

# The Academic Quality Improvement Program at the Community College of Denver

## What is Accreditation?

Institutional accreditation is provided by regional and national associations of schools and colleges. There are six regional associations, each named after the region in which it operates (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, Western). An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an entire educational organization in terms of its mission and the agency's standards or criteria. Besides assessing formal educational activities, it evaluates such things as governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student services, institutional resources, student learning, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with internal and external constituencies.

## The North Central Association (NCA)

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools was founded in 1895 for the purpose of establishing close relations between the colleges and secondary schools of the region. The Association is a membership organization of colleges and schools in nineteen states (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming).

Two independent corporations also hold membership in the Association. The Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) accredits its schools offering education at the kindergarten through twelfth-grade levels as well as non-degree-granting post-secondary schools. The [Higher Learning Commission](#) (HLC) accredits degree-granting organization of higher education. The Commission provides two programs for maintaining accredited status: the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ), and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

## Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)

CCD's application to participate in [AQIP](#) was accepted and approved in 2002. AQIP is structured around quality improvement principles and processes and involves a structured set of goal-setting, networking, and accountability activities. AQIP employs the following steps to reaffirm an organization's accredited status:

## Timeline for Quality Improvement Activities

### **Annually**

- The updates and/or conclusions of three to four Action Projects are submitted for review and feedback in September.

### **Every 3-5 years**

- CCD has participated in two Strategy Forums, the first of which was attended in the Fall of 2002, and the second was in 2007.
- The first CCD Systems Portfolio was submitted in November 2005. The Systems Portfolio Appraisal was received in the Spring of 2006.
- The first Quality Check-Up Visit occurred in March 2009.

### **Every 7 years**

- In 2009 CCD will participate in a formal Reaffirmation of Accreditation; concurrently CCD will submit an updated Systems Portfolio.

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### CCD Action Projects

- Currently CCD has three [Action Projects](#), two of which will be retired in August of 2009. The current three are Recommitment to Learning College Principles, Implementation of Faculty Voice, and Development of A Student Communication System. The last Action Project, Development of a Student Communication System will remain and continue through the next academic year, based on the recommendations from the Quality Checkup Visit.
- Retired Action Projects are as follows: Develop Early/Middle College Model, Creating Strategic Campus Expansions, and Develop Model Planning

### [AQIP Quality Categories](#) / [CCD Touchstones](#):

1. Helping Students Learn
2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives
3. Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
4. Valuing People
5. Leading and Communicating
6. Supporting Institutional Operations
7. Measuring Effectiveness
8. Planning Continuous Improvement
9. Building Collaborative Relationships

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