



ACCJC

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Substantive Change Manual

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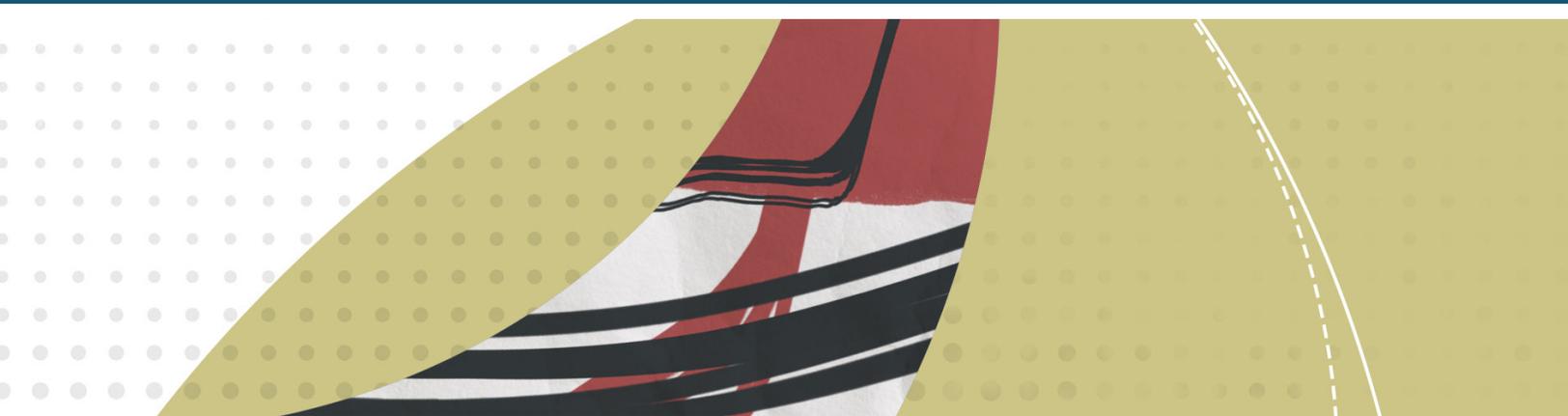


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Introduction

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) supports all efforts to continuously improve the quality of learning at our member institutions. As such, change is constant. Defined by federal regulations, an institutional change that significantly affects quality, mission, scope, or control is considered substantive. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) regulations require that accrediting agencies have policies and procedures that ensure that any substantive changes to the institution, its educational mission, or programs do not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. Federal law mandates that accrediting agencies require institutions to obtain accreditor approval of a substantive change before it is included in the scope of the accreditation granted to the institution (34 CFR §602.22).

The ACCJC is committed to supporting our member institutions' efforts to ensuring quality in higher learning. The revised manual is the result of comments and concerns from practitioners in the field. The ACCJC staff and Commissioners work with an advisory committee comprised of accreditation liaison officers from across the region to streamline the substantive change process in order to help institutions meet their students' needs.

ACCJC staff and Commissioners would like to extend our appreciation for the work of the Substantive Change Advisory Group:

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1 Changes the Commission Considers Substantive

1.1 Change in Mission, Objectives, Scope, or Name of the Institution

- Change in the mission or character of the institution. If the mission or character of the institution becomes dramatically different, the Commission reserves the right to require the institution to complete the eligibility, candidacy, and initial accreditation process
- Change in the degree level from that which was previously offered by the institution, i.e., offering a degree at a level higher than the accredited institution offers currently
- Change in the official name of the institution
- Merger of two separately-accredited ACCJC institutions into a single institution
- Reduction of programs to an extent that the institution's mission cannot be accomplished

1.2 Change in the Nature of the Constituency Served

- Change in the intended student population
- Closure of an institution or degree level program, loss of state authorization or licensure for the institution or a program, or withdrawal of accreditation if such withdrawal will result in closure¹
- Closure of a permanent location geographically apart from the main campus at which students can complete at least 50% of an educational program
- Courses or programs offered outside the geographic region currently served

1.3 Change in the Location or Geographic Area Served

- Move of the institution to a new permanent location or an addition of a permanent location, geographically apart from the main campus, where students can complete 50% or more of a program. The offering of courses and programs at a high school (dual enrollment) or a correctional institution do not constitute a change of location that requires substantive change approval, unless the college has USDE approval to offer federal financial to these student populations. The Substantive Change Committee will determine if an institution applying for substantive change for a new permanent location requires a visit to the site. Considerations related to an additional or new location include the following:
 - The institution must have the fiscal and administrative capacity to operate the additional location. If required, a visit will be arranged within six months of review to an additional or new location the institution establishes. The purpose of the site visit is to verify that the location has the personnel, facilities, and resources the institution claimed to have in its substantive change application.

¹ See the Policy on Closing an Institution for further discussion of requirements related to closing an institution and teach-out plans for institutional or programmatic closures.

- The Substantive Change Committee may not approve an institution's addition of locations after the institution undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control² until the institution demonstrates that it meets the conditions for the Commission to pre-approve additional locations.³

1.4 Change in the Control or Legal Status of the Institution

- Change in the form of control, legal status, or ownership of the institution
- Merger with another institution⁴
- Separation of one unit of the institution into separate institutions, dividing an institution into two or more separately controlled and accredited units, or a change of an off-campus site into a separate institution
- Acquisition of any other institution or program or location of another institution, and/or the addition of a permanent location at the site of a teach-out the institution is conducting

1.5 Change in Courses or Programs or their Mode of Delivery that Represents a Significant Departure from Current Practice

A change that represents a significant departure from current practice in the mode or location of courses occurs when the change constitutes 50% or more of a program, degree or certificate. This includes the following:

- Programs offered at a new or different permanent location operated by the college
- Programs offered exclusively or primarily through distance education or correspondence education
- Course additions that constitute 50% or more of a degree program
- Addition of programs that represent a significant departure from existing offerings of educational programs or methods of delivery from those offered when the institution was last evaluated. The following changes are considered significant departures for Substantive Change purposes:
 - New permanent locations (either owned or leased by the college on a long-term basis);
 - Distance education offered as a new modality (for the first time that an institution offers on-line instruction for 50% or more of a program);
 - New distance education programs, if the college has not submitted and received approval on at least one substantive change application;
 - Certificate (16 units/credits or greater) or a Degree that requires additional significant institutional resource (Human resources, physical resources, technical resources) commitment.

Institutions may make changes that are not considered as a substantial deviation from existing practices or programs. Changes that are generally considered as not substantive, however, do require review and administrative approval by the ACCJC to ensure that student access to federal financial aid is assured. The following changes are not considered significant departures for Substantive Change Purposes:

² as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 600.3.1

³ 34 C.F.R. §602.22(a)(2)(viii)(D)

⁴ See also *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations*

- Use of a location for 50% or more of a program that is not considered a permanent location for the institution but rather is for occasional or incidental use (such as borrowed facilities, area schools, jails and prisons, etc.)
 - Dual credit programs at high schools and programs offered at correctional facilities do not require substantive change applications unless the college has USDE approval to provide federal financial aid to those student populations;
- Certificates integral to existing degrees (Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, or Associate Degrees for Transfer) or new Degrees where less than 50% of the courses are new to the institution.
- Distance education programs, if the college has not submitted and received approval on at least one substantive change application.

1.6 Change in Credit Awarded

- Substantial increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for the successful completion of a program
- Change from clock hours to credit hours

1.7 Implementation of Direct Assessment⁵

- Change of an instructional program from clock hours or credit hours, to direct assessment of student learning. A program must obtain ED approval as a direct assessment program.⁶

1.8 Contractual Relationship with a Non-Regionally-Accredited Organization

- More than 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's for-credit educational programs are offered by the non-regionally-accredited organization.⁷

1.9 Any Other Significant Change

The Commission reserves the right to request reports and visits to assess the effects of any change it deems to be a significant departure from the previous reaffirmation of accreditation.

⁵ See the *Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning*

⁶ See 34 C.F.R. § 668.10

⁷ 34 C.F.R. § 602.22(a)(2)(vii)

2 Timing considerations for Substantive Changes

Substantive change approval is needed before an applicable change can be implemented to ensure affected students can qualify for federal financial aid. A substantive change application should be submitted when the institution is able to demonstrate and provide evidence that the change meets Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies and any specific evaluation criteria. **Substantive Change Applications are due to the ACCJC 45 days prior to the scheduled meeting of the Substantive Change Committee.** Due dates are posted on the ACCJC website (ACCJC.org).

In the following circumstances, institutions may not submit a substantive change application:

- In the six-month period preceding a comprehensive evaluation team visit.
- During the period that an institution is on a sanction such as Warning, Probation, or Show Cause until the conditions that resulted in a sanction have been resolved and the Commission has reaffirmed accreditation. If the sanction includes a specific recommendation which cites as a non-compliance the institution's failure to seek substantive change approval of an existing program, delivery mode, or location, then, to the extent of that recommendation only, the institution may proceed with a substantive change application.
- If the institution is subject to withdrawal of accreditation, pending the outcome of administrative remedies.

3 Substantive Change Review Process

3.1 Step 1: Determination whether a Change is Considered Substantive

Section 1 above identifies those changes that are considered substantive and require review and approval prior to implementation. Institutions are required to submit the Substantive Change Inquiry Form, for each change, so that a determination can be made as to whether the change requires a full Substantive Change Application or whether an Administrative Approval can be granted. The Substantive Change Inquiry Form can be accessed [here](#). After review of the Substantive Change inquiry

3.2 Step 2: Develop the Application

- Once it has been determined that the proposed change requires approval of the Substantive Change Committee, the institution should develop the Application using the appropriate Substantive Change Application Form. Specific Templates are available for New Program, New Location, Distance Education – Intentional program, and Change in Local Control. Once it has been determined that a Sub Change Application is required, staff will provide the appropriate template.
- The ALO is responsible for disseminating this information to the institutional representatives drafting the application. They are also responsible for reviewing the application for completeness and accuracy prior to submittal to the ACCJC.
- As noted above, a number of templates have been developed to correspond to the types of substantive change. Each question in the template must be addressed.
- Prior to submission, applications must obtain all relevant internal approvals, including administrative and governance reviews, to ensure adherence to the institution's quality

assurance processes. Faculty must be appropriately involved in developing and approving programs, especially those who will be responsible for instructional delivery and assessment.

3.3 Step 3: Submit the Application and Fee

- Once the Application has been completed, it should be submitted with the appropriate forms and the fee. The application should be submitted no later than 45 days prior to the meeting dates of the Substantive Change Committee as posted on the ACCJC website. Substantive Change Fees are specified in the ACCJC Fee Schedule. This fee schedule is adjusted periodically. Colleges should consult the Fee Schedule to ascertain the fee required. Reviews are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Receipt of the Substantive Change Application and fee will reserve a place on the Substantive Change Committee's Agenda. The Substantive Change Committee will determine how many applications will be reviewed at a meeting. Applications that are unable to be reviewed will be scheduled for the next regular meeting of the Committee.

Preliminary Review by ACCJC Staff

Once an application has been submitted, ACCJC staff will review the application and give the institution the opportunity to provide missing information and to clarify any aspects of the application that are unclear. The ACCJC Staff and the Substantive Change Committee reserve the right to remove any application that is incomplete. The preliminary review is designed to assist institutions in avoiding a denial or deferral of the application.

3.4 Step 4: Receive Notification of Action from the ACCJC

The ACCJC Substantive Change Committee will take one of the following Actions:

Approve the substantive change. The institution has demonstrated that it meets the evaluation criteria.

Approve the substantive change and require a Follow-Up Report with or without a visit, or a visit without an institutional report. The institution meets the evaluation criteria, but the committee has specific questions (which don't require deferral), feels general verification is needed of sustained practice, or has questions concerning further implementation stages. A visit timeline will be specified: 6-18 months. The Committee will review the report(s).

Provisionally approve a planned substantive change that is subject to a federally mandated site visit. The institution's submitted plans for a change of ownership, new location, or creation of a branch campus demonstrate future actions that will meet the evaluation criteria. The provisional approval allows the institution to move forward with steps of implementation in preparation for seeking approval of the substantive change. The provisional approval may include a site visit. The provisional approval must state a date, not to exceed three years, by which the change must be approved for inclusion in the institution's accreditation. If that time is exceeded, then the substantive change request process must be initiated anew. A new location which requires a federally mandated site visit cannot be provisionally approved if there has been a change in ownership since the institution has successfully had three new locations approved by substantive change. The Committee may require additional reports or visits before the approval is final.

Defer pending additional information. Consideration of the request cannot move forward without receipt of additional information demonstrating the evaluation criteria are met.

Deny the substantive change. The institution has not demonstrated that the change meets the evaluation criteria.

Refer the proposed change to the Commission. The substantive change application can be referred by the Substantive Change Committee to the Commission when it has determined there may be the need for a comprehensive evaluation or for a special report and visit. The evaluation of the institution's substantive change follow-up report and/or visit may also be referred to the Commission when deemed appropriate for review by the full Commission. The Committee's referral to the Commission will include the reasons for such referral.

Appeal of the Committee Decision

If an application is not accepted, the institution may request that the Committee reconsider its decision. The request for reconsideration must be received by the ACCJC within 30 days of the notice of denial.

Substantive Change Appeal Process

- If the institution wishes to appeal the decision of the Committee on Substantive Change, the appeal must be filed in writing and will be deliberated at the next meeting of the Commission.
- Members of the Committee on Substantive Change may participate in the discussion but will abstain from voting on the appeal.

3.5 Step 5: Requirements on institutions after approval of substantive changes visits

Federal regulations require that certain substantive changes include a site visit as part of the approval. Generally, visits are required when there is a new location where at least 50% of a program is offered, when a new branch campus is established, or when there is a change of ownership that results in a change of control. Visits occur within six months of the start of operations.

Federally mandated visits

- **New permanent location where at least 50% of an educational program is offered.** When there is a change that constitutes 50% or more of a program, certificate, or degree, at a new permanent location, a federally-mandated site visit is required. The purpose of the visit is to verify that the information provided by the institution in its substantive change application was accurate and complete. It is also used to verify that the actions implemented align with the plans that received provisional approval by the committee.
- **Branch Campus.** Substantive Change uses the federal regulation definition of a Branch Campus. An institution must provide a business plan in advance of establishing a branch campus (describing the educational programs, the projected revenues/ expenditures/cash flow, the operation, management and physical resources of the branch campus). Approval (accreditation) can only be given after determining the campus has sufficient educational, financial, operational, management, and physical resources.

- Change of Ownership. A Change in the ownership of an institution is one which results in a change of control. The Substantive Change Committee will designate the effective date of the approval, which will be within 30 days of the change of ownership.

The Substantive Change Committee may also require a site visit if it deems that a visit would be appropriate. This could include, but not be limited to the following:

- If the institution is not due for a comprehensive evaluation within two years of the approval of the substantive change, an on-site evaluation or other review may be required by the Commission.
- If there has been rapid growth in the number of such locations.

Substantive Change team visits:

The Substantive Change Committee may require visits for approved changes where additional confirmation of conditions is desired. Substantive Change visiting teams consist of academic and/or administrative evaluators. These visits may also include a member of the Commission staff. The size of the visiting team will be a function of the complexity and size of the site and/or proposed change. The visiting team will focus on the content of the original Substantive Change Application and any updated information requested by Commission staff prior to the visit, as well as any stated concerns of the Committee on Substantive Change.

Note: The Commission requires institutions to absorb the costs of a site visit.

Institutional Follow-Up

- The Commission may require institutions to submit Special Reports on specific issues precipitated by the substantive change. These reports make it possible for the Commission to assess the impact of the change once it has been implemented.
- Requirements for these reports will be specified in the action letter approving the substantive change. Institutions should include updates of approved substantive changes in their next Institutional Self-Evaluation and Midterm reports.
- Comprehensive Evaluation team chairs are supplied with a matrix of substantive changes since the last comprehensive visit.

Appendices

Appendix A: Brief Descriptions of Selected Policies

There are Commission policies that are particularly relevant to substantive changes. The complete Policies are available on the ACCJC website.

The **“Policy on Substantive Change”** provides the framework for this manual and all actions related to Substantive Change. The policy can be accessed [here](#).

The **“Policy on Award of Credit”** details the requirements and expectations for awarding credit at a member institution. The Accreditation Standards require that the units awarded be consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms in higher education. In addition, institutions increasingly are providing more varied educational experiences as a means for students to earn college credits such as distance education, independent study, group project work, study abroad, work-experience, transfer of credits from other institutions, credit by examination, and through direct assessment programs. Institutional policy and practice in award of credit must assure the integrity of credit awarded to all educational experiences. Access the policy [here](#).

The **“Policy on Closing an Institution”** includes requirements of provisions for student completion of programs and transfer to other institutions, academic records, financial aid, faculty and staff, and completion of institutional financial obligations. Access the policy [here](#).

The **“Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations”** details the controls institutions must have in place when contracting with another entity to provide courses or programs. The policy provides guidance for contract content. Access the policy [here](#).

In the **“Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education”** the Commission recognizes that most institutions will make use of the growing range of systems for delivery of instruction, including various electronic means. The policy is based on principles of good practice to help assure that distance learning is characterized by the same concerns for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instruction. Access the policy [here](#).

The **“Policy on Institutions with Related Entities”** is intended to ensure that accreditors receive appropriate assurances and sufficient information and documentation to determine whether such institutions comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies (together Commission’s Standards). It addresses change of ownership and details the specific information that is needed in addition to information required by the Policy on Substantive Change or other policies. Access the policy [here](#).

The **“Protocol and Policy on the Accreditation of Baccalaureate Degrees”** provides guidance to colleges that wish to apply for authorization to offer a Baccalaureate Degree through the Substantive Change process. The college must meet all elements of the Protocol before approval will be granted (See appendix C).

Appendix B: Definitions

Branch Campus: Federal regulations define a branch campus as a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of that institution. The branch location of an institution is independent if it is (1) is permanent in nature; (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Permanent Location: A permanent location is a location either purchased or leased for a term of five or more years. The lease can be either for the full term or renewable for the minimum period.

Other Definitions will be added as the need is identified.

Appendix C: Guide for Preparing an ACCJC Baccalaureate Degree Substantive Change Application

Colleges that wish to apply for authorization to offer a Baccalaureate Degree shall utilize the *Protocol and Policy for the Addition of a Baccalaureate Degree*. The college must meet all elements of the Protocol before approval will be granted. In addition to addressing the criteria for the Standards noted in the Protocol, the College shall also complete the Substantive Change Application form, including Part I.

PROTOCOL AND POLICY ON THE ACCREDITATION OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

[After the approval through the Substantive Change process and institutional implementation of the Baccalaureate Degree, evaluators will examine the evidence to support the Eligibility Requirement and Standards listed and determine that the College meets the Standard with respect to the Baccalaureate Degree.]

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority: *The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and to award degrees by an appropriate governmental organization or agency as required by each of the jurisdictions or regions in which it operates.*

Private institutions, if required by the appropriate statutory regulatory body, must submit evidence of authorization, licensure, or approval by that body. If incorporated, the institution shall submit a copy of its articles of incorporation.

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Authority requires that an institution be authorized or licensed as a post-secondary institution to award degrees. An institution wishing to gain approval for a baccalaureate degree will have to provide evidence of the institution's authorization to offer the degree, as required by each of the jurisdictions or regions in which it operates.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Eligibility Requirement and the associated criterion.

Accreditation Standards

The Accreditation Standards listed below apply to the institution as a whole and to each baccalaureate program. As appropriate, the list includes criteria indicating how the Standards specifically apply to baccalaureate programs. In addressing the standards, the institution must also address and provide evidence of its practices for the baccalaureate program-specific evaluation criteria identified below.

MISSION

Standard I.A. Mission:

Standard I.A.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 learning and student achievement. (ER 6)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Baccalaureate degrees generally extend beyond previously identified credentials, service areas, and intended student populations. Member institutions may need to make changes within the institutional mission to reflect these differences.
- The baccalaureate degree program must align with the Institutional mission.
- Student demand for the baccalaureate degree should demonstrate its correlation with the institutional mission.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The assessment of data, in addition to measuring institution effectiveness, must also demonstrate the effectiveness and success of the baccalaureate program.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The baccalaureate program is clearly aligned with the institutional mission.
- The institution has included the baccalaureate degree in its decision making and planning processes, and in setting its goals for student learning and achievement.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

ASSURING ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Standard I.B.2 *The institution defines and assesses student learning outcomes for all instructional programs and student and learning support services. (ER 11)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Student learning outcomes for upper division baccalaureate courses reflect higher levels of depth and rigor generally expected in higher education.
- Assessment must be accurate and distinguish the baccalaureate degree outcomes from those of other programs.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.B.3: *The institution establishes institution-set standards for student achievement, appropriate to its mission, assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of continuous improvement, and publishes this information. (ER 11)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The Institution has institution-set standards for the baccalaureate program and assesses performance related to those standards. It uses this assessment to improve the quality of the baccalaureate program.
- Student Achievement standards are separately identified and assessed for baccalaureate programs to distinguish them from associate degree programs.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.B.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The institutional evaluation policies and practices recognize the unique aspects and requirements of the baccalaureate program in relation to learning and student support services and resource allocation and management.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Standard I.C.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Information related to baccalaureate programs are clear and accurate in all aspects of this Standard, especially in regard to learning outcomes, program requirements, and student support services.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.C.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The assessment results of student learning and student achievement in the baccalaureate programs are used in the communication of academic quality.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard I.C.4: *The institution describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The purpose, content, course requirements and learning outcomes of the baccalaureate programs are clearly described.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Standard II.A.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The baccalaureate degree field of study aligns with the institutional mission.
- Student demand for the baccalaureate degree program demonstrates its correlation with the institutional mission.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Learning outcomes for baccalaureate courses, programs, and degrees are identified and assessed consistent with institutional processes.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- A Minimum of 40 semester credits or equivalent of total upper division coursework including the major and general education is required.
- The academic credit awarded for upper division courses within baccalaureate programs is clearly distinguished from that of lower division courses.
- The instructional level and curriculum of the upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree are comparable to those commonly accepted among like degrees in higher education and reflect the higher levels of knowledge and intellectual inquiry expected at the baccalaureate level.
- Student expectations, including learning outcomes, assignments and examinations of the upper division courses demonstrate the rigor commonly accepted among like degrees in higher education.
- The program length and delivery mode of instruction are appropriate for the expected level of rigor.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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.*⁸ (ER 9)

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Baccalaureate courses are scheduled to ensure that students will complete those programs in a reasonable period of time.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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.* (ER 10)

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Baccalaureate Degrees and the course credit in those programs are based on student learning outcomes. These outcomes are consistent with generally accepted norms and equivalencies in higher education, especially in relation to upper division courses.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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*

⁸ 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.

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)

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Policies for student transfer into the baccalaureate program ensure that all program requirements are fulfilled, including completion of the minimum required semester units, prerequisites, experiential activities, and general education.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Student learning outcomes in baccalaureate programs are consistent with generally accepted norms in higher education and reflect the higher levels expected at the baccalaureate level.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- At least 36 semester units or equivalent of lower and upper division general education is required, including at least 9 semester units or equivalent of upper division general education coursework.

- At least 9 semester units or equivalent of upper division general education coursework is required.
- The general education requirements are integrated and distributed to both lower division and upper division courses.
- The general education requirements are distributed across the major subject areas for general education; the distribution appropriately captures the baccalaureate level student learning outcomes and competencies.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.13: *All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core. 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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The baccalaureate degree programs include a focused study on one area of inquiry or discipline at the baccalaureate level and include key theories and practices appropriate to the baccalaureate degree level.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard II.A.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*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The CTE baccalaureate degree ensures students will be able to meet employment standards and licensure or certification as required in the field of study.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

LIBRARY AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

Standard II.B.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Learning support services to support the baccalaureate program are sufficient to support the quality, currency, rigor and depth of the baccalaureate degree and reflect the unique needs of this program.
- Resource collections are sufficient in regard to the rigor, currency, and depth expected of baccalaureate programs.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Standard II.C.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 pathways⁹ to complete degrees, certificate and transfer goals. (ER 16)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The prerequisites and other qualifications for the baccalaureate are appropriately communicated and applied to students.
- The advising of students related to the baccalaureate degree appropriately identifies course sequencing and pathways.

⁹ 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.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Standard III.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The job descriptions for faculty members teaching in the baccalaureate degree accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities associated with the position.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard III.A.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The qualifications for faculty teaching upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree include the requirement for a master’s degree (or academic credentials at least one level higher than the baccalaureate degree) or doctoral degree, in an appropriate discipline.
- In cases where no Master’s degree is available for the field of study, the qualifications for faculty teaching upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree include a bachelor’s degree in the discipline or closely related discipline, and a Master’s degree in any discipline, and demonstrated industry work experience in the field for a minimum of six years, and commonly required industry-recognized certification or professional licensure.
- The Commission may require some faculty in non-career technical education baccalaureate programs to have the recognized terminal degree in the field of study.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Standard III.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- There is at least one full-time faculty member assigned to the baccalaureate program.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Standard III.B.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The facilities and other physical resources utilized by the baccalaureate program are evaluated for feasibility and effectiveness for the program on a regular basis.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Standard III.C.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- Technology services, support, facilities, hardware and software utilized by the baccalaureate program are appropriate and adequate for the program.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Standard III.D.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)*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The financial resources allocated to the baccalaureate program are sufficient to support and sustain program student learning and effectiveness.
- Financial resources allocated to the baccalaureate program ensure the financial stability of the program.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

DECISION-MAKING ROLES AND PROCESSES

Standard IV.A.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.*

Specified Baccalaureate Degree Program Evaluation Criteria:

- The faculty and academic administrators assigned to the baccalaureate program have responsibility for making recommendations to appropriate governance and decision-making bodies about the curriculum, student learning programs, and services for the program.

College: Provide a description and supporting documentation demonstrating how the College meets this Standard and the associated criteria.

Catalog Requirements

The institution assures that the Catalog provides the following information about the baccalaureate degree program:

1. General Information
 - Course Program and Degree Offerings
 - Student Learning Outcomes for Programs and Degrees
2. Requirements for
 - Degrees, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer

Commission Policies

In preparing its ISER, an institution with one or more ACCJC-accredited baccalaureate degrees must, for the evaluation criteria cited in the Checklist for Evaluating Institutional Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies¹⁰ in the categories identified below, specifically address and provide evidence of its practices as to the baccalaureate degree and how those practices meet the criteria.

- Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement
- Credits, Program Length, and Tuition
- Transfer Policies
- Distance Education and Correspondence Education
- Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

¹⁰ See the Checklist for Evaluating Institutional Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies for articulation of the evaluation criteria.