

# CANDIDACY FOR ACCREDITATION FOR FREE STANDING INSTITUTIONS ABROAD

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## **CANDIDACY FOR ACCREDITATION FOR FREE STANDING INSTITUTIONS ABROAD**

The following procedures have been adopted to support the application for candidacy by institutions which are applying under the provisions of the Commission's *Policy on the Accreditation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*.

### **The Meaning of Candidacy**

The Candidate for Accreditation program offers certain postsecondary institutions the opportunity to establish a formal, publicly recognized relationship with the New England Association through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Candidacy is a status of affiliation which indicates that an institution has met the Commission's *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*, is progressing toward accreditation, but does not currently meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*. Only accredited institutions are members of the Association.

Attainment of candidacy does not ensure eventual accreditation. A candidate institution has a maximum period of five years, from the effective date of candidacy, within which to achieve accredited status.

It is not mandatory that candidate institutions remain in that status for the maximum period of five years. However, early applications are appropriate only when encouraged by the results of evaluation visits and Commission action.

### **Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad**

To be granted Candidate for Accreditation status, an applicant institution must demonstrate that it:

1. meets the *Requirements of Affiliation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*;
2. has, with the intention of meeting the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*, effectively organized sufficient human, financial, learning, and physical resources into educational and other activities so that it is accomplishing its immediate educational purposes;
3. has established and is following realistic plans to acquire, organize, and appropriately apply any additional resources needed to comply with the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* within the candidacy period;
4. meets the Commission's standard on *Integrity*.

### **Application for Candidacy**

If an institution believes that it meets the Commission's eligibility requirements (*Requirements of Affiliation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*) and wishes to be considered for candidate status, its chief executive officer should contact the Commission's Director. The Commission requires that representatives of the institution meet with the Director or the Director's designee to discuss application procedures and materials. Generally, this meeting will occur at the Commission offices. This meeting will be followed by a staff visit to the campus.

After this meeting, the institution's chief executive officer may submit to the Director a *Report of Eligibility* containing a letter of intent stating that the institution's governing board has authorized the institution to seek affiliation with the Commission. In addition, the report should provide

detailed information documenting how the institution meets the *Requirements of Affiliation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*. The report should be concise, no longer than thirty (30) pages, responding to each element of the Requirements and should be accompanied by relevant supporting documents. Guidelines for the preparation of the report accompany these procedures. Four copies of the report and all appended materials should be submitted to the Commission offices. Providing this report does not constitute a formal application for candidacy nor does it commit the Commission to an evaluation of the institution for affiliation.

The Commission staff reviews the *Report of Eligibility*. If that review finds that the report is complete and shows probable compliance with the *Requirements of Affiliation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*, an eligibility visit to the institution is scheduled. This visit is undertaken by two of the Commission's site visitors and a member of the Commission's staff. Its purpose is to prepare a report validating the contents of the institution's *Report of Eligibility* and to make a recommendation to the Commission regarding whether the institution should be invited to make a formal application for affiliation. This visit and the resulting recommendation do not constitute an evaluation for candidacy nor does the recommendation result in any affiliation.

At one of its regularly scheduled meetings, the Commission considers the *Report of Eligibility* and the report and recommendation of the site visitors and determines if the institution should be invited to apply for candidacy. If the invitation to make a formal application is offered, the Director of the Commission and the institution's chief executive officer establish a time period for an on-site evaluation. The formal application for candidacy includes a letter of application from the chief executive officer and chair of the governing board and a self-study report following the format described below.

If the Commission determines not to invite an application for candidacy, the institution will be so notified and given the reasons for the decision. This decision is not subject to appeal. The institution may resubmit an application in keeping with these procedures one year following notification.

An invitation to make a formal application for candidacy in no way establishes any affiliation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Affiliation occurs only after positive action by the Trustees of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, based on the on-site evaluation and action by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Until such positive action by the Trustees, the applying institution is not permitted to state or imply that it has any affiliation with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education or the Association. An institution may not make any public statement<sup>1</sup> that it has applied for candidacy nor suggest in any other way that it has any affiliation whatsoever with the Commission or the Association. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in immediate termination of the application process.

### **Self-Study for Candidacy**

The self-study undertaken for a candidacy application serves both internal and external purposes. It encourages institutional improvement through rigorous self-analysis and creates a basis for the Commission's evaluation in respect to the *Standards for Accreditation* and *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*. For a fuller discussion of the self-study process, the institution should consult the Commission's *Self-Study Guide*, which is available from the offices of the Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Public statements include but are not limited to notices on institutional web pages, catalogs, advertisements, recruitment materials, job advertisements, newspaper, radio, and television broadcast.

The institution should plan to attend the self-study workshop offered by the Commission each fall and should otherwise consult with the Commission staff as it undertakes the self-study effort and prepares the self-study report.

The self-study report should contain both the previously submitted *Report of Eligibility*, including supporting materials, possibly revised in light of interactions between the Commission and the institution, and a comprehensive narrative addressing each of the Commission's standards by means of description, appraisal, and projection, as outlined in the *Self-Study Guide*. In addition, as indicated in the *Criteria for Candidacy*, the institution should demonstrate how it is organizing its resources to accomplish immediate educational purposes and how it is planning to acquire those resources necessary to fulfill the *Standards for Accreditation*.

### **Evaluation for Candidacy**

For a fuller discussion of the evaluation processes, the institution is referred to the Commission's *Evaluation Manual*.

1. Selection of Visiting Committee. The on-campus evaluation is typically scheduled for a three-day period, from Sunday afternoon through Wednesday afternoon. Well in advance of the scheduled visit, the Director of the Commission, with consideration for the nature of the institution, proposes a visiting committee and solicits the chief executive officer's comments about the prospective team. The Commission maintains a file of several hundred evaluators who are affiliated with accredited institutions. While the Commission always reserves the right to appoint the visiting committee, the views of the institution are important in ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of evaluators. The Commission relies on the personal and professional integrity of individuals to refuse any assignment where even the slightest potential for conflict of interest exists. As soon as all team members have accepted appointment, the Commission staff informs the institution.
2. Preliminary Visit by the Team Chairperson. Three to six months prior to the evaluation visit, the chairperson of the visiting team makes a preliminary visit to the institution. This visit, typically one day in length, is designed to help the institution understand how the team will operate and to enable the chairperson to assess the institution's self-study progress and make arrangements for the visit. More information about the chair's preliminary visit can be found in the *Evaluation Manual*.
3. Format of Evaluation Visit. Well in advance of the evaluation visit, the team chairperson communicates with the chief executive officer to discuss the committee's time of arrival, schedule, accommodations, and related matters. The institution should arrange for charges for the team's lodging and meals to be billed directly to the institution.

The team usually arrives at the institution on Sunday afternoon; after its initial session, the team meets with major administrators, faculty, and board members, typically at dinner. The following days of the visit are spent in conducting a review of the institution and preparing the committee's report and recommendations. The exact schedule of the team is arranged in advance through discussions between the chairperson and institutional staff.

At a final session with representatives of the institution, the team chairperson presents an oral preview of all major points that will be made in the team's report. The chief executive officer and chairperson decide who will be present at this session. Frequently the chief executive officer wants the major administrative officers and/or the steering committee of the self-study to hear this exit interview; all members of the team will also be present.

4. Committee's Report and Recommendation to the Commission. The visiting team chairperson, with the assistance of the other team members, is responsible for the

preparation of a report for submission to the Commission. This report is essentially an assessment of the institution's eligibility for candidate status and its potential for attaining accreditation within a maximum of five years.

The chairperson is asked to use the following format for the report:

- a. Cover Page
  - See *Evaluation Manual, appendix XII*.
- b. Preface Page (Complete form provided by the Commission office)
- c. Introduction
  - brief summary of purpose and format of visit;
  - basic information about institution: date of degree authority, range of degree authority, date of first degrees awarded (if any), type of control, FTE enrollment and other data on student body.
- d. Compliance with *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*
  - assessment of institution's compliance with each of the *Requirements of Affiliation of Free Standing Institutions Abroad*;
  - appraisal of institution's accomplishment of immediate educational objectives;
  - appraisal of current institutional fulfillment and plans to comply with each of the *Standards for Accreditation*;
  - assessment of compliance with the standard on *Integrity*.
- e. Major Strengths and Weaknesses related specifically to the *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* and the institution's ability to achieve accreditation by fulfilling the *Standards for Accreditation*.

After the chairperson has completed an initial draft of the report and has sent it to the other team members for correction, the chair forwards it to the institution's chief executive officer, who is allowed a brief interval to identify factual errors. When the final draft of the report has been prepared by the chairperson, it is sent to the chief executive officer. The institution duplicates the report and sends a copy to each team member and thirty-five (35) copies to the Director of the Commission. When the report has been received at the office of the Commission (and prior to its consideration by the Commission), the Director of the Commission acknowledges receipt of the report and asks the chief executive officer to offer in writing any comments that the institution wishes to bring to the attention of the Commission.

In a separate communication, the chairperson sends to the Director of the Commission the team's confidential recommendation on whether the institution should be granted candidate status. Specific reasons based on the *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* must be set forth in support of the committee's recommendation to grant or deny candidacy.

Visiting committee reports are considered at one of the Commission's regularly scheduled meetings. Commission actions are usually taken at fall meetings for institutions visited in the spring of a given year, and at spring meetings for those visited the previous fall. The visiting

committee chairperson is asked to be present at the Commission's discussion of the committee's report together with the institutional chief executive officer.

The members of the visiting committee have discharged their responsibilities to the Commission with the presentation of the report.

### **Commission and Association Action on Candidacy Application**

In taking action on candidate status, the Commission considers all relevant information available, including the self-study report and related materials, the report of the visiting committee, and the institution's response to the report. It should be understood that the visiting team's recommendation may be modified by the Commission. Following its meeting the Commission reports its action to the institution and the visiting committee. Review or appeal of an adverse action by the Commission is governed by the due process statement then in effect.

In the granting or denial of candidate status, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Association's Board of Trustees, which takes final action. An institution denied candidate status is free to reapply when it can demonstrate that it has substantially improved those areas cited as reasons for the denial. An applicant for candidacy can withdraw its request for affiliation at any time prior to action by the Board of Trustees.

If candidate status is granted, the effective date (unless otherwise specified) is the last day of the evaluation visit that resulted in the Association's action.

### **Public Statements on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Association.

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution's accreditation by the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**  
**209 Burlington Road**  
**Bedford, MA 01730-1433**  
**U.S.A.**  
**(781) 271-0022**  
**E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

Upon inquiry about a candidate institution, the Commission will release the date when candidacy was granted, the date of the next review, and certain other information described in the policy on "Public Disclosure of Information About Affiliated Institutions." (Copies available at the Commission Offices.) If an institution releases information that misrepresents its affiliation, the institution will be notified and asked to take corrective action. Should it fail to do so, the New England

Association, acting through its Executive Director, will release a public statement providing correct information.

### **Procedures Required of Candidate Institutions**

Each institution granted candidate status has the following responsibilities.

1. Annual Report. Candidate institutions, like those accredited, are asked to complete and submit a data form in the spring of the year.
2. Notification of Substantive Change. New programs, degree levels, sites, and other substantive changes, as defined in Commission policy, must be reported in advance to the Commission. Candidate status encompasses only those aspects of the institution in existence at the time of the evaluation visit; a substantive change must be approved by the Commission before the institution can claim its inclusion in its candidate status. (Refer to the "Substantive Change Policy," copies available at Commission offices.)
3. Biennial Review. Two years after candidacy has been granted, the institution submits an updated self-study report reflecting developments since the time of the initial visit, including steps taken to respond to identified concerns followed by a brief evaluation visit conducted by a team of two or three evaluators. The purpose of this biennial review is to determine if the institution continues to meet the *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* and is making reasonable progress toward accreditation. The biennial review does not serve as an evaluation for accreditation. (See "Procedures for the Biennial Review of Candidate Status," page 15.)

### **Evaluation for Initial Accreditation**

An evaluation for initial accreditation normally occurs during the fifth year of candidate status. A comprehensive self-study and visit are required, and the Commission staff will provide appropriate materials and advice on preparing for the evaluation. In special circumstances, a candidate institution may apply for an earlier review for initial accreditation. Institutions contemplating an early application should consult the Director of the Commission.

### **Costs of Candidacy Application and Affiliation**

Fees and annual dues paid by affiliated institutions cover the cost of services provided by the Commission and Association and are the means by which independent, non-governmental accreditation is sustained.

The institution pays a \$5,000 fee for the review of its *Report of Eligibility* and also pays for the lodging, meals, and out-of-pocket expenses (including transportation) for the initial staff campus visit and for the two evaluators and Commission staff member who conduct the eligibility visit.

The evaluation fee for candidate status varies according to the institution's full-time-equivalent enrollment. If the institution is accepted as a candidate, it will pay an annual affiliation fee, also based on its full-time-equivalent enrollment. For the biennial review visit the institution will be assessed a fee equal to a fraction of the annual affiliation fee. The current schedule of evaluation and affiliation fees is available upon request.

Members of evaluation committees serve without honoraria. However, the institution pays for their lodging, meals, and out-of-pocket expenses (including transportation). These costs are in addition to the evaluation fee paid to the Association. Within two weeks after the visit, committee members submit out-of-pocket expense vouchers to the Director of the Commission, who, in turn,

forwards them to the institution. Upon receipt of expense vouchers from the Commission office, the institution should promptly mail reimbursement checks directly to committee members.

### **Loss of Candidate Status**

Candidacy lapses when an institution fails to achieve accredited status by the end of the maximum five-year period. Extensions of candidacy beyond the fifth year are granted only rarely and require action by the Commission.

Termination of candidacy within the five-year period can occur, following due process, as a result of a determination that the institution no longer meets one or more of the *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* or that conditions at the institution have been radically altered since it was admitted to candidacy. An institution removed from candidacy may reapply for candidate status when it can demonstrate that the conditions leading to the lapse or termination of candidacy have been corrected. However, in no case will the Commission consider such application prior to the effective date of loss of candidacy.

CIHE: 2004



**REPORT OF ELIGIBILITY:  
REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION FOR FREE-STANDING INSTITUTIONS ABROAD**

The *Requirements of Affiliation for Free-standing Institutions Abroad* define the basic elements and characteristics considered essential in an affiliated institution and provide assurance that institutions requesting affiliation conform to generally accepted policies and practices of American higher education and have the capacity to fulfill the *Standards of Accreditation*. Each institution applying for candidacy must document compliance with the *Requirements* in its Report of Eligibility. If candidate status is granted, the institution is required to demonstrate continued compliance through the biennial review and in its self-study for initial accreditation.

Institutions are asked to include evidence that they satisfy each *Requirement*. Because they speak to institutional characteristics which are largely capable of objective verification and because institutional publications, such as the catalog, often contain information demonstrating compliance, it is frequently satisfactory to provide a summary statement indicating how the *Requirement* is met, followed by a reference to the relevant source of information.

In preparing their response to the *Requirements*, institutions are asked to adhere to the following guidelines. Each *Requirement* should be stated (it is not necessary to repeat the commentary) and followed by the information indicated:

*The institution:*

1. *Has formally adopted a statement of mission, which demonstrates that the fundamental purposes of the institution are educational, and which is also appropriate to a degree-granting institution and appropriate to those needs of society it seeks to serve.*

Commentary: The term "mission" refers to a general, relatively unchanging broad purpose that the institution seeks to fulfill. Statements of institutional mission provide the basis for the Commission's evaluation process, institutions being evaluated against their stated purposes. Because the Commission limits its accreditation activities to degree-granting institutions, the mission of an institution seeking to establish or retain affiliation with the Commission must conform generally to those of institutions within the traditions of American higher education. Furthermore, because education within the United States serves the end of meeting the needs of society, the purposes of educational institutions should be directed toward that goal.

- a. State the institutional mission as it appears in the institution's publications.
- b. Indicate where the institutional mission is published.
- c. Indicate when the mission was adopted and by what body.

2. *Offers one or more collegiate-level education programs, consistent with its mission, that lead to degrees in recognized fields of study and that require at least one year to complete.*

Commentary: Because the Commission deals only with degree-granting institutions, affiliates must establish academic programs leading to degrees. Thus, excluded from the Commission's scope are institutions offering only short courses. The Commission does, however, regard as appropriate the offering of short courses in a context established by the presence of degree programs. The institution's mission gives general direction to its academic programs; therefore, those programs should be consistent with the mission.

- a. Summarize the programmatic offerings of the institution.

- b. Indicate where detailed information about the institution's academic programs can be found in the institution's catalog. If it is not available in the catalog, provide documentation demonstrating how the *Requirement* is met.
3. *Offers academic programs that are comparable in terms of length, curriculum, objectives, learning outcomes, and degrees awarded to those offered by regionally accredited institutions in the United States.*

Commentary: Through this requirement, the Commission seeks assurance that the academic programs offered by the institution are comparable to those generally offered in the United States. Since graduates of the institution may seek employment or additional education in the United States, it is important that the academic programs offered by the institution resemble, in length, structure, content, and depth, comparable programs available in the U.S.

- a. For each degree or other academic credential awarded by the institution, identify the comparable degree or credential offered in the United States. Provide a brief explanation of how the degrees and credentials are comparable.
  - b. Include descriptions of program curricula, objectives and learning outcomes sufficiently detailed that an evaluator may determine comparability to programs offered in the United States.
4. *Awards the bachelor's, master's, or doctor's degree or, if it grants only the associate's degree, includes at least one program leading to a degree in liberal arts or general studies or another area of study widely available at the baccalaureate level of regionally accredited colleges and universities in the United States.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* limits the range of degree-granting institutions with which the Commission deals. Specifically, the Commission's purview is limited to institutions which provide students with the opportunity to complete academic programs that will prepare them to pursue degrees at a higher level at regionally accredited institutions in the United States.

- a. Indicate degrees awarded. If only the associate's degree is granted, indicate programs offered in the liberal arts or general studies or in areas of study widely available at the baccalaureate level of regionally accredited colleges and universities in the U.S.
  - b. Indicate where detailed information demonstrating compliance can be found in the institution's catalog.
5. *Has, for each of its educational programs, clearly defined and published objectives appropriate to higher education in level, standards, and quality, as well as the means for achieving them, including a designated course of studies acceptable for meeting degree requirements, adequate guidance to degree candidates in the satisfaction of requirements, and adequate grading or evaluation procedures.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* speaks to the need to assure the public that the institution is operating with integrity. It ensures that each program offered by the institution has a purpose, plan, and objectives; that each student is following a purposeful course of study and receives guidance in ensuring fulfillment of the course

requirements; and that the grading and/or evaluation systems are appropriate, fair, and consistent.

- a. Summarize the institution's policies affecting the establishment and maintenance of program objectives and curricula.
- b. Indicate where program objectives and curricula are published.
- c. Summarize guidance activities for students.
- d. Summarize the institution's grading or evaluation procedures. If more detailed information can be found in the institutional catalog, indicate the page numbers for reference.

6. *Awards only degrees appropriate to each graduate's level of attainment.*

Commentary: The concern addressed here is that degrees granted by affiliated institutions should have integrity. The institution should assure that credentials are awarded only to students who have fulfilled program requirements at a satisfactory level of achievement.

- Indicate how the institution guarantees the integrity of its degrees.

7. *Offers its instructional programs entirely or predominantly through coursework that includes face-to-face instruction.*

Commentary: Through this requirement, the Commission limits its activities with free-standing institutions abroad to those that offer instructional programs entirely or predominantly through coursework that includes face-to-face instruction.

- a. For each of the institution's academic programs, describe the instructional format(s) used to offer courses.
- b. For programs that include courses offered via electronic delivery formats, indicate the percentage of courses that are offered via face-to-face instruction and describe how students enrolled in courses offered via electronic formats are guaranteed adequate access to instructional and support services.

8. *Uses English as a principal language of instruction and operation, sufficient to permit an evaluation by the Commission and to ensure the ability of its graduates to continue their education in other regionally accredited U.S. institutions.*

Commentary: This requirement provides assurance that students who graduate from the institution have sufficient proficiency in English to be able to enroll in advanced programs offered by regionally accredited institutions in the United States. In addition, all evaluations of the institution undertaken by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education will be conducted in English. Thus, the materials prepared in support of these evaluations (Report of Eligibility, self-study) must be written in English, and the supporting documents provided to the evaluators must be available in English. Examples of such documents include the catalog, course syllabi, planning documents, personnel handbooks, financial statements, brochures, and other promotional materials.

- a. Identify the primary language(s) of instruction and operation. If languages other than English are used in instruction, indicate the percentage of courses that are offered in English.

- b. Indicate where information indicating compliance with this item can be found in the institution's catalog. If it is not available in the catalog, provide documentation demonstrating how the item is met.

9. *In addition to study of the areas of specialization proper to its principal educational programs, requires a coherent and substantive program of general education at the postsecondary level, comparable to those offered by institutions in the United States, as either a prerequisite to or a clearly defined element in those programs; documents a commitment and resource base sufficient to facilitate students' achievement of the goals of general education.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* ensures that the inclusion of a general education component is an essential element of a degree program. (The Commission's Standard on *Programs and Instruction* further stipulates that at least one-third of an undergraduate program leading to a degree should consist of courses in arts and the humanities, the sciences, including mathematics, and the social sciences.) To ensure that the recognized purposes of general education in a degree program are fulfilled, the Commission requires that it be offered at the collegiate level and that it not be a random collection of courses but rather have coherence as a whole. Recognizing that there are degree-granting institutions which offer only professional graduate work, the Commission has provided explicitly that this *Requirement* can be met by making undergraduate work containing a general education component a prerequisite to admission to such graduate institutions.

- a. Briefly describe the institution's general education requirement. Include the number of courses students are required to take as well as the fields of study encompassed in the general education component.
- b. Indicate where information indicating compliance with the *Requirement* can be found in the institution's catalog. If it is not available in the catalog, provide documentation demonstrating how the *Requirement* is met.
- c. For institutions offering undergraduate programs, indicate the number of faculty who teach general education courses and the library resources and physical facilities available to support the general education curriculum.

10. *Has adopted a statement specifying the potential students it wishes to serve, and admits qualified students to its programs under admission policies consistent with this statement and appropriate to those programs.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* ensures that an institution has given consideration to the necessary characteristics of its potential student population and that the statement indicating the students it wishes to serve is compatible with the institution's mission and programs. It also obligates institutions to admit only students who are capable of successfully completing its programs.

- Summarize institutional admission policies and practices.

11. *Has students enrolled in and pursuing its principal educational programs at the time of the Commission's evaluation.*

Commentary: The Commission believes that the most accurate judgments about the quality of institutions as a whole can be made by examining ongoing educational enterprises.

Briefly summarize the make-up of the student body by year and academic program.

12. *Has available to students and the public a current and accurate catalog or comparable official publication setting forth purposes and objectives, entrance requirements and procedures, rules and regulations for student conduct, programs and courses, degree completion requirements, full-time and part-time faculty and degrees held, costs, refunds, and other items related to attending or withdrawing from the institution.*

Commentary: The Commission believes that each institution must operate openly, providing to its prospective and enrolled students all necessary information about its programs, activities, and procedures.

- A copy of the catalog is provided to the Commission.

13. *Has a charter and/or other formal authority from the appropriate government agency authorizing it to grant all degrees it awards; has the necessary operating authority for each jurisdiction in which it conducts its activities, and is operating within its authority. If the institution is not legally eligible for local government approval, it otherwise documents its standing and significant support from the local community and other relevant communities of interest.*

Commentary: By this *Requirement*, the Commission is assured that affiliated institutions are operating legally. The Commission understands that some institutions operating outside the United States may be ineligible for legal approval by the local government. In such circumstances, the Commission seeks assurance that the institution has strong support from the local community and other relevant communities of interest.

- a. Indicate the source or sources of the institution's degree-granting or operating authority for all jurisdictions in which the institution provides instruction.
- b. If the institution is ineligible for legal approval by the local government, identify the sources of significant community support and describe the nature of the support received.

14. *Has a governing board that includes representation reflecting the public interest that oversees the institution, working to assure the fulfillment of its mission and advance the institution's level of quality; assures that fewer than one-half of the board members have any financial interest in the institution, including as employee, stock-holder, or corporate director.*

Commentary: An affiliated institution must demonstrate the existence of a properly constituted entity responsible for its governance which in fact has the requisite powers to see that purposes of the institution are fulfilled. The requirement of representation of the public interest on governing boards recognizes that educational institutions serve a public purpose; their graduates not only should have personal gains from their education, but also should enhance the public good by being well-educated citizens and workers.

- a. Provide the names of the members of the governing board indicating the nature of any relationship individual trustees have with the institution apart from their membership on its governing board.
- b. Summarize the source and extent of the governing board's authority.

15. *Has a chief executive officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution and who possesses the requisite authority.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* ensures that affiliated institutions have at least a minimal administrative structure and a person in place, with the authority to direct the affairs of the institution on a continuous basis. Furthermore, it assures the Commission of an authoritative point of contact with the institution.

- Indicate the responsibilities of the institution's chief executive officer.

16. *Has an administration, faculty, and professional staff who collectively have significant experience in American higher education and are prepared to ensure the institution meets the Standards for Accreditation.*

Commentary: Through this requirement, the Commission asks the institution to provide evidence that its understanding of higher education in the United States is sufficient to ensure its ability to meet the *Standards for Accreditation*.

- Identify the members of the institution's faculty, administration, and professional staff who have experience in American higher education. For each, briefly describe that experience; give particular attention to any experience these individuals may have had with regional accreditation.

17. *Devotes all, or substantially all, of its gross income to the support of its educational purposes and programs.*

Commentary: The purpose of this *Requirement* is to guarantee that the educational purposes of affiliated institutions are paramount and are not subverted for the achievement of other goals.

18. *Documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to carry out its stated purposes.*

19. *Has financial records that relate clearly to the institution's educational activities and has these records externally audited on a regular schedule; if auditing procedures differ from those generally used in the United States, provides financial records reconciled to accounting practices common to American higher education.*

Commentary: The students' welfare is the concern of the Commission in these two *Requirements*. When students enroll, making a substantial commitment of time and money, they should be assured that the institution has the financial means of carrying out its programs now and into the future. The Commission understands that auditing procedures used in some countries may differ substantially from those used in the United States. In such instances, it will be difficult for evaluators from the United States to reach an adequate understanding the financial situation of the institution without a second set of financial records that are reconciled to U.S. accounting practices.

- a. Provide a set of financial records that are reconciled to accounting practices commonly used by colleges and universities in the United States.
- b. Provide appropriate references within the institution's audited financial statements to address *Requirements* 13, 14, and 15.

20. *Has graduated at least one class in its principal educational programs before the Commission's evaluation for accredited status. If the institution has graduated its first class not more than one year before the Commission's evaluation, the effective date of accreditation will be the date of graduation of that first class.*

Commentary: This *Requirement* refers to those institutions seeking initial accreditation as distinct from those seeking candidacy status or continued accreditation. Since accreditation covers an institution's entire program, up to and including the awarding of degrees, the Commission must be able to evaluate a complete cycle of the institution's principal program as it actually operates. The provision that accreditation be retroactive to the date of graduation of the first class (if not more than one year before the Commission's evaluation) is designed to eliminate the difficulties that graduates of that first class might have with professional licensure and admission to certain graduate programs if their degrees were from an unaccredited institution.

- Such institutions should provide the date of the first graduating class.

## PROCEDURES FOR THE BIENNIAL REVIEW OF CANDIDATE STATUS

### Nature of the Biennial Review

The purpose of the biennial review during candidacy is to determine if the institution continues to meet the Commission's *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* and is making reasonable progress toward accreditation. The steps in the review process are:

- a. the preparation of a report by the candidate institution;
- b. an on-site evaluation to validate the contents of the report;
- c. the visiting committee's preparation of an evaluation report and a recommendation on continuation of candidacy;
- d. the Commission's action to continue or terminate candidate status.

### Preparation of the Institution's Report

In order that the institution's preparation for biennial review may be more productive than burdensome, the Commission specifies that the report be an updating of the self-study submitted for the institution's candidacy application. The institution should consider the biennial review a phase of its planning process, an opportunity to measure its progress toward meeting the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*. If the institution's biennial self-assessment is effective, the self-study it must prepare for initial accreditation will be essentially an updating of its biennial report.

The most useful biennial report will therefore be both a progress report and a planning document, addressing each of the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* as well as its *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*. Like the self-study for candidacy, the report should be a comprehensive and coherent narrative accompanied by the required supportive materials. Where progress has occurred, it should be documented. Where problems remain, plans for their solution should be detailed.

### On-Site Evaluation

For the biennial review, the process for scheduling the visit and appointing the evaluation committee is essentially the same as that for the candidacy application. Two or three team members, spending two days on campus, will examine materials, conduct interviews, and present an oral preview of their report. The institution makes arrangements in advance for the team and communicates regularly with the team members. For this focused evaluation, a preliminary visit by the committee chairperson is usually unnecessary.

### Preparation of the Visiting Committee's Report

The steps in the preparation of the report and distribution are the same as those prescribed for other evaluation reports, and the institution will, of course, be asked to provide to the Commission a written response to the team's report.



The chairperson is asked to use the following format for the report:

- a. Cover Page
  - See *Evaluation Manual, appendix XII*.
- b. Preface Page (Complete form provided by the Commission office.)
- c. Introduction
  - brief summary of purpose and format of visit;
  - basic information about institution: date of degree authority, range of degree authority, date of first degrees awarded, if any, type of control, FTE enrollment and other data on student body).
- d. Compliance with *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*
  - assessment of institution's compliance with each *Requirement of Affiliation for Free Standing Institutions Abroad*;
  - appraisal of institution's accomplishment of immediate educational objectives;
  - appraisal of current institutional fulfillment and plans to comply with each of the *Standards for Accreditation*;
  - assessment of compliance with Standard on *Integrity*.
- e. Major Strengths and Weaknesses, related specifically to the *Criteria for Candidacy for Free Standing Institutions Abroad* and the institution's ability to achieve accreditation.
  - include appraisal of institution's success in enhancing strengths and correcting weaknesses identified during previous evaluation.

The team chair will send directly to the Commission the confidential recommendation on continuation or termination of candidate status.

### **Commission Action on Biennial Review**

The Commission typically considers all fall evaluations at the next spring's meetings and all spring evaluations the following fall.

A Commission decision to continue candidate status is final; action to terminate is subject to the due process statement then in effect.