



American Culinary Federation  
Education Foundation  
Accrediting Commission



# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## POSTSECONDARY AND SECONDARY PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION

AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC., ACCREDITING COMMISSION

6816 SOUTHPOINT PKWY STE 400, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32216

[www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org) | 800-624-9458 | [accreditation@acfchefs.org](mailto:accreditation@acfchefs.org)

## Table of Contents

Section I: Background .....	3
Overview.....	3
ACFEF Accrediting Commission Mission Statement .....	3
Section II: Introduction .....	4
Commission and Committee .....	4
Scope - Evaluation of Eligible Institutional Programs .....	4
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) .....	4
Autonomy .....	4
Official Activity.....	4
Funding .....	4
Section III: Commission Composition .....	5
Commission Organization Chart .....	5
Commission/Committee Member Requirements .....	5
Member Removal .....	5
Commission Executive Committee .....	6
Commission Roles.....	6
Commission Members .....	8
SECONDARY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP.....	10
Section IV: Meetings .....	13
Section V: Ethics.....	15
Section VI: Public Comments and Participation.....	16
Public Comments.....	16
Public Participation:.....	16
Section VII: Site Visit Evaluation Teams .....	17
Introduction.....	17
Site Visit Evaluation Team Composition .....	17
Evaluator Roles Defined.....	17
EVALUATOR REQUIREMENTS .....	18
Site Visit Evaluator Application Approval .....	18
Site Visit Evaluator Social Media Policy .....	18
Section VIII: Initial and Renewing Program Accreditation Process.....	19
Initial.....	19
Renewal .....	19

Accreditation Application Process .....	19
Site Visit Quality Assurance .....	20
Section IX: Commission Decision Grant Matrix and Flow Charts.....	21
Overview.....	21
ACFEF Accrediting Commission Decision Matrix .....	22
Initial (Site Visit) Decision Grant Matrix Flow Chart .....	23
Renewal (Site Visit) Decision Grant Matrix Flow Chart.....	24
.....	24
Administrative (Non- Site Visit) Decision Matrix Flow Chart .....	25
Interim Grant Process for Extenuating Circumstances.....	26
Section X: Notifications to the United States Secretary of Education .....	27
Section XI: Responsibility of the Accredited Program .....	28
Accreditation Fees .....	28
International Standards and Policies & Procedures .....	30
International School Fees .....	31
Annual Program Update (Formerly Annual Report) .....	32
Self-Study Oversight: .....	33
Special Visits .....	33
Advertising of Postsecondary and Secondary Accreditation .....	33
Advance Notice of Substantive Changes .....	33
Change in Institutional Accreditation or State Licensure Status .....	34
Student Grievances.....	34
Section XII: Appeals Procedures .....	35
First Level Appeal.....	35
Appeal Determination Affecting Others .....	36
Second Level Appeal Review and Determination .....	36
Section XIII: Grievance Policy and Procedures.....	37
Document Retention .....	37
Submitting Grievance .....	38
Accreditation Grievance Decision Procedure .....	38
Removing an Accreditation Commission Member or Site Visit Evaluator.....	39

## Section I: Background

### Overview

The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Accrediting Commission (ACFEF AC) is an accrediting body operating within the corporate structure of the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation, Inc. (ACFEF). ACFEF is a national not-for-profit federation of chefs and culinary professionals whose purpose is promoting education and training for careers in food preparation, food services, culinary arts and baking and pastry.

Postsecondary and secondary accreditation is voluntary and offered to institutions that demonstrate a commitment to culinary excellence in education by meeting required skills and knowledge standards developed by the ACFEF AC. Accreditation requires the proper organizational structure to meet excellence in curriculum, faculty, resources, facilities, and support staff. The ACFEF AC standards reflect proven best practices from culinary programs across the American Culinary Federation's (ACF) culinary education members and support the standardized objectives in education.

The ACFEF AC policies and procedures are intended to provide an understanding of the accreditation process. The ACFEF AC, also referred to as "the Commission," works with industry representatives to monitor industry changes and needs to reflect current best practices of the food and beverage profession.

### ACFEF Accrediting Commission Mission Statement

ACFEF Accrediting Commission is committed to the academic, professional, and personal growth of student culinarians by ensuring that ACFEF accredited foodservice programs provide a comprehensive, solid foundation as well as innovative learning opportunities to diverse communities.

## Section II: Introduction

### Commission and Committee

The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Accrediting Commission (ACFEF AC) is responsible for the evaluations of postsecondary and secondary culinary arts, baking and pastry and foodservice programs. The Secondary Accreditation Committee is a sub-committee of the ACFEF AC Commission.

#### **Here on:**

- The ACFEF Accrediting Commission will be referred to as “the Commission.”
- The Secondary Accreditation Committee will be referred to as “the Committee.”

### Scope - Evaluation of Eligible Institutional Programs

The Commission accredits postsecondary programs which award associate degrees, bachelor’s degrees, and certificate/diplomas in the professional fields of culinary arts, baking and pastry arts and foodservice management. Locations of accredited programs include the United States, United States Territories of Puerto Rico, and Guam, and internationally in Bermuda, Bulgaria, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation and Switzerland. (2019)

### Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) was created to assure the quality of postsecondary education through the process of voluntary, non-governmental accreditation. CHEA does this through the establishment of criteria and provisions for the evaluation and recognition of accrediting organization. The Commission is recognized by CHEA.

### Autonomy

The Commission and Committee are responsible for formulating its Policies and Procedures, Standards and Required Knowledge and Skills Competencies. The Commission and the Committee have sole authority to evaluate programs to determine the degree to which each complies with these standards and has freedom from external control or influence.

### Official Activity

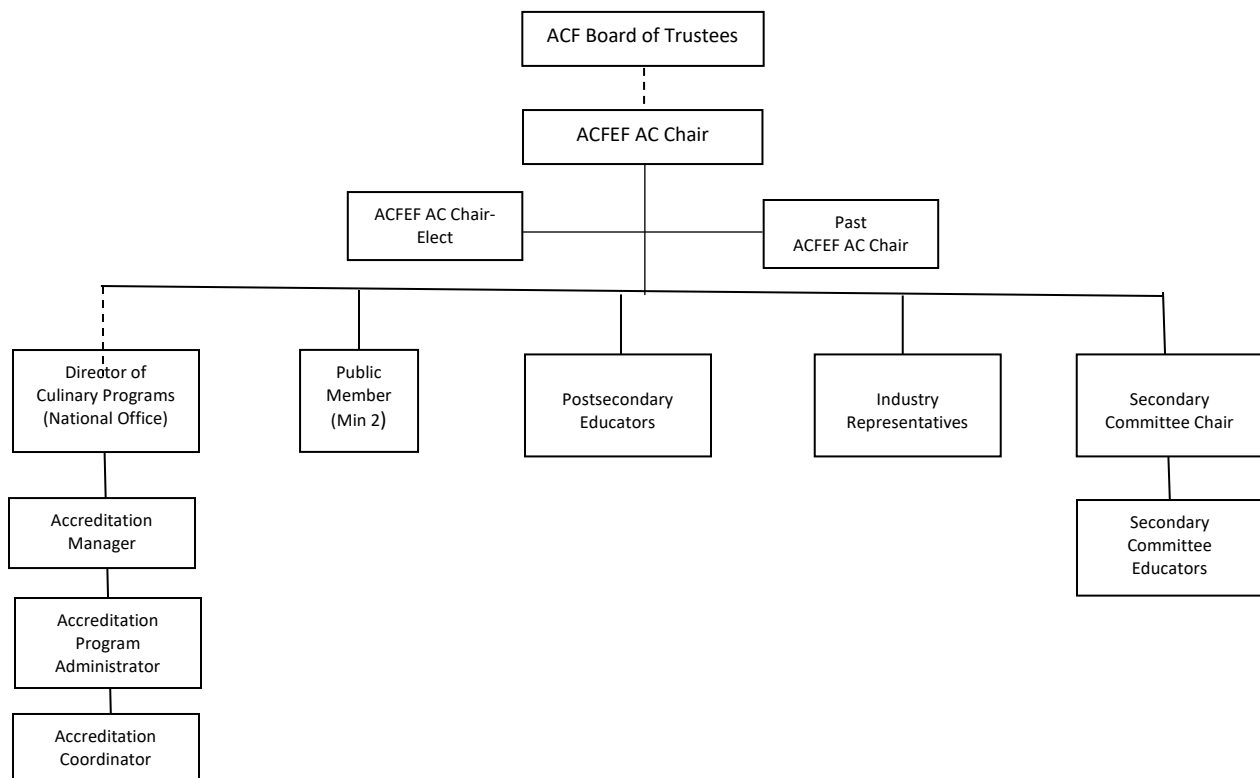
Accrediting actions are taken by the Commission and Committee a minimum of two times each year.

### Funding

The Commission is generally self-funded. As a body within a larger corporate structure, the Commission has the support of ACFEF assets to the extent that ACFEF AC funds would not allow the Commission to perform its accreditation functions efficiently and effectively. Accreditation is consistent with ACFEF’s primary exempt purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, therefore, ACFEF would be able to use its general revenues to support the Commission, if necessary.

## Section III: Commission Composition

### Commission Organization Chart



### Commission/Committee Member Requirements

Membership on the Commission/Committee is contingent on its members to agree to the following requirements:

- Be active ACF members in good standing throughout their term of service.
- Certifiable at ACF Certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC) and/or Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC) level.
- May serve on the Commission/Committee as a member if retired five (5) years or less at the time of membership appointment.
- Adhere to and sign the ACF conflict of interest and confidentiality statement prior to term of service.
- Comply with the ACF anti-harassment policy and complete training as required.
- Comply with ACF travel policy to ensure proper reimbursement and expense allocations.

### Member Removal

Any Commission/Committee member may be recommended for removal for any action that is determined by the Executive Committee to be detrimental to the best interests of the ACFEF Accrediting

Commission. Removal of any member shall be by recommendation of the Executive Committee and by majority vote of the full Commission (excluding the member proposed for removal).

### Commission Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the Commission Chair, Chair-Elect, Secondary Committee Chair and Past Chair. The Executive Committee is responsible for all actions required of the Commission between regularly scheduled meetings. These actions shall include review of notices of substantive changes, comments against standards or procedures or other actions requiring interim actions. In the event of a tied vote, the tie breaking vote will be administered by the Chair of the ACF Education Foundation.

### Commission Roles

#### *Commission Chair*

The Commission Chair is a non-voting position. The Chair-Elect assumes the Chair position at the beginning of the next designated term.

Commission Chair requirements:

- Must be an active postsecondary educator or administrator from an ACFEF-accredited program or retired less than five years from an ACFEF-accredited program.
- Has served as an Incoming Chair for a full or partial term as the Incoming Chair.
- Leads the Executive Committee.
- Serves a two (2) year term:
  - If Commission Chair vacates their position before completing their term within 0 to 6 months:
    - The Chair-Elect is appointed to complete the remainder of that term as a full term.
  - If Commission Chair vacates their position before completing their term within 7-24 months:
    - The Chair-Elect is appointed to complete the remainder of that term and is permitted to serve an additional (2) year term in the same position.
    - Nominations for chair-elect will begin immediately with a vote at the next full Commission meeting.
- Roles and responsibilities include:
  - Establishes agendas and leads all meetings of the Commission.
  - Ensures policies and procedures are implemented and followed.
  - Meets regularly with ACF staff liaison to discuss and guide work related to commission business.
  - Appoints a grievance committee when required and provides final decisions.
  - Assists budget development and compliance.
  - Establishes committees/taskforces to support the Commission mission and goals.
  - Provides updates to and is a voting member of the ACFEF Board of Trustees.
  - Approves accreditation projects regarding growth and retention of accredited programs.
  - Provides quarterly updates to Commission membership.
  - Attends key meetings as necessary to include CHEA, regional and national ACF events, CTE other education-centric organizations, or other events as required.

- Completes a minimum of two (2) site visits a year.
- May call for a special site visit, announced or unannounced, to provide information for its deliberations as required for dispute or grievances.
- This position is not one that manages office staff or directors associated with the ACFEF but shall work with the Director of Culinary Programs to direct work as it relates to accreditation for secondary and postsecondary programs.

### *Chair-Elect*

The Chair-Elect is a voting position and is elected by a majority vote of voting members of the Commission. Nominations are made one year prior, and the position is voted on six months prior to initiation.

#### Incoming Chair-Elect Requirements:

- Must have served a one-year term as a Commission member.
- Must be an active postsecondary educator or administrator from an ACFEF-accredited program.
- Serves a two (2) year term:
  - If the Chair-Elect vacates before completing their term within 0 to 6 months:
    - Commission Chair will appoint a postsecondary member of the Commission to complete the remainder of that term as a full term.
  - If the Chair-Elect vacates before completing their term within 7-24 months:
    - Commission Chair will appoint a postsecondary member of the Commission to complete the remainder of that term and will/can then serve an additional 2-year term in the same position.
- If there are no nominees that meet the qualifications, nominations will open to Commission members from an active post-secondary program, preferably having served a one-year term on the Commission.
- Roles and responsibilities:
  - Coordinates and tracks committee and project work within the Commission
  - Meets regularly with staff liaison and Commission Chair.
  - Conducts a minimum of (2) site visits a year.
  - This position is not one that manages office staff or directors associated with the ACFEF, but shall work with the designated staff liaison to direct work as it relates to accreditation for secondary and postsecondary programs.

### *Past Chair*

The past chair is a voting member of the Commission and serves a two (2) year term.

- If the present Past Commission Chair vacates before completing their term, the previous past commission chair will complete the remainder of the term. If the past chair is not available, one is appointed by the current Commission Chair and/or the Director of Culinary Programs.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - May lead a committee within the Commission.
  - Conducts a minimum of one (1) site visit per year.



- Serves as Chair of the ACFEF AC Grievance Subcommittee.

## Commission Members

### *Term Limits*

Commission members may serve up to two (2) consecutive two-year terms. Nomination of a current or previous member for additional terms will be allowed after a one-year break, serving no more than eight years total as a commission member.

Commission members may make a request for reappointment in writing to the Executive Committee six months prior to their term completion.

### *Nominations*

Nominations for Commission and Committee members are solicited from Commission members, ACFEF-AC site visit evaluators, and program coordinators from ACFEF-accredited programs.

Educators are replaced by educators and industry representatives are replaced by industry representatives.

Nominations may be solicited in a variety of ways including:

- An article in The Culinary Insider (TCI).
- Letters emailed to evaluators, and to ACFEF Accredited Postsecondary and Secondary Institutions.
- From previously submitted applications.

Nominees are reviewed by the Executive Committee and presented to the Commission for comment and selection. Public members are appointed by the Chair and approved by the Commission.

### *Postsecondary Educator*

The Accrediting Commission requires a total of six (6) postsecondary educators with representation across culinary arts, pastry arts, foodservice management and are elected by a majority vote of the postsecondary commission members.

The postsecondary educator may serve up to two (2) consecutive two-year terms. Nomination of a current or previous member for additional terms will be allowed after a one-year break, serving no more than eight years total as a commission member.

- If a postsecondary commission member vacates before their term is complete, their replacement will be appointed by the Commission Executive Committee from on-file applicants within the vacated discipline.
  - If there are no on-file applicants within the vacated discipline, a notification will be sent to all ACFEF-accredited programs for nominations in the vacated discipline for consideration.

- If no nomination is provided, the Commission Executive Committee may appoint someone from another discipline to complete the vacant term until the next election of accreditation members.
- Requirements
  - Must be a postsecondary educator or administrator from an ACFEF-accredited program at the time of the Commission/Committee appointment. Should the educator leave their position within the accredited school, they may complete their term but may not re-apply for an additional term.
  - May be retired postsecondary educator for no more than five (5) years at the time of membership appointment.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Participates on a committee or taskforce as requested.
  - Conducts a minimum of two (2) site visits per year.
  - Attends biannual meetings to guide Commission business.
  - Votes on accreditation recommendations during meetings.
  - Actively recruits for commission membership and evaluation team members.

### *Industry Representative*

The Accrediting Commission requires three (3) industry representatives, one each for culinary arts, baking and pastry, and foodservice management, elected by a majority vote of the Commission members.

The industry representative may serve up to two (2) consecutive two-year terms. Nomination of a current or previous member for additional terms will be allowed after a one-year break, serving no more than eight years total as a commission member.

- If an industry representative member vacates before their term is complete, the commission executive committee will appoint their replacement from the on-file applicants.
  - If there are no on-file applicants, the Commission Executive Committee may appoint someone to complete the vacant term until the next election of accreditation members.
- Requirements
  - May be retired from the industry for no more three (3) years.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Participates on a committee or taskforce as requested.
  - Attends biannual meetings to guide the Commission business.
  - Votes on accreditation recommendations during meetings.
  - Actively recruits nominations to fill their position.

### *Public Member*

- Requirements
  - Serves a 3-year term.
  - Must be a non-member of the culinary community but may be a retired educational faculty or administrator from programs other than culinary, baking & pastry, and hospitality.
  - Selected based on Commission recruitment and recommendations as well as public announcement.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Serves in the public interest in accreditation business.
  - Is a voting member of the Commission while being mindful of public interest.
  - Public members are encouraged to participate on one accreditation site visit each year within their local area, if available and requires Commission Executive Committee approval for expense reimbursement.

## **SECONDARY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

### *Secondary Committee Chair*

- Requirements
  - Appointed by the Commission Executive Committee.
  - Serves a two (2) year term.
  - Is an active secondary educator and current member of the Accreditation Secondary Committee from an accredited program.
  - Conducts a minimum of (1) site visit to a secondary program each year.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Attends key meetings; these may include regional and national ACF events, CTE, secondary CTE events or other events.
  - Is a member of the Commission Executive Committee.
  - Has full voting rights related to secondary programs only.
  - Coordinates all work related to secondary program recruitment and retention.
  - Provides input to agenda items for Commission meetings.
  - Meets regularly with ACF staff liaison.
  - Holds meetings with secondary committee members for business input.

### *Secondary Educator*

- The Accreditation Commission requires (1) secondary educator for each of the ACF-defined regions.
  - If a Secondary Committee member vacates before their term is complete, their replacement will be appointed by the Commission Executive Committee with input from the Secondary Committee Chair from on-file applicants within the region.
    - If there are no applicants from the region a notification will be sent to all secondary ACFEF-accredited programs within the region for nominations for consideration.
    - If no nomination is provided, the Commission Executive Committee with input from the Secondary Committee Chair may appoint someone from another region to

complete the vacant term until the next election of accreditation members within the region.

- Requirements
  - Must be a secondary educator from an ACFEF-accredited secondary program at the time of the Commission / Committee appointment; should the educator leave their position within the accredited school they may complete their term.
  - Conducts a minimum of (1) site visit per year.
  - May serve up to two (2) two-year terms, may serve longer if appointed to an unfinished term.
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Recruits nominations to fill their position.
  - Attends meetings held by Secondary Committee Chair to guide business.
  - Votes on secondary accreditation recommendations during meeting.

### *ACF National Office Staff*

ACF staff are employees of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) and serve the Commission as advocates and liaison to ACF. Their employment requirements are governed by ACF employment policies with the primary role and responsibility to the management and sustainability of the ACFFEF accreditation program.

The Director of Culinary Programs serves as the primary staff liaison to the Commission. This position or any other office position is not a voting member of the Commission. The staff liaison ensures that core business is cared for within the office environment and manages the office staff to ensure that communications and information are timely and consistent within brand. They are the direct liaison with and facilitate communications with the Commission Executive Committee, the Executive Director for the ACF and other leadership positions within the Federation and Foundation.

- Roles and responsibilities
  - Provides regular monthly updates to the Executive Committee on budget, commission management, marketing, and sustainment.
  - Coordinates biannual meetings for the Commission in conjunction with the Commission Chair.
  - Conducts regular database review to ensure data is correct, and reports are generated and well-managed.
  - Direct liaison with CHEA, managing overall CHEA accreditation and reporting requirements.
  - Manages and communicates budget updates monthly, forecasts estimate based on site visit forecast within budget year and provides forecast update to Commission in six (6) month increments for three (3) years out.

### *Foundation Chair*

- Requirements
  - ACF Immediate Past President

- No voting rights
- Activities
  - Provides general ACF Board update to Commission membership.
  - Advocates on behalf of the Commission.
  - Sounding board for innovative ideas

## Section IV: Meetings

The Commission will meet a minimum of twice a year, in-person, virtually, or a hybrid meeting. The Commission Chair shall select the time and place of each meeting and shall give 30 days' written notice to Commission members. In person meetings shall be approved based on available funding within the Commission's budget.

Meeting attendees shall include:

- Past Commission Chair
- Commission Chair
- Incoming Commission Chair
- All Post-Secondary members
- All Secondary members
- Public members
- Directory of Culinary Programs or their designate
- Accreditation Coordinator or their designate
- Foundation Chair or their designate

### *Attendance Policy*

The Commission shall determine a quorum using guidance from Robert's Rules of Order prior to the start of any meeting. If a quorum cannot be established at the time of the meeting, no official business can be voted on. The Commission shall define a quorum as:

- A Post-secondary Quorum is defined as 75% of post-secondary members present during the meeting either in person or in video conferencing.
- A Secondary Quorum is defined as 75% of secondary members present during the meeting either in person or in video conferencing.

The Commission Chair may reschedule a meeting if a quorum cannot be established for the scheduled meeting.

- Commission members are expected to attend all meetings which are convened on an as needed basis determined by the Commission Chair for special circumstances.
- A Commission member who misses two (2) consecutive meetings will receive a written notice from the Commission Chair regarding their absences, notifying them that missing a third meeting will result in dismissal from the Commission.
  - Excused absences do not count towards missing a meeting.
  - Members have the option to remote into a meeting when video conferencing is available.
- CEHs will be awarded at the end of each term. Commission members who are dismissed/resign shall not receive CEH's.

### *Subcommittee and Taskforce Meetings*

Subcommittee and taskforce meetings will be held as required to complete their respective goals and objectives.

### *Special Meetings*

Special meetings shall be called by the Commission Chair or at the request of a majority of the Commission members. Notice of a meeting is to be given not less than five (5) days before the meeting.

### *Open Meetings*

Meetings of the Commission and its subcommittees are open to the public for observation except when activities or discussions pertain to accreditation decisions, or other confidential matters, appeals, or during an executive session called by the Chair.

### *Meeting Minutes*

Commission meeting minutes will follow Robert's Rules and will be approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Draft minutes will be prepared and reviewed by the Executive Committee within 30 days. Meeting recordings, audio and/or video, do not constitute a formal capturing of the meeting and will be permanently deleted once the meeting minutes have been approved by the Commission. Any requests to view/listen to the recordings must be made to and approved by the full Commission.

Notes shall be taken at subcommittee and taskforce meetings and distributed to the committee/taskforce members and Commission Chair within 14 days of the meeting.

### *Travel*

If requested by the Chair and/or staff liaison, commission members shall attend any in-person meetings of the Commission at the expense of the ACFEF Accrediting Commission. All members will abide by the ACF Travel Policy when making any travel plans or forfeit their right for expense reimbursement.

## Section V: Ethics

The Commission and Committee membership will protect the confidentiality of information obtained and shared during the accrediting process.

Any information about an institution is confidential and must remain so. The Commission, Committee and its representatives will not reveal program information. Official notifications and other Commission-related decisions will be distributed by the Accreditation Commission office representatives.

All Commission and Committee members are required to read and agree to the Canons of Ethics prior to Commission meetings. Canon of Ethics are available for review within the Commission portal; members will sign the Canon of Ethics signature sheet prior to the start of each official meeting.

The Commission, Committee and its representatives will avoid conflicts of interest during participation in site visits or during award of accreditation. These may include but are not limited to current or former employment or affiliation, previous or current service as a consultant, holding a financial interest, affiliation with an institution in direct geographic competition, or other close relationships with the program or host institution under review. Commission members will identify conflicts of interest prior to official voting.

Site visit evaluation team members will identify conflicts of interest prior to accepting a position on a specific site visit. Commission representatives with a potential conflict of interest with a program or host institution must disclose that a conflict exists, recuse themselves in advance from the site visit, refrain from discussion or other deliberation intended to influence the outcome of the accreditation process, and abstain from voting.



## Section VI: Public Comments and Participation

### Public Comments

The Commission accreditation review process includes an opportunity for parties independent of the program under review to make written comments on whether the program meets Commission-recognized standards. This may include commentary from different sources, such as other accrediting organizations, institutions, programs, or professional or higher education associations.

Public comments received in-between Commission meetings are made available during Commission meetings for review and are discussed when applicable to a specific program. If no public comment is submitted, it shall be noted within the Commission meeting minutes and acknowledged by the Commission membership through a vote.

### Third Party Comments:

- The Commission staff will review third-party comments to assess their applicability to the accreditation review. Third party programmatic review comments must be submitted in writing and received in the Commission office no later than six (6) weeks prior to scheduled meetings or by January 1 and/or July 1 of the meeting year. The programmatic comments will be reviewed at the respective Commission meetings.
- The Commission staff will review third-party submissions for applicability to recognized standards. If applicable, the Commission will review third-party comments and request additional information / response from the program in question, prior to making its decision to grant accreditation.

### Public Participation:

- The Commission provides notice and invites comment on proposed revisions to the standards to all persons, institutions and organizations affected by or with a direct interest in the Commission's accrediting process.
- The Commission shall review and consider all comments received prior to discussion and vote/no vote to revise commission standards.
- Commission meetings will be open to the public except when it is deliberating and acting on matters concerning specific programs or individuals.

## Section VII: Site Visit Evaluation Teams

### Introduction

The function of the site visit evaluation team is to:

- Review and validate the program's self-study submission.
  - Complete the team report 2 to 3 weeks prior to site visit based on available information and exhibits provided.
  - Provide program coordinator a list of follow up requirements based on missing or incomplete information, provide a 'due by' date; this may be before arrival or on site. This allows the program to further prepare and provide any clarity required prior to arrival.
- Observe curriculum delivery and conduct on site interviews with administration, students, advisory committee, faculty, bookstore, library, and any other required student support personnel to complete any remaining team report requirements.
- Deliver the verbal exit assessment led by the lead evaluator to include strengths, suggestions and non-compliances.

### Site Visit Evaluation Team Composition

**Postsecondary Schools:** An evaluation team consists of a minimum of two, and no more than three evaluators. Minimum team composition is an administrative lead evaluator and educator evaluator. When available or required, an industry evaluator will be added. In cases where an industry evaluator is not available or required for a site evaluation, the lead and educator will assume the responsibilities of the industry evaluator.

**Secondary Schools:** An evaluation team consists of an administrative lead evaluator and an educator evaluator.

### Evaluator Roles Defined

#### **Administrative Lead Evaluator**

- Point of contact for communications with both ACFEF accreditation staff and the school program coordinator.
- Travel coordinator for evaluation team.
- Has final decision-making authority and overall responsibility for site visits.
- Delivers the non-compliances to program coordinator.
  - Strengths/suggestions delivery is shared amongst the team as directed by the lead evaluator.

#### **Secondary/Post-Secondary Educators**

- Primary responsibility for Section 5 input of team report.
- Observes curriculum delivery during the site visit.
- Supports administrative lead during required interviews of instructors, students, and administration.
- In the absence of an industry evaluator, assists with industry section of the team report.
- Participates in the exit interview process.

### **Industry Evaluator**

- Primary responsibility for the industry checklist of the team report.
- Conducts onsite sanitation review.
- Supports the administrative lead as requested.

## **EVALUATOR REQUIREMENTS**

### ***All Evaluators***

- ACF member in good standing.
- Certifiable at ACF Certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC) and/or Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC) level.
- Retired less than 5 years from the food service industry for industry evaluators.
- Retired less than 5 years from or have taught at an accredited program within the last 5 years for educators.
- May serve on any of the site visit teams for postsecondary, secondary, and foodservice management programs.
- Current with evaluator and ACF anti-harassment training.
- Completed evaluator training and updated profile (current within 24 months).
- Signed confidentiality agreement, conflict of interest form and travel policy agreement on file (current within 24 months).
- Administrative leads are required to complete one site visit as lead evaluator per year to remain current as a secondary or postsecondary administrative lead.
- Exceptions can be made by the Executive Committee.

### ***Industry Evaluator***

- Holds a current minimum ACF Certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC) and/or Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC) designation.
- Educators from accredited or non-accredited schools meeting certification level requirements are eligible to serve as an industry evaluator.
  - Note: Educators from schools and programs with pending applications or interest in accreditation shall be considered to support site visits as an industry evaluator or may participate in a local or nearby site visit at their expense.

## **Site Visit Evaluator Application Approval**

The Commission calls for evaluators throughout the year, and application forms are available from the ACF accreditation staff. Applications shall be reviewed by the staff for eligibility, vetted and approved by the Commission. Applicants will receive notification within thirty (30) days upon receipt of application.

## **Site Visit Evaluator Social Media Policy**

Site visit team members agree not to post to any social media site or personal page any site visit information or photographs related to a site visit for postsecondary or secondary programs. Team members that post to any social media site without the express written permission of the Commission will be removed from the evaluation team roster for future accreditation site visits.

## Section VIII: Initial and Renewing Program Accreditation Process

There are two types of accreditation applications:

### Initial

- Programs applying for accreditation for the first time.
- Previously accredited programs with a lapse greater than 12 months which are reapplying for accreditation.

### Renewal

- Current accredited program renewing their accreditation.
- Current accredited programs adding new programs to their existing accreditation.

### Accreditation Application Process

Initial and renewal applicants shall contact the ACFEF accreditation staff.

1. Applicant/program coordinator submits the non-refundable application fee. Once received, the program coordinator will receive the application and list of required supporting documents. If a program applicant has any of the eligibility issues listed below, the program's issues will be sent to the Commission / Committee for review. Upon review, the program coordinator will be notified as to its eligibility in the accreditation process.
  - a) Any application that includes information regarding any denial, suspension, revocation, probation, or any other final or interim adverse action affecting the pre-accreditation or accreditation status of the institution within the previous five (5) year period.
  - b) Any application that includes information regarding a state agency withdrawing authorization or licensure of the program or institution within the previous five (5) year period.
2. Should any conflicts arise between Commission accreditation standards and state or local laws governing the program seeking accreditation, the Commission shall be required to engage in conflict resolution consultation with the appropriate governmental representatives.
3. The institution, along with the names of the eligible program(s), will be published to allow for public comments from individuals who possess information concerning the program's qualifications for accreditation.
4. Program personnel and the ACFEF accreditation staff will set a tentative site visit date 6-12 months prior to the actual visit. The site visit must occur when classes are in session and when administrative staff members are available.
5. The ACFEF accreditation staff will notify the program coordinator of the site visit team selected once all team members are confirmed.

6. The program coordinator will submit the required fees to the ACFEF accreditation staff (60) days prior to the scheduled site visit for domestic programs; international program site visit fees are due (120) days prior to scheduled visit. Upon receipt, the ACFEF accreditation staff and the program coordinator will set a firm date for the site visit.
7. The program coordinator will submit the following to the ACFEF accreditation staff 30 days prior to scheduled site visit:
  - Site visit points of contact and lodging arrangements with confirmation numbers.
  - Self-study and supporting exhibits.
  - Site visit data sheet information.
8. The evaluation team will conduct the site visit and provide a preliminary verbal exit interview of the team report on the final day of the visit. The program coordinator is required to attend, other attendees are determined by the program coordinator. The lead evaluator will provide the preliminary team report to the ACFEF accreditation staff within five (5) business days of the exit interview.
9. Within four (4) weeks of the exit meeting, the ACFEF accreditation administrator will provide the program coordinator with a written narrative of the team report to include areas of non-compliance cited during the site visit. Non-compliances must be responded to in writing to the ACFEF accreditation administrator by the date specified.
10. The site visit evaluation team report, written public comments (if any), and the program's written response to the cited non-compliances are submitted to the Commission for review and action at the next scheduled Commission meeting (January/July).
11. Refer to Section IX of the policies and procedures for complete details regarding the Commission decision process.
12. The following will be made publicly available via the ACF website:
  - The Commission's decisions and actions, including any denial or withholding of accreditation.
  - The program's responses to the Commission's decisions, including any denial or withholding of accreditation.

### Site Visit Quality Assurance

The ACFEF accreditation administrator will review each completed team report to ensure accuracy, consistency, and objectivity. If the ACFEF accreditation administrator identifies any discrepancies, or there is a challenge from the program administrator on the findings, the ACFEF accreditation administrator will send the team report to the quality assurance taskforce for review. Decisions by the quality assurance task force are final.

The quality assurance task force will consist of three (3) administrative leads based on availability and experience appointed by the Accreditation Commission Executive Committee.

## **Section IX: Commission Decision Grant Matrix and Flow Charts**

### **Overview**

Accreditation shall be granted by the Commission / Committee for programs in compliance with the ACFEF AC standards, fees, and annual program report.

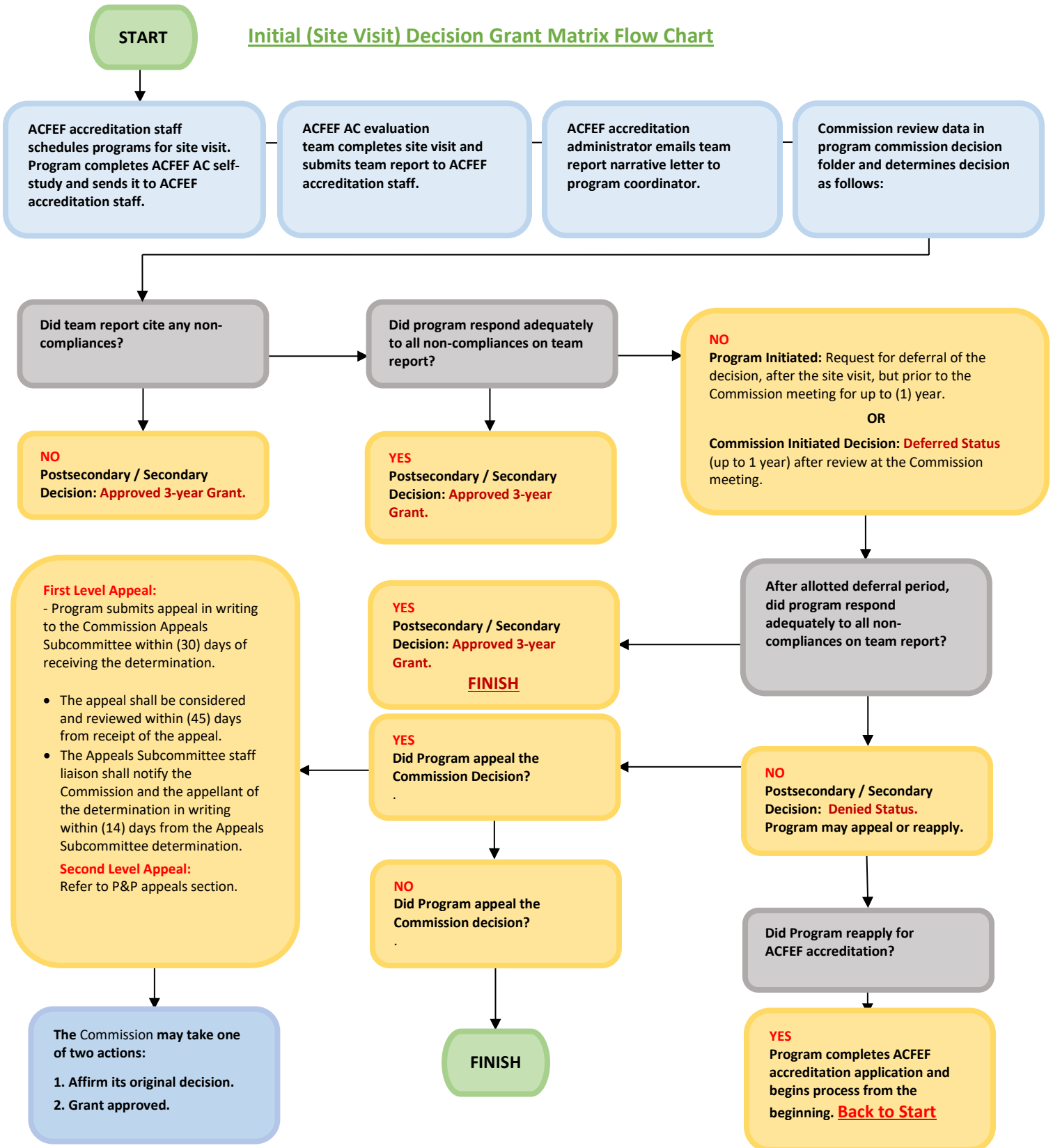
The program will receive written notification of the accreditation decision along with a formal motion citing the authority by which the action was taken.

Note: A commission member who acts in the capacity of evaluator during a site visit may not vote on the application, nor may a Commission member vote on any application regarding their own school or any school with which they are or have been affiliated in any way (such as serving on the program's advisory board).

ACFEF Accrediting Commission Decision Matrix

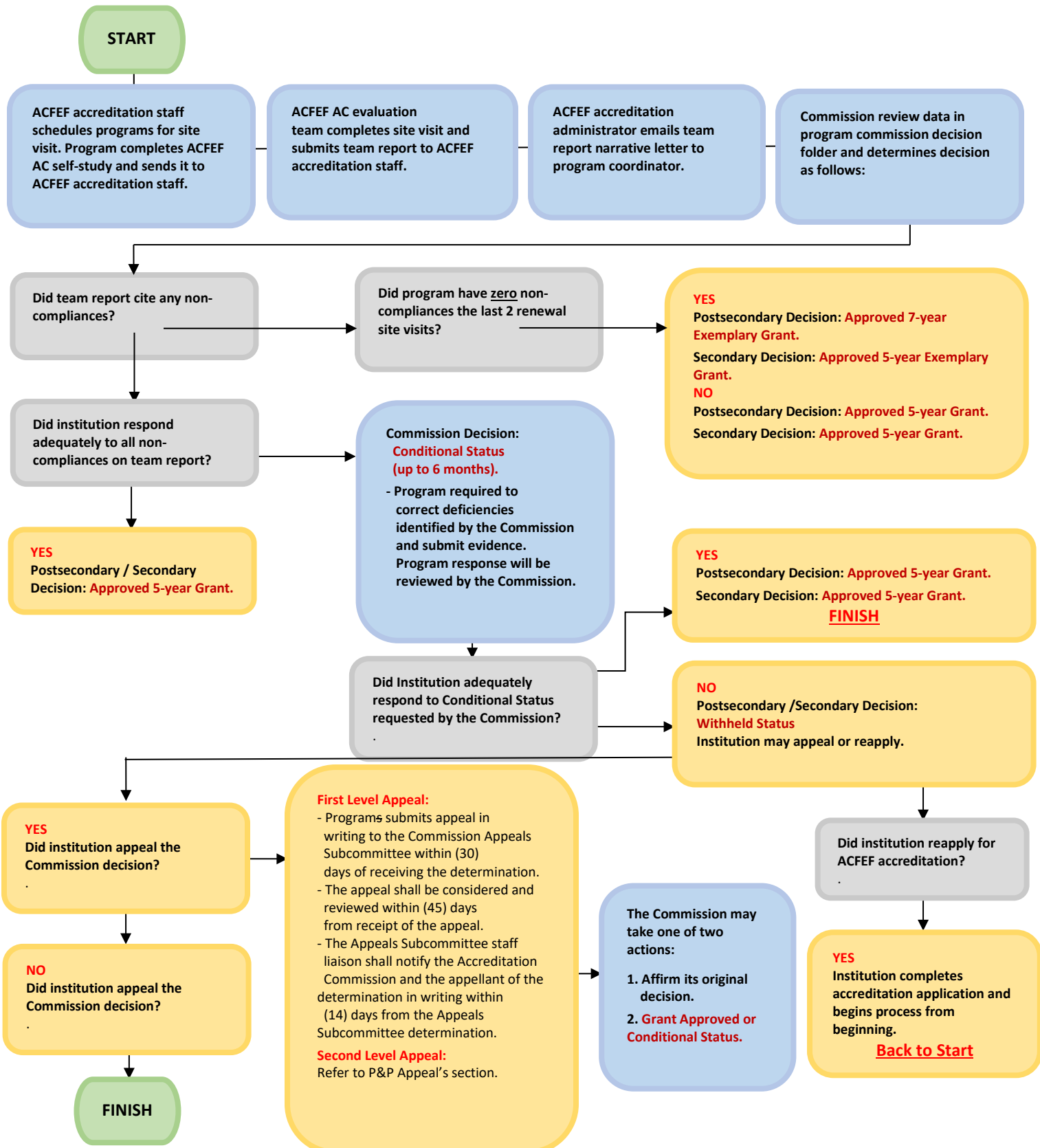
Grant	Programs	Grant Definition
<b>Approved</b>	Initial and Renewal	<p>Accreditation grants are awarded as follows:</p> <p><b>Postsecondary Accreditation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 Year Grant – <i>Initial</i> only</li> <li>- 5 Year Grant - <i>Renewing</i> schools (with renewing and/or new programs)</li> <li>- 7 Year Exemplary Grant - <i>Renewing</i> schools that are in full compliance (zero non-compliances) on the consecutive renewal are eligible for a 7-year exemplary grant</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Accreditation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 Year Grant – <i>Initial</i> only</li> <li>- 5 Year Grant - <i>Renewing</i> schools (with renewing and/or initial programs)</li> <li>- 5 Year Exemplary Grant - <i>Renewing</i> schools that are in full compliance (zero non-compliances) on the consecutive renewal are eligible for a 5-year exemplary grant</li> </ul>
<b>Deferred</b>	Initial	<p>A decision to postpone action, from 6 months up to one (1) year, for an institution's <u>initial program</u>.</p> <p><b>Commission Initiated Deferral:</b> A determination to defer a decision, up to (1) year, to allow the program to correct deficiencies identified by the Commission and to submit evidence to show that areas of non-compliance have been addressed. The program's response will be reviewed at the next Commission meeting for a decision.</p> <p><b>Program Initiated Deferral:</b> A request for deferral of the decision after the site visit but prior to the Commission meeting, for up to (1) year. This allows the program the time needed to address cited non-compliances identified during the site visit.</p>
<b>Denied / Withheld</b>	Initial / Renewal	A determination that the program is unable to demonstrate that they meet the ACFEF AC requirements. The accreditation status of an institution's program is denied for new programs and is <i>withheld</i> for renewing programs. The program may appeal this decision following the ACFEF AC appeals guidelines or reapply.
<b>Conditional</b>	Renewal	<p>A decision to allow the program up to (6) months to correct deficiencies identified by the Commission and to submit evidence to show that areas of non-compliance have been addressed. Program's response will be reviewed at the next Commission meeting for a decision.</p> <p><i>Note: The Commission may request that a follow-up site visit be scheduled to confirm certain deficiencies have in fact been corrected per the program's response, especially if they pertain to the labs/kitchens or curriculum. The educational institution will be responsible for all site visit evaluator expenses associated with the follow-up site visit.</i></p>
<b>Extended</b>	Renewal	A decision to extend a program's expiration date up to one (1) year if the program submits a formal request in writing to the Commission a minimum of (120) days prior to their expiration date. <i>Note: The grant will revert to the original expiration date.</i>
<b>Withdrawn</b>	Renewal	A proactive determination made by the Institution that they no longer want a program to have accreditation. The decision shall be recognized by the Commission.
<b>Suspended</b>	Renewal	<p>A determination that a program has failed to meet reporting deadlines or financial obligations, has refused to respond to or cooperate with the Commission, or has not notified the Commission of any substantive changes to the program or institution's status.</p> <p>Suspension will be for a specific period up to 1 year, at which time the Commission will determine if the program's accreditation should be reinstated or revoked.</p> <p>The institution may appeal this decision following the ACFEF AC appeals guidelines.</p>
<b>Revoked</b>	Renewal	The determination that a program has closed or failed to inform the Commission of its closure, or if a program does not respond to the conditions set forth in a suspension status. The institution may appeal the decision following the ACFEF AC appeals guidelines.
<b>Interim</b>	Renewal	The Commission Executive Committee may award an interim grant during times of natural disasters/global pandemics when a physical site visit cannot take place as conditions for evaluators are identified as high risk.

**Initial (Site Visit) Decision Grant Matrix Flow Chart**

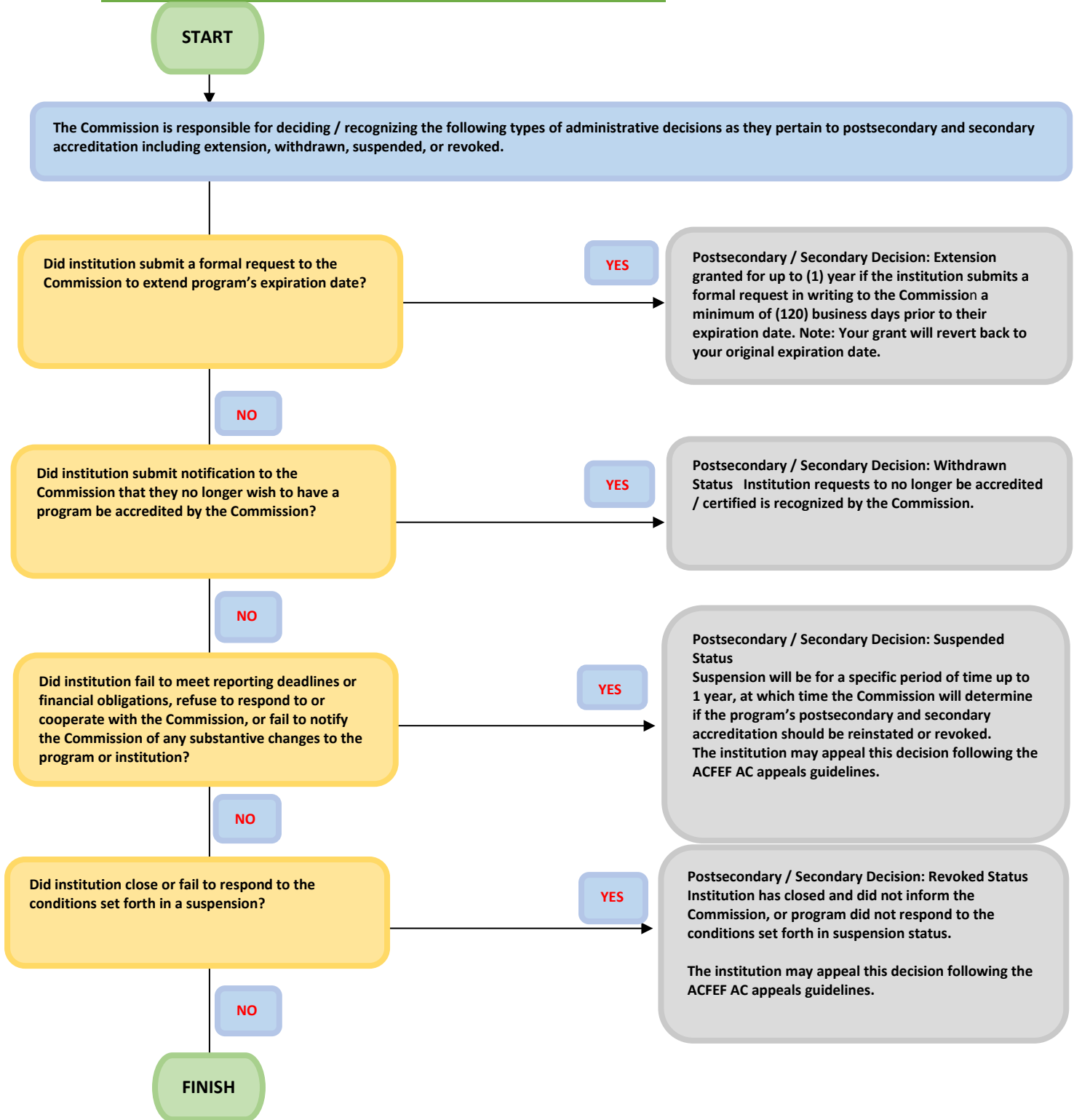




**Renewal (Site Visit) Decision Grant Matrix Flow Chart**



**Administrative (Non- Site Visit) Decision Matrix Flow Chart**



### Interim Grant Process for Extenuating Circumstances

The Commission will award interim grants for renewing applications during times of natural disasters/global pandemics when a physical site visit cannot take place as conditions for evaluators are identified as high risk. The program must be in good standing, with all fees paid, to be eligible.

The Commission Executive Committee will determine if a location is classified as high risk by considering any announcements from the federal or state government and advisement from the local program coordinator.

The Commission Executive Committee will award interim grants in six month increments and can be extended for the duration of the natural disaster/global pandemic as determined by the Executive Committee.

Programs receiving an interim grant will have a physical site visit within six months following the expiration of the interim grant. The renewal date will revert to the expiration date of the interim grant. A processing fee of \$250 will be invoiced and will be applied towards the physical site visit.

Programs requesting an interim grant must submit the following:

- Completed self-study
- Video walkthrough of
  - kitchen areas, to include ware-washing areas
  - pantry/storage areas
  - inside cold storage areas
  - dining room and service areas (if applicable)
- Recording of or remote access to minimum of one classroom lecture and one lab session for observation

The Commission Executive Committee will identify evaluators to review the documentation and complete a modified team report. Programs with no areas of non-compliance will be awarded the interim grant; programs with areas of non-compliance will have 30 days to provide documentation showing compliance. If compliance cannot be verified as requested by the evaluators, the program will be placed in conditional status until a physical site visit can take place.

## **Section X: Notifications to the United States Secretary of Education**

Notification of any Commission action of granting, withholding, suspending, or revoking accreditation of a program will be made in writing within thirty (30) days to the United States Secretary of Education and any other appropriate Institutional Accrediting Agency.

If there is a final decision to withhold, suspend, or revoke accreditation, a summary of the review resulting in the Commission's decision together with the comments of the affected program will be prepared within sixty (60) days of the decision for submission to the United States Secretary of Education and the appropriate Institutional Accrediting Agency. The summary of the action taken, and culinary arts program response will be made available to the public.

The Commission is responsible for the accuracy of any written notification or request for public comment.

The Commission will publish corrections for any errors or misleading information about the accreditation status of a program, the contents of the site visit team report, and its postsecondary and secondary accreditation actions.

## Section XI: Responsibility of the Accredited Program

### Accreditation Fees

Programs seeking ACFEF accreditation will be invoiced with an accreditation fee. The fee includes the application fee, self-study review fee and evaluator travel expenses to include travel by air or car. Programs are responsible to provide hotel accommodations for the evaluation team billed directly to the Institution unless otherwise arranged when a program is unable to be directly billed due to district or institutional policies.

An invoice will be sent to the program coordinator 180 days prior to the site visit. The accreditation fee shall be received in full no later than 60 days (90 days for international) prior to the program's scheduled site visit; upon receipt, the ACFEF accreditation staff will confirm the site visit dates and book travel for the evaluation team. Late payments will be assessed as an additional late fee and/or be subject to site visit cancellation.

### *Policy for Independent Campuses– School or Branch*

An independent campus (school or branch) is defined as a location of an institution that is geographically separate from and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is defined as independent of the main campus if the location:

- Is permanent in nature.
- Teaches programmatic culinary and/or baking and pastry courses and leads to a degree, certificate, or other recognized education credential.
- Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization.
- Has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

### *Multiple School, Branch or Campus Fees*

Accredited programs with more than one location will be invoiced on a tiered level if the program meets the following conditions:

- Secondary and postsecondary schools / programs shall be within a 35-mile radius of each other to take advantage of multiple school site visit reduced fees.
  - Secondary and postsecondary programs within the same geographic location may not be combined, programs must be multiple postsecondary or secondary to be tiered.
  - Accreditation visits for programs with a new program/school and renewing program/school may be combined; the standard fee will apply for the new program, and the renewing school/program shall be considered the second program for invoicing.
- Secondary locations must have the same curriculum, rubric, policies, and director as the primary location.
- Program assessment is accomplished by one accreditation team, not to exceed three programs in one week.
  - Programs with locations greater than three shall contact the ACFEF accreditation staff for guidance.

The accreditation fee includes the application fee, self-study review, and evaluators' travel expenses.

<b>Programs with Multiple Locations</b>	
<b>Postsecondary School Accreditation Fee</b>	<b>Secondary School Accreditation Fee</b>
\$4,500 - Renewing Schools	\$2,500 - Renewing Schools
\$7,750 - Two Locations	\$4,250 - Two Locations
\$10,500 - Three Locations	\$6,000 - Three Locations
The above fees do not include these services and products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel accommodations will be directly billed to the program by the hotel.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirmation number for each evaluator due 30 days prior to site visit.</li> <li>○ Evaluators are responsible for their own incidentals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

### **Domestic School Accreditation Fees**

Accreditation fees include the application fee, self-study, and most of evaluators' travel expenses.

\*Required Knowledge and Skills Competencies (RKC's) are proprietary to the ACFEF AC.

<b>Postsecondary School Accreditation Fee</b>	<b>Secondary School Accreditation Fee</b>
\$4,500 - Renewing Schools	\$2,500 - Renewing Schools
\$5,250 - New Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$4,500 Accreditation Fee</li> <li>• \$750 RKC's Documents Fee*</li> <li>• \$250 Each Additional Program</li> </ul>	\$3,000 – New Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2,500 Accreditation Fee</li> <li>• \$500 RKC's Documents Fee*</li> <li>• \$250 Each Additional Program</li> </ul>
The above fees do not include these services and products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel accommodations will be directly billed to the program by the hotel.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirmation number for each evaluator due 30 days prior to site visit</li> <li>○ Evaluators are responsible for their own incidentals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

### **Billing**

- The accreditation fee invoices will be sent to the school 120 days prior to the site visit. The school must pay the invoice in full no later than 60 days prior to the school's scheduled site visit (late payments will be assessed a late fee and/or be subject to site visit cancellation).

### **Site Visit Cancellation Fees:**

- Programs that cancel a scheduled site visit within 60 days of the visit will be assessed a \$500 cancellation fee.
- Programs that defer or postpone a scheduled site visit outside the scheduled calendar year within 60 days of the scheduled site visit will be assessed a \$500 change fee.
- Programs that reschedule a visit within the calendar year will be assessed a \$250 change fee.

- Site visit renewal extension requests are assessed a \$100 fee (extensions require Commission approval).
- Programs that cancel, defer, or reschedule will be responsible for airline change fees for each traveler.

#### **Annual Fees:**

- Annual fees are invoiced in November of each year.
- Secondary schools: \$375 for the first program, \$175 for each additional program.
- Postsecondary schools: \$925 for the first program, \$675 for each additional program.

#### **Late Fees:**

- A late fee of \$250.00 will be assessed for the late submission of the self-study, the annual fee, and/or any other Commission related submissions with deadlines.

#### **Other Fees:**

- \$50.00 for a duplicate or replacement certificate.

*All fees are non-refundable. Per ACF's policy, we do not accept purchase orders. Payments are to be made by check, credit card or money order. For any questions, please contact the ACF national office at 800-624-9458 ext. 235.*

### **International Standards and Policies & Procedures**

International specific standards can be found within the self-study. International programs with questions related to documentation requirements within the self-study shall contact the ACF accreditation staff or their assigned lead evaluator for clarity.

International programs are required to adhere to all ACFEF AC policies and procedures as identified within this document, as well as the additional requirements found below.

1. **International Standards and Required Knowledge and Skills Competencies** - International institutions will be required to comply with the same ACFEF AC Standards and Required Knowledge and Skills Competencies as identified within the program standards.
2. **International Administrative Fee** - Refer to the ACFEF AC policies and procedures for international accreditation fees.
3. **Pre-Payment for International Travel** - International programs are required to pay the accreditation flat fee through wire transfer a minimum of ninety (90) business days prior to ACFEF site visit. ACFEF will provide the bank account numbers and SWIFT/BIC codes as needed for all international wire transfers.
4. **Time Zone Difference** - International institutions with a (4) hour (+/-) time zone difference than Eastern Standard Time will require an additional 1- or 2-day extension based on travel availability.

The institution will assume the additional cost of accommodations.

5. **Visa and Other Entry Fees** - Should a visa or other country entry fees be required by the country where the institution resides, those costs will be in addition to the accreditation fee and will be billed for reimbursement. International site visit team members will provide documentation of a valid passport 90 days prior to the scheduled site visit, and the passport expiration date must extend a minimum of 60 days after the scheduled visit in case of last-minute travel changes. Passport fees are not a reimbursable expense.
6. **Currency** - All expenses will be calculated and reimbursed in U.S. dollars.

### International School Fees

The accreditation fee invoice includes the application fee, self-study review, and most of the evaluators' travel expenses.

\*Required Knowledge and Skills Competencies (RKC's) are proprietary to the ACFEF AC.

<b><u>International Postsecondary School Accreditation</u></b>	<b><u>International Secondary School Accreditation</u></b>
\$7,500 - Renewing Schools	\$6,500 - Renewing Schools
\$8,250 - New Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$7,500 Accreditation Fee</li> <li>• \$750 RKC's Documents Fee*</li> <li>• \$250 Each Additional Program</li> </ul>	\$7,000 – New Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6,500 Accreditation Fee</li> <li>• \$500 RKC's Documents Fee*</li> <li>• \$250 Each Additional Program</li> </ul>
The international policy does not include these services and products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Hotel Accommodations: Hotel costs will be directly billed to the program by the hotel                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirmation number for each evaluator due 30 days prior to arrival</li> <li>○ Evaluators are responsible for their own incidentals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Local Transportation: Program coordinator is required to provide transportation to/from local in-country airport, hotel, and school locations during the official visit</li> <li>• Visas or other country entry fees</li> <li>• Translator as needed</li> </ul>	
Please note these international specific site visit policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits are 5 days to allow for international travel.</li> <li>• Accreditation fees are to be paid in full prior to scheduling site visits.</li> </ul>	

### **Billing**

- The accreditation fee invoice will be sent to the school 120 days prior to the site visit. The school must pay the invoice in full no later than 90 days prior to the school's scheduled site visit (late payments will be assessed a late fee and/or be subject to site visit cancellation).



### Site Visit Cancellation Fees:

- Programs that cancel a scheduled site visit within 90 days of visit will be assessed a \$500 cancellation fee.
- Programs that defer or postpone a scheduled site visit outside of the scheduled year within 90 days of the scheduled site visit will be assessed a \$500 change fee.
- Programs that reschedule a site visit within the calendar year will be assessed a \$250 change fee.
- Site Visit renewal extension requests are assessed a \$100.00 fee (extensions require Commission approval).
- Programs that cancel, defer, or reschedule will be responsible for airline change fees for each traveler.

### Annual Fees:

- Annual fees are invoiced in November of each year.
- Secondary schools: \$375 for the first Program, \$175 for each additional program.
- Postsecondary schools: \$925 for first program, \$675 for each additional program.

### Late Fees:

- A late fee of \$250.00 will be assessed for late submission of the self-study, the annual fee, and/or any other Commission related submissions with deadlines.

### Other Fees:

- \$50.00 for a duplicate or replacement certificate.

*All fees are non-refundable. Per ACF's policy we do not accept purchase orders. Payments must be made by credit card or money order. For any questions, please contact the ACF national office at 800-624-9458 ext. 235.*

### Annual Program Update (Formerly Annual Report)

The annual program update communicates to the Commission any substantial changes which have occurred in the program. Changes include but are not limited to leadership and personnel changes, point of contact information, student/faculty ratios, major course changes, new course/program titles, discontinued programs, etc.

- An annual program update is required by all ACFEF accredited postsecondary and secondary programs each year, regardless if the school is scheduled for a site visit. Programs with an accreditation visit scheduled or completed within the year are required to submit an annual program update.
- The annual program update is submitted electronically and is due no later than April 30 each year, but may be submitted any time prior.
- The date the update is received will serve as the official submission date. Should the due date fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the official due date will move to the next business day.

### ***Late Annual Program Update***

If the annual program update is received after May 1:

- A \$150 late fee will be imposed, and
- The ACFEF accredited postsecondary and secondary program(s) shall be removed from the ACF accreditation website and placed in suspended status until the annual program update is received.

The program will be returned to the ACF accreditation website and accreditation status changed to “approved” upon receipt of both the annual program update and the late fee payment.

### ***Annual Program Update Exemptions***

- Programs may be considered exempt for special circumstances approved by the Commission Executive Committee. Exemption requests shall be made electronically and received by February 1 for the year of request for consideration with a decision provided by February 14.
- Discontinued programs or programs closing in the year the annual program update is due are still required to file for the previous year but are not required to file the following year.

### **Self-Study Oversight:**

The self-study is an assessment of the institution’s program as it relates to the ACFEF accreditation standards. The program coordinator will compile, verify, and submit the self-study. All documents submitted to the Commission shall be attested to be accurate, truthful and are the responsibility of the program coordinator representing the educational institution.

### **Special Visits**

The Commission reserves the right to conduct special visits and/or request specific reports from a program at any time. These shall be under conditions within a time frame to be decided by the Commission / Committee. Refusal by a program to respond to or cooperate with such requests shall be grounds for suspension, revocation, or conditioning of its accreditation and so noted within the ACF website.

### **Advertising of Postsecondary and Secondary Accreditation**

A program may advertise its accreditation status only after accreditation is granted by the Commission / Committee, and the program coordinator has been officially notified by the ACFEF accreditation staff. It may be listed as “Accredited Program, American Culinary Federation Education Foundation, Inc. Accrediting Commission” or “Accredited Program, ACFEF Accrediting Commission.” A program may also say the ACFEF Accrediting Commission / Committee accredits the program.

### **Advance Notice of Substantive Changes**

Substantive change is defined as:

- any change to institutional accreditation or licensure.
- any change in the type or length of the program offered.

- any change in the method used by an institution to describe its program length in terms of credential awarded.
- any change in the graduation requirements.
- changes in program director.
- new locations or facilities.
- major coursework changes.
- change in ownership.

An accredited program with planned substantive change shall notify the Commission / Committee of the proposed changes in writing sixty (60) days in advance of the change. An accredited program that experiences unexpected or unanticipated substantive change shall notify the Commission as soon as they are notified. The Commission should be advised as far in advance as possible as to the change going into effect. The Commission will review and provide their response in writing and identify the potential impact of the proposed change.

Change notification will include a description of the changes, the impact(s) to the program and updated points of contact to include Program Coordinator, Lead, or Senior Instructor for the accredited program.

The substantive change notification form is available on the ACF website at [www.acfchefs.org/accreditation](http://www.acfchefs.org/accreditation). A copy of the institutional accreditor's approval letter should be submitted to the Commission and will be placed in the program's file.

The Commission will respond to the proposed changes within (60) business days based on either a meeting of the Executive Committee or the full Commission / Committee.

### Change in Institutional Accreditation or State Licensure Status

An accredited program must notify the Commission within (30) days of denial, suspension, revocation, probation, or other adverse action affecting the accreditation status of the institution.

An accredited program must notify the Commission within (30) days of any state agency attempting to withdraw authorization or licensure of the program or institution.

Failure to comply will be grounds for suspension, revocation, or conditioning of its ACFEF Accreditation.

### Student Grievances

If a student files a grievance with the accredited program and is dissatisfied with the program's response to the complaint, the program must inform the student of the ACFEF AC's grievance policy detailed within these policies and procedures.

## Section XII: Appeals Procedures

Programs are entitled to appeal determinations made by the Commission regarding accreditation and/or reaccreditation decisions. All first and second level appeals shall be submitted in writing by registered mail to ensure proper tracking and compliance with timelines. Appeals shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The rules of evidence shall not apply and there shall be no witnesses, cross-examination, or other attributes of a trial.

### First Level Appeal

Date	Action	Responsibility
Day 1	An appeal will be made to the ACFEF AC Appeals Subcommittee within thirty (30) days of receiving the Commission decision on accreditation status. The written appeal must include the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials and current contact information.	Appellant
By Day 30	The appeal shall be considered and reviewed by the Commission Appeals Subcommittee within thirty (30) days of receipt. The subcommittee will review the appeal and may conduct an investigation through reasonable means.	Commission Appeals Committee
By Day 45	The Commission Appeals Subcommittee office liaison will notify the Commission in writing within fourteen (14) days from the Appeals Subcommittee determination. The written summary of the Appeals Subcommittee determination will include the reason for the decision and advise the program of the second level appeal option.  Confidentiality will be maintained unless otherwise advised by legal counsel. The decision of the subcommittee shall be based on majority vote of committee members.  The program is not permitted to contact the subcommittee in any fashion. The Commission Appeals Subcommittee Chair shall make all procedural decisions with advice from staff and/or legal counsel.	Commission Appeals Committee / Commission
By Day 60	The ACFEF accreditation staff will provide the Appeals Subcommittee decision to the program by email followed by a hard copy of the decision by USPS.	ACFEF Accreditation Staff

### Appeal Determination Affecting Others

Should the Commission Appeals Subcommittee grant an appeal on an issue that impacts the eligibility status of a program, a review or regrading of those potentially impacted shall automatically be conducted by the Commission, which may take remedial action at its discretion. The Commission staff liaison will notify the individuals affected by any such action.

### Second Level Appeal Review and Determination

The appellant shall have thirty (30) days from receipt of the Appeals Subcommittee determination to file a second level written appeal with the Commission. The second level written appeal must include the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials and current contact information.

Date	Action	Responsibility
Day 1	The appellant shall have thirty (30) days from receipt of the Appeals Subcommittee determination to file a second level written appeal with the Commission. The written appeal must include the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials and current contact information.	Appellant
By Day 30	<p>A second level appeal shall be reviewed, and a decision rendered within thirty (30) days of receipt of the second appeal by the Accrediting Commission Executive Committee.</p> <p>The Executive Committee shall only review whether the determination of the Appeals Subcommittee was valid because of 1) material errors of fact or 2) failure of the Commission Appeals Subcommittee to conform to the published criteria, policies, or procedures. Only facts leading up to and including the time of the Appeals Subcommittee determination shall be considered during an appeal.</p> <p>The Executive Committee shall make all procedural decisions with advice from staff and/or legal counsel. The Accrediting Commission Executive Committee's determination is final.</p>	Executive Committee
By Day 45	The Commission membership shall be advised of the decision prior to notifying the Program Coordinator.	Commission
By Day 60	Program Coordinator will be notified by registered mail of the final decision.	ACFEF Accreditation Staff

### Section XIII: Grievance Policy and Procedures

The Commission will only consider and act upon a written grievance against an accredited program that demonstrates:

1. Accredited program's non-compliance with the ACFEF AC standards.
2. Accredited program's non-compliance with ACFEF AC policy.
3. Accredited program's non-compliance with its own published policy as said policy relates to the ACFEF AC standards.

The Commission will only consider and act upon written grievance against the Commission or site visit team that demonstrates:

1. Improper assessment against an ACFEF AC accreditation standard.
2. Actions or behavior by a site visit accreditation team or team member that violates the Accreditation Commission's code of conduct, sexual or personal harassment policy towards students, administration, or staff.
3. Action or behavior by a Commission member that violates the Accreditation Commission's code of conduct, sexual or personal harassment policy.

The Commission will not consider a grievance, respond to, or act on any of the following:

1. Personal issues such as, but not limited to, admission; grades; granting or transferability of credits; or application of academic policies.
2. Anonymous grievances or those filed by friends or family on behalf of a student.
3. Fees or other financial matters.
4. Disciplinary matters, contractual rights, obligations, or collective bargaining disputes.
5. Hiring or dismissing personnel decisions, or similar matters.
6. Compensation, damages, readmission, or other redress on a given individual's behalf.
7. Any complaint that is defamatory, hostile, or profane, nor will it accept complaints about individuals.

#### Document Retention

1. The Commission will hold records of single complaints on file for five (5) years.
2. If more than one individual complaint suggests a pattern of concern not evident from any single complaint, the Commission may renew its consideration of the matter for whatever action may be appropriate.
3. The Commission expects an individual to attempt resolution through the institution's own published grievance policy and procedures before submitting a complaint to the Commission. An individual must use all available grievance opportunities and means of appeal within the institution before filing a complaint with the Commission.
  - a. A filed grievance shall be accompanied by documentation of an attempt to resolve within the institution's policy and procedures.
4. The Commission will not consider a complaint while proceedings or litigation are ongoing. However, if the Commission determines the complainant raises issues so urgent that a delay may

jeopardize the program's accreditation status or cause harm to students, the Commission may, at its discretion, choose to proceed with its review.

5. The Commission will not consider or act on a complaint to which such policies/procedures do not apply if it is formally filed with the Commission equal to or greater than one (1) year after the circumstances leading to the complaint.

### Submitting Grievance

1. All grievances are presented to the Commission using the ACFEF AC grievance form.  
<https://form.jotform.com/232404022240234>
  - a. The grievance must contain details of the alleged activities; the basis for the complainant's knowledge of these activities; names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all persons involved or who might have knowledge of the activities; and whether the complaint has been submitted to a court or an administrative body.
2. The Commission will not review or act upon anonymous complaints, nor will it review or act upon complaints submitted by an individual or agency on behalf of another individual. For example, the Commission will not review or act upon a complaint from a parent, spouse, child, sibling, co-worker, or friend of a complainant, nor from an attorney.
3. The Commission must be the original intended recipient of the complaint and will not review or act upon complaints that are forwarded to the Commission.
4. The Commission will not accept or discuss complaints via telephone. The Commission will only confirm receipt of the grievance by mail, express carrier, or email.
5. All written materials, including the grievance form, the required supporting documentation, and any other printed materials, must be presented in English. All documentation is uploaded via the online form.

### Accreditation Grievance Decision Procedure

1. The Commission Executive Committee will acknowledge a complaint within 5 days of receipt.
2. Within 10 days after acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the Commission Executive Committee will review the complaint and determine if the complaint is valid and actionable. The complainant shall also be notified that the complaint is being reviewed, but the complainant is not notified of the results unless the complaint is dismissed, or public disciplinary action is taken.
3. If the grievance complaint does not have sufficient evidence to warrant further review, the Commission Executive Committee will inform the complainant in writing in a timely manner.
4. If the complaint has sufficient evidence to warrant further review, the Commission Executive Committee will make every effort to expedite its review; however, the time required to conduct its review may vary considerably depending on the circumstances and nature of the grievance.
5. The notice will be sent from the ACFEF accreditation staff via certified mail, return-receipt requested email or other verifiable means of delivery. The respondent will be sent a summary of the complaint, the ACF Code of Ethics, a copy of these procedures, and a response form.
6. The respondent will have thirty (30) days from receipt of the notification in which to submit a written response. The response must be signed by the respondent.
7. If the Commission Executive Committee does not receive a response, the Commission Chair, or designee, will attempt to contact the respondent by telephone. If contact with the respondent is

still not made, a certified written notice will be sent. Failure to reach the respondent will not prevent a Review Panel from proceeding with the investigation or reaching a decision.

8. The Commission Executive Committee shall appoint an Independent Review Panel whose membership consists of site visit evaluators, commission members and or members from other committees within ACF EF to investigate and make an appropriate determination with respect to valid and actionable complaints. No one with a conflict of interest shall participate in the Review Panel. The Commission Executive Committee exercises general supervision over all investigations but may not influence the final outcome. Confidentiality will be maintained unless otherwise required by law or upon the advice of legal counsel.
9. The Review Panel shall notify the Commission Executive Committee of their determination within 14 days. The Commission Executive Committee shall notify the respondent of the decision. The notice will be sent from the Commission staff via certified mail, return-receipt requested email or other verifiable means of delivery.
10. The respondent shall have 30 days from receipt of the final decision to appeal. The written appeal must include the stated appeal, the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials. The Commission Executive Committee shall only review whether the determination of the Review Panel was inappropriate because of 1) material errors of fact, or 2) failure of the Review Panel to conform to the policies and procedures or 3) gross negligence or undue influence of the decision-making process by the Executive Committee.
  - i. In the event of any finding related to the above, a new review panel will be appointed and overseen by the ACF EF Chair with additional oversight provided by the Director of Operations or the Director of Culinary Programs if required

### Removing an Accreditation Commission Member or Site Visit Evaluator

A commission member or evaluator serves the Commission, the programs, the ACFEF and the ACF's general membership. As a result, commission members must represent the commission in a respectful and professional manner in their official capacity when on official Commission business.

A member or evaluator may be removed from the Commission or evaluator list for varied reasons (listed below) only after an official investigation has concluded and an official vote by commission leadership is recorded. A vote of two thirds to remove must be recorded.

Commission members or evaluators may be removed for any reason related to the list below:

1. Violation of the ACF code of conduct.
2. Violation of the ACF code of ethics or the ACFEF AC Canon of Ethics.
3. Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of anyone associated with the Commission.
4. Willful damage to property.
5. Pilfering property or documents from the Commission or its programs without express written permission from its titleholder.
6. Financial gain or quid pro quo greater than \$1.00.

If a grievance is filed against a commission member, site visit team or one of its individual members, they are entitled to an investigation by the grievance committee within the timeline identified within this document.



Any commission member or evaluator with a team or individual grievance file is suspended from all activity within the Commission until the grievance investigation is complete. Travel plans for team site visits or commission meetings a member is scheduled to attend will be cancelled and the team member will be replaced until the conclusion of the grievance at no personal expense to the member. Any expenses incurred per the ACF travel policy prior to suspension by the member will be reimbursed.

If a commission member or evaluator has a grievance filed against them and they are found to be guilty of the grievance, a commission member or evaluator may be removed from the commission and approved evaluator list depending on the level of grievance and the outcome of the grievance committee.

If a grievance is found to be true based on the investigation and conclusion of the grievance committee the following actions may be taken based on the level of severity of the grievance.

#### **Severe:**

A commission member or approved evaluator is removed from all activity within the ACFEF, the issue is reported to the ACF President, the American Academy of Chef's Chair and the member's local chapter president.

- Extreme unprofessional behavior misrepresenting ACFEF or ACF.
- Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment or abuse.
- Willful damage to property in conjunction with official Commission business
- Financial gain or bribery greater than \$500.00 in conjunction with official Commission business.

#### **Moderate:**

A commission member or approved evaluator may be suspended for up to 6 months of activity within the ACFEF, requires additional training on site visit policy and procedures, on probation for up to two site visits with a qualified lead and/or office staff prior to reinstatement to the approved evaluator list. If the member is a team lead, the member may be suspended from all team lead activity for up to 12 months and must accompany a qualified team lead on two site visits prior to reinstatement.

- Unprofessional behavior misrepresenting the Commission /Federation
- Damage to property in conjunction with official Commission business

#### **Light:**

A commission member or approved evaluator may be required to take additional trainings on site visit policy and procedures and may be placed on probation for up to one site visit. The evaluator will need to go on his/her next site visit with a qualified lead and/or office staff. If the member is a team lead, the member will be required to take additional training and must accompany a qualified team lead on one site visit prior to reinstatement as a team lead.

Revisions Approved	Revisions Completed/Reviewed By	Comments/Completed Date
10/21/2019	M. Harants and K. Shugart	11/02/2019
11/14/2019	K. Roberts and S. Taylor	
11/26/19	M. Harants, K. Roberts, S. Taylor	
12/2/2019	S. Taylor	
12/10/2019	K. Roberts	
1/28/2020	S. Taylor	
2/25/2020	S. Taylor	
07/15/2021	M. Whitfield	07/31/2021
01/25/2022	D. Nagy-Baldwin/M. Whitfield	02/15/2022 (e-vote)
7/24/2022	D. Nagy-Baldwin/M. Whitfield	Section XI: added Self-Study Oversight section
8/31/2023	M.Harants/M. Whitfield	Added clarification to Roles and Responsibilities of Commission Members/Site Visit Team; added Meetings section; clarified Grievance policy