



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

Accreditation FAQ's

What is NWCCU?

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) has been recognized as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Secretary of Education since 1952. It is one of six regional institutional accrediting associations in the United States; each are responsible for a specific geographic area. The NWCCU serves Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Canada. **UAS has been accredited by NWCCU since 1983.**

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a voluntary process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public. Accrediting associations are not associated with local, state, or the federal government. However, **only through accreditation can an institution be eligible to participate in the Higher Education Act programs, such as Student Federal Financial Aid.**

What is the accreditation process?

The process requires institutions and its programs to continually examine their own goals, operations, and achievements. These are then reviewed by a visiting evaluation committee, comprised of volunteers from other NWCCU accredited institutions. **The focus is on the institution as a total operating unit, examining an institution's mission, core themes, student support services, library and information resources, and finance and facilities.** The process does not review any particular program in great detail, but reviews them as part of the entire institution. There are specialized accrediting organizations who evaluate specific programs within an institution, but NWCCU is focused on the entire institution.

Institutions accredited by NWCCU follow a seven-year cycle, with continuous institutional review.

Year 1: Self-evaluation of Standard 1, Mission & Core Themes

Year 3: Mid-cycle report completed to determine readiness for the year seven review

Year 7: A comprehensive self-evaluation report on all Standards and Eligibility Requirements, followed by an evaluation committee site visit. UAS is in year 7 of the accreditation process.

When is UAS's site visit?

The evaluation committee site visit will take place **April 24th – April 26th.**

What happens after the site visit?

Upon completion of the site visit the committee will make a determination to: Reaffirm Accreditation, Request a special report, Defer action, Impose sanctions, or Terminate Accreditation

The report findings will be shared with executive leadership June 19th and communication will be shared with the community shortly after.



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

UAS Mission

Student learning enhanced by faculty scholarship, undergraduate research and creative activities, community engagement, and the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska.

UAS Core Themes

Student Success: Provide the academic support & student services that facilitate access and completion of educational goals.

Teaching & Learning: Provide a broad range of programs & services resulting in student engagement & empowerment for academic excellence.

Community Engagement: Provide programs & services that connect with local, state, national, and international entities on programs, events, services, and research that respond to the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs and resources of Southeast Alaska.

Research & Creative Expression: Provide programs & services that support research, scholarship, & creative expression by faculty & students.

Student Enrollment

Alaska Native Students: Nearly 20% of UAS students are Alaska Native.

Rural Students: 47% of UAS students come from rural areas of Alaska.

College Readiness: 25% of first time freshmen at UAS take developmental Math or English classes as compared to 43% in 2013.

Full-Time Students: 12% of UAS students enroll in 30+ credits per year. The majority of students attend on a part-time basis and many are non-traditional students and attend classes online.

Course Completion: About 80% of degree seeking students complete their courses in any given semester.

Student Opinion: Students love the responsiveness of faculty and staff and the small class sizes.

Retention and Graduation

Retention: UAS currently retains 65% of first time full time freshmen.

Graduation: 24% is the current six-year completion rate at UAS.

Degrees: 668 degrees were awarded in 2018.

High Demand Job Areas: 69% of students completing programs at UAS earn awards in high demand job areas as defined by the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Associates Earners: 39% of UAS students who earn an associate's degree continue on to a degree program within the UA system.

Distance Education: 46% of all UAS degrees and awards completed are from students enrolled in distance based programs.

Student Opinion: 90% of alumni are satisfied or very satisfied with their education programs at UAS, according to a survey conducted in 2018.

Continuous Improvement

A Director of Admissions, Recruitment, and Advising was hired in 2017 to focus on enrollment of new students. A Strategic Enrollment Plan, including a recruitment and retention plan was approved in January 2019 and is currently being implemented. A key challenge to enrollment has been the decrease in the number of high school graduates in Alaska, although these numbers now appear somewhat stable. Additionally, Alaska as a whole has a small population.

A Student Success Task Force has been in place for almost two years that focuses on areas to improve the student experience, including mandatory advising, academics, housing, and new student orientation. The issuing of mid-term grades is also being discussed with faculty senate.

A number of programs have been developed including the Alaska Leadership Initiative (ALI), Finish College Alaska, Come Home to Alaska, Career and Technical Education Tuition Discounts, Stay-On-Track Awards, Chancellor's Award for Housing, the opening of the Center for Learning and Teaching (CELT), the Writing Center, the expanded Learning Center, and the initiation of the Education Advisory Board Early Alert System.