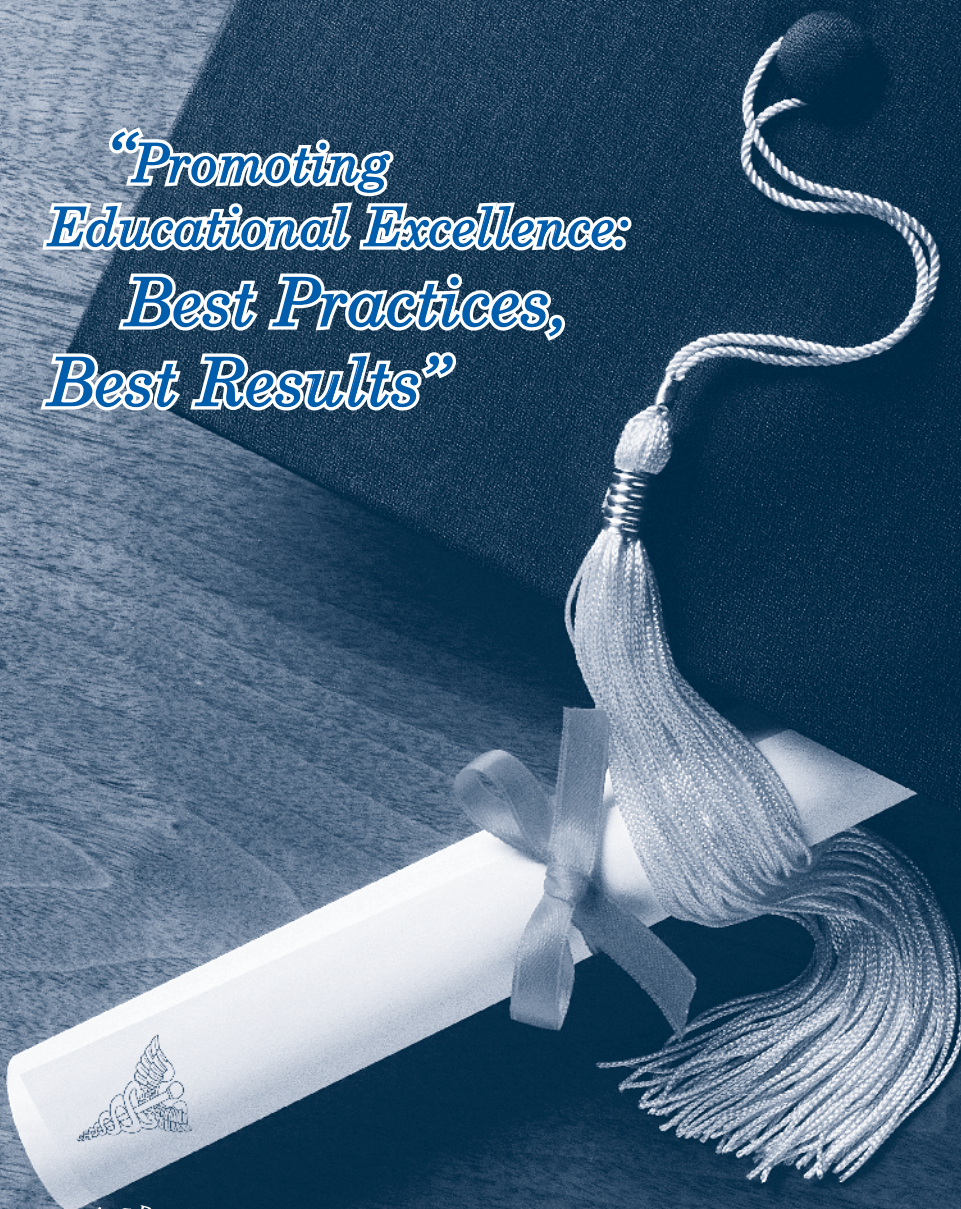


*“Promoting
Educational Excellence:
Best Practices,
Best Results”*



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OVERVIEW OF THE ACCREDITING BUREAU OF HEALTH EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Formed in 1964 as the Accrediting Bureau of Medical Laboratory Schools, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) has undergone tremendous growth and major enhancements to its operations and scope of accreditation activity since its inception. It has been recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education since 1968 and has successfully achieved both continued recognition and expansions of scope over the years. The requirements for attainment of recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education are identical to those required of all accrediting agencies; whether regional, national, or specialized.



Mission, Goals and Objectives

ABHES' stated mission is to enhance the quality of education and training and promote institutional and programmatic accountability through systematic and consistent program evaluation. The key to ABHES' mission is to assure the quality of the programs it accredits, and assist in the improvement of the programs. This quality-determination is accomplished by rigorous and systematic evaluation based on valid standards.

ABHES' goals and objectives focus on three key areas: recognition, resources, and service; all of which ABHES believes are essential and paramount to the achievement of its mission.

Scope of Recognition

ABHES is unlike most accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education in that it specializes in health education and accredits both on the institutional and programmatic level. Specifically, ABHES is recognized to accredit private, postsecondary institutions in the United States offering predominantly allied health education programs and to programmatically accredit Medical Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technician, and Surgical Technology programs, which may be offered within its accredited institutions or by institutions otherwise accredited by other recognized accrediting agencies. The programs accredited by

ABHES lead to a certificate, diploma, an Associate of Applied Science degree, an Associate of Occupational Science degree or an Academic Associate degree. ABHES' recognition also includes the accreditation of programs offered by distance education.

Other Recognition

ABHES holds a number of significant recognitions, including the following:

- **American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA)** graduates of ABHES-accredited medical assistant programs are eligible to sit for the Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) examination.
- **American Medical Technologists (AMT)** graduates of ABHES-accredited institutions and programs are eligible to sit for a variety of credentialing examinations provided by the AMT, including the Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) examination, the Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) examination, and the Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT) examination.
- **National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)** graduates of ABHES-accredited surgical technology programs are eligible to sit for the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) examination.
- **National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLN-AC)**
The National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLN-AC) recognizes ABHES as an accrediting agency for the accreditation of nursing programs. This recognition allows ABHES-accredited institutions to apply for programmatic accreditation by the NLN-AC for their nursing programs.

Membership

ABHES also holds a number of memberships in organizations focused on accreditation, credentialing, and health care education, including the following:

- **The Association of Specialized & Professional Accreditors (ASPA)**
ABHES is a long-time member of ASPA, an organization that supports the importance of specialized and professional accreditation. A primary mission of ASPA is the advancement of the knowledge, skills, good practices, and ethical commitments of its recognized accreditors.

- **The Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP)**
ABHES is proud to be a member of this long-standing, non-profit professional association that strives to be recognized as the unifying voice and learning advocate for allied health education.
- **The Council of Recognized National Accrediting Agencies (CRNAA)**
CRNAA is an alliance of six (6) accrediting agencies, including ABHES, with a national scope whose objectives are to promote and inspire the continuous peer review and assessment of accreditation practices predicated upon ensuring the quality and integrity of postsecondary education and training.
- **The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)**
ABHES is a long-time member of NOCA, the leader in setting quality standards for credentialing organizations. Through its annual conference, regional seminars, and publications, NOCA serves its membership as a clearinghouse for information on the latest trends and issues of concern to practitioners and organizations focused on certification, licensure, and human resource development.

In addition to the memberships noted above, ABHES staff holds individual membership in a variety of organizations focused on both accreditation and health.



THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF ACCREDITATION

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a non-governmental, professional peer review process by which educational institutions and programs are provided technical assistance and are evaluated for quality based pre-established academic and administrative standards. Accreditation

is used by the public as the most reliable indicator of educational quality.

Why ABHES?

One of the primary goals of ABHES accreditation is to assist institutions and programs in identifying and achieving goals in order to enhance the profession served. Accreditation by ABHES means that each individual program has received a complete review by an experienced and appropriately credentialed program specialist and that the outcome of this review has been considered by peers and the ABHES Board of Commissioners for accreditation.

The U.S. Department of Labor projects the health care industry to generate 3 million new employment opportunities through 2016, the largest growth of any industry. Increasing demand for healthcare because of an aging population and longer life expectancies will drive the employment growth. As the only nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency specializing in a variety of health care education programs, coupled with its numerous national recognitions including that of credentialing agencies, the importance of ABHES accreditation cannot be understated.

What else does ABHES offer?

- A dedicated group of commissioners possessing diverse educational and experiential backgrounds in health care, accreditation and/or institutional administration.
- A user-friendly and experienced staff, with a combined 50+ years with ABHES and additional years of accreditation and/or education experience.
- A pool of well-trained, experienced, and necessarily credentialed program specialists to evaluate and assist programs.
- An assortment of committee members and advisors focused on what is best for the institutions and programs served.
- An understanding of commonly-accepted requirements and trends in various health care fields.
- Regular monitoring of legal and regulatory health care-related federal and state matters, affecting such things as transferability of credit, credentialing, and employment.
- Electronic alerts pertaining to important matters affecting ABHES-accredited institutions and programs.
- Dedicated volunteers from higher education, accreditation, and health care communities.
- The annual National Conference on Allied Health Education, sponsored by ABHES, bringing together its accredited members, commissioners and staff, volunteers, credentialing agencies, publishers, and other key constituents focused on quality health care education.



OVERVIEW OF ABHES' ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES



ABHES accreditation standards and procedures are outlined in its Accreditation Manual and are a guide for the ABHES visitation team that evaluates the institution or program, for the peer reviewers who review all components of the application, and for the commissioners who act on the application for accreditation. Institutions and programs seeking accreditation or those accredited by ABHES must comply with

policies, procedures, and standards for accreditation set forth by ABHES in its Accreditation Manual.

The following steps are to be followed for application to ABHES:

1. Retrieve Application Packet

Visit the ABHES Website at www.abhes.org to download the instructional letter that will outline how to apply for either institutional or programmatic accreditation with guidance for downloading necessary applications and forms.

2. Application Submission

Once you are able to evidence that your institution or program meets the Basic Eligibility criteria (Chapter II of the *Accreditation Manual*) and your institution or program is ready to apply for accreditation, complete the Application for Accreditation and submit it along with the other required documents outlined in the instructional letter referenced in Step 1.

3. Self-Evaluation Report Completion

Upon receipt of the completed application packet and confirmation that the institution or program meets the eligibility criteria, the institution will be provided the Self Evaluation Report (SER) for completion. There are two SER deadlines each year for initial and recycle applicants in preparation for the two commission meetings held each year.

4. Accreditation Workshop Attendance

Applicants are required to attend an ABHES Accreditation Workshop prior to submission of the SER.

5. Preliminary Visit (new institutional applicants only)

Initial institutional applicants are required to undergo a preliminary visit, which is conducted to confirm eligibility and determine whether the institution is in substantial compliance with the accreditation standards in preparation to undergo an on-site team visit. A draft copy of the narrative portion of the SER is required for staff review in preparation for the preliminary visit.

6. SER Submission

The visiting evaluation team and ABHES commissioners will base their judgments, in part, on this document. The self-evaluation questions and evaluation standards are arranged consistently so that the answers can easily be paired with the questions. The institution's SER, including the narrative and exhibits, is submitted electronically to ABHES with specific direction provided.

7. On-Site Team Visit

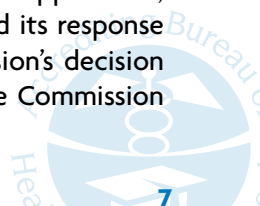
Upon receipt of the SER, a staff member will contact the institution to schedule the on-site evaluation visit. Visits are scheduled for two days and the number of evaluators is determined by the number of like programs offered by the institution. Each team consists of a team leader, program specialist(s), and an ABHES staff member. The institution is required to send copies of the SER to the visitation team, including the ABHES staff member, approximately one month prior to the site visit.

8. Institutional Response

Accrediting procedures provide an institution and program the opportunity to respond to the on-site visitation reports, concentrating specifically on areas of concern and violations, if any. The primary purpose of this step is to provide the institution or program an opportunity to document changes made by the institution or program to evidence compliance with a standard that was cited as a violation in the visitation report(s).

9. Commission Review

The Commission meets at least twice per year and the commissioners are provided with necessary information pertinent to the application, including the institution's/program's SER, team report, and its response to the team reports for review and action. The Commission's decision is then provided to the applicant in writing following the Commission meeting.



IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

Accreditation by ABHES signifies that the institution or program has met the eligibility criteria and evaluation standards of ABHES as evidenced during its most recent on-site review and continues to comply with the policies, procedures and standards for maintenance of accreditation as established by ABHES.

While ABHES holds a number of important recognitions, accreditation does not guarantee Title IV or other financial aid eligibility, credentialing opportunities for graduates, or the ability to transfer credits to other institutions. It is the responsibility of institutions and programs accredited by ABHES and individuals seeking to train at an ABHES-accredited institution or program to explore all necessary aspects associated with their objectives.

For additional information on ABHES, please visit www.abhes.org or contact the ABHES office at info@abhes.org or by phone at 703.917.9503.

Published 1/09



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