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Information Systems Accreditation: A New Criteria Structure and New Flexibility

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ABSTRACT

The Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC) has proposed changes in the structure of the criteria used to accredit information systems programs. The new structure combines so-called “general criteria,” criteria that apply to *any* computing program, and additional program criteria that apply to IS, IT, or CS programs. This new format allows an emerging-computing-discipline (e.g., bioinformatics) program to apply for accreditation under the general criteria while the discipline matures to where model curricula develop. This new format begins to move criteria documents to outcome based statements. This session will discuss the new criteria structure, including the proposed general and program criteria, and the timetable for implementation of the new structure. Time will be devoted to Q&A regarding any aspect of IS program accreditation. The session will also discuss accrediting IS programs, overview the IS accreditation criteria and processes, discuss the pros and cons of accrediting IS programs, and review the internal and external steps of the process, identifying bottlenecks and problems and suggesting solutions.

Keywords

Accreditation, standardization, information technology, information systems.

SESSION OVERVIEW

It is important that the IS community be aware of these new developments and have the opportunity to provide feedback during the review and comment period. Thus, the objective of this session is to inform, discuss and obtain feedback about the new criteria structure, including the proposed general and program criteria and the timetable for implementation of the new structure.

The session organization follows:

- a. New criteria format and proposed general criteria
- b. Proposed program criteria for IS
- c. Proposed program criteria for IT
- d. Proposed timetable for implementation
- e. Accrediting IS Programs: Pros, Cons, Processes and Commitments
- f. Discussion

The intended audience for this session includes faculty from accredited information systems programs, faculty from information systems programs that are not currently accredited but are considering or otherwise interested in accreditation, and faculty from all other computing programs such as in information technology that are considering or otherwise interested in accreditation.

The session is important because the new criteria structure is very different from the current criteria structure.

The session will explain the new structure and the reasons for the new format. It will explain the general criteria as published for review and comment, and the proposed program criterion in the areas of information systems and information technology. Feedback on both general and program criteria will be sought as part of the discussion in the session. The timetable and transition plan proposed for instituting the new criteria will be explained. The presenters will discuss accrediting IS programs, overview the IS accreditation criteria and processes, discuss the pros and cons of accrediting IS programs, and review the internal and external steps of the process, identifying bottlenecks and problems and suggesting solutions.