accredited schools.

3



Also, many employers will only provide tuition assistance to employees for continuing education if the school or program is accredited.

4



Credits or degrees from non-accredited programs often are not transferable to an accredited institution.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

1



National accreditation is done by career-related organizations and credit transferability is not guaranteed.

2



Regional accrediting agencies are generally thought to be the most reliable and accredit schools that offer a broad range of programs.

3



Degrees from regionally accredited schools will always be accepted everywhere.

UNDERSTAND YOUR GI BILL BENEFITS

1



The Post-9/11 GI Bill factors in accreditation.

2



You can use your benefits at any "approved" institute of higher learning.

3



Typically, accreditation is a major factor that determines whether a school or program receives VA approval. ☺

"A SCHOOL'S ACCREDITED STATUS SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MAKING A DECISION TO ATTEND A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY. A DEGREE FROM A NON-ACCREDITED INSTITUTION MAY BE CONSIDERED WORTHLESS BY PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS AND WORK DONE AT THE NON-ACCREDITED INSTITUTION MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED IF THE STUDENT WISHES TO TRANSFER TO AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY."

- TIM WILLARD
 Director of communications for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

