

Institutional Stability

1. **Integrity:** The institution operates with integrity in all matters.
2. **Institutional Mission:** The institution has a clearly defined, published educational mission appropriate to its purpose and educational programs offered.
3. **Governing Board:** The institution has a governing authority (for example, a governing board) that is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution, and for ensuring that its mission is accomplished. To that end, the institution demonstrates that the governing authority (a) exercises appropriate oversight, including fiduciary duties, (b) hires and evaluates the institution's CEO, and (c) focuses on approval of policies. Furthermore, (d) the governing authority demonstrates that its first duty is to the institution, (e) protects institutional autonomy from undue influence, and (f) adheres to ethical standards.
4. **Chief Executive Officer and Administrative Capacity:** The Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of the mission and student success. The institution demonstrates that (a) the CEO and administrative leadership team possess the qualifications and authority to effectively execute institutional responsibilities, and (b) the leadership roles and responsibilities of the CEO and governing authority are clearly defined.
5. **Institutional Planning and Effectiveness:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through systematic, integrated, and data-informed planning processes to enhance institutional effectiveness. The planning process includes: (a) clearly articulated goals consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to the credentials offered, and (b) a process of regular review to determine the institution's achievement of the goals. Planning and evaluation (c) occurs at strategic and key operational levels, (d) engages appropriate stakeholders, and (e) consistently focuses on institutional sustainability and improvement.
6. **Sound Financial Planning and Management:** The institution demonstrates that it maintains and annually updates a financial plan covering a minimum of three (3) fiscal years, that is (a) aligned with the mission and strategic priorities, (b) based upon realistic and clearly documented revenue and expenditure assumptions, and (c) reviewed and approved by the governing authority or its designated finance committee. Additionally, (d) the institution demonstrates that it has established appropriate financial controls to ensure accurate and reliable financial operations.

7. **Financial Documents:** The institution demonstrates financial stability and resources sufficient for operations by providing audited financial statements and appropriate supplementary documentation across multiple years.
8. **Oversight of External Funds and Regulatory Compliance:** The institution demonstrates that it (a) exercises appropriate financial control and oversight of externally funded and sponsored programs, (b) complies with all applicable federal and state program responsibilities, and (c) is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended, including required audits of Title IV and other financial aid programs.
9. **Facilities, Technology, and Safety:** The institution demonstrates that it (a) provides adequate physical facilities and infrastructure to support its mission, educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. Additionally, the institution (b) takes reasonable steps to ensure a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community, and (c) provides information on investigations by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for violations alleging sexual violence.

Quality Education

10. **Undergraduate Curriculum (General Education):** The institution's educational programs include a general education component that addresses foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies that support lifelong learning, informed citizenship, and/or future employment. The general education component (a) is based on a coherent rationale, (b) constitutes a substantial component of required credit hours for the undergraduate degree, and (c) ensures a breadth of knowledge across several disciplines beyond what is required in the major.
11. **Program Content:** The institution demonstrates that at all credential levels, the institution's programs of study (a) are compatible with the mission, (b) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education, (c) embody a coherent course of study, and (d) provide a logical progression of higher-order thinking.
12. **Post-baccalaureate Curriculum:** The institution demonstrates that post-baccalaureate professional degree and graduate degree programs are (a) progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs and (b) structured to include knowledge of the literature central to the discipline, and (c) designed to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate practice and training.

- 13. Alignment with Workforce Needs:** The institution has a process to review its educational programs and career competencies to support their alignment with industry standards and workforce needs.
- 14. Definition of Credit Hour and Alternative Approaches:** The institution demonstrates that it (a) makes public its definition of a “credit hour” and (b) implements policies for the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. Institutions that employ equivalencies to measure educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs) will provide an explanation of the equivalencies and include the objectives of the credential offered.
- 15. Program Length:** At all credential levels, the institution demonstrates that its programs are (a) of a length to ensure achievement of the programmatic student learning outcomes and (b) of a length that conforms to commonly accepted standards for the granting of the credential. Additionally, (c) the institution demonstrates that combined degree programs or reduced credit-hour programs are based upon the assessment of clear and evidence-based competencies.
- 16. Evaluating and Awarding External and Transfer Credit:** The institution publishes and implements policies for evaluating and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution demonstrates (a) that it has processes designed to support the ease of transfer to and from other institutions, and (b) that it has an approval process with involvement from persons qualified to make necessary judgments, including determining academic quality. Additionally, the institution verifies (c) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcripts; (d) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution’s mission, and (e) that policies address credit awarded based on prior academic or non-academic learning, experiential learning, competency-based assessments, and other alternative learning approaches.
- 17. Assessment of Student Learning:** The institution demonstrates continuous improvement efforts grounded in direct and indirect measures through a systematic assessment of student learning. This includes (a) establishing program learning outcomes, inclusive of general education, (b) developing methods to collect information on student learning, (c) analyzing the resulting data, and (d) using evidence-based findings to drive ongoing improvements to each academic program to improve student learning.

- 18. Distance, Correspondence, and Direct Assessment Education:** The institution that offers distance, correspondence, or direct assessment education demonstrates (a) the quality and integrity of these offerings, (b) the inclusion of these offerings under all appropriate standards and policies included in the compliance submissions, (c) that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence course is the same student who participates in and receives credit for the course, and (d) that students are notified at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional expenses associated with verification of their identity.
- 19. Institutional Credits for Graduation:** The institution demonstrates that at least 25% of the credit hours required for undergraduate credentials and 33% of the credit hours for graduate level credentials are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding that credential. Institutions making an exception to the credit hours required will provide an explanation.
- 20. Sufficient Faculty to Deliver Quality Programs:** The institution implements policies and procedures to ensure that its educational programs are sufficiently supported by qualified faculty who assure program quality, content currency, and assessment of learning effectiveness.
- 21. Faculty Qualifications:** The institution demonstrates that it implements policies and documents procedures for approval of faculty qualifications that support a high-quality learning experience for students at all credential levels. In instances where an exception to policy was made, the institution provides a clear rationale for the exception, including documenting the decision-making process, and including the alternative credentials or experiences accepted.
- 22. Freedom of Inquiry:** The institution publishes and demonstrates implementation of appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting the principles of free inquiry and intellectual autonomy.

Student Success

- 23. Student Success and Achievement Outcomes:** The institution demonstrates that it identifies student success and achievement measures disaggregated based upon the nature of the students it serves, inclusive of distance, correspondence, and direct assessment programs. The institution (a) selects a key student completion indicator, (b) selects additional measures of student achievement that may include (but are not limited to): progress toward graduation, state licensing examinations, job placement, a post-matriculation financial indicator, completion rates, and

course completion; (c) publishes goals and outcomes for each measure, (d) evaluates success in achieving the outcomes, and (e) implements strategies to support student success.

24. Academic and Student Support Services: The institution provides (a) academic and student support services, (b) library, learning information resources and services, (c) information and guidance to assist students in understanding debt, loan repayment, and financial management, and (d) assists students with post-completion transitions consistent with the mission and appropriate to the students it serves.

25. Student Rights and Written Complaints: The institution has broadly disseminated clear, appropriate, and published (a) statements of student rights and responsibilities and (b) procedures for addressing student written complaints. The institution demonstrates that it (c) fairly administers those policies and procedures when resolving student complaints, and (d) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.

26. Protection of Privacy and Integrity of Student Records: The institution demonstrates that it takes reasonable measures to protect the privacy, security, and integrity of students' records.

27. Transparency in Admissions and Institutional Representation: The institution publishes (a) admissions policies consistent with its mission, (b) advertising and recruitment materials that accurately represent the institution's programs and admissions practices and policies. Additionally, the institution demonstrates that (c) independent agents or contractors used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.

28. Publicly Disclosed Materials: The institution provides evidence that academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, refund policies, and academic catalogs are published, accurate, and accessible to meet the needs of prospective, current, and former students.

Compliance with Regulations

29. Accreditation Status: The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, telephone number, and website address of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC requirements and federal policy, and (b) ensures that all branch campuses also include the name of the principal institution

and makes clear that their accreditation depends on the continued accreditation of the parent campus.

30. Representation to Other Agencies and Reporting Changes: The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs SACSCOC and other agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions.

31. Policy Compliance and Substantive Change: The institution complies with SACSCOC policy statements that pertain to new or additional institutional obligations that may arise, including Substantive Change requirements that are not part of the standards in the current Principles of Accreditation.