

Version I

New Version Coming in 2011

Documenting Fundamental Understandings: Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation

Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation

The Minimum Expectations are organized by six areas: Fiduciary Responsibility, Public Information, Programs and Instruction, Faculty, Student Support Services, and Resources. For each specific item, the chart identifies the Criteria and Core Component(s) to which it refers. Please note that some of the specific items are in fact derived from, and often identical to, statements that are already present in the Criteria in the form of the "examples of evidence" which are offered for each component.

Part 1. Fiduciary Responsibility	
<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
The institution has the legal documents required to confirm its status as an institution of higher education (public, non-profit, for-profit).	Criterion: 1 Core Components: 1d, 1e
The institution has legal authority to grant degrees and meets the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1e
The institution understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations applicable to it (or bylaws and regulations established by federally sovereign entities).	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1e
The institution has a governing board that possesses and exercises the necessary legal power to establish and review the basic policies that govern the institution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The board provides oversight of the institution's finances as well as its academic and business operations. — The board is sufficiently autonomous from the administration, ownership, and other related entities to assure the integrity of the institution and to allow the board to make decisions in the best interest of the institution. — The board authorizes the institution's affiliation with the Commission. 	Criteria: 1, 2 Core Components: 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2d
The institution has a qualified Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Academic Officer (titles may vary).	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1d
The institution has a published conflict of interest policy for the governing board and the senior administrative leadership.	Criterion: 1 Core Components: 1d, 1e
The institution defines and applies minimum qualifications for administrators.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1d
The institution follows established administrative policies and procedures.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1d
The institution evaluates its governance and administrative structures and processes regularly.	Criterion: 2 Core Component: 2c
The institution presents to the Commission a clear and complete description of its relationship to any corporate parent or other related legal entity to which the institution is subject.	Criterion: 1 Core Components: 1d, 1e

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The institution documents outsourcing of services in written agreements, including agreements with parent or affiliated organizations.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1c
The institution addresses diversity of students and staff within the values and purposes of its mission.	Criteria: 1, 5 Core Components: 1b, 5a
The institution responds to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students, in a timely manner.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1e

Part 2. Public Information

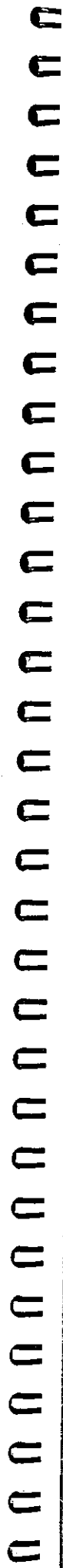
<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
The Board has adopted and published statements of mission, vision, values, goals and organizational priorities that together clearly and broadly define the organization's mission.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1a
The institution presents itself accurately and honestly to the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The institution advertises only programs it actually provides. — The institution's catalog, with full descriptions of programs and admission requirements, is accessible to the public. — The institution portrays its accreditation status clearly to the public, including the status of its branch campuses and related entities and its specialized and professional accreditations. — The institution communicates to its constituencies and applicants any Public Disclosure Notice it receives from the Higher Learning Commission. 	Criterion: 1 Core Components: 1d, 1e
The institution presents itself clearly and honestly to students and applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The institution provides students clear, timely, and accurate disclosure of all costs: tuition, fees, training, and incidentals. — The institution provides students timely and accurate information on its refund policy. — The institution explains clearly to applicants its requirements for admission to particular programs or majors as well as to the institution. — The institution explains clearly to applicants in advance of enrollment its policies on acceptance of transfer credit. — The institution clearly indicates to students what services it provides and how to access them. 	Criteria: 1, 5 Core Components: 1d, 1e, 5b
The institution includes on its Web site a telephone number that includes an option to speak with a representative of the institution.	Criteria: 1, 5 Core Components: 1e, 5b

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Part 3. Programs and Instruction	
<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
<p>The institution follows established academic policies and procedures that reflect commonly accepted practice in higher education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Faculty have primary authority for the assignment of grades. — The institution has clear published policies on student academic load. — Syllabi are provided for all courses offered. — Residency requirements for each program are stated. — The institution has formal, written agreements for managing internships and clinical placements. 	<p>Criterion: 3 Core Components: 3b, 3c</p>
<p>The institution maintains a practice of regular academic program reviews that include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs.</p>	<p>Criteria: 2, 3, 4 Core Components: 2c, 3c, 4c</p>
<p>Assessment provides evidence of student learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Programs, majors, degrees and general education have stated learning outcomes. — Processes for assessment of student learning are in effect. 	<p>Criterion: 3 Core Component: 3a</p>
<p>The institution follows appropriate policies for academic level and program requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The institution clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes for each. — No graduate program is composed primarily of courses that are available for both graduate and undergraduate credit. — Credits earned in remedial courses do not receive degree credit. — The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: 60 semester credits for associate's degrees, 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees, 30 semester credits beyond the bachelor's for master's degrees, 30 semester credits beyond the master's degree for doctorates. Any exception to these minima must be explained and justified. — The institution maintains a minimum requirement for general education for all of its undergraduate programs whether through the traditional distributed curricula (15 semester credits for technical associate's degrees, 24 for transfer associate's degrees, and 30 for bachelor's degrees) or through integrated, embedded, interdisciplinary, or other accepted models that demonstrate a minimum requirement equivalent to the distributed model. Any exceptions are explained and justified. — The institution assigns credit values to courses based on commonly accepted ascriptions for traditional classroom learning, distance learning, hybrid programs, and compressed schedules. <i>(Note: This item will incorporate whatever definition of a credit hour results from the federal regulatory process in progress during 2010.)</i> 	<p>Criteria: 3, 4 Core Components: 3a, 3b, 4b</p>



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Students have access to the resources necessary to support learning and teaching (e.g., research laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites) and those resources are appropriate for the institution's mission and programs.	Criteria: 3, 4 Core Components: 3c, 3d, 4d
Students have access to guidance in the use of research and information resources.	Criterion: 4 Core Component: 4d
Faculty members at the institution are available for student inquiry and mentoring.	Criteria: 3, 4 Core Components: 3c, 4d
The rigor of programs is consistent wherever and however curricula are delivered (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, etc.).	Criterion: 4 Core Component: 4c

Part 4. Faculty

<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
Faculty members possess an academic degree one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established. In terminal degree programs, faculty members possess the same level of degree. When faculty members are employed based on equivalent experience, the institution defines a minimum threshold of experience and an evaluation process.	Criterion: 3 Core Component: 3b
Faculty members teaching at the doctoral level have a record of recognized scholarship, creative endeavor, or achievement in practice commensurate to doctoral expectations.	Criteria: 3, 4 Core Components: 3b, 4a
The institution has a process for assuring that faculty members are current in their disciplines.	Criteria: 3, 4 Core Components: 3b, 4a
All faculty members are evaluated regularly in accordance with established procedures.	Criterion: 3 Core Component: 3b
The institution has a sufficient number of faculty members to carry out the administrative roles of faculty, in particular oversight of the curriculum and assurance that students meet program requirements.	Criteria: 2, 3 Core Components: 2b, 3b

Part 5. Student Support Services

<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
<p>The institution provides student support services consistent with the type of students admitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Qualified staffing is provided for the student services offered. — Appropriate academic advising is provided. — Financial aid advising clearly and comprehensively reviews the student's 	Criteria: 3, 5 Core Components: 3d, 5c

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<p>eligibility for federal assistance and scholarships and the student's debt capacity.</p> <p>— Timely and accurate transcript and records services are maintained.</p>	
The institution assures the quality and integrity of its admissions function.	Criterion: 1 Core Components: 1c, 1d
The institution maintains contact information for student support services on its Web site for its main campus, off-campus locations, branch campuses, and online delivery. Contact information is also provided for students to use should a service not be readily available.	Criteria: 1, 5 Core Components: 1d, 5c

Part 6. Resources	
<i>The specific items in these Minimum Expectations are not additional requirements. Rather, they state fundamental understandings and should be used as needed in evaluating the institution against the Criteria for Accreditation.</i>	Related Criteria and Core Components
The institution is fiscally viable.	Criterion: 2 Core Component: 2b
The accredited entity has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency. For private institutions the audit is annual; for public institutions it conforms with state practice.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2b, 2c, 2d
The institution's resources are adequate to ensure the quality of the academic programs and services it claims to provide.	Criterion: 2 Core Component: 2b
The institution maintains an annual statement of revenue and expense.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2b, 2c
The institution has a prepared budget for the current year and the capacity to compare it with budgets of previous years.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2b, 2c
The institution has a system of ongoing planning and a current operational plan.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2b, 2c
The institution's planning processes are linked with its budgeting process.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2b, 2c
The institution maintains systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information.	Criterion: 2 Core Components: 2a, 2d
The institution has a process for regular review of its physical infrastructure at all locations.	Criterion: 2 Core Component: 2b
The institution's facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1c
The institution's facilities are compliant with state and local regulations to ensure health and safety.	Criterion: 1 Core Component: 1c

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