
The Background Screening Credentialing Council (BSCC) has drafted the following accreditation tip for the US Employment Screening / General Background Screening BSOAP Standard, this tip applies to US Version 2.0, 3.0 and General Version 1.0. This response is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice, express or implied of the BSCC, or the Professional Background Screening Association. Consultation with legal counsel is recommended in all matters of employment law.

For the purposes of this Tip, and to ensure our response applies to both Standards, the terms Organization and CRA may both be used.

TITLE: Clause 5.3 – Accredited Academic Institutions

Clause 5.3 US Standards V2 and V3: Organization must have and follow procedures to inform client when post-secondary academic institutions are not accredited by an accrediting body recognized by U.S. Department of Education, Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), similar U.S. body, or comparable global body, if reasonably available, for academic institutions outside the U.S.

Clause 5.3 General Standard V1: Organization must have and follow procedures to inform client what steps have been taken to authenticate the institution itself. The procedures must also include steps to verify the accuracy of the information provided against the details provided by the subject and to flag any concerns which may exist with the information obtained or the institution from which it was obtained. If an institution is suspected of being a diploma mill or otherwise suspect in their operations, clients should be directed to verify the legitimacy of same.

While accreditation status may be one method of assessing institutional legitimacy, organizations operating under the General Standard should also ensure they can demonstrate the steps taken to authenticate the institution and identify indicators that may suggest the institution is a diploma mill or otherwise suspect.

A **Non-Conformity** under Clause 5.3 may be identified when organizational workers:

- Do not know how to use an authoritative source to verify accreditation status;
- Apply accreditation verification procedures selectively or inconsistently;
- Fail to notify client when the academic institution cannot be confirmed as accredited by an authoritative source.

Organizations may find it helpful to provide workers responsible for academic verifications with training or reference materials regarding accreditation sources and to maintain documentation consistent with organizational policies and procedures.

For example, an organization may verify accreditation through sources such as the U.S. Department of Education database, CHEA resources, a state education department, or a comparable global authority, as applicable. When accreditation cannot be confirmed through an authoritative source, the organization should follow its procedures for notifying the client.

The Audit Criteria for Clause 5.3 provides:

*[US Standard] Organization workers responsible for verification of academic credentials must **demonstrate knowledge of accrediting bodies** and describe methodology by which they learn how to confirm accreditation status of academic institutions. **Methods used** to reasonably ensure legitimacy of accrediting body include, but are not limited to confirmation using: 1) U.S. Department of Education, 2) the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 3) state education departments, 4) similar U.S. body, and/or comparable global body, if reasonably available, for academic institutions outside the U.S. Auditor will seek evidence of adherence to policies and procedures, which may include training records.*

*Organization must provide policy or procedure used to reasonably ensure accreditation status of post-secondary academic institution and **to inform client** when any academic institution submitted for verification **is not accredited** by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, CHEA, similar U.S. body, or comparable global body, if reasonably available, for academic institutions outside the U.S.*

*[General Standard]: Organization workers responsible for verification of academic credentials must **demonstrate knowledge of accrediting bodies** and describe methodology by which they learn how to confirm accreditation status of academic institutions. **Methods used** to reasonably ensure legitimacy of accrediting body include, but are not limited to confirmation using: comparable global body, if reasonably available. Auditor will seek evidence of adherence to policies and procedures, which may include training records.*

*Organization must provide policy or procedure used to reasonably ensure accreditation status of post-secondary academic institution and **to inform client** when any academic institution submitted for verification **is not accredited** by an accrediting body recognized by the country.*

Organizations may wish to evaluate whether their accreditation verification procedures, worker resources, and related documentation align with the expectations outlined in Clause 5.3 and the associated Audit Criteria. We hope the above provides further information and clarification regarding Clause 5.3 and assists organizations in preparing for accreditation and ongoing compliance activities.