

# **Standards for Accreditation**

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges



**Standards Adopted 2005**  
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# Standards for Accreditation

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## Standards for Accreditation

### Preamble

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, one of six regional accrediting bodies in the United States, is a voluntary, non-profit, self-governing organization having as its purpose the accreditation of educational institutions. Through its evaluation activities, carried out by its commissions, the Association provides public assurance about the educational quality of those schools and colleges that seek or wish to maintain membership, which is synonymous with accreditation.

Institutions of higher learning achieve accreditation from the New England Association through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education by demonstrating they meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* and comply with its policies. The Standards establish criteria for institutional quality; in addition, the Commission adopts policies that elucidate the Standards, relate to their application, and otherwise ensure that the Commission is current with respect to changing circumstances in higher education and public expectation. Moreover, the Commission expects affiliated institutions to work toward improving their quality, increasing their effectiveness, and continually striving toward excellence. Its evaluative processes are designed to encourage such improvement.

Each of the eleven Standards articulates a dimension of institutional quality. In applying the Standards, the Commission assesses and makes a determination about the effectiveness of the institution as a whole. The institution that meets the Standards:

- has clearly defined purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning;
- has assembled and organized those resources necessary to achieve its purposes;
- is achieving its purposes;
- has the ability to continue to achieve its purposes.

The Commission recognizes that some aspects of an institution are always stronger than others. Meeting the Standards does not guarantee the quality of individual programs, courses, or graduates, but serious weaknesses in a particular area may threaten the institution's accreditation.

The Commission deals with institutional differences in ways designed to protect both educational quality and individual philosophy and practice. The Standards are aspirational expectations that must be met at least minimally. They are essentially qualitative criteria that measure the institution's current state of educational effectiveness. They allow the Commission to appraise a wide variety of collegiate institutions, differing in purpose, size, organization, scope of program, clientele served, support, and control. By design, the Standards as explicated do not preclude perceptive and imaginative innovation aimed at increasing the effectiveness of higher education.

Institutions whose policies, practices, or resources differ significantly from those described in the *Standards for Accreditation* must present evidence that these are appropriate to higher education, consistent with institutional mission and purposes, and effective in meeting the intent of the Commission's Standards. The existence of collective bargaining agreements, in and of themselves, does not abrogate institutional or faculty obligations to comply with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

Self-regulation is an essential element in the success of accreditation. Thus, the *Standards for Accreditation* were developed through a lengthy participatory process involving the membership in articulating the dimensions of quality required of institutions of higher education deserving of the public trust. Indeed the public as well was invited to participate in this process in recognition of the importance of higher education to the individual and collective well being of our citizenry

and for our economy. Thus, the Standards represent the accrued wisdom of over 200 colleges and universities and interested others about the essential elements of institutional quality, and they offer a perspective that stresses the public purposes of higher education. The Commission continually evaluates the effectiveness of its Standards and its processes for applying them, and makes such changes as conditions warrant.

Self-regulation obliges institutions to adhere to the Standards as a condition of their accredited status; accredited colleges and universities demonstrate their integrity through their continued voluntary compliance to these criteria. Adherence to the Standards is periodically reviewed through peer evaluations that are preceded by self-studies directed toward demonstrating that the institution meets the Standards and that it has effective means to ensure institutional improvement. This system of accreditation is based on institutions agreeing to participate in and to accept and profit by an honest and forthright assessment of institutional strengths and weaknesses.

Each of the eleven dimensions of institutional quality has a Statement of the Standard set forth in bold type. The considerations in determining the fulfillment of the Standard are articulated in numbered paragraphs below the Statement of the Standard, including in each case a final paragraph directing the institution's attention toward institutional effectiveness; these considerations provide a basis for institutions to undertake self study as well as a basis for institutional evaluation by visiting teams and the Commission. Because the eleven Standards represent dimensions of institutional quality, they are necessarily inter-related. Thus, considerations found in one Standard may also have application for another; for example, while there is a Standard on Integrity, considerations related to integrity may also be found in several of the other Standards.

Additional information about accreditation and the Commission may be found at its website <http://cihe.neasc.org/>

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## Standard One Mission and Purposes

**The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.**

- 1.1 The mission of the institution defines its distinctive character, addresses the needs of society and identifies the students the institution seeks to serve, and reflects both the institution's traditions and its vision for the future. The institution's mission provides the basis upon which the institution identifies its priorities, plans its future and evaluates its endeavors; it provides a basis for the evaluation of the institution against the Commission's Standards.
- 1.2 The institution's mission is set forth in a concise statement that is formally adopted by the governing board and appears in appropriate institutional publications.
- 1.3 The institution's purposes are concrete and realistic and further define its educational and other dimensions, including scholarship, research, and public service. Consistent with its mission, the institution endeavors to enhance the communities it serves.
- 1.4 The mission and purposes of the institution are accepted and widely understood by its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. They provide direction to the curricula and other activities and form the basis on which expectations for student learning are developed. Specific objectives, reflective of the institution's overall mission and purposes, are developed by the institution's individual units.

### Institutional Effectiveness

- 1.5 The institution periodically re-evaluates the content and pertinence of its mission and purposes, assessing their usefulness in providing overall direction in planning and resource allocation. The results of this evaluation are used to enhance institutional effectiveness.

## **Standard Two Planning and Evaluation**

**The institution undertakes planning and evaluation to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.**

- 2.1 Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes. Results of planning and evaluation are regularly communicated to appropriate institutional constituencies. The institution allocates sufficient resources for its planning and evaluation efforts.
- 2.2 Institutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The institution systematically collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness.

### **Planning**

- 2.3 The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. It plans for and responds to financial and other contingencies, establishes feasible priorities, and develops a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives. Institutional decision-making, particularly the allocation of resources, is consistent with planning priorities.
- 2.4 The institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning.

### **Evaluation**

- 2.5 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the achievement of its mission and purposes, giving primary focus to the realization of its educational objectives. Its system of evaluation is designed to provide relevant and trustworthy information to support institutional improvement, with an emphasis on the academic program. The institution's evaluation efforts are effective for addressing its unique circumstances. These efforts use both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- 2.6 The institution has a system of periodic review of academic and other programs that includes the use of external perspectives.
- 2.7 Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful evidence about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and resource allocation and to inform the public about the institution. (See also 10.10)

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 2.8 The institution determines the effectiveness of its planning and evaluation activities on an ongoing basis. Results of these activities are used to further enhance the institution's implementation of its purposes and objectives.

## Standard Three Organization and Governance

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component. The institution has sufficient independence from any sponsoring entity to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*.

- 3.1 The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff are clearly described in the institution's by-laws, or an equivalent document, and in a table of organization that displays the working order of the institution. The board, administration, staff, and faculty understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in the institution's official documents and are provided with the appropriate information to undertake their respective roles. The institution's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies are clear and consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them.
- 3.2 The governing board is the legally constituted body ultimately responsible for the institution's quality and integrity. The board demonstrates sufficient independence to ensure it can act in the institution's best interest. The composition of the board includes representation of the public interest and reflects the areas of competence needed to fulfill its responsibilities. More than one-half of the board members, including the chair, are free of any personal or immediate familial financial interest in the institution, including as employee, stock- or share-holder, corporate director, or contractor. Members of the governing board understand, accept, and fulfill their responsibilities as fiduciaries to act honestly and in good faith in the best interest of the institution toward the achievement of its purposes in a manner free from conflicts of interest.
- 3.3 The board has a clear understanding of the institution's distinctive mission and purposes. It exercises the authority to ensure the realization of institutional mission and purposes. The board sets and reviews institutional policies; monitors the institution's fiscal solvency; and approves major new initiatives, assuring that they are compatible with institutional mission and capacity. These policies are developed in consultation with appropriate constituencies. The board assures that the institution periodically reviews its success in fulfilling its mission and achieving its purposes.
- 3.4 The board systematically develops and ensures its own effectiveness. The board enhances its effectiveness through periodic evaluation.
- 3.5 Utilizing the institutional governance structure, the board establishes and maintains appropriate and productive channels of communication among its members and with the institutional community. Its role and functions are effectively carried out through appropriate committees and meetings.
- 3.6 The board appoints and periodically reviews the performance of the chief executive officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution.
- 3.7 The board delegates to the chief executive officer and, as appropriate, to others the requisite authority and autonomy to manage the institution compatible with the board's intentions and the institutional mission. In exercising its fiduciary responsibility, the governing board assures that senior officers identify, assess, and manage risks and ensure regulatory compliance.

- 3.8 The chief executive officer through an appropriate administrative structure effectively manages the institution so as to fulfill its purposes and objectives and establishes the means to assess the effectiveness of the institution. The chief executive officer manages and allocates resources in keeping with institutional purpose and objectives and assesses the effectiveness of the institution. The chief executive officer assures that the institution employs staff sufficient in role, number, and qualifications appropriate to the institution's mission, size, and scope.
- 3.9 In accordance with established institutional mechanisms and procedures, the chief executive officer and the administration consult with faculty, students, other administrators and staff, and are appropriately responsive to their concerns, needs, and initiatives. The institution's internal governance provides for the appropriate participation of its constituencies, promotes communications, and effectively advances the quality of the institution.
- 3.10 The institution's chief academic officer is directly responsible to the chief executive officer, and in concert with the faculty and other academic administrators is responsible for the quality of the academic program. The institution's organization and governance structure assure the integrity and quality of academic programming however and wherever offered. Off-campus, continuing education, distance education, correspondence education, international, evening, and week-end programs are clearly integrated and incorporated into the policy formation, and academic oversight, and evaluation system of the institution.
- 3.11 In multi-campus systems organized under a single governing board, the division of responsibility and authority between the system office and the institution is clear. Where system and campus boards share governance responsibilities or dimensions of authority, system policies and procedures are clearly defined and equitably administered.
- 3.12 Faculty exercise an important role in assuring the academic integrity of the institution's educational programs. Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.
- 3.13 The system of governance makes provisions for consideration of student views and judgments in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest.
- 3.14 Through its system of board and internal governance, the institution ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 3.15 The effectiveness of the institution's organizational structure and system of governance is improved through periodic and systematic review.

## **Standard Four The Academic Program**

**The institution's academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution sets a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree awarded and develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.**

- 4.1 The institution's programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution offers collegiate-level programs consisting of a curriculum of studies that leads to a degree in a recognized field of study and requires at least one year to complete. The institution for which the associate's degree is the highest awarded offers at least one program in liberal studies or another area of study widely available at the baccalaureate level of regionally accredited colleges and universities.
- 4.2 Through its system of academic administration and faculty participation, the institution demonstrates an effective system of academic oversight, assuring the quality of the academic program wherever and however it is offered.
- 4.3 Each educational program demonstrates coherence through its goals, structure, and content; policies and procedures for admission and retention; instructional methods and procedures; and the nature, quality, and extent of student learning and achievement. The institution offering multiple academic programs ensures that all programs meet or exceed the basic quality standards of the institution and that there is a reasonable consistency in quality among them. The institution provides sufficient resources to sustain and improve its academic programs.
- 4.4 Institutions offering degrees at multiple levels demonstrate that expectations for student achievement, independent learning, skills in inquiry, and critical judgment are graduated by degree level and in keeping with generally accepted practice.
- 4.5 The institution publishes the learning goals and requirements for each program. Such goals include the knowledge, intellectual and academic skills, and methods of inquiry to be acquired. In addition, if relevant to the program, goals include creative abilities and values to be developed and specific career-preparation practices to be mastered.
- 4.6 Degree programs have a coherent design and are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, continuity, sequential progression, and synthesis of learning.
- 4.7 The institution ensures that students use information resources and information technology as an integral part of their education. The institution provides appropriate orientation and training for use of these resources, as well as instruction and support in information literacy and information technology appropriate to the degree level and field of study. (See also 7.10)
- 4.8 Students completing an undergraduate or graduate degree program demonstrate collegiate-level skills in the English language.
- 4.9 The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its degree programs under effective institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters.
- 4.10 The institution undertakes academic planning and evaluation as part of its overall planning and evaluation to enhance the achievement of institutional mission and

- program objectives. These activities are realistic and take into account stated goals and available resources. The evaluation of existing programs includes an external perspective and assessment of their effectiveness. Additions and deletions of programs are consistent with institutional mission and capacity, faculty expertise, student needs, and the availability of sufficient resources required for the development and improvement of academic programs. The institution allocates resources on the basis of its academic planning, needs, and objectives.
- 4.11 Institutions undertaking the initiation of degrees at a higher or lower level, off-campus programs, programs that substantially broaden the scope of the academic offerings, distance learning programs, correspondence education programs, contractual relationships involving courses and programs, academic programs overseas, or other substantive change demonstrate their capacity to undertake and sustain such initiatives and to assure that the new academic programming meets the standards of quality of the institution and the Commission's Standards and policies. In keeping with Commission policy, institutions initiating substantive changes seek Commission approval prior to implementation. The institution recognizes and takes account of the increased demands on resources made by programs offered at a higher degree level.
- 4.12 When programs are eliminated or program requirements are changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements for enrolled students so that they may complete their education with a minimum of disruption.
- 4.13 If the institution depends on resources outside its direct control (for example, classrooms, information resources, information technology, testing sites), provision is made for a clear, fixed understanding of that relationship that ensures the reasonable continued availability of those resources. Clear descriptions of the circumstances and procedures for the use of such resources are readily available to students who require them.

### **Undergraduate Degree Programs**

- 4.14 Undergraduate degree programs are designed to give students a substantial and coherent introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge, their theories and methods of inquiry, plus in-depth study in at least one disciplinary or interdisciplinary area. Programs have an appropriate rationale; their clarity and order are visible in stated requirements in official publications and in student records.
- 4.15 Each undergraduate program includes a general education requirement and a major or concentration requirement. At the baccalaureate level, curricula include substantial requirements at the intermediate and advanced undergraduate level, with appropriate prerequisites. Wherever possible, the institution also affords undergraduate students the opportunity to pursue knowledge and understanding through unrestricted electives.

### **General Education**

- 4.16 The general education requirement is coherent and substantive. It embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn.
- 4.17 The general education requirement in each undergraduate program ensures adequate breadth for all degree-seeking students by showing a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. General education requirements include offerings that focus on the subject matter and methodologies of these three primary domains of knowledge as well as on their relationships to one another.

- 4.18 The institution ensures that all undergraduate students complete at least the equivalent of forty semester hours in a bachelor's degree program, or the equivalent of twenty semester hours in an associate's degree program in general education.
- 4.19 Graduates successfully completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English; the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, for critical analysis and logical thinking; and the capability for continuing learning, including the skills of information literacy. They also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena, and a knowledge and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind.

### **The Major or Concentration**

- 4.20 The major or area of concentration affords the student the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in a specific disciplinary or clearly articulated interdisciplinary area above the introductory level through properly sequenced course work. Requirements for the major or area of concentration are based upon clear and articulated learning objectives, including a mastery of the knowledge, information resources, methods, and theories pertinent to a particular area of inquiry. Through the major or area of concentration, the student develops an understanding of the complex structure of knowledge germane to an area of inquiry and its interrelatedness to other areas of inquiry. For programs designed to provide professional training, an effective relationship exists between curricular content and effective practice in the field of specialization. Graduates demonstrate an in-depth understanding of an area of knowledge or practice, its principal information resources, and its interrelatedness with other areas.

### **Graduate Degree Programs**

- 4.21 Graduate degree programs are designed to give students a mastery of a complex field of study or professional area. Programs have an appropriate rationale; their clarity and order are visible in stated requirements, in relevant official publications, and in the demonstrated learning experiences of graduates. Learning objectives reflect a high level of complexity, specialization, and generalization.
- 4.22 Graduate programs are not offered unless resources and expectations exceed those required for an undergraduate program in a similar field. Information resources, information technology, and as appropriate physical resources should exceed those required for an undergraduate program in a similar field.
- 4.23 Institutions offering graduate degrees have an adequate staff of full-time faculty in areas appropriate to the degree offered. Faculty responsible for graduate programs are sufficient by credentials, experience, number, and time commitment for the successful accomplishment of program objectives and program improvement. The scholarly expectations of faculty exceed those expected for faculty working at the undergraduate level. Research-oriented graduate programs have a preponderance of active research scholars on their faculties. Professionally-oriented programs include faculty who are experienced professionals making scholarly contributions to the development of the field.
- 4.24 Students admitted to graduate degree programs are demonstrably qualified for advanced academic study.
- 4.25 The institution's graduate programs have cohesive curricula and require scholarly and professional activities designed to advance the student substantially beyond the educational accomplishments of a baccalaureate degree program. The demands made by the institution's graduate programs on students' intellectual and creative capacities are also significantly greater than those expected at the undergraduate level; graduate programs build upon and challenge students beyond the levels of knowledge and competence acquired at the undergraduate level. The institution offering both undergraduate and graduate degree programs assesses the relationship and

- interdependence of the two levels and utilizes the results for their individual and collective improvement.
- 4.26 Degree requirements of the institution's graduate programs take into account specific program purposes. Research-oriented doctoral programs, including the Ph.D., and disciplinary master's degree programs are designed to prepare students for scholarly careers; they emphasize the acquisition, organization, utilization, and dissemination of knowledge. Doctoral degree programs afford the student substantial mastery of the subject matter, theory, literature, and methodology of a significant field of study. They include a sequential development of research skills leading to the attainment of an independent research capacity. Students undertake original research that contributes to new knowledge in the chosen field of study. Disciplinary master's programs have many of the same objectives but require less sophisticated levels of mastery in the chosen field of study than does the research doctorate. While they need not require students to engage in original research, they do provide an understanding of research appropriate to the discipline and the manner in which it is conducted.
- 4.27 Professional or practice-oriented programs at the doctoral or master's degree levels are designed to prepare students for professional practice involving the application or transmission of existing knowledge or the development of new applications of knowledge within their field. Such programs afford the student a broad conceptual mastery of the field of professional practice through an understanding of its subject matter, literature, theory, and methods. They seek to develop the capacity to interpret, organize, and communicate knowledge, and to develop those analytical and professional skills needed to practice in and advance the profession. Instruction in relevant research methodology is provided, directed toward the appropriate application of its results as a regular part of professional practice. Programs include the sequential development of professional skills that will result in competent practitioners. Where there is a hierarchy of degrees within an area of professional study, programs differ by level as reflected in the expected sophistication, knowledge, and capacity for leadership within the profession by graduates.
- 4.28 Programs encompassing both research activities and professional practice define their relative emphases in program objectives that are reflected in curricular, scholarly, and program requirements.
- 4.29 Students who successfully complete a graduate program demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge and developed the skills that are identified as the program's objectives.

### **Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit**

- 4.30 The institution's degrees and other forms of academic recognition are appropriately named, following practices common to American institutions of higher education in terms of length, content, and level of the programs. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits at the associate's level, 120 semester credits at the baccalaureate level, and 30 semester credits at the master's level.
- 4.31 The institution offers required and elective courses as described in publicly available print and electronic formats with sufficient availability to provide students with the opportunity to graduate within the published program length.
- 4.32 The institution demonstrates its clear and ongoing authority and administrative oversight for the academic elements of all courses for which it awards institutional credit or credentials. These responsibilities include course content and the delivery of the instructional program; selection, approval, professional development, and evaluation of faculty; admission, registration, and retention of students; evaluation of prior learning; and evaluation of student progress, including the awarding and recording of credit. The institution retains, even with contractual or other arrangements, responsibility for the

- design, content, and delivery of courses for which academic credit or degrees are awarded. The institution awarding a joint, dual, or concurrent degree demonstrates that the program is consistent with Commission policy, and that the student learning outcomes meet the institution's own standards and those of the Commission.
- 4.33 The evaluation of student learning or achievement and the award of credit are based upon clearly stated criteria that reflect learning objectives and are consistently and effectively applied. They are appropriate to the degree level at which they are applied.
- 4.34 Credit awards are consistent with Commission policy and the course content, appropriate to the field of study, and reflect the level and amount of student learning. The award of credit is based on policies developed and overseen by the faculty and academic administration. There is demonstrable academic content for all experiences for which credit is awarded, including study abroad, internships, independent study, and service learning. No credit toward graduation is awarded for pre-collegiate level or remedial work designed to prepare the student for collegiate study.
- 4.35 Credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning is awarded only at the undergraduate level with appropriate oversight by faculty and academic administration. When credit is awarded on the basis of prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning alone, student learning and achievement are demonstrated to be at least comparable in breadth, depth, and quality to the results of institutionally provided learning experiences. The policies and procedures for the award of credit for prior or experiential learning are clearly stated and available to affected students.
- 4.36 The institution publishes requirements for continuation in, termination from, or re-admission to its academic programs that are compatible with its educational purposes. Decisions about the continuing academic standing of enrolled students are based on clearly stated policies and applied by faculty and academic administrators.
- 4.37 Graduation requirements are clearly stated in appropriate electronic and print publications and are consistently applied in the degree certification process. The degrees awarded accurately reflect student attainments.
- 4.38 Faculty, with administrative support, ensure the academic integrity of the award of grades, where applicable, and credits for individual courses. The institution works to prevent cheating and plagiarism as well as to deal forthrightly with any instances in which they occur.
- 4.39 The institution offering programs and courses for abbreviated or concentrated time periods or via distance or correspondence learning demonstrates that students completing these programs or courses acquire levels of knowledge, understanding, and competencies equivalent to those achieved in similar programs offered in more traditional time periods and modalities. Programs and courses are designed to ensure an opportunity for reflection and for analysis of the subject matter and the identification, analysis and evaluation of information resources beyond those provided directly for the course.
- 4.40 Courses and programs offered for credit off campus, through distance or correspondence education, or through continuing education, evening or week-end divisions are consistent with the educational objectives of the institution. Such activities are integral parts of the institution and maintain the same academic standards as courses and programs offered on campus. They receive sufficient support for instructional and other needs. Students have ready access to and support in using appropriate learning resources. The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of all programs and assures adequate resources to maintain quality. (See also 3.10)

- 4.41 On-campus faculty have a substantive role in the design and implementation of off-campus programs. Students enrolled in off-campus courses, distance learning courses, and/or correspondence education courses have sufficient opportunities to interact with faculty regarding course content and related academic matters.
- 4.42 An institution that offers distance education or correspondence education has procedures through which it establishes that the student who registers for such a course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. In carrying out these procedures, the institution protects student privacy.
- 4.43 Institutions offering certificates based on courses offered for credit ensure the coherence and level of academic quality are consistent with its degree programs.
- 4.44 In accepting undergraduate transfer credit from other institutions, the institution applies policies and procedures that ensure that credit accepted reflects appropriate levels of academic quality and is applicable to the student's program. The institution's policies for considering the transfer of credit are publicly available to students and prospective students on its website and in other communications. The information includes the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements.
- 4.45 The institution does not erect barriers to the acceptance of transfer credit that are unnecessary to protect its academic quality and integrity, and it seeks to establish articulation agreements with institutions from which and to which there is a significant pattern of student transfer. Such agreements are made available to those students affected by them.
- 4.46 Students complete at least one fourth of their undergraduate program, including advanced work in the major or concentration, at the institution awarding the degree. In accepting transfer credit, the institution exercises the responsibility to ensure that students have met its stated learning outcomes of programs at all degree levels. The acceptance of transfer credit does not substantially diminish the proportion of intermediate and advanced coursework in a student's academic program.
- 4.47 The institution accepts graduate credit in transfer on a strictly limited basis to preserve the integrity of the degree awarded.

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

- 4.48 The institution implements and provides support for systematic and broad-based assessment of what and how students are learning through their academic program and experiences outside the classroom. Assessment is based on clear statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. Assessment provides useful information that helps the institution to improve the experiences provided for students, as well as to assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded.
- 4.49 The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Evidence is considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students.
- 4.50 Expectations for student learning reflect both the mission and character of the institution and general expectations of the larger academic community for the level of degree awarded and the field of study. These expectations include statements that are consistent with the institution's mission in preparing students for further study and employment, as appropriate. (See also 1.4 and 2.7)

- 4.51 The institution's approach to understanding what and how students are learning and using the results for improvement has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty. (See also 3.12)
- 4.52 The institution's system of periodic review of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program. (See also 2.6, 4.9 and 4.10)
- 4.53 The institution ensures that students have systematic, substantial, and sequential opportunities to learn important skills and understandings and actively engage in important problems of their discipline or profession and that they are provided with regular and constructive feedback designed to help them improve their achievement.
- 4.54 The institution uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures to understand the experiences and learning outcomes of its students, and includes external perspectives. The institution devotes appropriate attention to ensuring that its methods of understanding student learning are trustworthy and provide information useful in the continuing improvement of programs and services for students.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 4.55 The institution's principal evaluation focus is the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its academic programs. Evaluation endeavors and systematic assessment are demonstrably effective in the improvement of academic offerings and student learning.

## Standard Five Faculty

**The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.**

- 5.1 Faculty categories (e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct) are clearly defined by the institution as is the role of each category in fulfilling the institution's mission and purposes. Should part-time or adjunct faculty be utilized, the institution has in place policies governing their role compatible with its mission and purposes and the Standards of the Commission.
- 5.2 The preparation and qualifications of all faculty are appropriate to the field and level of their assignments. Qualifications are measured by advanced degrees held, evidence of scholarship, advanced study, creative activities, teaching abilities, and relevant professional experience, training, and credentials. (See also 4.23)
- 5.3 There are an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes. Responsibilities of teaching faculty include instruction and the systematic understanding of effective teaching/learning processes and outcomes in courses and programs for which they share responsibility; additional duties may include such functions as student advisement, academic planning, and participation in policy-making, course and curricular development, research, and institutional governance.
- 5.4 The institution employs an open and orderly process for recruiting and appointing its faculty. Faculty participate in the search process for new members of the instructional staff. The institution ensures equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its own choosing; compatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty. Faculty selection reflects the effectiveness of this process and results in a variety of intellectual backgrounds and training. Each prospective faculty member is provided with a written contract that states explicitly the nature and term of the initial appointment and, when applicable, institutional considerations that might preclude or limit future appointments.
- 5.5 Where graduate teaching assistants are employed, the institution carefully selects, trains, supervises, and evaluates them.
- 5.6 Faculty are accorded reasonable contractual security for appropriate periods consistent with the institution's ability to fulfill its mission. Salaries and benefits are set at levels that ensure the institution's continued ability to attract and maintain an appropriately qualified instructional staff whose profile is consistent with the institution's mission and purposes.
- 5.7 Faculty assignments and workloads are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, contribute to program and institutional assessment and improvement, continue professional growth, and participate in scholarship, research, creative activities and service compatible with the mission and purposes of the institution. Faculty workloads are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change.

- 5.8 The full-time/part-time composition of the faculty reflects the institution's mission, programs, and student body and is periodically reviewed. The institution avoids undue dependence on part-time faculty, adjuncts, temporary appointments, and graduate assistants to conduct instruction. Institutions that employ part-time, adjunct, clinical or temporary faculty assure their appropriate integration into the department and institution and provide opportunities for faculty development.
- 5.9 The institution's academic organization and governance structures and policies reflect the composition and variety of faculty appointments.
- 5.10 In a faculty handbook or in other written documents that are current and readily available, the institution clearly defines the responsibilities of faculty and the criteria for their recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion, and, if applicable, tenure. Such policies are equitable and compatible with the mission and purposes of the institution; they provide for the fair redress of grievances, and they are consistently applied and periodically reviewed.
- 5.11 Faculty are demonstrably effective in carrying out their assigned responsibilities. The institution employs effective procedures for the regular evaluation of faculty appointments, performance, and retention. The evaluative criteria reflect the mission and purposes of the institution and the importance it attaches to the various responsibilities of faculty, e.g., teaching, advising, assessment, scholarship, creative activities, research, and professional and community service. The institution has equitable and broad-based procedures for such evaluation applying to both full- and part-time faculty, in which its expectations are stated clearly and weighted appropriately for use in the evaluative process.
- 5.12 Faculty accept the responsibility for ensuring that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations, and that considerations of program improvement are informed by a shared understanding of what and how students are learning in the program.
- 5.13 The institution provides its faculty with substantial and equitable opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers. Such opportunities are consistent with and enhance the achievement of the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty accept the obligation to take advantage of these opportunities and otherwise take the initiative in ensuring their continued competence and growth as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.
- 5.14 The institution protects and fosters academic freedom of all faculty regardless of rank or term of appointment.
- 5.15 The institution has a statement of expectations and processes to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, observe the established conditions of their employment, and otherwise function in a manner consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution.

### **Teaching and Advising**

- 5.16 Instructional techniques and delivery systems, including technology, are compatible with and serve to further the mission and purposes of the institution as well as the learning goals of academic programs and objectives of individual courses. Methods of instruction are appropriate to the students' capabilities and learning needs. Scholarly and creative achievement by students is encouraged and appropriately assessed.
- 5.17 Students in each program are taught by a variety of faculty in order to ensure experience in different methods of instruction and exposure to different viewpoints. Institutions regularly offering multiple sections of the same course ensure an appropriate balance

- between achieving consistency in learning outcomes and flexibility, allowing students to benefit from individual faculty members' experience and teaching style.
- 5.18 The institution endeavors to enhance the quality of teaching and learning wherever and however courses and programs are offered. It encourages experimentation with methods to improve instruction. The effectiveness of instruction is periodically and systematically assessed using adequate and reliable procedures; the results are used to improve instruction. Faculty collectively and individually endeavor to fulfill their responsibility to improve instructional effectiveness. Adequate support is provided to accomplish this task. (See also 8.2)
- 5.19 The institution has in place an effective system of academic advising that meets student needs for information and advice and is compatible with its educational objectives. Faculty and other personnel responsible for academic advising are adequately informed and prepared to discharge their advising functions. Resources are adequate to ensure the quality of advising for students regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery.
- 5.20 With the administration, the faculty work systematically to ensure an environment supportive of academic integrity.

### **Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity**

- 5.21 All faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. Scholarship and instruction are integrated and mutually supportive.
- 5.22 Where compatible with the institution's purposes and reflective of the level of degrees offered, research is undertaken by faculty and students directed toward the creation, revision, or application of knowledge. Physical, technological, and administrative resources together with academic services are adequate to support the institution's commitment to research and creative activity. Faculty workloads reflect this commitment. Policies and procedures related to research, including ethical considerations, are established and clearly communicated throughout the institution. Faculty exercise a substantive role in the development and administration of research policies and practices.
- 5.23 Scholarship, research, and creative activities receive encouragement and support appropriate to the institution's purposes and objectives. Faculty and students are accorded academic freedom in these activities.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 5.24 The institution periodically evaluates the sufficiency of and support for the faculty and the effectiveness of the faculty in teaching and advising, scholarship, service, and as appropriate to institutional mission, research and creative activity. The results of these evaluations are used to enhance fulfillment of the institution's mission.

## Standard Six Students

**Consistent with its mission, the institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve and provides an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.**

### Admissions

- 6.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution sets and achieves realistic goals to enroll a student body that is broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve and addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its students.
- 6.2 The institution has an orderly and ethical program of admission that complies with the requirements of legislation concerning equality of educational opportunity. Its admission and retention policies and procedures are clear, consistent with its mission and purposes, and available to all students and prospective students electronically and through other appropriate publications.
- 6.3 Standards for admission ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with institutional objectives. Individuals admitted demonstrate through their intellectual and personal qualifications a reasonable potential for success in the programs to which they are admitted. If the institution recruits and admits individuals with identified needs that must be addressed to assure their likely academic success, it applies appropriate mechanisms to address those needs so as to provide reasonable opportunities for that success. Such mechanisms receive sufficient support and are adequate to the needs of those admitted. The institution endeavors to integrate specifically recruited populations into the larger student body and to assure that they have comparable academic experiences.
- 6.4 The institution utilizes appropriate methods of evaluation to identify deficiencies and offers appropriate developmental or remedial support where necessary to prepare students for collegiate study. Such testing and remediation receive sufficient support and are adequate to serve the needs of students admitted. (For admission of graduate students, see 4.24.)

### Retention and Graduation

- 6.5 The institution demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in the institution's academic program, including specifically recruited populations. It ensures a systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their academic goals. The institution provides students with information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their academic success.
- 6.6 The institution measures student success, including rates of retention and graduation and other measures of success appropriate to institutional mission.
- 6.7 Measures of student success, including rates of retention and graduation, are separately determined for any group that the institution specifically recruits, and those rates are used in evaluating the success of specialized recruitment and the services and opportunities provided for the recruited students.
- 6.8 The institution's goals for retention and graduation reflect institutional purposes, and the results are used to inform recruitment and the review of programs and services.

- 6.9 Data on retention, graduation, and other measures of student success are regularly reviewed within the institution, with the results being used for planning, resource allocation, and improvement.

### Student Services

- 6.10 The institution systematically identifies the characteristics and learning needs of its student population and then makes provision for responding to them. The institution's student services are guided by a philosophy that reflects the institution's mission and special character, is circulated widely and reviewed periodically, and provides the basis on which services to students can be evaluated.
- 6.11 The institution offers an array of student services appropriate to its mission and the needs and goals of its students, recognizing the variations in services that are appropriate at the main campus, at off-campus locations, and for programs delivered electronically as well as the differences in circumstances and goals of students pursuing degrees. In all cases, the institution provides academic support services appropriate to the student body. The institution's faculty and professional staff collectively have sufficient interaction with students outside of class to promote students' academic achievement and provide academic and career guidance. In providing services, in accordance with its mission and purposes, the institution adheres to both the spirit and intent of equal opportunity and its own goals for diversity. (See also 5.19, 7.7, 7.8, 8.3, and 11.8)
- 6.12 Institutions with full time or residential student bodies provide an array of services that includes access to health services and co-curricular activities consistent with the mission of the institution.
- 6.13 A clear description of the nature, extent, and availability of student services is easily available to students and prospective students. Newly enrolled students are provided with an orientation that includes information on student services as well as a focus on academic opportunities, expectations, and support services.
- 6.14 Student financial aid is provided through a well-organized program. Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and publicized criteria. Students are provided with clear and timely information about debt before borrowing.
- 6.15 As appropriate, the institution supports opportunities for student leadership and participation in campus organizations and governance.
- 6.16 If the institution offers recreational and athletic programs, they are conducted in a manner consistent with sound educational policy, standards of integrity, and the institution's purposes. The institution has responsibility for the control of these programs, including their financial aspects. Educational programs and academic expectations are the same for student athletes as for other students.
- 6.17 The institution ensures that individuals responsible for student services are qualified by formal training and work experience to represent and address the needs of students effectively. Facilities, technology, and funding are adequate to implement the institution's student service policies and procedures.
- 6.18 The institution has identified, published widely, and implemented an appropriate set of clearly stated ethical standards to guide student services. Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered.
- 6.19 The institution has policies regarding the kinds of information that will be included in the permanent record of students as well as policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. Its information-release policies respect the rights of

individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of students and the institution.

- 6.20 Institutions with stated goals for students' co-curricular learning systematically assess their achievement.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

- 6.21 Through a program of regular and systematic evaluation, the institution assesses its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students and the appropriateness and effectiveness of its student services to advance institutional purposes. Information obtained through this evaluation is used to revise these goals and services and improve their achievement.

## **Standard Seven**

### **Library and Other Information Resources**

**The institution provides sufficient and appropriate library and information resources. The institution provides adequate access to these resources and demonstrates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The institution provides instructional and information technology sufficient to support its teaching and learning environment.**

#### **Resources and Access**

- 7.1 The institution articulates a clear vision of the level and breadth of information resources and services and of instructional and information technology appropriate to support its academic mission and its administrative functions. Through strategic, operational, and financial planning, it works to achieve that vision.
- 7.2 Institutional planning and resource allocation support the development of library, information resources and technology appropriate to the institution's mission and academic program. The institution provides sufficient and consistent financial support for the library and the effective maintenance and improvement of the institution's information resources and instructional and information technology.
- 7.3 The institution uses instructional technology appropriate to its academic mission and the modes of delivery of its academic program.
- 7.4 Professionally qualified and numerically adequate staff administer the institution's library, information resources and services, and instructional and information technology support functions.
- 7.5 Through ownership or guaranteed access, the institution makes available the library and information resources necessary for the fulfillment of its mission and purposes. These resources are sufficient in quality, level, diversity, quantity, and currency to support and enrich the institution's academic offerings. They support the academic and research program and the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff.
- 7.6 Faculty, staff, and students are provided appropriate training and support to make effective use of library and information resources, and instructional and information technology.
- 7.7 The institution ensures appropriate access to library and information resources and services for all students regardless of program location or mode of delivery.
- 7.8 The institution ensures that students have available and are appropriately directed to sources of information appropriate to support and enrich their academic work.

#### **Information and Technological Literacy**

- 7.9 The institution demonstrates that students use information resources and technology as an integral part of their education, attaining levels of proficiency appropriate to their degree and subject or professional field of study.
- 7.10 The institution ensures that throughout their program of study students acquire increasingly sophisticated skills in evaluating the quality of information sources appropriate to their field of study and the level of the degree program. (See also 4.7)

#### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 7.11 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the adequacy, utilization, and impact of its library, information resources and services, and instructional and information technology and uses the findings to improve and increase the effectiveness of these services.

## **Standard Eight Physical and Technological Resources**

**The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes. It manages and maintains these resources in a manner to sustain and enhance the realization of institutional purposes.**

- 8.1 The institution's physical and technological resources, including classrooms, laboratories, network infrastructure, materials, equipment, and buildings and grounds, whether owned or rented, are commensurate with institutional purposes. They are designed, maintained, and managed at both on- and off-campus sites in a manner that serves institutional needs. Proper management, maintenance, and operation of all physical facilities, including student housing provided by the institution, are accomplished by adequate and competent staffing.
- 8.2 Classrooms and other facilities are appropriately equipped and adequate in capacity. Classrooms and other teaching spaces support teaching methods appropriate to the discipline. Students and faculty have access to appropriate physical, technological, and educational resources to support teaching and learning. (See also 5.18)
- 8.3 Facilities are constructed and maintained in accordance with legal requirements to ensure access, safety, security, and a healthful environment with consideration for environmental and ecological concerns.
- 8.4 The institution undertakes physical resource planning linked to academic and student services, support functions, and financial planning. It determines the adequacy of existing physical and technological resources and identifies and plans the specified resolution of deferred maintenance needs. Space planning occurs on a regular basis as part of physical resource evaluation and planning, and is consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution.
- 8.5 The institution demonstrates the effectiveness of its policies and procedures in ensuring the reliability of the systems, the integrity and security of data, and the privacy of individuals. The institution establishes and applies clear policies and procedures and monitors and responds to illegal or inappropriate uses of its technology systems and resources.
- 8.6 The institution's physical and electronic environments provide an atmosphere conducive to study and research.
- 8.7 The institution uses information technology sufficient to ensure its efficient ability to plan, administer, and evaluate its program and services.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 8.8 The institution's ongoing evaluation of its physical and technological resources in light of its mission, current needs and plans for the future is a basis of realistic planning and budget allocation.

## Standard Nine Financial Resources

**The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the quality of its educational program and to support institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates, through verifiable internal and external evidence, its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity.**

- 9.1 The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances.
- 9.2 The institution is financially stable. Ostensible financial stability is not achieved at the expense of educational quality. Its stability and viability are not unduly dependent upon vulnerable financial resources or an historically narrow base of support. The institution's governing board retains appropriate autonomy in all budget and finance matters; this includes institutions that depend on financial support from an external agency (state, church, or other private or public entity).
- 9.3 The institution's multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students. The governing board reviews and approves the institution's financial plans based on multi-year analysis and financial forecasting.
- 9.4 All or substantially all of the institution's revenue is devoted to the support of its academic purposes and programs. The institution's financial records clearly relate to its educational activities.
- 9.5 The institution and its governing board regularly and systematically review the effectiveness of the institution's financial aid policy and practices in advancing the institution's mission and helping to ensure that the institution enrolls and supports the student body it seeks to serve.
- 9.6 The institution ensures that it has sufficient professionally qualified finance staff, led by a chief financial officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution.
- 9.7 The institution ensures the integrity of its finances through prudent financial management and organization, a well-organized budget process, appropriate internal control mechanisms, risk assessment, and timely financial reporting to internal and external constituency groups, providing a basis for sound financial decision-making.
- 9.8 The institution establishes and implements its budget after appropriate consultation with relevant constituencies in accord with realistic overall planning that provides for the appropriate integration of academic, student service, fiscal, development, information and technology and physical resource priorities to advance its educational objectives.
- 9.9 The institution's financial planning, including contingency planning, is integrated with overall planning and evaluation processes. The institution demonstrates its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand the opportunities and constraints that will influence its financial condition and acts accordingly. It reallocates resources as necessary to achieve its purposes and objectives. The institution implements a realistic plan for addressing issues raised by the existence of any operating deficit. (See also 2.3)

- 9.10 Opportunities identified for new sources of revenue are reviewed by the administration and board to ensure the integrity of the institution and the quality of the academic program are maintained and enhanced. The institution planning a substantive change demonstrates the financial capacity to ensure that the new initiative meets the standards of quality of the institution and the Commission's Standards.
- 9.11 Institutional and board leadership ensure the institution's ethical oversight of its financial resources and practices.
- 9.12 The institution's financial resources and transactions are audited annually by an external auditor in accord with the generally accepted auditing standards for colleges and universities as adopted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Board policies and institutional practices ensure the independence and objectivity of the auditor and the appropriate consideration of the audit by the governing board. For institutions part of a larger system or corporation, the audit provides sufficient information about the institution's finances to support a determination regarding the sufficiency and stability of the institution's financial resources. In all cases, the audit and management letter are appropriately reviewed by the institution's administration and governing board who take appropriate action on resulting recommendations or conclusions.
- 9.13 The institution directs its fund-raising efforts toward the fulfillment of institutional purposes and conducts them in accordance with clear and complete policies that stipulate the conditions and terms under which gifts are solicited and accepted. The institution accurately represents itself and its capacities and needs to prospective donors and accurately portrays the impact that their gifts can reasonably be expected to have. Gifts are promptly directed toward donors' intentions.
- 9.14 All fiscal policies, including those related to budgeting, investments, insurance, risk management, contracts and grants, transfers and inter-fund borrowing, fund-raising, and other institutional advancement and development activities, are clearly stated in writing and consistently implemented in compliance with ethical and sound financial practices.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 9.15 The institution has in place appropriate internal and external mechanisms to evaluate its fiscal condition and financial management and to maintain its integrity. The institution uses the results of these activities for improvement.

## Standard Ten Public Disclosure

**In presenting itself to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.**

- 10.1 The information published by the institution on its website is sufficient to allow students and prospective students to make informed decisions about their education. The institution's public website includes the information specified elsewhere in this Standard (10.2 - 10.13).
- 10.2 The institution informs the public of the information available about itself and how inquiries can be addressed. It is also responsive to reasonable requests for information about itself. The institution provides notice as to the availability upon request of its publications and its most recent audited financial statement or a fair summary thereof.
- 10.3 The institution's current catalogue describes the institution consistent with its mission statement and sets forth the obligations and responsibilities of both students and the institution. The catalogue or other authoritative publications present information relative to admission and attendance. Institutions relying on electronic catalogues ensure the availability of archival editions sufficient to serve the needs of alumni and former and returning students.
- 10.4 All forms of print and electronic communications officially representing the institution are consistent with catalogue content and accurately portray the conditions and opportunities available at the institution.
- 10.5 The institution publishes its mission, objectives, and expected educational outcomes; its status as a public or independent institution; if independent, its status as a not-for-profit or for-profit institution; any religious affiliation; requirements and procedures and policies related to admissions and the transfer of credit; a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements; student fees, charges and refund policies; rules and regulations for student conduct; procedures for student appeals and complaints; other items related to attending or withdrawing from the institution; academic programs, courses currently offered, and other available educational opportunities; and academic policies and procedures and the requirements for degrees or other forms of academic recognition.
- 10.6 The institution publishes a list of its current faculty, indicating departmental or program affiliation, distinguishing between those who have full- and part-time status, showing degrees held and the institutions granting them. The names and positions of administrative officers, and the names and principal affiliations of members of the governing board are also included.
- 10.7 The institution publishes the locations and programs available at branch campuses, other instructional locations, including those overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of the programs and services available at each location.
- 10.8 The institution clearly indicates those programs, courses, services, and personnel not available during a given academic year. It does not list as current any courses not taught for two consecutive years that will not be taught during the third consecutive year.
- 10.9 The institution publishes a description of the size and characteristics of the student body, the campus setting, the availability of academic and other support services, the range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students; and those institutional

- learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit.
- 10.10 The institution publishes statements of its goals for students' education and the success of students in achieving those goals. Information on student success includes rates of retention and graduation and other measures of student success appropriate to institutional mission. As appropriate, recent information on passage rates for licensure examinations is also published.
- 10.11 The institution publishes information about the total cost of education, including the availability of financial aid and the typical length of study. The expected amount of student debt upon graduation is provided to help students and prospective students make informed decisions.
- 10.12 The institution has readily available valid documentation for any statements and promises regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty.
- 10.13 The institution's statements about its current accredited status are accurately and explicitly worded. An institution placed on probation by the New England Association discloses this status in its catalogue and recruitment materials and in any other publication, print or electronic, in which the institution's accreditation is mentioned, as well as the availability of additional information on its probationary status.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

- 10.14 Through a systematic process of periodic review, the institution ensures that its print and electronic publications are complete, accurate, available, and current. The results of the review are used for improvement.

## Standard Eleven Integrity

**The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.**

- 11.1 The institution expects that members of its community, including the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students, will act responsibly and with integrity; and it systematically provides support in the pursuit thereof. Institutional leadership fosters an atmosphere where issues of integrity can be openly considered, and members of the institutional community understand and assume their responsibilities in the pursuit of integrity.
- 11.2 Truthfulness, clarity, and fairness characterize the institution's relations with all internal and external constituencies. Adequate provision is made to ensure academic honesty. Appropriate policies and procedures are in effect and periodically reviewed for matters including intellectual property rights, the avoidance of conflict of interest, privacy rights, and fairness in dealing with students, faculty, and staff. The institution's educational policies and procedures are applicable and equitably applied to all its students.
- 11.3 The institution is committed to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It assures faculty and students the freedom to teach and study a given field, to examine all pertinent data, to question assumptions, and to be guided by the evidence of scholarly research.
- 11.4 The institution observes the spirit as well as the letter of applicable legal requirements. It has a charter and/or other formal authority from the appropriate governmental agency authorizing it to grant all degrees it awards; it has the necessary operating authority for each jurisdiction in which it conducts activities; and it operates within this authority.
- 11.5 The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. It fosters an atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds.
- 11.6 The institution manages its academic, research and service programs, administrative operations, responsibilities for students and interactions with prospective students with honesty and integrity.
- 11.7 The institution is responsible for conferences, institutes, workshops, or other instructional or enrichment activities that are sponsored by the institution or carry its name. These activities are compatible with the institution's purposes and are administered within its organizational structure. The institution assumes responsibility for the appropriateness and integrity of such activities.
- 11.8 The institution has established and publicizes clear policies ensuring institutional integrity. Included among them are appropriate policies and procedures for the fair resolution of grievances brought by faculty, staff, or students.
- 11.9 In its relationships with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, the institution demonstrates honesty and integrity, and it complies with the Commission's Standards, policies, Requirements of Affiliation, and requests.

- 11.10 In addition to the considerations stated in this Standard, the institution adheres to those requirements related to institutional integrity embodied in all other Commission Standards.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

- 11.11 The pursuit of institutional integrity is strengthened through the application of findings from periodic and episodic assessments of the policies and conditions that support the achievement of these aims among members of the institutional community.