

AED Foundation Accreditation College Diesel/Equipment Technology Programs

*Student Career Success Through
Excellence in Technical Education*



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The AED Foundation Accreditation Program Diesel/Equipment Technology

Who are AED and The AED Foundation?

The AED Foundation is an affiliate of Associated Equipment Distributors (AED), based in Schaumburg, IL. Established in 1919, AED is an international trade association of the construction equipment industry, representing over 700 companies that sell, rent, service, manufacture and support equipment used in construction and construction-related industries. AED has served the industry for more than nine decades.

Founded in 1991, The AED Foundation supports AED's overall mission by providing professional education and workforce development services for the construction equipment industry.

Why was AED Foundation Accreditation for College Diesel/Equipment Programs Developed?

Prior to The AED Foundation's initiative, no non-OEM industry accreditation or certification program was available for college degree programs in construction diesel/equipment technology. Colleges lacked a comprehensive set of industry-developed technical standards that would define what skills and knowledge students should master by graduation. This also made establishing the linkages between industry needs and colleges' curriculums and courses problematic.

Conversely, there was no sure way for employers in the heavy equipment industry to know whether a post-secondary school with a diesel/equipment technology program was sufficiently preparing students for jobs and careers in this field. Surveys by The AED Foundation showed that employers ranked some schools as excellent. Others were graded as fair or poor. However, too frequently these evaluations were highly

subjective; based on employers' individual experiences, anecdotal evidence, and personal perceptions of a school's overall reputation.

The AED Foundation's Technical Training Committee decided that more than circumstantial evidence was needed to evaluate the effectiveness of these schools. Furthermore, evaluation based on a standard set of criteria was needed to objectively evaluate programs' teaching effectiveness and quality.

Other reasons included concern that: students get the top-quality technical education they pay for; technical programs follow a "continuous improvement" model as the industry evolves; resources and funding have become scarcer for technical programs; there is a need for college diesel/equipment program benchmarking, and local equipment industry dealers need to partner with and support local technical colleges to achieve the above.

This accreditation program facilitates relationships between AED, The AED Foundation, AED member dealers, AED Accredited schools and the broader industry; a unified effort makes participants more effective in addressing industry challenges. It's a "Win, Win" for all involved.

How were The AED Foundation's Post-Secondary Technical Standards Developed and by Whom?

The AED Foundation Technical Training Committee, via a Task Force initiative, with broad industry representation from dealers, educators and manufacturers, established the "**Standards for Construction Equipment Technology.**" As an accreditation program "living document," the "Standards" are updated every three years by task forces representing the same industry segments mentioned above. The

ongoing effort truly is “**of the industry; for the industry!**”

The Standards are in fact the “bedrock” of AED Foundation Accreditation; an industry statement of what students should have mastered upon graduation from an AED Foundation Accredited college. They require that technical schools’ curriculum and courses cover all of these technical areas:

- ✓ **Safety/Administrative**
- ✓ **Electronics/Electrical**
- ✓ **Hydraulics/Hydrostatics**
- ✓ **Power Trains**
- ✓ **Diesel Engines & Fuel Systems**
- ✓ **A/C & Heating**

AED Foundation Accreditation validates that applicant colleges offer degree programs that provide effective and comprehensive instruction in the six areas.

What is Required for AED Foundation Accreditation?

AED Foundation Accreditation is an important credential for post-secondary community colleges and technical schools that recognize and value the importance of the broader, more complex and more sophisticated skills and knowledge sets, both technical and academic, that today’s diesel/equipment technicians require. Accreditation requirements and eligibility reflect those values.

- ✓ An AED member equipment dealer or manufacturer in the school’s area or state must be a primary sponsor for the college’s accreditation effort.
- ✓ Post-secondary schools with programs in diesel/equipment technology are eligible to apply. Actual program titles will vary. **A minimum of two full-time program instructors is required.**
- ✓ An AED member representative must sit on the school’s diesel/equipment program Advisory Board.
- ✓ The diesel/equipment program must meet all Standards as specified in the latest version of the The AED

Foundation’s “Standards for Construction Equipment Technology.”

- ✓ A separate application with fee of \$1000.00 is required **per evaluated program**. This fee partially defrays the cost of application processing, on-site Evaluation Team Leader (ETL) visits, and other administrative costs. **There are no other associated fees.**
- ✓ The effective term of AED Foundation Accreditation is **five years** from the month/year stated on the school’s certificate of accreditation. Prior to expiration, the school will receive notice that it is time to re-apply. The re-accreditation process and fee are the same as for first-time accreditation.

Who are the Evaluation Team Leaders Advising and Making On-site Evaluation Visits?

AED Foundation Evaluation Team Leaders (ETLs) are recruited primarily from industry dealers and AED-Accredited colleges. On-site evaluations are typically conducted by a team of two that offers both perspectives. They are construction equipment industry veterans, well versed in the skills and knowledge, including technical knowledge, needed to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

ETLs receive training from The AED Foundation to ensure that applicant schools are evaluated consistently and objectively. It is important to note that ETLs are AED Foundation Volunteers and receive no compensation from the Foundation; only reimbursement of accreditation-related actual expenses.

What are the Stakeholder Benefits of AED Foundation Accreditation?

For Students, AED Foundation Accreditation:

- Represents high-quality education from technical colleges that are recognized

within the equipment industry for excellence in teaching and preparing students that are equipped to meet employers' needs.

- Means students receive an education in equipment technology that prepares them with broad, current, relevant skills and knowledge. They have what is needed to take advantage of industry opportunities... greater job flexibility and choice of specialties. They can build a successful career path rather than "just have a job."
- Provides opportunities for students to develop relationships with equipment dealers. Frequently, these relationships may translate into mentorships, part-time employment while in school, internships, work-study arrangements, career counseling, scholarships or loans... and/or a great job after graduation.
- Signifies to employers, via the rigor of the college's program, that the graduating student understands the importance of good initial technical education, knows the need for ongoing training to stay current in relevant knowledge and skills, and has the tenacity to start and complete a challenging college program.
- Assures employers that the technical college has provided the student with solid basic safety training, an extremely important concern for all.

For Technical Schools, AED Foundation Accreditation:

- Sets technical college equipment/diesel programs apart from the rest as the only non-OEM industry-based national accreditation with specific focus on diesel/equipment technology. AED Foundation Accredited colleges are "the cutting edge" in equipment industry technical education.
- Helps form local relationships where equipment dealers can collectively support local diesel/equipment technical

programs to recruit students, get them enrolled in the programs, and place them upon graduation. Dealers can assist with human, financial and material resources for the technical programs and the students enrolled.

- Aids in program marketing and student recruitment efforts by signifying to prospective students, their parents, peers, high school counselors and other career decision influencers, that investment in technical education at "this" technical program will result in a high-quality learning experience and a degree that really means something.
- Assures that colleges' programs are based on comprehensive national equipment/diesel standards that are fully aligned with industry needs, and developed and updated on a regular basis with broad representation from equipment dealers, equipment manufacturers and technical colleges. This provides direction and great benefit to colleges as to curriculum development, outcomes assessment and overall program review. In turn, this ensures that programs are reflecting current and up-to-date technology.
- Via the process and technical standards, helps instructors validate program funding and growth to their internal college administrations and state education agencies. Close linkages to industry and ties to nationally recognized organizations like The AED Foundation carry significant weight.
- Supports obtaining/retaining Federal Perkins Act, state and/or other types of funding. Requirements continue to move toward more "linkages" that better connect technical programs with industry-defined needs and standards, and verification/validation of student learning.

For AED Equipment Dealers, AED Foundation Accreditation:

- Is an avenue that helps dealers to proactively manage and meet their

short- and long-term demand for qualified technicians, rather than just hope for the best in finding technical talent. In the end, dealers have a larger pool of skilled entry-level technicians from which to recruit. Proactive is better than reactive.

- Gives equipment dealers an incentive to hire from "AED Foundation" colleges. Dealers better know via the Standards what students have learned and "who" they are hiring. In many cases, they will have had the opportunity to get to know the students, and even support their education, prior to hire.
- Helps facilitate AED member dealers' local relationships with technical colleges and the larger equipment industry... an "informed" local industry. Dealers have an avenue to tell the colleges what their needs are; and help them develop a program that meets those needs.
- Means that, working in a collective manner, dealers, colleges and other industry stakeholders can generate more local "horsepower" to implement plans that address common workforce challenges and meet mutual needs.
- Reinforces the case for colleges developing and/or maintaining strong and distinct equipment/diesel technical programs, rather than diluting them through merger with other technical programs such as auto or truck.
- By establishing solid relationships with schools, and greater hiring demand from dealers, in more extreme cases, can help make the case for continued existence of a diesel/equipment technical program.

9 Steps to AED Accreditation

1. Contact The AED Foundation to discuss the accreditation process.

Schools and dealers need to obtain information from The AED Foundation as to accreditation requirements, the

application, and related processes and procedures.

2. Review the AED national technical "Standards" thoroughly.

It is highly recommended that schools and dealers use the Standards book as a reference during the entire process of accreditation, including application submission. **The document can be downloaded from the Foundation website at www.AEDFoundation.org.**

3. Perform a GAP analysis of your diesel/equipment program versus AED Foundation technical standards.

Complete a comprehensive evaluation of your program's structure and content. Look at overall curriculum, lab work, course outlines, teaching and lab facilities, simulators, trainers, (electric/electrical; hydraulic/hydrostatic; etc.), training aids, construction equipment and equipment parts, etc. Identify program areas not meeting AED Foundation technical standards.

Important Note: Discuss findings with an Evaluation Team Leader (ETL); ask questions... obtain answers. It is critical that everyone is on the same page as the school embarks on, and goes through the accreditation process.

4. Develop and implement plan to meet Standards-specified requirements.

Ensure that the plan for your program's structure, content and resource development is such that, upon completion, you will be able to answer all accreditation application questions in the affirmative. Ensure that all the required Standards disciplines are included and documented in your program's curriculum, course outlines, other required materials, and the accreditation application.

Ensure that during your impending ETL on-site evaluation, you are able to provide access to facilities, classrooms, labs, shops and other resources that

support information provided in the written application.

Ensure that your curriculum provides the classroom and lab hours that are necessary to provide comprehensive, high quality instruction.

Important Note: Any of the Dept. Chairs at AED Accredited Colleges would be happy to advise should you have questions through the process. Foundation Staff can facilitate this networking. Just let us know!

5. *When approaching “plan” completion, submit application and fee to The AED Foundation.*

The application for accreditation asks questions about the scope and content of school courses/programs in each of the technical disciplines identified by The AED Foundation’s Technical Training Committee. To simplify the process, the numbered sections in the application and the Standards book are in alignment.

Applicant schools should complete the application form and submit the required specified materials. Documentation includes such items as: course information, degree requirements, program information, Advisory Board members, instructor information, and promotional materials.

6. *Communicate with the ETL; clarify application issues as needed.*

The written application, along with other supporting documents, is evaluated by AED Foundation staff and ETLs to determine if the program qualifies for the final step in the accreditation process; that is, the on-site visit by an ETL.

Should any of the technical questions in the application require clarification, applicant schools are referred to an ETL for discussion using the Standards as the reference.

Again, discuss findings with your ETL; ask questions... obtain answers.

7. *Schedule the on-site ETL visit to verify that requirements are met.*

If the initial application is approved, an on-site visit is scheduled and completed at the applicant school by two AED Foundation ETLs. They review school programs and facilities, and verify the information provided via the application form and supporting materials.

8. *AED Foundation Accreditation is awarded, given requirements are met.*

A school is accredited based on the **written recommendation** of the ETLs, following the on-site visit, that the school meets AED Standards. The accreditation approval decision rests solely with the ETLs making the on-site visit.

9. *What if a School is Denied Approval of Accreditation per the ETL Visit?*

Accreditation by The AED Foundation is not intended as an adversarial process. To the contrary, the Foundation and ETLs share the school’s goal of achieving accreditation... that is to everyone’s benefit.

If a school is denied accreditation, they receive a letter citing specific reasons, and suggesting additional work needed to qualify. In most cases, those changes can be made without reapplying for accreditation. ETLs and Foundation staff are happy to advise as schools remedy any issues identified during the onsite visit.

If another on-site visit is required for Standards verification, in most cases, there are no extra fees for that second visit.

**For more information, visit us at www.AEDFoundation.org
The AED Foundation, Schaumburg, IL
630-574-0650**