



STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDITION | 2018

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSIONS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) was established in 1887 and is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization. MSA provides leadership in growing and improving student learning in its member institutions throughout the country and in almost than 100 countries outside the United States.

MSA has three accrediting commissions:

- The Commission on Higher Education (MSA-CHE) serves academic, degree-granting institutions and evaluates and accredits post-secondary institutions and programs.
- The Commission on Secondary Schools (MSA-CSS) evaluates and accredits institutions providing middle and/or secondary education, including vocational-technical institutions that offer non-degree-granting post-secondary programs.
- The Commission on Elementary Schools (MSA-CES) serves institutions that provide middle, elementary, and early age education.

THE ROLE OF STANDARDS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Middle States Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions are qualitative statements that reflect research-based best practices for career and technical institutions. These Standards complement content area standards, which designate what students are expected to learn in various curriculum areas. The content standards may be incorporated in the accreditation process in a variety of ways, but because content standards vary among institutions, states, and overseas locales, it is not possible to designate a single set of content standards for all Middle States accredited institutions.

The Middle States Standards for Accreditation have several important functions in the accreditation process. Most importantly, they serve as 1) the standard for quality in career and technical institutions, 2) as the foundation upon which institutional improvement efforts can be based. Because they are based on research and reflect best practices, the Standards serve as a qualitative guide to expectations for an accredited career and technical institution. The Standards are not designed to make all institutions look alike. The Middle States accreditation process respects the individual nature and character of each institution. The diversity of Middle States member institutions reflects this important principle.

The Standards are the basic criteria the Commission on Secondary Schools uses to make accreditation decisions. To be accredited by the Commission, an institution must comply with all 12 Middle States Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions.

THE ROLE OF INDICATORS OF QUALITY IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The requirements and expectations expressed in each Standard for Accreditation are amplified by Indicators of Quality. The Indicators show the kinds of documentation an institution should be able to provide as evidence that it complies with a Standard. Indicators provide greater clarity regarding best practices for each Standard.

THE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS

ORGANIZATION OF THE STANDARDS

The Standards for Accreditation and Indicators of Quality are numbered for ease of reference only. No added weight or other significance should be attributed to the numbers assigned to a Standard of Indicator. Additionally, the Standards are organized in two broad categories based on the following:

Foundational Standards: Standards addressing best practices that provide the foundations for quality in an education program, services, activities, and results in student learning:

- Mission
- Governance and Leadership
- Institutional Planning
- Finances
- Facilities, Equipment, and Materials
- Culture, Organization, and Staff
- Health and Safety
- Information and Technology Resources

Operational Standards: Standards addressing best practices what is delivered to students—the educational program, students services, and student activities:

- Educational Program
- Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Student Services
- Student Life and Student Activities

Each Standard for Accreditation is stated in two formats:

- as a paragraph in a holistic form; and
- as separate requirements/expectations of quality included within the Standard.



MISSION

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution has a statement of mission that communicates the institution’s vision of a preferred vision for its students and conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program. It is consistent with ethical norms and demonstrates respect for all persons. The mission is free of contradiction, ambiguity, and excessive abstraction and is clearly written and actively implemented. It expresses expectations for quality in terms of student and institutional performance. The mission serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision-making as well as strategic and short-range planning. The mission was developed using a process that considered input by appropriate stakeholders of the institution. The mission, is aligned with the needs of the community (ies) the institution serves and is reviewed periodically.

The institution has a statement of mission that:

- M.ST.1 Communicates the institution’s vision of a preferred vision for its students
- M.ST.2 Conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program.
- M.ST.3 Is consistent with ethical norms.
- M.ST.4 Demonstrates respect for all persons.
- M.ST.5 Is free of contradiction, ambiguity, and excessive abstraction.
- M.ST.6 Is clearly written and actively implemented.
- M.ST.7 Expresses expectations for quality in terms of student and institutional performance.
- M.ST.8 Serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision-making as well as strategic and short-range planning
- M.ST.9 Was developed using a process that considered input by appropriate stakeholders of the institution.
- M.ST.10 Is aligned with the needs of the community (ies) the institution serves.
- M.ST.11 Is reviewed periodically.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

M.1 – M.3 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- M.1 Implements a system to assess its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.
- M.2 Communicates its mission in all resources provided or available to students and the institution’s community of stakeholders.
- M.3 Takes steps to ensure that students and their families (if appropriate) understand and support the institution’s mission.

M.4 – M.7 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- M.4 The use of a distance education modality is appropriate for achieving the institution’s mission.
- M.5 The institution’s leadership is able to articulate how the institution’s mission is enhanced by delivering all or part of its educational program by a distance modality.
- M.6 The distance education modality employed enhances and does not detract from other elements of the institution’s mission.
- M.7 The distance education modality is selected because of the increased options for learning it provides for students and not used solely to attract target student populations that differ significantly from the populations the institution has served in the past.

M.8– M.10 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS¹

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- M.8 The institution’s religious identity is articulated clearly in its mission, core values, and publications.
- M.9 The institution’s religious identity and purposes are integral parts of mission and its institution-wide goals and objectives.
- M.10 Symbols and artifacts of the institution community (ies) of faith are visible in the institution.

¹ The use of the Faith-Based Indicators for this and the other Standards for Accreditation by -based institutions is voluntary and not required, unless their use is directed by the head of a parent institution system such as a Diocesan/Archdiocesan or a similar system of institutions. The Faith-Based Indicators allow faith-based institutions, if they desire, to include in their self-study and accreditation process Indicators of Quality that address unique characteristics of and expectations for institutions whose mission and educational program are defined wholly or in part by their particular faith.



GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution is chartered, licensed, and/or authorized by a state, nation, or other appropriate authority, if required by law. It is in compliance with all applicable statutes, ordinances, and regulations of all civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates. The institution possesses no legal or proprietary ambiguities in ownership, control, or responsibility.

The governing body and leadership ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the institution by establishing and implementing clear policies and procedures, providing needed resources, and employing systems that ensure the institution delivers a quality educational program. They act ethically and consistently to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. The governing body and leadership foster a productive environment for teaching and learning and have timely and open communication with their community of stakeholders. The governing body and leadership provide the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and strategic and short-term planning.

The institution:

- GL.ST.1 Is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or other appropriate authority if required by law.
- GL.ST.2 Is in compliance with all applicable statutes, ordinances, and regulations of all civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- GL.ST.3 Possesses no legal or proprietary ambiguities in ownership, control, or responsibility.

The governing body and leadership:

- GL.ST.4 Ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the institution by establishing and implementing clear policies and procedures, providing needed resources, and employing systems that ensure the institution delivers a quality educational program.
- GL.ST.5 Act ethically and consistently to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning.
- GL.ST.6 Foster a productive environment for teaching and learning.
- GL.ST.7 Have timely and open communication with their community of stakeholders.
- GL.ST.8 Provide the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and strategic and short-term planning.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

GL.1 – GL.18 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body ensures that:

- GL.1 It works cooperatively with the institution's leadership to establish and maintain clear, written policies and procedures that are consistent with the institution's mission. Policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed regularly.
- GL.2 Members of the governing body receive regular training to ensure that the members understand their proper roles and responsibilities.
- GL.3 The institution is provided with effective leadership, support, and continuity in leadership through succession planning.
- GL.4 There is stability in the institution's leadership and administrative operations over time.
- GL.5 It thinks and acts strategically, reflecting on its decisions and the consequences of its actions.
- GL.6 It systematically evaluates its own effectiveness in performing its duties and fulfilling its responsibilities.
- GL.7 It is focused on selecting, evaluating, and supporting the head of the institution; policy development, planning, assessing the institution's performance, and ensuring the availability of adequate resources to accomplish the institution's mission.
- GL.8 It refrains from undermining the authority of the institution's leadership to conduct the daily operation of the institution.
- GL.9 It uses a clearly defined performance appraisal system for the head of the institution, and the appraisal is conducted with the knowledge and participation of the head of the institution.
- GL.10 It has and implements written policies and procedures that define
 - a. the proper roles and responsibilities of the governing body;
 - b. qualifications for members of the governing body;
 - c. composition and organization of the governing body;
 - d. operation of the governing body;
 - e. terms of office for members of the governing body; and
 - f. provisions for identifying and selecting new members when vacancies occur.
- GL.11 It has a regular schedule of meetings that is made known to the institution's community of stakeholders.
- GL.12 It includes members that represent constituencies served by the institution.
- GL.13 Members of the staff and students are appropriately recognized for their accomplishments.

The leadership of the institution ensures that:

- GL.14 It is accountable to the governing body and/or system/corporate leadership and is responsible for ensuring that expected levels of student performance are achieved.
- GL.15 All programs and activities are adequately and appropriately planned, supervised, resourced, and staffed with qualified personnel.
- GL.16 Members of the professional and support staffs are well informed regarding applicable educational research and best practices.
- GL.17 It adheres to guidelines concerning confidentiality in communications.
- GL.18 It maintains appropriate and constructive relations with families, students, the staff, the community, and with each other in the interest of serving the needs of the students.

GL.19 – G.21 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE PART OF A LARGER SYSTEM OF SCHOOLS OR CORPORATION

The system/corporate leadership ensures that it [for institutions that are part of a larger system of schools or corporation]:

- GL.19 Provides the institution with leadership that possesses the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies required by the civil authority (ies) in which the institution operates.
- GL.20 Adheres to appropriate guidelines concerning confidentiality in communications.
- GL.21 Maintains appropriate and constructive relations with the staff of the institution and members of its community of stakeholders.

GL.22 – G.23 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The leadership ensures that:

- GL.22 Instruction is provided by personnel with education and expertise in delivering the educational program by the distance modality.
- GL.23 The leadership includes educators that possess the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead an institution that delivers all or part of its educational program by a distance modality.

GL.24 – GL.34 INDICATORS FOR PROPRIETARY INSTITUTIONS

The proprietor/leader ensures that:

- GL.24 If required, the institution is chartered or licensed to operate as an educational institution by the civil authority (ies) of the location(s) within which it operates.
- GL.25 S/he has appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead the career and technical institution.
- GL.26 S/he has sufficient knowledge of the career and technical programs offered by the institution and/or ensures that others in the institution's leadership possess that knowledge and those competencies.

The proprietor/leader that is also the governing body ensures that the proprietor/leader:

- GL.27 Has and implements a formal system for obtaining advice and assistance from specialists in the career and technical programs the institution offers.
- GL.28 Establishes and implements clear, written policies and procedures that are consistent with the institution's mission and are reviewed regularly.
- GL.29 Has a clear and logical table of organization with lines of responsibility.

- GL.30 Ensures that members of the institution’s staff understand their proper roles and responsibilities.
- GL.31 Has a succession plan to ensure stability and continuity of the leadership of the institution.
- GL.32 Thinks and acts strategically, reflecting on decisions and the consequences of those decisions.
- GL.33 Implements as system for evaluating his/her effectiveness in leading the institution.
- GL.34 Is focused on policy development, planning, assessing the performance of the institution’s staff, and ensuring the availability of adequate resources to accomplish the institution’s mission.

GL.35 – GL.41 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that they:

- GL.35 Articulate and model the religious tenets of the institution.
- GL.36 Maintain the religious identity of the institution as a priority for the institution.
- GL.37 Align policies, procedures, and decisions with the religious values and identity of the institution.
- GL.38 Accept the authority of the sponsoring religious institution.
- GL.39 Engage the institution's community in planning and decision-making and in setting direction for the future of the institution as a faith-based institution.
- GL.40 Include an assessment of candidates’ understanding and commitment to the religious beliefs and mission of the institution as criteria for hiring the institution's leadership and teachers.
- GL.41 Promote respect and collaboration among all members of the institution's "faith" community.

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution plans strategically and aligns its plans with the institution's mission. The institution uses a collaborative process involving appropriate stakeholders in developing and implementing its plans. The institution ensures that its plans are focused on continuous growth and improvement in student performance, professional growth of the staff, and the institution's capacity to achieve its mission.

The institution:

- IP.ST.1 Plans strategically.
- IP.ST.2 Aligns its plans with the institution's mission.
- IP.ST.3 Uses a collaborative process involving appropriate stakeholders in developing and implementing its plans.
- IP.ST.4 Ensures that its plans are focused on continuous growth and improvement in student performance, professional growth of the staff, and the institution's capacity to achieve its mission.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

IP.1 – IP.11 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- IP.1 Institutional plans are approved by the governing body (if appropriate) and implemented faithfully.
- IP.2 Information about the institution's planning processes, its plans and goals, and the results of implementing its plans are communicated to its community of stakeholders.
- IP.3 Members of the institution's staff, students, and the institution's community of stakeholders are provided with appropriate opportunities to participate in and provide input into the institution's planning for improvement.
- IP.4 Plans and goals are supported by the institution's community of stakeholders.
- IP.5 Plans are reviewed periodically to determine the extent to which outcomes are meeting expectations and to determine corrective actions that must be taken.
- IP.6 Periodic internal and external reviews are conducted to validate the institution's plans and planning processes.
- IP.7 Plans address all appropriate areas of the institution's programs, services, operations, activities, and resources.
- IP.8 Plans and goals are based, in part, on an analysis of historical data, baseline performance, and trend data and projections.
- IP.9 Planning for new programs, services, activities, and operations includes consideration of the capacities of the institution's facilities, equipment, and staff.

- IP.10 Criteria and procedures, where applicable, are provided for identifying the need for new programs and how they are to be implemented, including
- needs of the local/regional job market,
 - adequacy of potential enrollment,
 - availability of qualified instructors,
 - availability of necessary financial resources, and
 - availability of needed facilities and equipment.
- IP.11 Criteria and procedures, where applicable, are provided for identifying programs that should be eliminated including
- needs of the local/regional job market,
 - adequacy of potential enrollment,
 - availability of qualified instructors,
 - availability of necessary financial resources, and
 - availability of needed facilities and equipment.

IP.12 INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- IP.12 The spiritual life of the institution is a priority in all planning activities.

FINANCES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution has financial resources that are sufficient to provide its students with the educational program as defined by the institution's mission. Its financial resources have been stable for at least three years, and projections indicate continuing stability for at least the next five years. The institution uses business practices that are ethical and follow accepted budgeting and accounting principles. The practices promote confidence in the institution's ability to manage its fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner. The institution dedicates the majority of its financial resources to implementing its educational program, services, activities, and operations.

The institution:

- FI.ST.1 Has financial resources that are sufficient to provide its students with the educational program defined by the institution's mission.
- FI.ST.2 Has financial resources that have been stable for at least three years, and projections indicate continuing stability for at least the next five years.
- FI.ST.3 Uses business practices that are ethical and follow accepted budgeting and accounting principles.
- FI.ST.4 Uses business practices that promote confidence in the institution's ability to manage its fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner.
- FI.ST.5 Dedicates the majority of its financial resources to implementing its educational program, services, activities, and operations.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

FI.1 – FI.18 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has and implements written financial policies and procedures that:

- FI.1 Ensure business practices are in accordance with accepted business practices.
- FI.2 Ensure that current and future financial resources are sufficient to provide for achieving the institution's mission and goals.
- FI.3 Require and ensure the governing body and leadership exercise prudent control over all financial operations.
- FI.4 Govern the collection and refund of students' tuitions and fees.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- FI.5 Has no contingent liabilities or on-going litigations that could affect the institution's ability to continue operation.

- FI.6 Maintains an appropriate balance between income and expenditures.
- FI.7 Has assets that are sufficient to meet current liabilities.
- FI.8 Develops and implements short- and long-range financial plans to ensure resources are available to deliver its educational program and services.
- FI.9 Provides stakeholders with appropriate opportunities to provide input into the institution's financial planning.
- FI.10 Includes the input of its staff in determining budget priorities for the institution's educational programs, services, activities, and operations.
- FI.11 Sets tuitions and fees that are reasonably related to the content of the program, the length of the program, equipment and supplies required, and the prospects for gainful employment in the career/technical field of study.
- FI.12 Informs prospective students (and their families, as appropriate) in advance of all financial obligations for attending the institution.
- FI.13 Employs staff members entrusted with overseeing and conducting the financial and business operations of the institution that possess appropriate qualifications by education and experience.
- FI.14 Requires periodic financial audits or reviews by qualified external agencies.
- FI.15 Responds appropriately to the results and recommendations of financial audits or reviews.
- FI.16 Carries adequate insurance coverage such as business interruption, casualty, property, and liability insurance for employees and the governing body/owner, as appropriate.
- FI.17 Makes prudent use of resources available through development activities, grants, foundations, and other partnerships.
- FI.18 Does not base nor affect in any other way the salaries/wages of agents of the institution that recruit and/or enroll students on the number of students recruited and/or enrolled.

FI.19 – FI.22 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN TITLE IV FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- FI.19 Administers financial aid programs in accordance with the regulations of the funding agency.
- FI.20 Provides refunds to students, when due, within 30 days of 1) the last day of attendance if written notification of withdrawal has been provided by the students, or 2) the date the institution terminates the student or determines that the student has withdrawn.
- FI.21 Does not overly depend on Veterans Administration students as a source of revenues.
- FI.22 Does not receive more than 90% of the institution's financial revenues are received from Title IV federal student loan programs.

FI.23 – FI.25 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

Fl.23 Has the financial resources necessary to support and enhance the religious nature of the institution.

Fl.24 Makes judicious use of financial resources based on the religious values of the institution.

The institution's staff, students, parents, and alumni:

Fl.25 Support the institution's advancement efforts.



FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution's facilities, equipment, and materials are appropriate and adequate to achieve the institution's mission and to deliver its educational program, services, operations, and activities. They enhance delivery of high quality programs and services and achievement of high levels of student and institutional performance. The facilities, equipment, and materials are safe, clean, and well maintained. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable health and safety codes of the civil jurisdiction(s) within which the institution is located.

The institution's facilities, equipment, and materials:

- FEM.ST.1 Are appropriate and adequate to achieve the institution's mission.
- FEM.ST.3 Are appropriate and adequate to deliver the institution's educational program, services, operations, and activities.
- FEM.ST.4 Enhance delivery of high quality programs and services and high levels of student and institutional performance.
- FEM.ST.5 Are safe, clean, and well maintained.
- FEM.ST.6 Are inspected regularly for effective operation and meet all applicable health and safety codes of the civil jurisdiction(s) within which the institution is located.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

FEM.1 – FEM.16 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- FEM.1 Includes in its budget the financial resources needed to obtain and maintain the facilities, equipment, and materials required to deliver its educational program, services, and activities.
- FEM.2 Conducts regular and systematic assessments of the adequacy of the institution's facilities, equipment, and materials.
- FEM.3 Includes in its long-range and/or strategic plans planning for additional facilities, equipment, and materials.
- FEM.4 Considers the capacities of its facilities and equipment before adopting new programs.
- FEM.5 Plans for, funds, and schedules regular preventative maintenance and repair/replacement of its facilities, equipment, and materials.
- FEM.6 Has sufficient space for safe ingress, egress, and traffic flow within its facilities.
- FEM.7 Has sufficient systems to monitor and maintain appropriate levels of quality air in its facilities.
- FEM.8 Has adequate and appropriate lighting throughout the facilities.

The governing body and leadership provide sufficient and appropriate facilities for all aspects of the institution's educational program, operations, services, and activities including:

- FEM.9 Instruction
- FEM.10 Shops and laboratories
- FEM.11 Administrative functions
- FEM.12 Student activities
- FEM.13 Student services
- FEM.14 Storage of the institution's equipment and materials
- FEM.15 Storage for student personal items
- FEM.16 Storage of hazardous chemicals and other materials

CULTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND STAFF

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution's culture, organization, and staff facilitate achievement of its purposes as expressed in its mission. The institution's culture reflects its core values. The culture is characterized by expectations for excellence in student performance and cooperative and collaborative relationships between the governing body, leadership, the staff, students, and the institution's community of stakeholders. The administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified and competent as defined by the civil authority within in which the institution operates. They are sufficient in qualifications and number to provide a high quality educational experience for students as defined by the institution's mission and as expected by the institution's community of stakeholders. Members of the staff have clearly defined responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships, and they are evaluated regularly based on clear expectations for performance.

The institution's:

- COS.ST.1 Culture, organization, and staffing facilitate achievement of its purposes as expressed in its mission.
- COS.ST.2 Culture reflects its core values and is characterized by expectations for excellence in student performance.
- COS.ST.3 Culture is characterized by cooperative and collaborative relationships between the governing body, leadership, the staff, students, and the institution's community of stakeholders.
- COS.ST.4 Administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified, competent as defined by the civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- COS.ST.5 Administrative, instructional, and support staffs are sufficient in qualifications and number to provide a high quality educational experience for students as defined by the institution's mission and the expectations of its community of stakeholders.
- COS.ST.6 Staff has clearly defined responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships, and are evaluated regularly based on clear expectations for performance.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

COS.1 – COS.31 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

CULTURE

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution's culture:

- COS.1 Promotes in the institution's staff and community of stakeholders' high expectations for success in achieving the expected levels of student performance.
- COS.2 Promotes among the governing body, leadership, and staff the desire and willingness to cooperate in serving the institution's students in their pursuit of the levels of performance expected.

- COS.3 Is characterized by students' good behavior, cooperation in learning, respect for and treatment of others, and pride in their achievements and their institution.
- COS.4 Is characterized by staff members' professional satisfaction, good morale, collective commitment to the institution and its purposes, and pride in their achievements and their institution.
- COS.5 Is characterized by a community of stakeholders that demonstrates a commitment to, pride in, and a willingness to support the institution by promoting its mission, providing necessary financial resources, and participating in its work where appropriate.
- COS.6 Is supported by a clearly defined, written code of conduct for students that promotes an environment conducive to learning and teaching, is understood and supported by students, the staff, and the community of stakeholders, and is enforced fairly and uniformly.
- COS.7 Is supported by written policies that define expectations for the professional conduct of the staff.
- COS.8 Is characterized by stakeholders' feeling safe when in the institution.
- COS.9 Includes a program of appropriate recognition for student accomplishments and contributions.

ORGANIZATION

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- COS.10 Is defined by a logical and clear table of organization that includes written job descriptions specifying levels of responsibilities and reporting relationships.
- COS.11 Employs a ratio of full-time to part-time instructors that is appropriate for delivering the educational program.
- COS.12 Has and implements written policies and procedures that govern how the institution is organized and operated for its purposes.
- COS.13 Has and implements written policies and procedures for responding to complaints/grievances by students' families and other members of the institution's community of stakeholders.

STAFF

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has and implements written policies and procedures that govern:

- COS.14 The institution's personnel practices.
- COS.15 The process for determining adequate compensation, reasonable workloads, acceptable working conditions, and just and fair treatment for all members of the staff.
- COS.16 The supervision and evaluation of staff members' performance.
- COS.17 Procedures for responding to complaints/grievances by members of the staff.
- COS.18 Orienting and mentoring new staff members.
- COS.19 Orienting and supervising service providers not employed by the institution.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution

- COS.20 Assigns staff members to work based on their education, preparation, experience, expertise, and commitment to the institution's success.
- COS.21 Bases evaluations of staff members' performance on predetermined criteria.
- COS.22 Conducts evaluations of staff members' performance with the knowledge of the staff member and reports evaluations in writing and verbally.
- COS.23 Uses the results of staff members' performance evaluations to identify areas for individual and staff professional growth and/or improvement.
- COS.24 Provides a high quality program of professional development that is informed by the institution's mission, its goals for growth and improvement in student learning, and its capacity to produce the levels of student performance described in its mission and expected by its community of stakeholders.
- COS.25 Provides staff members with opportunities to offer input into the content of their professional development programs.
- COS.26 Gives members of the faculty appropriate roles in developing and reviewing the curricula they teach.
- COS.27 Encourages staff members' affiliations with professional organizations.

COS.28 INDICATOR FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- COS.28 Uses only appropriately qualified members of the staff to perform the distance-learning tasks of teaching, grading student work, communicating with students, academic counseling, course revision, and development of curriculum guides.

COS.29—COS.35 INDICATOR FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING IN FEDERAL TITLE IV STUDENT AID PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- COS.29 Is in compliance with all Title IV requirements and responsibilities.
- COS.30 Reports to the Commission on Secondary Schools requirements for audits or other special requirements by the U.S. Department of Education, a state agency, and/or another accrediting agency within five business days of the receipt of such requirements.
- COS.31 Provides to the Commission on Secondary Schools any reports regarding audits or other special requirements by the U.S. Department of Education, a state agency, and/or another accrediting agency within ten business days of the receipt of such reports.

COS.32 – COS.32 INDICATORS FOR ALL PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTRACTORS' EMPLOYEES WHO WILL WORK IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN, AND STUDENT TEACHER CANDIDATES.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has and implements written policies and procedures that:

- COS.32 In accordance with Act 24 of 2011 and Section 111 of the Pennsylvania School Code, require all applicants for employment with the institution, including employees of independent contractors but excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students, and student teacher candidates to undergo the following background checks prior to being hired or contracted:
- Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check. Applies to individuals hired as of January 1, 1986;
- PA Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance; and
- Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) in a manner required by the Department of Education.
- COS.33 In accordance with Act 24 of 2011, requires all employees as of September 29, 2011 who have not been subject to a previous background check to:
- provide assurances on form PDE-6004 that they have not been previously arrested or convicted of a Section 111(e) offense; or
- If they refuse to submit form PDE-6004 are required to submit a current background check under Section 111.
- COS.34 Requires the institution to review applicants' required background check reports prior to their being hired or contracted to determine the fitness of the individual to work in a position in which s/he will have contact with children.
- COS.35 Requires the institution to keep on file copies of the required background check reports for all staff hired or contracted on or after April 1, 2007.

COS.36 – COS.46 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- COS.36 Has an environment that portrays an identifiable integration of faith, life, and culture.
- COS.37 Offers programs of study, activities, athletics, a code of conduct, and discipline actions that reflect the religious values expressed in the institution's foundational mission and core values.
- COS.38 Gives appropriate attention in all institution programs and activities to the values and traditions that demonstrate and reinforce the institution's religious nature.
- COS.39 Provides members of the faculty with opportunities to advance their understanding of the religious beliefs and foundational documents of the institution.
- COS.40 Provides formal and informal opportunities for the spiritual development of the members of the faculty and staff.
- COS.41 Regularly provides professional development opportunities for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff as spiritual leaders in the institution's community.
- COS.42 Delivers a religious studies program for students that is well defined and consistent with the mission and core values of the institution and the sponsoring institution.

- COS.43 Includes prayer and/or other expressions of faith as integral components of the institution's curriculum and daily activities.
- COS.44 Provides students with an appropriate role in planning, organizing and conducting the institution's faith-based experiences.
- COS.45 Includes in the criteria for hiring personnel an assessment of the candidates' understanding and commitment to mission and the religious values of the institution.
- COS.46 Includes in the criteria for performance evaluations of members of the faculty and staff their understanding and commitment to the mission and religious values of the institution.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution provides a safe, orderly, and healthy environment for learning and teaching. It is in compliance with all fire, safety, and health requirements of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which it operates. The institution has clear and well documented health, safety, prevention, and crisis management policies and procedures that are practiced, implemented when necessary, and updated regularly.

The institution

- HS.ST.1 Provides a safe, orderly, and healthy environment for learning and teaching.
- HS.ST.2 Is in compliance with all fire, safety, and health requirements of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which it operates.
- HS.ST.3 Has clear and well documented health, safety, prevention, and crisis management policies, plans, and procedures that are practiced, implemented when necessary, and updated regularly.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

HS.1 – HS.23 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution

- HS.1 Conducts and maintains written records of regular practices/drills of the institution's health, safety, prevention, and crisis management policies, plans, and procedures.
- HS.2 Provides appropriate training for all staff members on the institution's emergency and crisis plans, handling accidents and illnesses, and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.
- HS.3 Maintains for at least three years records of fire, safety, and health inspections by the school personnel and the civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- HS.4 Has and implements written procedures and functional equipment with which to communicate during fire and other emergencies, to summon assistance, and to evacuate the institution's facilities.
- HS.5 Maintains its instructional equipment and materials in a safe and healthy condition that meets the fire, health, and safety standards and requirements of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- HS.6 Includes in all components of its educational program instruction and practice in appropriate and safe use of all equipment and materials.
- HS.7 Posts in all instructional areas required safety notices, including requirements for wearing safety equipment, fire/crisis evacuation procedures, MSDES data sheets, etc..
- HS.8 Equips instructional areas that have power equipment with appropriate emergency shut off devices and marked safety/warning areas.
- HS.9 Has evidence that appropriate and safe use of all equipment and wearing of all safety equipment is enforced in all instructional areas.

- HS.10 Maintains comprehensive, current health records for all students as required by the civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- HS.11 Informs members of the staff and families (as appropriate) about students' health or physical needs.
- HS.12 Keeps members of the staff up-to-date on relevant health, safety, and wellness information and practices.
- HS.13 Expects members of the staff to model positive health, safety, and wellness practices.
- HS.14 Maintains positive working relationships with local health and safety authorities and providers.
- HS.15 Includes in its educational program opportunities for students to develop knowledge, attitudes, and practices necessary for personal wellness and a healthy lifestyle.
- HS.16 Has and implements an effective system to control access to the institution by visitors and other persons not students or members of the staff.
- HS.17 Ensures that safe drinking water is available throughout the day for the staff and students.
- HS.18 Plans and provides for appropriate health care, when required, at the institution's functions that take place away from its premises.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the institution has and implements written policies and procedures for:

- HS.19 Regular health and safety inspections of the institution's facilities, equipment, and materials by the institution's staff and/or representatives of the civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- HS.20 Storing equipment and materials safely and in accordance with applicable laws and codes of the civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- HS.21 Maintaining student health records and ensuring their confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- HS.22 Managing and storing student medications in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- HS.23 Accounting for the whereabouts of students at all times during the school day, during approved student activities, and at school-sponsored activities beyond the school day.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution's educational program consists of career/technical programs that are aligned with the purposes set forth in its mission. The programs are delivered using carefully planned and well-executed written curricula that include appropriate content, instructional methodologies, and assessment practices that are based on current research and best practices. Standards for student performance are based on readiness knowledge, skills, and habits required for further study, entry into the world of work, and/or business/industry standards.

Career/technical components of the educational program are approved by the governing body and, where required, by the appropriate authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates. The programs are supported with sufficient resources. The institution has and implements a plan for reviewing/revising the programs regularly using pre-determined criteria.

Curriculum guides are current, functional, available, and are used to deliver the academic and/or career/technical programs. Guides establish the scope and sequence of the programs and include expectations for student performance. Instructional materials, technology, and equipment are appropriate, functional, and well maintained.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution's academic and/or career/technical programs are:

- EP.ST.1 Aligned with the purposes set forth in its mission.
- EP.ST.2 Delivered using carefully planned, well-executed curricula that include appropriate content and are aligned with current research and best practices.
- EP.ST.3 Delivered using instructional methodologies that are based on current research and best practices.
- EP.ST.4 Delivered using assessment practices that are based on current research and best practices.
- EP.ST.5 Designed to provide students with readiness knowledge, skills, and habits required for further study, entry into the world of work, and/or business/industry standards.
- EP.ST.6 Approved by the governing body and, where required, by the appropriate authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- EP.ST.7 Supported with sufficient resources.
- EP.ST.8 Reviewed/revised regularly to ensure continuing alignment with business/industry standards and requirements.
- EP.ST.9 Designed to foster and challenge all students to achieve at the levels expected as defined by the institution's mission.
- EP.ST.10 Defined by curriculum guides that are current, functional, and available, and are used to deliver the program and its components.
- EP.ST.11 Defined by curriculum guides that establish the scope and sequence of the educational program and its components and include student performance objectives for each component of the program.

EP.ST.12 Delivered using instructional materials, technology, and equipment that are appropriate, functional, and well maintained.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

EP.1 – EP.30 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- EP.1 Has and implements written policies and procedures for developing, implementing, reviewing, and improving the educational program and its components.
- EP.2 Has and publishes for prospective students and the institution’s community of stakeholders a thorough description of the following aspects of each component of the institution’s educational program
 - content,
 - objectives,
 - typical length of study,
 - prerequisites,
 - requirements for successful completion, and
 - employment prospects.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution provides career/technical programs that:

- EP.3 Are appropriate for students who are concluding formal study as well as those planning further education.
- EP.4 Include courses and sequences of courses that are appropriate for the field of study.
- EP.5 Enable all students to meet expected knowledge, skills, and competencies required for gainful employment in the field of study.
- EP.6 Enable students to develop academic knowledge and skills as well as career/technical competencies.
- EP.7 Develop in its students habits of the mind and attitudes required for success in further education and in the workplace.
- EP.8 Include expectations for learning that are understood and supported by the institution’s community of stakeholders.
- EP.9 Are articulated and coordinated both horizontally and vertically among all levels of the institution.

CURRICULA

The governing body and leadership ensure the programs’ curricula:

- EP.10 Are designed to achieve appropriate student outcomes and performance as expressed in terms of student understanding, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits.

- EP.11 Establish priorities, objectives, and goals for all courses and units within the program and clearly defined expectations for all students.
- EP.12 Are designed to ensure the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and assessment of student learning.
- EP.13 Are based on a thorough assessment of the basic concepts, skills, and knowledge required of all students to fulfill the stated student outcomes of each career/technical component.
- EP.14 Are aligned with business/industry standards and responsive to the needs of the local and regional job market in such areas as
 - a. knowledge/skills/competencies students are expected to learn and demonstrate;
 - b. standards for the knowledge/skills/ competencies students are expected to demonstrate; and
 - c. tools and equipment the use of which students must be able to demonstrate competency.
- EP.15 Include experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, and study skills.
- EP.16 Include experiences that promote development of appropriate social skills—such as increasing self-control and a sense of individual and group responsibility—in interactions with adults and peers.
- EP.17 Include instruction in appropriate and effective uses of information and technology resources and their application.
- EP.18 Provide appropriate accommodations for students' ages, cultures, and learning styles.

INSTRUCTION

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution's instructional methods:

- EP.19 Are designed to make it possible for all students to achieve the outcomes expected for their field of study.
- EP.20 Include a variety of methodologies to meet students' preferred learning styles.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR CAREER/TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure each of the institution's career/technical programs has an advisory committee that:

- EP.21 Consists primarily of business/industry practitioners and potential employers that are external to the institution.
- EP.22 Meets at least once annually and maintain records of decisions and recommendations regarding the appropriate career/technical programs.
- EP.23 Participates actively in the development, review, and revision of the program's curricula and instructional and assessment programs.

The governing body and leadership ensure that, together with the appropriate advisory committee(s), each career/technical component of the educational program:

- EP.24 Conducts a systematic and regular review of each component’s curriculum and instructional and assessment programs at least biannually to ensure they are responsive to local and regional job markets needs and standards.
- EP.25 Sets a length of time for learning that is appropriate for achieving obtaining the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for successful completion and gainful employment in the field of study.
- EP.26 Determines the tools and equipment with which students must demonstrate competency in their use are appropriate and responsive to business/industry standards, the needs of the local and regional job markets, and gainful employment.
- EP.27 Has and implements criteria and procedures to determine when a career/technical program is no longer responsive to local and regional job markets and should be terminated.

EVALUATING AND AWARDING CREDIT

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- EP.28 Has and makes available to current and prospective students and the institution’s community of stakeholders its standards for student performance and successful completion of each career/technical component of the educational program.
- EP.29 Has and makes available to current and prospective students and the institution’s community of stakeholders its policies and procedures for assessing and grading student work.
- EP.30 Has and implements criteria for awarding credit for student work that comply with the Federal definition of credit hour [34 CFR 600.2] as follows:
 - a. For credit awarded for the purposes of qualifying for Federal student aid
 - 1) an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than
 - a) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester of trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - b) at least an equivalent amount of work is required in paragraph (1) of this definition, including laboratory work internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
 - b. For credit awarded for purposes other than qualifying for Federal student aid: An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is defined by the institution and implemented in all components of the institution's educational program.

EP.31 – EP.33 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING OR INTENDING TO PARTICIPATE IN TITLE IV FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

TEACH-OUT PLAN

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has a teach-out plan:

- EP.31 That meets the federal and Middle States criteria.²
- EP.32 That includes procedures for entering into appropriate teach-out agreements³ with other institutions⁴ should the institution make the decision to close.
- EP.33 That is approved by the Commission on Secondary Schools.

EP.34 – EP.39 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- EP.34 The content of the institution’s career/technical components of the educational program delivered by a distance modality are the same content with the same expectations for learning as those delivered in a face-to-face instructional environment.
- EP.35 Provisions are made for student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction both synchronously and asynchronously.
- EP.36 Students and their families (if appropriate) are informed about any aspects of the components of the educational program that are created or delivered by an organization other than the institution.
- EP.37 Student performance outcomes for components delivered through a distance modality are achievable using that modality.
- EP.38 Instructional materials used are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques, and textbooks and other instructional materials are suitable for distance learning.
- EP.39 Instruction in appropriate study skills necessary for students to learn and success using a distance modality effectively and efficiently is included as part of the curriculum.

EP.40 – EP.50 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- EP.40 The religious nature of the institution is appropriately reflected throughout the curriculum.
- EP.41 The institution teaches the faith of the sponsoring institution in accordance with its official teachings and traditions.

² **Teach-out plan** means a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

³ **Teach-out agreement** means a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

⁴The criteria for institutions with which the institution may have a teach-out agreement are: 1) accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency, 2) that have the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and is reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the school, and 3) have demonstrated they can provide students access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantive distances.

- EP.42 Religious education of the students is a priority in scheduling, budgeting, and planning.
- EP.43 The religious education of the students is a concern of all faculty members.
- EP.44 The religious dimension of all areas of the curriculum is acknowledged.
- EP.45 The institution provides religious formation programs for its faith-community members that are based on the faith-community's beliefs, values, and traditions.
- EP.46 The religious education program is developmentally appropriate in nature.
- EP.47 Religious social teachings are integrated throughout the institution's educational program.
- EP.48 Faith development and community service programs are seen as integral components of the institution's educational program.
- EP.49 Faith-based experiences that foster the religious formation of the students are provided regularly.
- EP.50 Faith development and community service programs for students have clearly defined objectives reflecting the mission of the institution.

Note: The following Indicators of Quality identify expectations of quality in curriculum, instruction and assessment for *each* component of the institution's educational program.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR CURRICULUM

CI.1 – CI.31 CURRICULUM INDICATORS FOR ALL CAREER/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The career/technical component's curriculum:

- CI.1 Is based or built upon and aligned with a curriculum recognized and accepted by the business/industry in the field of study.
- CI.2 Is designed to achieve appropriate student outcomes and performance as expressed in terms of student understanding, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits.
- CI.3 Is set forth in written curriculum guides that include a scope and sequence, expected student outcomes, and sound approaches to teaching and learning.
- CI.4 Establishes priorities, objectives, and goals for all courses and units within the component that are based on clearly defined expectations for all students.
- CI.5 Is designed to ensure the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and assessment.
- CI.6 Is based on a thorough assessment of the basic concepts, skills, and knowledge required of all students to fulfill the expected student outcomes.
- CI.7 Addresses the diverse learning styles of students without compromising the essential knowledge and skills students are expected to learn and demonstrate.
- CI.8 Is responsive to business/industry standards and the needs of the local and regional job market in such areas as the:
 - a. knowledge/skills/competencies that students are expected to learn and demonstrate,

- b. standards to which students are expected to demonstrate knowledge/skills/ competencies, and
- c. tools and equipment with which students must demonstrate competency in their use are appropriate and responsive to business/industry standards, the needs of the local and regional job markets, and gainful employment.

The component's curriculum includes:

- CI.9 Program/course objectives and expectations for learning that are understood by students and the staff.
- CI.10 Program/course objectives and expectations for learning that are understood and supported by the institution's external stakeholders.
- CI.11 Required knowledge, skills, and competencies that are well-articulated and coordinated between all teachers at each level and by teachers within the same level.
- CI.12 A meaningful and logical progression of learning activities.
- CI.13 Learning activities are designed to foster active involvement of students in the learning process.
- CI.14 Learning materials that are current and are selected to facilitate achieving the outcomes defined by the curriculum.
- CI.15 Current best practices in the field, including the use of technology and other media for learning and application.
- CI.16 The development of health and safety knowledge and skills required in the classroom and the workplace.

The component has and implements policies and procedures that ensure:

- CI.17 Decisions regarding the efficacy of the curriculum are based primarily on data regarding students' achievement of the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for completing the component.
- CI.18 There is a regular and systematic review and evaluation of the efficacy of the curriculum.
- CI.19 The curriculum review/evaluation process includes criteria for determining what should be added and what should be deleted from the curriculum.
- CI.20 There is a system for monitoring and ensuring that the written curriculum is actually taught.
- CI.21 All component courses and learning experiences required for completion of the component are the same qualitatively regardless of location and/or mode of delivery.
- CI.22 At least three letters (within two years) from current members of the business/industry advisory committee expressing support for the program's curriculum and the operation of the committee are maintained on file.
- CI.23 At least three current (within two years) letters from potential local employers of completers of the program verifying that gainful employment opportunities exist for completers of the component and attesting support for the component are maintained on file.
- CI.24 The length of time to complete and achieve the outcomes of the program is appropriate for students to meet the anticipated requirements for entry-level completers.

- CI.25 Tuition/fees of the component are reasonable in terms of what completers can expect for entry-level employment.
- CI.26 Courses required to complete the component are offered with sufficient regularity to ensure that students can complete the component within the published time period.
- CI.27 The component is guided by a business/industry advisory committee consisting of practitioners and potential local employers in the program area.

Together with business/industry advisory committee for the career/technical component, the institution undertakes systematic and regular review at least once annually regarding the following aspects of the component to ensure it is aligned with and responsive to business/industry standards and the needs of the local and regional job market:

- CI.28 Knowledge/ skills/ competencies students are expected to learn and demonstrate;
- CI.29 Standards to which students are expected to demonstrate knowledge/skills/competencies;
- CI.30 Tools and equipment with which students must demonstrate competency in their use are appropriate and responsive to business/industry standards, the needs of the local and regional job markets, and gainful employment; and
- CI.31 Length of instructional time required for students to demonstrate competency.

CI.32 – CI.33 CURRICULUM INDICATORS FOR CAREER/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The curriculum includes:

- CI.32 Development of appropriate learning and study skills necessary for students to use a distance education modality effectively and efficiently.

The institution ensures that:

- CI.33 Students and their families (if appropriate) are informed about any aspects of the curriculum that are created or delivered by an organization other than the institution.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR INSTRUCTION

II.1 – II.12 INSTRUCTION INDICATORS FOR ALL CAREER/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The career/technical component’s instructional methodologies include:

- II.1 Methodologies that are appropriate for ensuring students achieve the expected knowledge, skills, and competencies of the component.
- II.2 A variety of teaching strategies and techniques accommodate students’ preferred learning styles.

- II.3 Appropriate amounts of learning time for each aspect of the curriculum.
- II.4 Appropriate and reasonable pacing for the knowledge, skills, and competencies to be mastered.
- II.5 Accommodations and additional assistance for students with identified learning challenges.

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- II.6 Members of the component’s faculty are qualified and competent as required by the authority of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- II.7 Instruction is appropriately and effectively organized and delivered.
- II.8 Instruction is based on written curricula that include objectives, learning activities, competencies to be learned/ demonstrated, and assessments to be used in this curriculum.
- II.9 Class sizes in the program promote and allow for the use of varied instructional strategies and personal attention to each student.

The governing body and leadership ensure that members of the component’s faculty:

- II.10 Maintain meaningful and frequent communications with students and their families (where applicable) regarding student learning.
- II.11 Maintain safe, positive, and supportive classroom environments.
- II.12 Are provided with continuing professional growth activities that support the use of current best practices in instruction.

II.13 – II.15 INSTRUCTION INDICATORS FOR CAREER/TECHNICAL PROGRAMS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- II.13 The curriculum of the component is the same content with the same expectations for learning as those delivered in a face-to-face instructional environment.
- II.14 Provisions are made for student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction both synchronously and asynchronously.
- II.15 Students and their families (if appropriate) are informed about any aspects of the components of the educational program that are created or delivered by an organization other than the institution.
- II.16 Student performance outcomes for components delivered through a distance modality are achievable using that modality.
- II.18 Instructional materials used are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques, and textbooks and other instructional materials are suitable for distance learning.
- II.12 Instruction in appropriate study skills necessary for students to learn and success using a distance modality effectively and efficiently is included as part of the curriculum.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR ASSESSMENT

AI.1 – AI.11 ASSESSMENT PRACTICES INDICATORS FOR ALL CAREER/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The program’s assessment practices:

- AI.1 Are aligned with the component’s curriculum and instruction.
- AI.2 Include a variety of appropriate methods for assessing student learning and performance.
- AI.3 Include both formative and summative assessments.
- AI.4 Include analyzing assessment results with appropriate frequency and rigor for
 - a. individual students as they move through the curriculum,
 - b. cohorts of students as they move through the curriculum, and
 - c. comparable (local, state, and national) groups outside of the institution.
- AI.5 Include methods for assessing student learning and performance that enables students to monitor their own learning progress and teachers to adapt their instruction to students’ learning needs.
- AI.6 Include maintaining useful records of students’ performance regarding the expected knowledge and competencies of the component.
- AI.7 Provide to students and their families (as appropriate) timely and useful assessment information and feedback regarding the students' learning.
- AI.8 Include using data from the assessment of student learning and performance to identify students needing additional support.
- AI.8 Include basing enrollment and placement in the component on an analysis of students’ interests and potential as well as on students' past performance.
- AI.9 Include assessment of student learning and competency against external business/industry standards such as NOCTI tests, industry certifications, and licensing examinations (where required).

Assessments of students’ learning and performance demonstrate that:

- AI.10 Students in the aggregate, are learning and performing at levels expected, or progress is being made to raise results accordingly.

NOTE: The following are Standards for Student and Institutional Performance for *each* component of the institution’s educational program.

STUDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR SECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Secondary Program Completion Rate	The Standard for the program completion rate is at least 70% of enrolled students completing the program within 150% of the time designated for completing the program.
Secondary Licensing Examination Pass Rate	The Standard for the licensing examination pass rate is at least 70% of students completing the program passing the licensing examination.

STUDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Postsecondary Program Completion Rate	The Standard for the program completion rate is at least 70% of enrolled students completing the program within 150% of the time designated for completing the program.
Postsecondary Program Completer Job Placement Rate	The Standard for the program completers' job placement rate is at least 70% of program completers placed in a job in the field of study within 180 days of completion of the component.
Postsecondary Licensing Examination Pass Rate	The Standard for the licensing examination pass rate is at least 70% of students completing the program passing the licensing examination.
Postsecondary Student Loan Default Rate	The Standard for the student loan default rate for the program is the rate set annually by the U.S. Department of Education.

ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution has a program for assessing student learning and performance that is based on current research and best practices. Assessment practices are aligned with the institution's mission, curricula, and instructional programs.

The institution systematically collects and analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of student performance using multiple, valid, and reliable assessments that are respected by the institution's community of stakeholders. The institution has and implements written policies for using the results of assessment of student learning and performance to evaluate and improve effectiveness of its curricula, instructional practices, professional development, and support services.

The results of assessing student learning and performance are reported regularly, accurately, clearly to the institution's community of stakeholders.

The institution expects all students to learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and competencies required by their component of the educational program, and students are learning and performing at the levels expected, or the institution has and is implementing a plan to raise learning and performance to the expected levels.

The institution:

- AE.ST.1 Has a program for assessing student learning and performance that is based on current research and best practices.
- AE.ST.2 Aligns its assessment practices with the expectations for student learning expressed in the institution's mission.
- AE.ST.3 Aligns its assessment practices with the institution's curricula and instructional programs.
- AE.ST.4 Collects and analyzes systematically quantifiable and observable evidence of student performance and growth using multiple, valid, and reliable assessments that are respected by the institution's community of stakeholders.
- AE.ST.5 Has and implements written policies for using the results of assessment of student learning and performance to evaluate and improve effectiveness of the educational program's curricula, instructional practices, professional development, and support services.
- AE.ST.6 Reports regularly to the institution's community of stakeholders the results of assessing student learning and performance regularly, accurately, clearly.
- AE.ST.7 Expects all students to learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and competencies required by their component of the educational program
- AE.ST.8 Ensures that students are learning and performing at the levels expected, or the institution has and is implementing a plan to raise learning and performance to the expected levels.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

AE.1 – AE.10 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the institution:

- AE.1 Has leadership and a staff that are committed to and share accountability for student learning and performance.
- AE.2 Analyzes with appropriate frequency and rigor the results of assessments of student learning and performance for
 - a. individual students as they move through the institution;
 - b. cohorts of students as they move through the institution; and
 - c. comparable (local, state, and national) groups outside of the institution.
- AE.3 Uses the results of assessments of student learning and performance to make decisions regarding allocation of resources.
- AE.4 Uses assessments of student learning and performance that enable students to monitor their own learning progress and teachers to adapt their instruction to students' specific learning needs.
- AE.5 Uses assessments that provide for students' preferred learning styles.
- AE.6 Maintains records of students' learning and performance.
- AE.7 Has and implements written policies and procedures for transcript control and use, including requirements for confidentiality.
- AE.8 Works collaboratively with colleagues and families (if appropriate) to review data about students' learning and to develop appropriate strategies for growth and/or improvement in learning.
- AE.9 Communicates its assessment policies and practices to the total school community (e.g., via parent handbooks, web sites, teacher handbooks, policy manuals).

AE.11 – AE.14 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- AE.10 Has and implements written policies and procedures to ensure that students studying by a distance modality fulfill program requirements personally and without inappropriate assistance.
- AE.11 Has and implements written policies and procedures to ensure the identity of a student studying by a distance modality when the assessment of learning is conducted electronically or by means other than in a location in which the student is present and under the direct supervision of a staff member.
- AE.12 Ensures that members of the staff who evaluate student work are qualified in the fields they are evaluating and in the distant modality.

AE.13 INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

AE.13 Includes in its assessment program evaluation of the students' knowledge of the religious beliefs and values of the institution.

STUDENT SERVICES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution provides services that are appropriate for the needs of all the institution's students, delivered effectively, and supportive of the institution's efforts to achieve its mission. Services are delivered systematically and are an integral part of the institution's educational program. They are delivered by personnel that possess the qualifications required by the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates and are sufficient in number to deliver services effectively. Student services are sufficiently financed and evaluated periodically for their effectiveness.

The institution provides student services that are:

- SS.ST.1 Appropriate for the needs of all the institution's students.
- SS.ST.2 Delivered effectively.
- SS.ST.3 Supportive of the institution's efforts to achieve its mission.
- SS.ST.4 Delivered systematically.
- SS.ST.5 An integral part of the institution's educational program.
- SS.ST.6 Delivered by personnel that possess the qualifications required by the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates.
- SS.ST.7 Delivered by personnel that are sufficient in number to deliver the services effectively.
- SS.ST.8 Sufficiently financed.
- SS.ST.9 Evaluated periodically for their effectiveness.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

SS.1 – SS.48 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that the institution provides student services that:

- SS.1 Address and support development of students' academic skills, career/technical skills, social skills, and personal growth.
- SS.2 Reflect the importance of non-academic as well as academic/career technical needs of students.
- SS.3 Address development of students' career awareness and career planning skills.
- SS.4 Are delivered to students as a shared responsibility of student services personnel, administrators, teachers, and other staff members, as appropriate.
- SS.5 Are delivered to individual students and groups of students, as appropriate.
- SS.6 Include assessments to identify individual students' aptitudes prior to making placement in a career/technical program.
- SS.7 Incorporate services provided by the community, as appropriate and as needed.

- SS.8 Are responsive to the results of regular follow-up studies of graduates/program completers and other former students as a factor in determining the effectiveness of the institution's educational program and services.
- SS.9 Include an orientation program for new students (and their families, if appropriate), to provide information regarding the institution's mission, programs, policies, procedures, and expectations.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- SS.10 Has and implements policies and procedures that govern the institution's student services.
- SS.11 Has and implements a policy and procedures for students to submit complaints regarding the institution and its policies, procedures, programs, and services.
- SS.12 Communicates its student complaint policy to all concerned and publishes the policy in all appropriate institutional publications that are provided to potential and enrolled students, parents (where appropriate), and the institution's community of stakeholders. The phone number and address of the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools is included in the published information for cases when a complaint is not settled at the institution's level.
- SS.13 Maintains a record of all student complaints and how they are resolved for at least a length of time equivalent to the most recent term of accreditation/candidacy.
- SS.14 Resolves student complaints in an appropriate and timely manner.
- SS.15 Does not have a pattern of student complaints that might have an effect on the institution's ability to meet one or more of the Standards for Accreditation.
- SS.16 Makes the record of student complaints available for review by any team or individual representing the Commission on Secondary Schools.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution's transportation services:

- SS.15 Are governed by policies and procedures regarding the safety of students when being transported and delivered to and from the institution
- SS.16 Are provided by personnel appropriately trained for this service.
- SS.17 Meet safety and other requirements of all appropriate civil authorities, whether provided by the institution or a contracted vendor.

FOOD SERVICES

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution's food services:

- SS.18 Are provided in dining areas that are functional and hygienic.
- SS.19 Include meals that meet generally accepted nutritional standards.
- SS.20 Provide information about the nutritional value of the meals provided.
- SS.21 Are provided by personnel appropriately trained for this service.

- SS.22 Delivered in facilities that are inspected regularly by internal personnel and external agencies (as required).
- SS.23 Are in compliance with the health, safety, and other requirements of all appropriate civil authorities.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS [For institutions that serve secondary students]

The governing body and leadership ensure that the institution’s services for student with special needs:

- SS.24 Are governed by written policies and procedures for identifying and addressing appropriately the learning requirements of students identified with special needs.
- SS.25 Include procedures to provide or refer students/families to appropriate related services and/or accommodations in the community to meet student needs.
- SS.26 Comply with all local, state, and federal requirements related to students identified with special needs.

ENROLLMENT, PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND RECRUITING PRACTICES

The institution has and implements written policies and procedures that:

- SS.27 Define and govern the institution’s recruiting practices and enrolling and placing students into the institution’s educational program.
- SS.28 Define and govern the institution’s process and criteria for transferring credits earned at other institutions.
- SS.29 Are disclosed to all potential students and the institution’s community of stakeholders.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution’s enrollment, placement services, and recruiting practices that:

- SS.30 Conform to generally accepted principles of good practice and expressed in the institution’s mission and core values.
- SS.31 Are communicated to prospective students (and their families, if appropriate), including a) the requirements for enrollment, b) the criteria defining placement within the institution’s educational program, c) the nature and extent of the educational program and services available, d) tuition and fees (if applicable), e) policies governing the evaluation of student work, and f) expectations for satisfactory student performance.
- SS.32 Are expressed in statements and representations that are
 - a. clear, accurate, and current,
 - b. published widely in all publications and by all means used by the institution to recruit students, and
 - c. published in appropriate publications and means that are provided and available to enrolled students and their families (if appropriate).
- SS.33 Are in compliance with all applicable requirements of laws and regulations of the civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) within which the institution operates.

- SS.34 Lead to enrolling only those students for which there is a reasonable expectation of success in the educational program in which they are to be enrolled.

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that the institution's recruiting practices:

- SS.35 Employ only those recruiting practices that are ethical and conform to all applicable laws and regulations of the appropriate civil authorities, the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools, and the U.S. Department of Education.
- SS.36 Include a policy and procedures for compensating financially or by other forms of compensation all personnel (both on institution's staff and those of a contracted vendor) conducting recruiting activities for the institution fairly and without regard to the number of students recruited.

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that the institution's enrollment and placement services:

- SS.37 Are governed by written policies and procedures that govern placing of newly enrolled students in a program that is appropriate for the student and in which s/he has a reasonable expectation of success.

STUDENT RECORDS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- SS.38 Has and implements written policies and procedures for collecting and maintaining student records in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- SS.39 Maintains information and data records for each student regarding application and enrollment, period of enrollment, tuition and/or fees, educational program, results of testing/assessments, course/program completion/non-completion, further education or job placement, and results of licensing examinations where applicable.
- SS.40 Has and implements written policies and procedures that govern maintaining student information and data that are current, comprehensive, and readily available for use by persons with appropriate access.
- SS.41 Maintains duplicate copies of all student records at a site or through a service other than on the institution's main campus.
- SS.42 Stores student records to protect them from fire and other physical damage.
- SS.43 Has and implements written policies and procedures governing access to and distribution of student records, transcripts, and information to protect confidentiality and to ensure that only authorized personnel have access to the records.
- SS.44 Ensures that members of the staff responsible for creating and maintaining student records are adequate in number and qualifications.

SERVICES FOR ADULT LEARNERS [For institutions that serve adult students]

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution provides:

- SS.45 Students with appropriate guidance, counseling, and assistance with gaining employment upon completion of the student's program.
- SS.46 Information to adult learners about services available at the institution and/or in the community that will assist students to attend the institution and be successful in their programs (e.g., child care services, tutoring services, etc.).

If the institution participates in Title IV student financial aid programs, the governing body and leadership ensure that:

- SS.47 It provides students with appropriate guidance and counseling regarding financial aid.
- SS.44 It has a default management plan that meets the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education and that is operational for the period required by the Department.

SS.49 – SS.57 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- SS.49 Prior to admission, prospective students (and their parents/guardians, if appropriate) are provided information about the self-motivation and commitment needed for success through distance learning and the technical competence required to participate and learn in the educational program.
- SS.50 Appropriate services are available for all students who are having difficulty with their studies as well as for those who are rapid learners.
- SS.51 The institution's guidance/advisory staff is qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to provide students with the quality of service they need to succeed in the distance education environment.
- SS.52 Data on student performance and course completion rates are used to evaluate and revise, as needed, the institution's educational program and services.

The governing body and leadership ensure that the institution has and implements written policies and procedures that:

- SS.54 Encourage students to start, continue in, and complete the program in which they have enrolled within the time prescribed.
- SS.55 Govern the process for evaluating previous academic/career technical record of achievement of students seeking to transfer into the institution and the criteria for transferring of credit for previous work.
- SS.56 Define the institution's system for ensuring that students fulfill program requirements personally and without inappropriate assistance.
- SS.57 Define the institution's system for ensuring the identity of the students when assessment of learning is conducted electronically or by means other than in a location in which the student is in the presence and under the direct supervision of a staff member.

SS.58 – SS.61 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that the institution's:

- SS.58 Student services reflect the institution's religious identity and mission.
- SS.59 Counseling and campus ministry personnel cooperate on programs addressing emerging student needs.
- SS.60 Guidance services support the development of the faith-based community of the institution.
- SS.61 Admissions policies are consistent with the institution's religious values and traditions.

STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution provides co- or extra-curricular activities that are age- and developmentally- appropriate, non-discriminatory, and accessible for all the institution's students. The activities are aligned with and supportive of the institution's mission and educational program. The institution provides a balance of academic and non-academic activities. Activities are adequately financed, periodically reviewed, and managed appropriately by the institution's governing body and leadership.

The institution provides co- or extra-curricular activities for its students that:

- SL.ST.1 Are age- and developmentally- appropriate, non-discriminatory, and accessible for all the institution's students.
- SL.ST.2 Are aligned with and supportive of the institution's mission and educational program.
- SL.ST.3 Represent a balance between academic/career and technical and non-academic/career and technical activities.
- SL.ST.4 Are adequately financed, periodically reviewed, and managed appropriately by the institution's governing body and leadership.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

SL.1 – SL.6 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

- SL.1 Has and implements written policies and procedures that govern the institution's program of student activities.
- SL.2 Offers students opportunities through student activities to build their skills in handling responsibility, taking initiative, leadership, cooperation, and self-direction.
- SL.3 Offers appropriate opportunities for students and members of the staff to offer input into the student activities program.
- SL.4 Requires staff members and volunteers who lead or participate in student activities are a) approved by the institution's leadership, b) suitably qualified, and c) provide appropriate supervision to students participating in the activities.
- SL.5 Recognizes in meaningful ways student accomplishments in and contributions to student activities.
- SL.6 Expects members of the staff, volunteers, and students in student activities program to demonstrate respect, fairness, and understanding for each other.

SL.17 – SL.10 INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM—DRAFT REVISION

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

- SL.7 The institution has a purposeful and meaningful residential life program.
- SL.8 The institution assists students to develop healthy relationships with adults in loco parentis and with other students.
- SL.9 Appropriate provisions are made for student privacy, recreation, and religious practice.
- SL.10 Continuous and responsible supervision by qualified adults is provided for all boarding students, including evenings, weekends, and periods when classes are not in session.

SL.11 INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that:

- SL.11 All student activities and athletics include opportunities for faith formation by the students.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution provides information and technology resources that facilitate learning and encourage all students and members of the staff to broaden and extend their abilities for learning using these resources. The resources are of sufficient type, quantity, and quality to meet the requirements of the institution's educational program. They are accessible to all students and members of the staff and are functional and up-to-date. The institution Provides students and the staff with appropriate instruction in the use of the institution's information and technology resources, including the correct and appropriate uses of the resources, and the use of these resources to develop and expand upon their inquiry, research, and information/technology literacy skills.

The institution:

- ITR.ST.1 Provides information and technology resources that facilitate learning and encourage all students and members of the staff to broaden and extend their abilities for learning using these resources.
- ITR.ST.2 Provides information and technology resources that are sufficient in type, quantity, and quality to meet the requirements of the institution's educational program.
- ITR.ST.3 Ensures that information and technology resources are accessible to all students and members of the staff.
- ITR.ST.4 Ensures that information and technology resources are functional and up-to-date.
- ITR.ST.5 Provides students and the staff with appropriate instruction in the use of the institution's information and technology resources, including the correct and appropriate uses of the resources, and the use of these resources to develop and expand upon their inquiry, research, and information/technology literacy skills.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

ITR.1 – ITR.7 INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has and implements written policies and procedures that:

- ITR.1 Govern the acquisition, storage, and use of information and technology resources.
- ITR.2 Prescribe procedures for the security of information and technology resources.
- ITR.3 Prescribe the criteria for the acceptable use of information and technology resources, including the Internet.

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that the institution:

- ITR.4 Properly catalogues, inventories, and reviews periodically for relevancy, currency, and condition its information and technology resources.

- ITR.5 Assigns responsibility for acquiring, storing, and distributing information and technology resources to persons who are appropriately qualified and sufficient in number for those purposes.
- ITR.6 Supports the institution's information and technology resources by for them in the institution's annual budget.
- ITR.7 Provides the staff and students with appropriate opportunities to offer input into the types, quality, and format of the information and technology resources provided.

ITR.8 – ITR.9 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution provides:

- ITR.8 Information and technology resources and capabilities that are adequate in kind and number to deliver the educational program, available when needed, and reliable.
- ITR.9 Students with reasonable technical support for the educational technology hardware, software, and delivery system required to participate in the educational program via a distance modality.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms used in the Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions have specific meanings as defined here:

Academic Standards – Expectations for what students are expected to know and to be able to do with what they know in the content areas included in the educational program.

Accreditation Standards – Qualitative statements that reflect research-based best practices for institutions.

Community of Stakeholders – Individuals or groups that have a stake in the operation, success, and future of the institution; may include the institution's leaders, teachers, governing body, support staff, and students; families, community leaders, alumni, business partners, and others.

Component of the Educational Program – Individual career/technical programs within the overall educational program offered by an institution.

The Educational Program – The overall program of studies offered by an institution.

Facilities – An institution's building(s), grounds, furnishings, equipment, and vehicles.

Faith-Based Indicators – Indicators of quality that apply to unique aspects of Catholic and other faith-based institutions. The use of the Faith-Based Indicators by Catholic and other faith-based institutions is voluntary and not required, unless their use is directed by the head of a parent institution system such as a Diocesan/Archdiocesan or a similar system of institutions. The Faith-Based Indicators allow faith-based institutions, if they desire, to include in their self-study and accreditation process Indicators of Quality that address unique characteristics of and expectations for institutions whose mission and educational program are defined wholly or in part by their particular faith.

Families – Parents, guardians, caregivers, or others in a custodial relationship with a learner.

Governing Body – The group or individuals charged with overseeing the direction of the institution; may be a governing body, board of trustees, board of education, advisory committee, or some other configuration.

Information Resources – Electronic, print, and other media, as well as interactive learning materials available through a library, in the classroom, or in the wider community that complement course materials and textbooks and enhance the educational program.

Institution – Any type of educational organization seeking accreditation.

Leadership – The head of the institution and institution system, members of the administrative staff of the institution and institution system, and all others in administrative positions.

Long-Range Plan – A plan that assumes that the future is fixed and already known; a plan not based on a vision of what the future might or could be but, instead, focused on improving existing systems. The locus of control in long range planning is often external to the organization.

Mission – The unifying theme or vision that illuminates the reason for the institution’s existence, the audience that it serves, and its distinctive character.

Proprietary Institution – Proprietary institution is a career and technology institutions that are non-public, privately owned and operated and, very often, operated for the purpose of generating a profit. Proprietary institutions may have various forms of control and ownership, most of which are similar to those found in business and industry. In most states, proprietary institutions must be licensed or chartered by the state and are regulated by an agency of the state. And, unique relationships may exist among proprietary institutions’ policy makers, management, and employees in terms of control of the institution.

Quality – A level of excellence expected by the institution’s stakeholders and respected by the larger community.

Related Services – Services that respond to the needs of identified students with special education needs such as speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other specialized services.

Strategic Plan – A plan based on the principle that the locus of control is inside the organization, because planning is based on the organization’s vision of a preferred future; plan that assumes that, as a human organization, the institution has the ability to exercise control over external factors and can create the future; plan that creates a desired reality and outlines the actions to be taken to obtain that reality.

Student Services – Services, or referrals to services, that address the emotional, physical, and social needs of students, and as appropriate involve their families, including guidance and counseling, speech-language services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

KEY DEFINITIONS FOR TITLE IV FEDERAL STUDENT AID PURPOSES [AUTHORITY 34 CFR 600.2, DEFINITIONS, AND 34 CFR 668.8, ELIGIBLE PROGRAM]

Accredited – The status of public recognition that a nationally recognized accrediting agency grants to an institution or educational program that meets the agency’s established requirements.

Award Year – The period of time from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year for federal student loan programs.

Branch Campus – A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The U.S. Secretary of Education considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if

- 1) the location is permanent in nature; and offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
- 2) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
- 3) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Calculation of Completion and Placement Rates – An institution shall substantiate the calculation of its completion and placement rates by having the certified public accountant who prepares its audit report required under 34 CFR 668.23 report on the institution’s calculation based on performing an attestation engagement in

accordance with the Statements on Standards for Attestation Engagements of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)

- a. Calculation of completion rate. An institution shall calculate its completion rate for an educational program for any award year as follows
 - 1) Determine the number of regular students who were enrolled in the program during the award year.
 - 2) Subtract from the number of students determined under paragraph (f)(1) of this section, the number of regular students who, during that award year, withdrew from, dropped out of, or were expelled from the program and were entitled to and actually received, in a timely manner a refund of 100 percent of their tuition and fees.
 - 3) Subtract from the total obtained under paragraph (f) (2) of this section the number of students who were enrolled in the program at the end of that award year.
 - 4) Determine the number of regular students who, during that award year, received within 150 percent of the published length of the educational program the degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential awarded for successfully completing the program.
 - 5) Divide the number determined under paragraph (f) (4) of this section by the total obtained under paragraph (f) (3) of this section.
- b. Calculation of placement rate. An institution shall calculate its placement rate for an educational program for any award year as follows
 - 1) Determine the number of students who, during the award year, received the degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential awarded for successfully completing the program.
 - 2) Of the total obtained under paragraph (g)(1)(i) of this section, determine the number of students who, within 180 days of the day they received their degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, obtained gainful employment in the recognized occupation for which they were trained or in a related comparable recognized occupation and, on the date of this calculation, are employed, or have been employed, for at least 13 weeks following receipt of the credential from the institution.
 - 3) Divide the number of students determined under paragraph (g)(1)(ii) of this section by the total obtained under paragraph (g)(1)(i) of this section.

Clock Hour – A period of time consisting of

- a. a 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
- b. a 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or
- c. sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

Correspondence Course –

- a. A course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
- b. If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course.
- c. A correspondence course is not distance education.

Clock-to-Credit Hour Conversion – If an institution offers an educational program in credit hours, the institution must use the formula contained in paragraph (3) below to determine whether that program satisfies the requirements contained in paragraph (c)(3) or (d) of this section, and the number of credit hours in that educational program for purposes of the Title IV, HEA programs, unless

- a. the program is at least two academic years in length and provides an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, a professional degree, or an equivalent degree as determined by the Secretary; or

- b. each course within the program is acceptable for full credit toward that institution's associate degree, bachelor's degree, professional degree, or equivalent degree as determined by the Secretary, provided that the institution's degree requires at least two academic years of study.
- (l) Formula. For purposes of determining whether a program satisfies the requirements contained in paragraph (c)(3) or (d) of this section, and the number of credit hours in that educational program with regard to the Title IV, HEA programs
 - 1) a semester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;
 - 2) a trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction; and
 - 3) a quarter hour must include at least 20 hours of instruction.

Credit Hour for Purposes Other Than Federal Student Aid Purposes – An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is defined by the institution and implemented in all components of the institution's educational program.

Credit Hour for Federal Student Aid Purposes – An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than

1. a. one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. b. at least an equivalent amount of work is required in paragraph (1) of this definition, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. [Authority: 34 CFR 600.2].
 - a. Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:
 - 1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - 2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
 - b. A credit hour for Federal purposes is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of work expected in a Carnegie unit: key phrases being "institutionally established," "equivalency," "reasonably approximates," and "minimum amount."
 - c. A credit hour is a unit of measure that gives value to the level of instruction, academic rigor, and time requirements for a course taken at an educational institution. At its most basic, a credit hour is a proxy measure of a quantity of student learning. The higher education community has long used the credit hour, as defined by the Carnegie unit, as part of a process to establish a standard measure of faculty workloads, costs of instruction, and rates of educational efficiencies as well as a measure of student work for transfer students.
 - d. An institution is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for coursework in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for Federal program purposes. These credit hours are used to determine the eligibility of the institution and its educational programs for participation in Federal programs. As required under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), they are also a measure of student work used by an institution to determine the eligibility of a student for Federal student assistance and the amount of the student's assistance.

- e. The definition provides several critical flexibilities for institutions in determining the appropriate amount of credit hours for student coursework:
 - 1) The institution determines the amount of credit awarded for student work. It is up to institutions to gain the confidence through peer review in the accreditation process that their credit hour policies and practices consistently meet conventional academic expectations.
 - 2) A credit hour is expected to be a reasonable approximation of a minimum amount of student work in a Carnegie unit in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education. It is important to note that there is no requirement that a credit hour *exactly* duplicate the amount of work in paragraph (1) of the definition, as is highlighted by the provisions of paragraph (2). The requirement is that a credit hour *reasonably approximates* that minimum amount of work in paragraph 1).
 - 3) The credit hour definition is a minimum standard that does not restrict an institution from setting a higher standard that requires more student work per credit hour.
 - 4) The definition does not dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work.
- f. In determining the amount of work the institution's learning outcomes will entail, as under current practice, the institution may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.
- g. To the extent an institution believes that complying with the Federal definition of a credit hour would not be appropriate for academic and other institutional needs, it may adopt a separate measure for those purposes.
- h. The intent of these flexibilities is to recognize the differences across institutions, fields of study, types of coursework, and delivery methods, while providing a consistent measure of student work for purposes of Federal programs.
- i. The credit hour definition does not emphasize the concept of "seat time" (time in class) as the primary metric for determining the amount of student work for Federal purposes. Institutions may assign credit hours to courses for an amount of work represented by verifiable student achievement of institutionally established learning outcomes. Credits may be awarded on the basis of documentation of the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time, or on the basis of documented student learning calibrated to that amount of academically engaged time for a typical student. Thus, the definition for Federal purposes represents nothing new in this regard.

Direct Assessment Programs – A program as described in 34 CFR 668.10:

- a. A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment.
- b. Direct assessment of student learning means a measure by the institution of what a student knows and can do in terms of the body of knowledge making up the educational program. These measures provide evidence that a student has command of a specific subject, content area, or skill or that the student demonstrates a specific quality such as creativity, analysis or synthesis associated with the subject matter of the program. Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.
- c. All regulatory requirements in this chapter that refer to credit or clock hours as a measurement apply to direct assessment programs. Because a direct assessment program does not utilize credit or clock hours as a measure of student learning, an institution must establish a methodology to reasonably equate the direct assessment program (or the direct assessment portion of any program, as applicable) to credit or clock hours for the purpose of complying with applicable regulatory requirements. The institution must provide a factual basis satisfactory to the Secretary for its claim that the program or portion of the program is equivalent to a specific number of credit or clock hours.

- d. An academic year in a direct assessment program is a period of instructional time that consists of a minimum of 30 weeks of instructional time during which, for an undergraduate educational program, a full-time student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least 24 semester or trimester credit hours, 36 quarter credit hours or 900 clock hours.
- e. A payment period in a direct assessment program for which equivalence in credit hours has been established must be determined under the requirements in §668.4(a), (b), or (c), as applicable, using the academic year determined in accordance with paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section (or the portion of that academic year comprising or remaining in the program). A payment period in a direct assessment program for which equivalence in clock hours has been established must be determined under the requirements in §668.4(c), using the academic year determined in accordance with paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section (or the portion of that academic year comprising or remaining in the program).
- f. A week of instructional time in a direct assessment program is any seven-day period in which at least one day of educational activity occurs. Educational activity in a direct assessment program includes regularly scheduled learning sessions, faculty-guided independent study, consultations with a faculty mentor, development of an academic action plan addressed to the competencies identified by the institution, or, in combination with any of the foregoing, assessments. It does not include credit for life experience. For purposes of direct assessment programs, independent study occurs when a student follows a course of study with predefined objectives but works with a faculty member to decide how the student is going to meet those objectives. The student and faculty member agree on what the student will do (e.g., required readings, research, and work products), how the student's work will be evaluated, and on what the relative timeframe for completion of the work will be. The student must interact with the faculty member on a regular and substantive basis to assure progress within the course or program.
- g. A full-time student in a direct assessment program is an enrolled student who is carrying a full-time academic workload as determined by the institution under a standard applicable to all students enrolled in the program. However, for an undergraduate student, the institution's minimum standard must equal or exceed the minimum full-time requirements specified in the definition of *full-time student* in §668.2 based on the credit or clock hour equivalency established by the institution for the direct assessment program.
- h. An institution that offers a direct assessment program must apply to the Secretary to have that program determined to be an eligible program for title IV, HEA program purposes. The institution's application must provide information satisfactory to the Secretary that includes
 - 1) a description of the educational program, including the educational credential offered (degree level or certificate) and the field of study;
 - 2) a description of how the assessment of student learning is done;
 - 3) a description of how the direct assessment program is structured, including information about how and when the institution determines on an individual basis what each student enrolled in the program needs to learn;
 - 4) a description of how the institution assists students in gaining the knowledge needed to pass the assessments;
 - 5) the number of semester or quarter credit hours, or clock hours, that are equivalent to the amount of student learning being directly assessed for the certificate or degree, as required by paragraph (b)(3) of this section
 - 6) methodology the institution uses to determine the number of credit or clock hours to which the program is equivalent;
 - 7) the methodology the institution uses to determine the number of credit or clock hours to which the portion of a program an individual student will need to complete is equivalent;
 - 8) documentation from the institution's accrediting agency indicating that the agency has evaluated the institution's offering of direct assessment program(s) and has included the program(s) in the institution's grant of accreditation;

- 9) documentation from the accrediting agency or relevant state licensing body indicating agreement with the institution's claim of the direct assessment program's equivalence in terms of credit or clock hours; and
 - 10) any other information the Secretary may require to determine whether to approve the institution's application.
- i. To be an eligible program, a direct assessment program must meet the requirements in §668.8 including, if applicable, minimum program length and qualitative factors.
 - j. Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section, no program offered by a foreign institution that involves direct assessment will be considered to be an eligible program under §668.8.
 - k. A direct assessment program may use learning resources (e.g., courses or portions of courses) that are provided by entities other than the institution providing the direct assessment program without regard to the limitations on contracting for part of an educational program in §668.5(c)(3).
 - l. Title IV, HEA program funds may be used only for learning that results from instruction provided, or overseen, by the institution, not for the portion of the program that the student has demonstrated mastery of prior to enrollment in the program or tests of learning that are not associated with educational activities overseen by the institution.
 - m. Title IV, HEA program eligibility with respect to direct assessment programs is limited to direct assessment programs approved by the Secretary. Title IV, HEA program funds may not be used for
 - 1) the course of study described in §668.32(a)(1)(ii) and (iii) if offered by direct assessment; or
 - 2) remedial coursework described in §668.20 offered by direct assessment. However, remedial instruction that is offered in credit or clock hours in conjunction with a direct assessment program is eligible for title IV, HEA program funds.
 - n. The Secretary's approval of a direct assessment program expires on the date that the institution changes one or more aspects of the program described in the institution's application submitted under paragraph (b) of this section. To maintain program eligibility, the institution must obtain prior approval from the Secretary through reapplication under paragraph (b) of this section that sets forth the revisions proposed.
- [71 FR 45693, Aug. 9, 2006, as amended at 71 FR 64397, Nov. 1, 2006; 72 FR 62026, Nov. 1, 2007]

Distance Education – Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include

- a. the internet;
- b. one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- c. audio conferencing; and/or
- d. video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs a through b of this definition.

Documentation of Placement Rate – An institution shall document that each student calculated in the placement rate obtained gainful employment in the recognized occupation for which he or she was trained or in a related comparable recognized occupation. Examples of satisfactory documentation of a student's gainful employment include, but are not limited to

- a. a written statement from the student's employer;
- b. signed copies of State or Federal income tax forms; and
- c. written evidence of payments of Social Security taxes.

Educational Program for Title IV Purposes – A legally authorized postsecondary program of organized instruction or study that

- 1) leads to an academic, professional, or vocational degree, or certificate, or other recognized educational credential, or is a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program, as described in 34 CFR part 668, subpart O; and
- 2) may, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilize direct assessment of student learning, or recognize the direct assessment of student learning by others, if such assessment is consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment and with the provisions of §668.10.
- 3) The Secretary does not consider that an institution provides an educational program if the institution does not provide instruction itself (including a course of independent study) but merely gives credit for one or more of the following: Instruction provided by other institutions or schools; examinations or direct assessments provided by agencies or organizations; or other accomplishments such as “life experience.”

Eligible Institution –

- a. An institution of higher education, as defined in §600.4.
- b. A proprietary institution of higher education, as defined in §600.5; or
- c. A postsecondary vocational institution, as defined in §600.6; and
- d. Meets all the other applicable provisions of this part.

Eligible Programs in Proprietary and Postsecondary Vocational Institutions –

- a. Must meet the following criteria
 - 1) require a minimum of 15 weeks of instruction, beginning on the first day of classes and ending on the last day of classes or examinations;
 - 2) be at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours;
 - 3) provide undergraduate training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; and
 - 4) may admit as regular students persons who have not completed the equivalent of an associate degree;
- OR
- 1) require a minimum of 10 weeks of instruction, beginning on the first day of classes and ending on the last day of classes or examinations;
- 2) be at least 300 clock hours, 8 semester or trimester hours, or 12 quarter hours;
- 3) provide training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; and
- 4) be a graduate or professional program; or
- 5) admit as regular students only persons who have completed the equivalent of an associate degree.
- b. For purposes of the FFEL and Direct Loan programs only, must
 - 1) require a minimum of 10 weeks of instruction, beginning on the first day of classes and ending on the last day of classes or examinations;
 - 2) be at least 300 clock hours but less than 600 clock hours;
 - 3) provide undergraduate training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
 - 4) admit as regular students some persons who have not completed the equivalent of an associate degree; and
 - 5) satisfy the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.
- c. Qualitative Factors – An educational program that satisfies the requirements for Eligible Programs in Proprietary and Postsecondary Vocational Institutions qualifies as an eligible program only if
 - 1) the program has a substantiated completion rate of at least 70 percent using the calculations provided in 34 CFR 668.8(f);
 - 2) the program has a substantiated placement rate of at least 70 percent, as calculated under paragraph (g) of this section;

- 3) the number of clock hours provided in the program does not exceed by more than 50 percent the minimum number of clock hours required for training in the recognized occupation for which the program prepares students, as established by the State in which the program is offered, if the State has established such a requirement, or as established by any Federal agency; and
- 4) the program has been in existence for at least one year. The Secretary considers an educational program to have been in existence for at least one year only if an institution has been legally authorized to provide, and has continuously provided, the program during the 12 months (except for normal vacation periods and, at the discretion of the Secretary, periods when the institution closes due to a natural disaster that directly affects the institution or the institution's students) preceding the date on which the institution applied for eligibility for that program.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – In addition to satisfying the relevant provisions of this section, an educational program that consists solely of instruction in ESL qualifies as an eligible program if

- a. the institution admits to the program only students who the institution determines need the ESL instruction to use already existing knowledge, training, or skills; and
- b. the program leads to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.
- c. An institution shall document its determination that ESL instruction is necessary to enable each student enrolled in its ESL program to use already existing knowledge, training, or skills with regard to the students that it admits to its ESL program under paragraph (j)(1)(i) of this section.
- d. An ESL program that qualifies as an eligible program under this paragraph is eligible for purposes of the Federal Pell Grant Program only.

Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Programs – The loan programs (formerly called the Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) programs) authorized by title IV-B of the HEA, including the Federal Stafford Loan, Federal PLUS, Federal Supplemental Loans for Students (Federal SLS), and Federal Consolidation Loan programs, in which lenders use their own funds to make loans to enable students or their parents to pay the costs of the students' attendance at eligible institutions. The Federal Stafford Loan, Federal PLUS, Federal SLS, and Federal Consolidation Loan programs are defined in 34 CFR part 668.

Flight Training – In addition to satisfying other relevant provisions of this section, for a program of flight training to be an eligible program, it must have a current valid certification from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Incarcerated Student – A student who is serving a criminal sentence in a Federal, State, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, or other similar correctional institution. A student is not considered incarcerated if that student is in a half-way house or home detention or is sentenced to serve only weekends.

Legally Authorized – The legal status granted to an institution through a charter, license, or other written document issued by the appropriate agency or official of the state in which the institution is physically located.

Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agency – An agency or association that the Secretary recognizes as a reliable authority to determine the quality of education or training offered by an institution or a program offered by an institution. The Secretary recognizes these agencies and associations under the provisions of 34 CFR Part 602 and publishes a list of the recognized agencies in the Federal Register.

Nonprofit Institution – An institution that

- a. is owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which benefits any private shareholder or individual;
- b. is legally authorized to operate as a nonprofit organization by each State in which it is physically located; and

- c. is determined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to be an organization to which contributions are tax-deductible in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)); or
- d. for a foreign institution:
 - 1) an institution that is owned and operated only by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations; and
 - 2) if a recognized tax authority of the institution's home country is recognized by the Secretary for purposes of making determinations of an institution's nonprofit status for title IV purposes, is determined by that tax authority to be a nonprofit educational institution; or
 - 3) if not recognized tax authority of the institution's home country is recognized by the Secretary for purposes of making determinations of an institution's nonprofit status for title IV purposes, the foreign institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that it is a nonprofit educational institution; and
 - 4) is determined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to be an organization to which contributions are tax-deductible in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)).

One-Academic-Year Training Program – An educational program that is at least one academic year as defined under 34 CFR 668.2.

Pre-accredited – A status that a nationally recognized accrediting agency, recognized by the Secretary to grant that status, has accorded an unaccredited public or private nonprofit institution that is progressing toward accreditation within a reasonable period of time. (The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools uses the term "candidate for accreditation" rather than "pre-accredited.")

Recognized Equivalent of a High School Diploma – The following are the equivalent of a high school diploma

- a. a General Education Development Certificate (GED);
- b. a State certificate received by a student after the student has passed a State-authorized examination that the State recognizes as the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- c. an academic transcript of a student who has successfully completed at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree; or
- d. for a person who is seeking enrollment in an educational program that leads to at least an associate degree or its equivalent and who has not completed high school but who excelled academically in high school, documentation that the student excelled academically in high school and has met the formalized, written policies of the institution for admitting such students.

Recognized Occupation – An occupation that is

- a. identified by a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code established by the Office of Management and Budget or an Occupational Information Network O*NET–SOC code established by the Department of Labor and available at <http://online.onetcenter.org> or its successor site; or
- b. determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Labor to be a recognized occupation.

Regular Student – A person who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential offered by that institution.

Secretary – The Secretary of the Department of Education or an official or employee of the Department of Education acting for the Secretary under a delegation of authority.

State – A State of the Union, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the

Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. The latter three are also known as the Freely Associated States.

Teach-Out Plan – A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100 percent of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions.