

# An Introduction to ABET

The Essential Facts  
Computer Science  
University of Wyoming

# Accreditation: The Basics

- In the U.S., accreditation is a non-governmental, peer-review process
- To assure quality of postsecondary education
- Two Types
  - Institutional
    - e.g. regional accreditation of colleges and universities
  - Specialized
    - specific programs of study

Ref: [http://www.abet.org/the\\_basics.shtml](http://www.abet.org/the_basics.shtml)

# What is ABET Accreditation?

- Specialized accreditation
  - Applied science, computing, engineering, technology
- “ABET accredits programs only, not degrees, departments, colleges or institutions.”

# Who Sets ABET Quality Standards?

- The ABET professions themselves
- Many different professional and technical societies
  - Develop the standards
  - Provide the professionals who evaluate programs

# Why is ABET Accreditation Important?

- Help students/parents select quality programs
- Enables employers to recruit well-prepared graduates
- Used by registration, licensure, and certification boards to screen candidates
- Provides a structured mechanism to assess, evaluate, and improve programs

# The ABET Accreditation Process

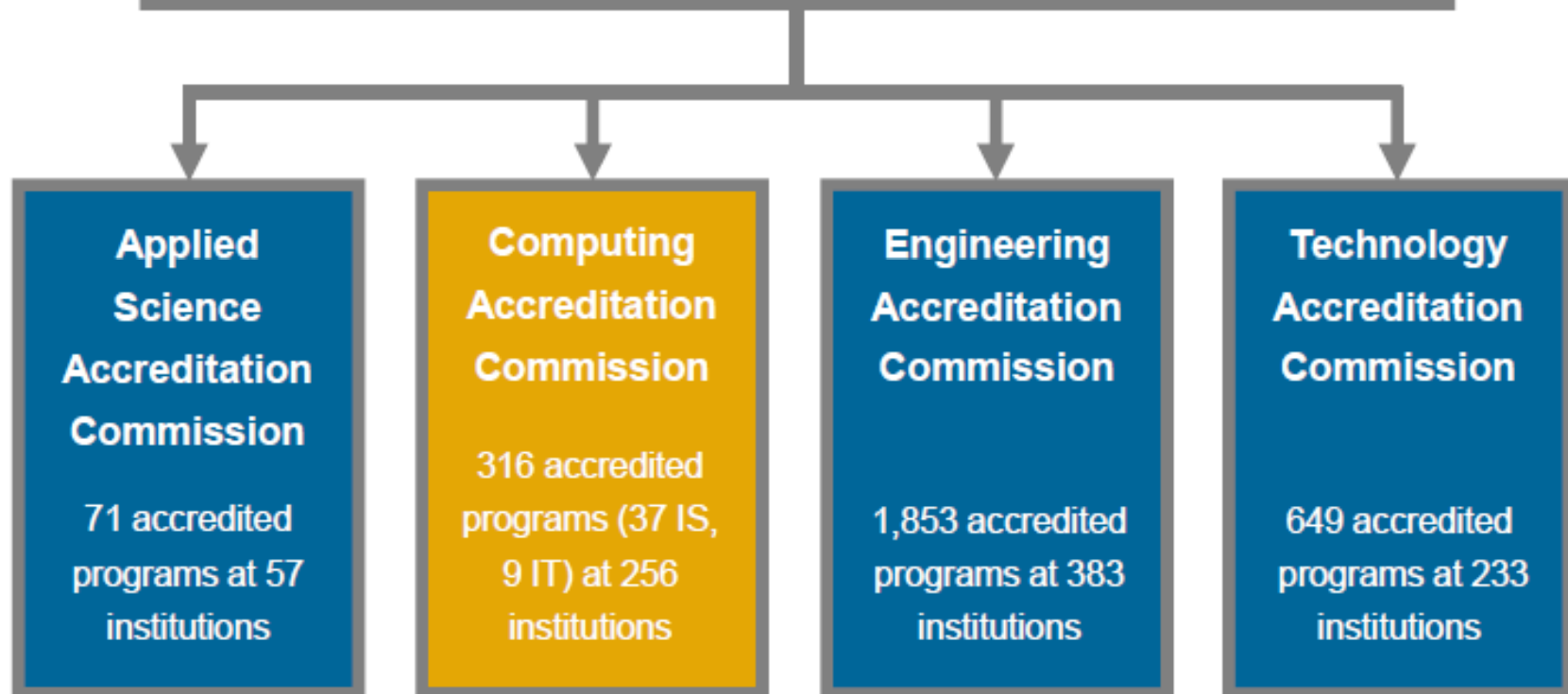
- Institution requests an evaluation of program(s)
- Each program completes a self-study questionnaire
- Appropriate ABET commission forms an evaluation team
- Evaluation team reviews self-study and conducts on-campus visit
- Evaluation team provides written report
- Commission meets annually to review reports, recommended action, make final decision
- Accreditation is granted for a maximum of six years.

# More Specifics of ABET

- ABET's Four Accreditation Commissions
  - ASAC (Applied Science Accreditation Commission)
  - CAC (Computing Accreditation Commission)
  - EAC (Engineering Accreditation Commission)
  - TAC (Technology Accreditation Commission)
- As of October 2008, accredits ~2800 programs at ~600 colleges and universities.
- Accreditation requires one graduate at least.

ABET: Information for Programs Seeking Initial Accreditation:  
Answers to Frequently-Asked-Questions

# ABET Board of Directors





# Timeline of Typical General Review

- Request for Evaluation: January 31 of review year
- Invoice of visit fees: May 1 (team chair identified mid May)
- Self-study delivered to ABET: July 1
- Program evaluator(s) chosen: late July
- Institutional representatives orientation: usually July
- Visit date negotiable: September thru December
- Evaluation team visit
  - Team arrives Saturday or Sunday, preview Sunday
  - Visit Monday and Tuesday, exit interview with officials, Program Audit Form
  - Seven-day period for institution to respond to “errors of fact”
- Draft Statement prepared by team chair: few months later
  - Institution has 30-day “due process response period”
- Final Statement prepared
  - Reviewed at commission annual meeting: July (next year)
- Final accreditation action: August (next year)

# CSAB, Inc.

(Formerly the Computing Sciences Accreditation Board, Inc.)

- The ABET “society” for computing accreditation
- A federation of ACM, IEEE-CS, and possibly others
- Lead ABET society for Computer Science, Information Systems, Information Technology, and Software Engineering
- Cooperating society for Computer Engineering
- Develops program-specific accreditation criteria for lead society programs



# CAC General Criteria

- Criterion 1. Students
- Criterion 2. Program Educational Objectives
- Criterion 3. Program Outcomes
- Criterion 4. Continuous Improvement
- Criterion 5. Curriculum
- Criterion 6. Faculty
- Criterion 7. Facilities
- Criterion 8. Support
- Criterion 9. Program Criteria

# Criteria Compliance / Review Results / “Satisfied” vs. “Shortcomings”

- An accredited program must meet the intent of each criterion
  - If a program doesn’t meet the intent, it has a deficiency (either Not to Accredit or SC)
  - If a program meets the intent but lacks strength of compliance, it has a weakness (impacts term)
  - If a program meets the intent but observations indicate a potential for non-satisfaction in the future, there can be a concern (doesn’t impact term)

# Accreditation Actions

		<u>Typical Duration (yrs)</u>
NGR	Next General Review	6
IR	Interim Report	2
IV	Interim Visit	2
SC	Show Cause	2
RE	Report Extended	2 or 4
VE	Visit Extended	2 or 4
SE	Show Cause Extended	1-5
NA	Not to Accredit	—

