

Accreditation Standards, Annotated¹

(Adopted June 2014)

Introduction²

The primary purpose of an ACCJC-accredited institution is to foster student learning and student achievement. An effective institution ensures that its resources, programs, and services, whenever, wherever, and however delivered, support student learning and achievement. The effective institution ensures academic quality and continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of learning and achievement and pursues institutional excellence and improvement through ongoing, integrated planning and evaluation.

There are four Standards that work together to define and promote student success, academic quality, institutional integrity, and excellence. The mission provides a framework for all institutional goals and activities. The institution provides the means for students to learn and achieve their goals, assesses how well learning is occurring, and strives to improve learning and achievement through ongoing, systematic, and integrated evaluation and planning (Standard I). Student learning programs and support services make possible the academic quality that supports student success (Standard II). Human, physical, technology, and financial resources enable these programs and services to function and improve (Standard III). Ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization guides the accomplishment of the mission and supports institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standard IV). Integrating the elements of the Standards gives institutions the means to develop a comprehensive assessment of academic quality, institutional integrity and effectiveness, and a path to continuous improvement.

References

Commission Policies touching generally on accreditation:

Statement on the Benefits of Accreditation

Interregional Policies on the Accreditation of Institutions Operating Across Regions

Federal law and regulations touching generally on accreditation:

20 U.S.C. § 1099(b).

34 C.F.R. § 602.

Note that cited federal regulations can be found online at www.ecfr.gov.

¹ This annotation of standards is provided as a reference tool for member institutions and interested others. The annotations are not "official" elements of the standards, and are subject to being changed in response to new information, to policy revisions, and so forth. The annotations attempt to capture related Commission policies, CHEA standards, and federal regulations involving the accreditation process. The annotations do not attempt to link to all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations which may touch on the subject matter of the standards or which may separately address requirements of higher education. Institutions should refer directly to source material when determining their obligations.

² The Introduction section and opening paragraphs of each Standard are not intended for citation as standards. They are introductory in nature only.

Other:

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Recognition of Accrediting Organizations Policy and Procedures (2010).

Standard I:³ Mission, Academic Quality⁴ and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes student learning and student achievement. Using analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the institution continuously and systematically evaluates, plans, implements, and improves the quality of its educational programs and services. The institution demonstrates integrity in all policies, actions, and communication. The administration, faculty, staff, and governing board members act honestly, ethically, and fairly in the performance of their duties.

A. Mission

1. The mission describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and other credentials it offers, and its commitment to student learning⁵ and student achievement.⁶ (ER 6)⁷
2. The institution uses data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission, and whether the mission directs institutional priorities in meeting the educational needs of students.

³ Each enumerated statement is an ACCJC accreditation standard (e.g., I.A.1, II.B.4, and so on). The standards are organized by subject matter into four chapters which are entitled Standard I, Standard II, Standard III, and Standard IV. The chapters are further divided by headings to help identify related groups of standards.

⁴ Glossary- Academic Quality: A way of describing how well the learning opportunities, instruction, support, services, environment, resource utilization and operations of a college result in student learning and student achievement of their educational goals. The Accreditation Standards, collectively, are factors in determining academic quality in the context of institutional mission.

⁵ Glossary- Student Learning: Competencies in skill and knowledge gained by students who are at the institution. The knowledge and competencies are expressed for segments of study or activity through measurable learning outcomes at the institutional, program, degree, and course levels.

⁶ Glossary- Student Achievement: Student attainment that can be measured at defined points of completion, including successful course completion, certificates and degrees, licensure examination passage, post-program employment, and other similar elements.

⁷ Institutions that have achieved accreditation are expected to include in their Institutional Self Evaluation Report information demonstrating that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements. Accredited institutions must separately address Eligibility Requirements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. The remaining Eligibility Requirements will be addressed in the institution's response to the relevant sections of the Accreditation Standards. The relevant sections of the Accreditation Standards are so noted by an (ER___) designation.

3. The institution's programs and services are aligned with its mission. The mission guides institutional decision-making, planning, and resource allocation and informs institutional goals for student learning and achievement.
4. The institution articulates its mission in a widely published statement approved by the governing board. The mission statement is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. (ER 6)

References

Policies:

Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
 Policy on Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals
 Policy on Substantive Change
 Statement on the Benefits of Accreditation
 Statement on Diversity

Regulations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.17; 602.18; 602.22; 602.24(c)5.

Other:

CHEA Standards 12A1, 12A4

B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

Academic Quality

1. The institution demonstrates a sustained, substantive and collegial dialog about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement.
2. The institution defines and assesses student learning outcomes for all instructional programs and student and learning support services. (ER 11)
3. The institution establishes institution-set standards⁸ for student achievement, appropriate to its mission,⁹ assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of continuous improvement, and publishes this information. (ER 11)

⁸ Glossary- Institution-Set Standards: Performance metrics and measures set by institutions for student achievement, both in individual programs and for institution-wide student achievement. [An example of an Institution-Set Standard is course completion. The definition is: the number of successful course completions (with a grade of C or better, if graded) over the number of student enrollments when the general enrollment period ends. The measure is the expected level of performance (the percentage, rate, number) for programs and across the institution: the college's expected rate might be based upon a 5-year average, or upon another number determined appropriate for college-wide application.] Both the definition of the measure and the institution-set level of expected performance must be appropriate for assessing achievement of institutional mission, for determining actions of improvement, and for analyzing institutional results in the context of higher education. Institutions assess student performance against locally set standards in order to determine institutional effectiveness and academic quality and to inform planning and action for continuous improvement.

4. The institution uses assessment data and organizes its institutional processes to support student learning and student achievement.

References

Policies:

Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV
Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance

Regulations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e); 668.6; 668.45.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards 12A2-3, 12B1

Institutional Effectiveness

5. The institution assesses accomplishment of its mission through program review and evaluation of goals and objectives, student learning outcomes, and student achievement. Quantitative and qualitative data are disaggregated for analysis by program type and mode of delivery.
6. The institution disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. When the institution identifies performance gaps, it implements strategies, which may include allocation or reallocation of human, fiscal and other resources, to mitigate those gaps and evaluates the efficacy of those strategies.
7. The institution regularly evaluates its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission.
8. The institution broadly communicates the results of all of its assessment and evaluation activities so that the institution has a shared understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate priorities.
9. The institution engages in continuous, broad based, systematic evaluation and planning. The institution integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation into a comprehensive process that leads to accomplishment of its mission and improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Institutional

⁹ There are three required institution-set standards: course completion (an institution-wide measure), job placement rates (a programmatic measure), and licensure examination passage rates (a programmatic measure). These measures and the institution's performance must be monitored by the ACCJC in accordance with federal regulations. The ACCJC has defined these measures for evaluation and comparison. However, given the breadth of an institutional mission, additional institution-set measures related to certificates and degrees, transfer, and others should also be used by the institution in assessing its performance as to student achievement.

planning addresses short- and long-range needs for educational programs and services and for human, physical, technology, and financial resources. (ER 19)

References

Policies:

Policy on Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals

Regulations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 602.17(a,e); 602.19(b).

Other:

CHEA Standards 12A; 12C1

C. Institutional Integrity¹⁰

1. The institution assures the clarity, accuracy, and integrity of information provided to students and prospective students, personnel, and all persons or organizations related to its mission statement, learning outcomes, educational programs, and student support services. The institution gives accurate information to students and the public about its accreditation status with all of its accreditors. (ER 20)
2. The institution provides a print or online catalog for students and prospective students with precise, accurate, and current information on all facts, requirements, policies, and procedures listed in the "Catalog Requirements" (see endnote). (ER 20)
3. The institution uses documented assessment of student learning and evaluation of student achievement to communicate matters of academic quality to appropriate constituencies, including current and prospective students and the public. (ER 19)
4. The institution describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes.
5. The institution regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations of its mission, programs, and services.
6. The institution accurately informs current and prospective students regarding the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, and other required expenses, including textbooks, and other instructional materials.
7. In order to assure institutional and academic integrity, the institution uses and publishes governing board policies on academic freedom and responsibility. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and its support for an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists for all constituencies, including faculty and students. (ER 13)

¹⁰ Glossary- Institutional Integrity: Concept of consistent and ethical actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes, as defined by institutions; and of clear, accurate, and current information available to the college community and public.

8. The institution establishes and publishes clear policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility and academic integrity. These policies apply to all constituencies and include specifics relative to each, including student behavior, academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty.
9. Faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.
10. Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or world views, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statements in the catalog and/or appropriate faculty and student handbooks.
11. Institutions operating in foreign locations operate in conformity with the Standards and applicable Commission policies for all students. Institutions must have authorization from the Commission to operate in a foreign location.
12. The institution agrees to comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure, institutional reporting, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. When directed to act by the Commission, the institution responds to meet requirements within a time period set by the Commission. It discloses information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. (ER 21)
13. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, including compliance with regulations and statutes. It describes itself in consistent terms to all of its accrediting agencies and communicates any changes in its accredited status to the Commission, students, and the public. (ER 21)
14. The institution ensures that its commitments to high quality education, student achievement and student learning are paramount to other objectives such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

References

Policies:

Policy on Closing an Institution
 Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
 Policy on Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals
 Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status
 Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV
 Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics
 Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process
 Policy on Representation of Accredited Status
 Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions
 Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.17(a)(3); 602.19(b);602.22(a);602.23; 602.24; 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.34; 668.41 et seq; 668.43; 668.6; 668.71 et seq.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards 12B1, 12B3

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services

The institution offers instructional programs, library and learning support services, and student support services aligned with its mission. The institution's programs are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional programs and student and learning support services offered in the name of the institution.

A. Instructional Programs

1. All instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of identified student learning outcomes, and achievement of degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education programs. (ER 9 and ER 11)
2. ***(Applicable to institutions with comprehensive reviews scheduled through Fall 2019.¹¹)*** Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Faculty and others responsible act to continuously improve instructional courses, programs and directly related services through systematic evaluation to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success.

(Applicable to institutions with comprehensive reviews scheduled after Fall 2019.¹¹) Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, regularly engage in ensuring that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. In exercising collective ownership over the design and improvement of the learning experience, faculty conduct systematic and inclusive program review, using student achievement data, in order to continuously improve instructional courses and programs, thereby ensuring program currency, improving teaching and learning strategies, and promoting student success.
3. The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline.
4. If the institution offers pre-collegiate level¹² curriculum, it distinguishes that curriculum from college level¹³ curriculum and directly supports students in learning

¹¹ The Commission acted to modify the Standard during its January 2018 Board of Directors meeting.

¹² Glossary- Pre-Collegiate Level: Curriculum and courses offered by the college, either credit or noncredit, that the college defines as below the level of curriculum that satisfies requirements

the knowledge and skills necessary to advance to and succeed in college level curriculum.

5. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)
6. The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education.¹⁴ (ER 9)
7. The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students.
8. The institution validates the effectiveness of department-wide course and/or program examinations, where used, including direct assessment of prior learning. The institution ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability.
9. The institution awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education. If the institution offers courses based on clock hours, it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions.
10. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission. (ER 10)
11. The institution includes in all of its programs, student learning outcomes, appropriate to the program level, in communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives, and other program-specific learning outcomes.

for either degrees or transfer. Pre-collegiate curriculum usually refers to courses which may prepare a student to successfully complete degrees or transfer. Pre-collegiate curriculum may also refer to courses which provide technical preparation for individuals to attain entry level work without completing studies which would qualify for either a certificate that is part of a degree, a degree or transfer.

¹³ Glossary- College Level: Curriculum and courses offered by the college which are degree applicable and meet college graduation requirements, including courses in certificate programs that qualify toward an associate degree and above.

¹⁴ Glossary- Established expectations in higher education (also, appropriate for, accepted in, common to, accepted norms in, etc): Shared and time honored principles, values and practices within the American community of higher education.

12. The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student's preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)
13. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.¹⁵ The identification of specialized courses in an area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core is based upon student learning outcomes and competencies, and include mastery, at the appropriate degree level, of key theories and practices within the field of study.
14. Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.
15. When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.
16. The institution regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, career-technical, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Award of Credit
- Policy on Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
- Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning
- Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
- Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits
- Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance
- Policy on Substantive Change
- Policy on Transfer of Credit

Regulations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 600.2; 602.2; 602.16(a)(1); 602.16(1)c; 602.17f, g; 602.22(2)(vii); 602.24(f); 668(l), (o); 668.2; 668.6; 668.8; 668.10; 668.20; 668.38; 668.39; 668.41 et seq; 668.7.

¹⁵ Glossary- Interdisciplinary Core: A set of courses required of all students for completion of an interdisciplinary major or degree. The courses are identified on the basis of the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that students within the interdisciplinary program of study are expected to attain and demonstrate.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards 12.A.3-5

B. Library and Learning Support Services

1. The institution supports student learning and achievement by providing library, and other learning support services to students and to personnel responsible for student learning and support. These services are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support educational programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education. Learning support services include, but are not limited to, library collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, learning technology, and ongoing instruction for users of library and other learning support services. (ER 17)
2. Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians, and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission.
3. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services includes evidence that they contribute to the attainment of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
4. When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible and utilized. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the security, maintenance, and reliability of services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement. The institution regularly evaluates these services to ensure their effectiveness. (ER 17)

References

Policies:

Policy on Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics
Policy on Institutions with Related Entities

Regulations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.22(a); 602.24(c)(5); 668.43.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards 12.A.5

C. Student Support Services

1. The institution regularly evaluates the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, support student learning, and enhance accomplishment of the mission of the institution. (ER 15) CW IIB1, IIB4
2. The institution identifies and assesses learning support outcomes for its student population and provides appropriate student support services and programs to achieve those outcomes. The institution uses assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services.
3. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. (ER 15)
4. Co-curricular programs and athletics programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of its students. If the institution offers co-curricular or athletic programs, they are conducted with sound educational policy and standards of integrity. The institution has responsibility for the control of these programs, including their finances.
5. The institution provides counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function. Counseling and advising programs orient students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.
6. The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. The institution defines and advises students on clear pathways¹⁶ to complete degrees, certificate and transfer goals. (ER 16)
7. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.
8. The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

¹⁶ Glossary- Pathways: The specific selection and progression of courses and learning experiences students pursue and complete and they progress in their education toward a certificate, degree, transfer, or other identified educational goal.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Closing an Institution
- Policy on Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
- Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
- Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status
- Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics
- Policy on Refund of Student Charges
- Policy on Representation of Accredited Status
- Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions
- Policy on Transfer of Credit
- Statement on Diversity

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.22(a); 602.24; 668.6; 668.16; 668.24; 668.41 et seq; 668.46; 668.47.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards 12.A.5; 12.B.6

Standard III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its mission and to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Accredited colleges in multi-college systems may be organized so that responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning rests with the district/system. In such cases, the district/system is responsible for meeting the Standards, and an evaluation of its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution(s).

A. Human Resources

1. The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing administrators, faculty and staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated and address the needs of the institution in serving its student population. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority.
2. Faculty qualifications include knowledge of the subject matter and requisite skills for the service to be performed. Factors of qualification include appropriate degrees, professional experience, discipline expertise, level of assignment, teaching skills, scholarly activities, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution. Faculty job descriptions include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning. (ER 14)
3. Administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services possess qualifications necessary to perform duties required to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality.
4. Required degrees held by faculty, administrators and other employees are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.
5. The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.
6. ~~The evaluation of faculty, academic administrators, and other personnel directly responsible for student learning includes, as a component of that evaluation, consideration of how these employees use the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning. (Effective January 2018, Standard III.A.6 is no longer applicable. The Commission acted to delete the Standard during its January 2018 Board of Directors meeting.)~~
7. The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty, which includes full time faculty and may include part time and adjunct faculty, to assure the fulfillment

- of faculty responsibilities essential to the quality of educational programs and services to achieve institutional mission and purposes. (ER 14)
8. An institution with part time and adjunct faculty has employment policies and practices which provide for their orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development. The institution provides opportunities for integration of part time and adjunct faculty into the life of the institution.
 9. The institution has a sufficient number of staff with appropriate qualifications to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the institution. (ER 8)
 10. The institution maintains a sufficient number of administrators with appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership and services that support the institution's mission and purposes. (ER 8)
 11. The institution establishes, publishes, and adheres to written personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are fair and equitably and consistently administered.
 12. Through its policies and practices, the institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel. The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.
 13. The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel, including consequences for violation.
 14. The institution plans for and provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on evolving pedagogy, technology, and learning needs. The institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
 15. The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law.

References

Policies:

Policy Closing an Institution
Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning
Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
Policy on Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems
Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status
Statement on Diversity

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 600.2 (Branch Campus); 602.16(a)(1)(iii, v, vi); 602.22(a)(2); 602.24; 668.15; 668.16.

Other:

CHEA Standard 12.C.2

B. Physical Resources

1. The institution assures safe and sufficient physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services. They are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment.
2. The institution plans, acquires or builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources, including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services and achieve its mission.
3. To assure the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.
4. Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.

References

Policies:

Policy on Closing an Institution

Policy on Substantive Change

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.22 (c); 602.24; 668.15; 668.49.

Other:

CHEA Standards 12.A.5; 12.C.2

C. Technology Resources

1. Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are appropriate and adequate to support the institution's management and operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services.
2. The institution continuously plans for, updates and replaces technology to ensure its technological infrastructure, quality and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services.
3. The institution assures that technology resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are implemented and maintained to assure reliable access, safety, and security.
4. The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators, in the effective use of technology and technology

systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.

5. The institution has policies and procedures that guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning processes.

References

Policies:

Policy on Closing an Institution
Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
Policy on Transfer of Credit

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)1; 602.17(g); 602.22(c); 602.24; 668.15.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards: 12.A.5; 12.C.1,2.

D. Financial Resources

Planning

1. Financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, allocation and reallocation, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. (ER 18)
2. The institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning, and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. The institution has policies and procedures to ensure sound financial practices and financial stability. Appropriate financial information is disseminated throughout the institution in a timely manner.
3. The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets.

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability

4. Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.
5. To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources, the internal control structure has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making. The institution regularly evaluates its financial management practices and uses the results to improve internal control systems.

6. Financial documents, including the budget, have a high degree of credibility and accuracy, and reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services.
7. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately.
8. The institution's financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness, and the results of this assessment are used for improvement.
9. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, support strategies for appropriate risk management, and, when necessary, implement contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.
10. The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

Liabilities

11. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations.
12. The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is current and prepared as required by appropriate accounting standards.
13. On an annual basis, the institution assesses and allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution.
14. All financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants, are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source.
15. The institution monitors and manages student loan default rates, revenue streams, and assets to ensure compliance with federal requirements, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act, and comes into compliance when the federal government identifies deficiencies.

References

Policies:

- Closing an Institution
- Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions
- Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals
- Institutional Compliance with Title IV
- Institutions with Related Entities
- Monitoring Institutional Performance
- Refund of Student Charges

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.19(b); 602.22(c); 602.24(c); 668.15; 668.16.

Other:

ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
CHEA Standards: 12.A.5; 12.C.1,2.

Contractual Agreements¹⁷

16. Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of its programs, services, and operations.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
- Policy on Good Practice in Overseas International Educational Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals
- Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status
- Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions
- Policy on Substantive Change

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.22(a); 668.5.

Other:

CHEA Standards 12.A.4; 12.c.2

¹⁷ Glossary- Contractual Agreements: Arrangements for educational services that are either: (1) provided by the college/district/system for remuneration under contracts with business or other agencies, or (2) received by the college/district/system under contracts with businesses or other agencies. Contractual arrangements for delivery of educational services may include, but are not limited to, curriculum, learning support services, student support services, and instruction.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for promoting student success, sustaining academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are defined in policy and are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief executive officer. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. In multi-college districts or systems, the roles within the district/system are clearly delineated. The multi-college district or system has policies for allocation of resources to adequately support and sustain the colleges.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. Institutional leaders create and encourage innovation leading to institutional excellence. They support administrators, faculty, staff, and students, no matter what their official titles, in taking initiative for improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective planning and implementation.
2. The institution establishes and implements policy and procedures authorizing administrator, faculty, and staff participation in decision-making processes. The policy makes provisions for student participation and consideration of student views in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest. Policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose committees.
3. Administrators and faculty, through policy and procedures, have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.
4. Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.
5. Through its system of board and institutional 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.
6. The processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions are documented and widely communicated across the institution.
7. Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions
- Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics
- Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.22(c).

Other:

CHEA Standard 12.C.3

B. Chief Executive Officer

1. The institutional chief executive officer (CEO) has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. The CEO provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
2. The CEO plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. The CEO delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.
3. Through established policies and procedures, the CEO guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by:
 - establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;
 - ensuring the college sets institutional performance standards for student achievement;
 - ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis of external and internal conditions;
 - ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning;
 - ensuring that the allocation of resources supports and improves learning and achievement; and
 - establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts to achieve the mission of the institution.
4. The CEO has the primary leadership role for accreditation, ensuring that the institution meets or exceeds Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times. Faculty, staff, and administrative leaders of the institution also have responsibility for assuring compliance with accreditation requirements.
5. The CEO assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures.

6. The CEO works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance
- Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process
- Policy on Regarding Matters Under Litigation
- Policy on Representation of Accredited Status
- Policy on Review of Commission Actions
- Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions
- Policy on Role of Accreditation Liaison Officers
- Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions
- Policy on Substantive Change

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.18; 602.22(c); 602.23; 602.25; 668.15.

Other:

- ACCJC Bylaws
- ACCJC Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies
- CHEA Standards 12.A, 12.B, 12.C.

C. Governing Board

1. The institution has a governing board that has authority over and responsibility for policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. (ER 7)
2. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision.
3. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the CEO of the college and/or the district/system.
4. The governing board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution's educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure. (ER 7)
5. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the college/district/system mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity and stability.
6. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.
7. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.

8. To ensure the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality.
9. The governing board has an ongoing training program for board development, including new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
10. Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the board's effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.
11. The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code. The board has a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary. A majority of the board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. Board member interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. (ER 7)
12. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.
13. The governing board is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the college's accredited status, and supports through policy the college's efforts to improve and excel. The board participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems
- Policy on Governing Boards for Military Institutions
- Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance
- Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process
- Policy Regarding Matters Under Litigation
- Policy on Representation of Accredited Status
- Policy on Review of Commission Actions
- Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions
- Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions
- Policy on Substantive Change

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.22(c); 602.23; 602.25; 668.15; 668.16.

Other:

ACCJC Bylaws

D. Multi-College Districts or Systems

1. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system CEO provides leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity throughout the district/system and assures support for the effective operation of the colleges. Working with the colleges, the district/system CEO establishes clearly defined roles, authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system.
2. The district/system CEO clearly delineates, documents, and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice. The district/system CEO ensures that the colleges receive effective and adequate district/system provided services to support the colleges in achieving their missions. Where a district/system has responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning, it is evaluated against the Standards, and its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution.
3. The district/system has a policy for allocation and reallocation of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations and sustainability of the colleges and district/system. The district/system CEO ensures effective control of expenditures.
4. The CEO of the district or system delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEOs of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without interference and holds college CEO's accountable for the operation of the colleges.
5. District/system planning and evaluation are integrated with college planning and evaluation to improve student learning and achievement and institutional effectiveness.
6. Communication between colleges and districts/systems ensures effective operations of the colleges and should be timely, accurate, and complete in order for the colleges to make decisions effectively.
7. The district/system CEO regularly evaluates district/system and college role delineations, governance and decision-making processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals for student achievement and learning. The district/system widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

References

Policies:

- Policy on Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems
- Policy on Institutions with Related Entities

Regulations:

34 C.F.R. §§ 602.16(a)(1); 602.22(c); 668.15.

Other:

CHEA Standards 12.A, 12.B, 12.C.

Catalog Requirements

The following list of required information must be included in the college catalog.

1. General Information

- Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and Website Address of the Institution
- Educational Mission
- Representation of accredited status with ACCJC, and with programmatic accreditors if any
- Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
- Student Learning Outcomes for Programs and Degrees
- Academic Calendar and Program Length
- Academic Freedom Statement
- Available Student Financial Aid
- Available Learning Resources
- Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty
- Names of Governing Board Members

2. Requirements

- Admissions
- Student Tuition, Fees, and Other Financial Obligations
- Degrees, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer

3. Major Policies and Procedures Affecting Students

- Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty
- Nondiscrimination
- Acceptance and Transfer of Credits
- Transcripts
- Grievance and Complaint Procedures
- Sexual Harassment
- Refund of Fees

4. Locations or Publications Where Other Policies may be Found