STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDITION | 2012

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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 developing and recognizing quality in education for its member schools throughout the United States and in more than 90 countries outside the United States.

The Middle States Association has three accrediting commissions:

- The Commission on Higher Education [dba as Mid-Atlantic Region Commission on Higher Education (MARCHE)] 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 schools that offer non-degree-granting post-secondary programs; and
- The Commission on Elementary Schools (MSA-CES) serves institutions that provide middle, elementary, and early age education.

Together, the elementary and secondary Commissions—operating as the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools—serve institutions providing early age through grade 12 or 13 education or any combination of grade levels served by the Commissions.

THE ROLE OF STANDARDS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

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

Middle States Standards for Accreditation have several important functions in the accreditation process. Most importantly, they serve as a mechanism for improving a school's ability to produce the levels of student performance that are both desired and expected by its community of stakeholders. Because they are based on research and reflect best practices, they serve as a qualitative guide to expectations for an accredited school. The Standards are not designed to make all schools look alike. The Middle States accreditation process respects the individual nature and character of each school. The diversity of Middle States member schools reflects this important principle. Although it is required that all schools meet the same Standards for Accreditation, there is sufficient flexibility within the Standards so that different schools can demonstrate they meet the Standards in different ways.

The Standards serve as the primary basis upon which the Commissions make accreditation decisions. The Commissions offer a variety of protocols for self-study and accreditation, each of which begins with the requirement that a school meets the Standards for Accreditation. Then, building on the requirements of the Standards, a school proceeds to establish a plan for growing or improving student performance

and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by its community of stakeholders.

THE ROLE OF INDICATORS OF QUALITY IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Indicators of Quality have been developed for each Standard. The Indicators amplify a Standard and show possible ways that a school can demonstrate that a particular Standard is met. Indicators provide greater clarity regarding best practices related to each Standard. Although it is expected that all accredited schools will meet the Standards, not all Indicators will apply to or be appropriate for each school. It is imperative that the use of Indicators respects the individual integrity of each school and that no attempt to conform a school's operation to these Indicators be made.

A number of the Standards for Accreditation include sub-sets of Indicators that are applicable to different types of schools and to schools with special programs or services. For example, the Governance and Leadership Standard includes a set of Indicators for independent/non-public schools and a different set of Indicators for schools in public school districts, archdiocesan/diocesan systems, and other school organizations with a central office staff. For some of the Standards, there are also Indicators for schools that have early age programs and Indicators for schools that deliver some or their entire educational program using a distance modality. Each school uses only the Indicators that are applicable and appropriate for the school.

CHANGES IN THE 2012 STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS

Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions were first adopted by the Commission on Secondary Schools in 2003. They were amended in 2009 and 2010.

A draft of the 2012 revised Standards was submitted to appropriate stakeholders for an extensive review and for comments and suggestions. More than 275 stakeholders participated in the review using the following rubric:

Response Legend	
1	The Standard and its Indicators are sufficiently rigorous to ensure the quality of education or training provided by the institution and its programs.
2	The Standard and its Indicators are sufficiently comprehensive in their requirements to ensure the quality of the education or training provided by the institution and its programs.
3	The Standard and its Indicators are sufficiently clear in meaning and intent to ensure the quality of education or training provided by the institution and its programs.
4	The Standard and its Indicators are appropriate for the type of institution and its educational programs at the level being accredited to ensure the quality of education or training provided by the institution and its programs.

Using these criteria, the respondents provided a response of Strongly Agree or Agree for each of the Standards and their Indicators at the rate of 90.8% or above for all Standards.

The revised Standards for Accreditation were approved by the Commission on Secondary Schools in 2011 to be effective for institutions scheduled for an accreditation/reaccreditation visit after January 1, 2013.

The 2012 edition of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation of Career and Technical Institutions includes a number of changes from earlier editions, paramount among which are

- previous editions of the Standards for Accreditation were built upon the Standards for Accreditation for Schools with career and technical issues' being addressed by separate sets of Indicators of Quality for each Standard. The 2013 edition of the career and technical Standards are "stand alone" Standards. All requirements of the Standards and Indicators of Quality that were in the previous editions of the Standards and that were not applicable to career and technical institutions have been removed;
- in 2011, the U.S. Secretary of Education issued new criteria for recognition and changes to the requirements for institutions participating in Title IV student loan programs. Therefore, the Middle States Standards for Accreditation for Career and Technical Institutions have been revised to address these changes;
- the names of four Standards have been changed so the names are more appropriate for the expectations for career and technical institutions. These changes are

Previous Title		New Title
Philosophy/Mission		Mission
School Improvement Planning	Changed to	Institutional Planning
Facilities		Facilities, Equipment, and Materials
School Climate and Organization		Climate, Organization, and Staff
Information Resources and Technology		Information and Technology Resources

- Indicators of Quality for curriculum, instruction, and assessment have been added to the Educational Program Standard for Accreditation; and
- Standards for student and institutional performance have been added to the Educational Program Standard for Accreditation.

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
- Climate, 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 it 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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

M.1 – M.4   INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

M.1   Clearly aligns the Mission with the institution's Beliefs and Profile of a graduate.

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 input from appropriate stakeholders was considered and that the stakeholders understand and support the institution's mission.

M.4   Implements a system to assess its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

M.5 – M.8   INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

M.5   The use of a distance education modality is appropriate for achieving the institution's mission.

M.6   The distance education modality employed enhances and does not detract from other elements of the institution's mission.

M.7   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.8   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.

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

M.9   The institution's religious identity is articulated clearly in its mission, core values, and publications.

M.10   The institution's religious identity and purposes are integral parts of mission and its institution-wide goals and objectives.

M.11   Symbols and artifacts of the institution community(ies) of faith are visible in the institution.

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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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

GL.1 – GL32   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 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 Maintains appropriate and constructive relations with the staff of the institution and members of its community of stakeholders.

GL.21 The leadership includes educators that possess the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead the institution's program of delivery all or part of its educational program by a distance modality.

GL.22 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.23 S/he has appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead the career and technical institution.

GL.24 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.

GL.25 Has and implements a formal system for obtaining advice and assistance from specialists in the career and technical programs the institution offers.

GL.26   Establishes and implements clear, written policies and procedures that are consistent with the institution's mission and are reviewed regularly.

GL.27   Has a clear and logical table of organization with lines of responsibility.

GL.28   Ensures that members of the institution's staff understand their proper roles and responsibilities.

GL.29   Has a leadership succession plan to ensure stability and continuity of the leadership of the institution.

GL.30   Thinks and acts strategically, reflecting on decisions and the consequences of those decisions.

Gl.31   Implements as system for evaluating his/her effectiveness in leading the institution.

GL.32   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.33 – GL.39   INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that they:

GL.33   Articulate and model the religious tenets of the institution.

GL.34   Maintain the religious identity of the institution as a priority for the institution.

GL.35   Align policies, procedures, and decisions with the religious values and identity of the institution.

GL.36   Accept the authority of the sponsoring religious institution.

GL.37   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.38   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.39   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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

IP.1 – IP.10   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.

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   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.10   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.11 INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

IP.11   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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

FI.1 – FI.17   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 current and future financial resources are sufficient to provide for achieving the institution's mission and goals.

FI.3   Require the governing body and leadership to exercise prudent control over all financial operations.

FI.4   Govern the collection and refund of students' tuitions and fees.

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   Seeks additional funding resources available through development activities, grants, foundations, and other partnerships and makes prudent use of the funds.

FI.18 – FI.20   INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

FI.18   Has the financial resources necessary to support and enhance the religious nature of the institution.

FI.19   Makes judicious use of financial resources based on the religious values of the institution.

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

FI.20   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.

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/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 students' personal items

FEM.16   Storage of hazardous chemicals and other hazardous materials

☺ CLIMATE, ORGANIZATION, AND STAFF
STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The institution's climate, organization, and staff facilitate achievement of its purposes as expressed in its mission. The institution's climate reflects its core values. The climate 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 organizational design provides the structural framework for delivering the educational program, services, and activities and facilitates levels of student and organizational performance desired by 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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

COS.1 – COS.28   INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

CLIMATE

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

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 chart 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, 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 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 wil have contact with children and keep on file copies

COS.29 INDICATOR FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

COS.29 Components of the educational program delivered by a distance modality are provided by personnel with education and expertise in delivering an educational program by the distance modality.

COS.30 – 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.30 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:

    a. Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check. Applies to individuals hired as of January 1, 1986;

    b. PA Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance; and

    c. Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) in a manner required by the Department of Education.

COS.31 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:

    a. provide assurances on form PDE-6004 that they have not been previously arrested or convicted of a Section 111(e) offense; or

    b. If they refuse to submit form PDE-6004 are required to submit a current background check under Section 111.

COS.32 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 and keep on file copies of the required background check reports for all staff. .

COS.33 – COS.43 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

COS.33   Has an environment that portrays an identifiable integration of faith, life, and culture.

COS.34   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.35   Gives appropriate attention in all institution programs and activities to the values and traditions that demonstrate and reinforce the institution's religious nature.

COS.36   Provides members of the faculty with opportunities to advance their understanding of the religious beliefs and foundational documents of the institution.

COS.37   Provides formal and informal opportunities for the spiritual development of the members of the faculty and staff.

COS.38   Regularly provides professional development opportunities for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff as spiritual leaders in the institution's community.

COS.39   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.40   Includes prayer and/or other expressions of faith as integral components of the institution's curriculum and daily activities.

COS.41   Provides students with an appropriate role in planning, organizing and conducting the institution's faith-based experiences.

COS.42   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.43   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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

HS.1 – HS.22   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 and MSDS 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 confidentially in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

HS.22   Managing and storing student medications in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

HS.23   INDICATOR FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

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

HS.23   Provide guidance to members of the staff for handling health and safety issues that are presented to them by students.

📖 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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

EP.1 – EP.25   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's

- content,
- objectives,
- typical length of study,
- prerequisites,
- requirements for successful completion,
- awarding clock/credit hours, 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 and enable all students to meet expected knowledge, skills, and competencies required for gainful employment in the field of study.

EP.5 Enable all students to develop academic knowledge and skills as well as career/technical competencies and habits of mind and attitudes required for success in further education and in the workplace.

EP.6 Include expectations for learning that are understood and supported by the institution's community of stakeholders.

CURRICULA

The governing body and leadership ensure the programs' curricula:

EP.7 Are designed to achieve appropriate student outcomes and performance as expressed in terms of student understanding, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits.

EP.8 Establish priorities, objectives, and goals for all courses and units within the program and clearly defined expectations for all students.

EP.9 Are designed to ensure the horizontal and vertical alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and assessment of student learning.

EP.10 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 and include experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, and study skills.

EP.11 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.12 Include instruction in appropriate and effective uses of information and technology resources and their application.

EP.13 Provide appropriate accommodations for students' ages, cultures, and learning styles.

INSTRUCTION

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

EP.14 Are designed to include a variety of methodologies to meet students' preferred learning styles and make it possible for all students to achieve the outcomes expected for their field of study.

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.15 Consists primarily of business/industry practitioners and potential employers that are external to the institution.

EP.16 Meets at least once annually and maintain records of decisions and recommendations regarding the appropriate career/technical programs.

EP.17 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.18 Conducts a systematic and regular review of each component's curriculum and instructional and assessment programs at least annually to ensure they are responsive to local and regional job markets needs and standards.

EP.19 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.20 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.21 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 CLOCK/CREDIT HOURS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure the institution has and implements written policies and procedures for the awarding of clock/credit hours that:

EP.22 Define and govern the policies and procedures for awarding clock/credit hours to ensure that clock/credit hours assigned represents the amount and quality of student work required to complete a program successfully and to ensure consistency in the award of clock/credit hours in all the institution's courses and programs of study.

EP.23 Are in compliance with definitions and the requirements of 34 CFR §602.24(f), Credit Hour Policies, and MSA-CSS Policy 6.3, Section 6.3.27, Determining Credit Hours and conform to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

TEACH-OUT PLAN[2]

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution has:

EP.24 A Draft Teach-Out Plan, as required by MSA-CSS Policy 6.3, Section 6.3.20, Teach-Out Plans and Agreements, that meets the federal and Middle States criteria on file.

The governing body and leadership ensure that, should there be a plan to close the institution, the institution has:

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[2] A **Teach-Out Plan** is 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)

EP.25 Submitted for approval by the Commission a teach-out plan and teach-out agreement(s)[3] that comply with Title 34 CFR §602.24(c), and MSA-CSS Policy 6.3, Section 6.3.20, requirements prior to the a planned closure of the institution.

EP.26 – EP.31 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

EP.26 The content of the career/technical components of the institution's 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.27 Provisions are made for student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction both synchronously and asynchronously.

EP.28 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.29 Student performance outcomes for components delivered through a distance modality are achievable using that modality.

EP.30 Instructional materials used are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques, and textbooks and other instructional materials are suitable for distance learning.

EP.31 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.32 – EP.42 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

EP.32 The religious nature of the institution is appropriately reflected throughout the curriculum.

EP.33 The institution teaches the faith of the sponsoring institution in accordance with its official teachings and traditions.

EP.34 Religious education of the students is a priority in scheduling, budgeting, and planning.

EP.35 The religious education of the students is a concern of all faculty members.

EP.36 The religious dimension of all areas of the curriculum is acknowledged.

EP.37 The institution provides religious formation programs for its faith-community members that are based on the faith-community's beliefs, values, and traditions.

EP.38 The religious education program is developmentally appropriate in nature.

EP.39 Religious social teachings are integrated throughout the institution's educational program.

EP.40 Faith development and community service programs are seen as integral components of the institution's educational program.

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[3] A **Teach-Out Agreement** (as specified in federal regulations) is a written agreement between the institution and another institution(s) that is/are accredited by an accrediting agency recognized nationally by the U.S. Secretary of Education that provides for the equitable treatment of students the institution's students.

| EP.41 | Faith-based experiences that foster the religious formation of the students are provided regularly. |
| EP.42 | Faith development and community service programs for students have clearly defined objectives reflecting the mission of the institution. |

NOTE: The following Standards of Quality identify expectation for quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each component of the institution's educational program.

STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR CURRICULUM

CI.1 – CI.31   CURRICULUM STANDARDS 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 appropriate for students who are concluding formal study as well as those planning further education.
CI.9	Enables all students to meet expected knowledge, skills, and competencies required for gainful employment in the field of study.
CI.10	Enables all students to develop academic knowledge and skills as well as career/technical competencies.
CI.11	Develops in students habits of the mind and attitudes required for success in further education and in the workplace and experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, and study skills.
CI.12	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,

c. tools and equipment with which students must demonstrate competency in their use, and

d. 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.13   Program/course objectives and expectations for learning that are understood by students, staff and stakeholders.

CI.14   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.15   A meaningful and logical progression of learning activities.

CI.16   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.

CI.17   Learning activities are designed to foster active involvement of students in the learning process.

CI.18   Learning materials that are current and are selected to facilitate achieving the outcomes defined by the curriculum.

CI.19   Current best practices in the field, including the use of technology and other media for learning and application.

CI.20   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.21   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.22   There is a regular and systematic review and evaluation of the efficacy of the curriculum and the curriculum review/evaluation process includes criteria for determining what should be added and what should be deleted from the curriculum.

CI.23   There is a system for monitoring and ensuring that the written curriculum is actually taught.

CI.24   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.25   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.26   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.27   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.28   Tuition/fees of the component are reasonable in terms of what completers can expect for entry-level employment.

CI.29 Courses required to complete the component are offered with sufficient regularity to ensure that students can complete the component within the published time period.

Together with the business/industry advisory committee for the program, systematic and regular review is undertaken 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.30 The program is guided by a business/industry advisory committee consisting of practitioners and potential local employers in the program area to assess:

- Knowledge/ skills/ competencies students are expected to learn and demonstrate

- Standards to which students are expected to demonstrate knowledge/skills/competencies

- 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

- Length of instructional time required for students to demonstrate competency.

CI.31 The number of clock/credit hours assigned represents the amount and quality of student work required to complete a program successfully.

CI.32 – CI.37 CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR ALL CAREER/TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

CI.32 The content of the career/technical components of the institution's 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

CI.33 Provisions are made for student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction both synchronously and asynchronously.

CI.34 Students and their families (if appropriate) are informed about any aspects of the educational program that are created or delivered by an organization other than the institution.

CI.35 Student performance outcomes for components delivered through a distance modality are achievable using that modality.

CI.36 Instructional materials used are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques, and textbooks and other instructional materials are suitable for distance learning.

CI.37 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.

STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR INSTRUCTION

II.1 – II.12 INSTRUCTION STANDARDS 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.

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

II.5   Accommodations and additional assistance for students with identified learning challenges.

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.17   INSTRUCTION STANDARDS 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   Provisions are made for student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction both synchronously and asynchronously.

II.14   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.15   Student performance outcomes for components delivered through a distance modality are achievable using that modality.

II.16   Instructional materials used are developed by authors qualified in distance education techniques, and textbooks and other instructional materials are suitable for distance learning.

II.17   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.

STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR ASSESSMENT

AI.1 – AI.9   ASSESSMENT STANDARDS 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 assessment of student learning and competency against external business/industry standards such as NOCTI tests, industry certifications, and licensing examinations (where required).

AI.5   So that it can be determined if students in the aggregate are learning and performing at levels expected, or progress is being made to raise results accordingly and teachers adapt their instruction to students' learning needs, 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.6   Include methods for students to self-assess and monitor their own learning progress.

AI.7   Include maintaining useful records of students' performance regarding the expected knowledge and competencies of the component and provide to students and their families (as appropriate) timely and useful assessment information and feedback regarding the students' progress.

AI.8   Include using data from the assessment of student learning and performance to identify students needing additional support.

AI.9   Include basing enrollment and placement in the component on an analysis of students' interests and potential as well as on students' past performance.

NOTE: The following are Standards for Student and Organizational Performance for each component of the institution's educational program.

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

Secondary Program Completion Rate	The Standard for the program completion rate for secondary career/technical programs 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 for secondary career/technical programs in which licensing is required for employment in the field is at least 70% of program completers passing the examination within the reporting year or the most recent 12-month period.

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

Postsecondary Program Completion Rate	The Standard for the completion rate for each program 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 job placement of program completers is at least 70% of program completers placed in a job in the field of study within 180 days of completion of the program.
Postsecondary Licensing Examination Pass Rate	The Standard for the licensing examination pass rate for programs in which licensing is required for employment in the field is at least 70% of program completers passing the examination within 12 months of completing the program.
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 and those of the appropriate career/technical field.

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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

AE.1 – AE.7   INDICATORS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

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

AE.1   Govern the institution's program of assessing, grading, and reporting student learning and performance.

AE.2   Maintains records of students' learning and performance, which include procedures for transcript control and use, including requirements for confidentiality.

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

AE.3   Has leadership and a staff that are committed to and share accountability for student learning and performance.

AE.4   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.5   Uses assessments that provide for students' preferred learning styles.

AE.6   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.7   Communicates its assessment policies and practices to the total school community (e.g., via parent handbooks, web sites, teacher handbooks, policy manuals).

AE.8 – AE.11   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.8   Has and implements written policies and procedures for establishing and verifying that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. Institutions may use methods such as:

   a.   A secure login and pass code;

   b.   Proctored examinations; and

   c.   New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

AE.9   The institution's written policies and procedures for verification of student identities include provisions that protect student privacy.

AE.10   The institution's policies and procedures require notifying students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

AE.11   Ensures that members of the staff who evaluate student work are qualified in the fields they are evaluating and in the distant modality.

AE.12   INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution

AE.12   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.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

SS.1 – SS.43   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   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.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The governing body and leadership ensure the institution:

SS.9   Has and implements policies and procedures that govern the institution's student services and implements a policy and procedures for students to submit complaints regarding the institution and its policies, procedures, programs, and services.

SS.10   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.11   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.12   Resolves student complaints in an appropriate and timely manner.

SS.13   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.14   Makes the record of student complaints available for review by any team or individual representing the Commission on Secondary Schools and/or the U.S. Department of Education.

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, delivered in facilities that are inspected regularly by internal personnel and are in compliance with the health, safety, and other requirements of all appropriate civil authorities

SS.19   Include meals that meet generally accepted nutritional standards and provide information about the nutritional value of the meals provided.

SS.20   Are provided by personnel appropriately trained for this service.

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.21   Are governed by written policies and procedures for identifying and addressing appropriately the learning requirements of students identified with special needs.

SS.22   Include procedures to provide or refer students/families to appropriate related services and/or accommodations in the community to meet student needs.

SS.23   Comply with all local, state, and federal requirements related to students identified with special needs.

ADVERTISING, RECRUITMENT, PLACEMENT, AND REPRESENTATION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

The institution has and implements written policies and procedures governing advertising, recruiting, and placement, and representation of accreditation status that:

SS.24   Comply with the requirements of MSA-CSS Policy 6.3, Section 6.3.27, Advertising, Recruitment, Placement, and Representation of Accreditation Status.

SS.25   Are disclosed publicly and to all potential students and the institution's community of stakeholders.

SS.26   Forbid 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 based on the number of students recruited.

SS.27   Are communicated to prospective students (and their families, if appropriate), and include 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.28   Are expressed in written and oral statements and representations that are

   a.   clear, true, accurate, and current,

   b.   published widely and in appropriate publications and by other means that are provided and available to prospective and currently enrolled students and their families (if appropriate).

   c.   Support the mission of the institution.

SS.29   Are ethical and in compliance with:

   a.   All applicable requirements of laws and regulations of the civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) within which the institution operates;

   b.   The regulations of the U.S. Department of Education; and

   c.   The Standards and policies of the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools.

SS.30   Lead to enrolling and placing newly enrolled students in a program that is appropriate for the student and in which s/he has a reasonable expectation of success.

TRANSFER OF CLOCK/CREDIT HOURS

The institution has and implements written policies and procedures for the transfer of clock/credit hours that:

SS.31   Comply with MSA-CSS Policy 6.3, Section 6.3.22, Transfer of Credits

SS.32   Define and govern the institution's process and criteria for transferring credits earned at other institutions of higher education.

SS.33   Are publicly disclosed to all enrolled and prospective students and the institution's community of stakeholders.

SS.34   Include the public disclosure of any institutions with which the institution has entered into a Teach-Out Agreement.

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that:

SS.35   The institution's transfer of credit policies are implemented consistently and fairly.

SS.36   The institution publicly discloses the institutions with which it has an articulation agreement.

STUDENT RECORDS

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

SS37   Has and implements written policies and procedures for collecting and maintaining student records that are current and comprehensive and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

SS.38   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.39   Stores student records to protect them from fire and other physical damage and maintains duplicate copies of all student records at a site or through a service other than on the institution's main campus.

SS.40   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.41   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.42   Students with appropriate guidance, counseling, and assistance with gaining employment upon completion of the student's program.

SS.43   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.).

SS.44 – SS.53   INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE PARTICIPATING IN FEDERAL TITLE IV STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

TITLE IV STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS

The governing body and leadership ensure:

SS.44   Federal financial aid program is in compliance with all Title IV requirements and responsibilities.

SS.45   Financial aid program is administered in accordance with the regulations of the funding agency.

SS.46   The institution provides students with appropriate guidance and counseling regarding financial aid in accordance with the regulations of the funding agency.

SS.47   The institution does not overly depend on federal student aid as a source of revenue.

SS.49   The institution does not receive more than 90% of the institution's financial revenues are received from Title IV federal student loan programs.

SS.50   The institution 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.51 Refunds are provided 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.

SS.52 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.

SS.53 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.

SS.54 – SS.59 INDICATORS FOR INSTITUTIONS THAT DELIVER ALL OR PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY A DISTANCE MODALITY

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

SS.54 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.55 Appropriate services are available for all students who are having difficulty with their studies as well as for those who are rapid learners.

SS.56 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.57 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.58 Encourage students to start, continue in, and complete the program in which they have enrolled within the time prescribed.

SS.59 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.67 – SS.70 INDICATORS FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The governing body and leadership ensure that the institution's

SS.67 Student services reflect the institution's religious identity and mission.

SS.68 Counseling and campus ministry personnel cooperate on programs addressing emerging student needs.

SS.69 Guidance services support the development of the faith-based community of the institution.

SS.70 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.

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

The governing body and leadership ensure:

SL.7   The institution provides a program of co-or extra-curricular activities that are related to the students' fields of study and appropriate for the distance environment.

SL.8 – SL.11   INDICATORS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOLS WITH A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

The governing body and leadership ensure that:

SL.8   The institution has a purposeful and meaningful residential life program.

SL.9   The institution has a purposeful and meaningful residential life program.

SL.10   Appropriate provisions are made for student privacy, recreation, and religious practice.

SL.11   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.12   INDICATOR FOR FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

The institution's governing body and leadership ensure that:

SL.12   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.

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   Implement an effective system to evaluate how information and technology resources support the mission of the institution.

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 – The status of public recognition that the Commission on Secondary Schools grants to an institution that meets the Commission's established requirements.

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

Accrediting Agency – A legal entity, or that part of a legal entity, that conducts accrediting activities through voluntary, non-Federal peer review and makes decisions concerning the accreditation or preaccreditation status of institutions, programs, or both.

Act – The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Adverse Accrediting Action – The denial, withdrawal, suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or preaccreditation, or any comparable accrediting action an agency may take against an institution or program.

Advisory Committee – The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.

Award/Reporting 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 Secretary considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if the location—
1) Is permanent in nature;
2) Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
3) Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
4) Has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

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—
1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or
3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

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:
(1) 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
(2) 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.
(I) 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; an
3) A quarter hour must include at least 20 hours of instruction.

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.

Correspondence Course – 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.
a. If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course.

b. A correspondence course is not distance education.

Credit Hour – 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.

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. 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
2. 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.

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; 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.

Direct Assessment Program – 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, and meets the conditions of 34 CFR 668.10. For Title IV purposes, the institution must obtain approval for the direct assessment program from the Secretary under 34 CFR 668.10(g) or (h) as applicable. As part of that approval, the Commission must—
1)   Evaluate the program(s) and include them in the institution's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation; and

2) Review and approve the institution's claim of each direct assessment program's equivalence in terms of credit or clock hours.

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.

Early Age Education – A program serving families and their children from infancy through age six years in settings such as institutions and early childhood centers.

Educational Program – 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 – An institution that qualifies as:
a. An institution of higher education, as defined in §600.4;
b. A proprietary institution of higher education, as defined in 34 CFR §600.5; or
c. A postsecondary vocational institution, as defined in 34 CFR §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;

<div align="center">OR</div>

   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.

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

Faith-Based Indicators – Indicators of quality that apply to unique aspects of faith-based institutions. The use of the Faith-Based Indicators by 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 grouping 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.

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.

Final Accrediting Action – A final determination by the Commission on Secondary Schools regarding the accreditation or preaccreditation status of an institution or program. A final accrediting action is not appealable within the agency.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Institution of Higher Education – An educational institution that qualifies, or may qualify, as an eligible institution under 34 CFR part 600

Institutional Accrediting Agency – An agency that accredits institutions of higher education.

Leadership – The head of the institution and, members of the administrative staff of the institution, 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.

Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agency – An accrediting agency 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:
(1) (i)   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;

(ii) Is legally authorized to operate as a nonprofit organization by each State in which it is physically located; and

(iii) 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

(2) For a foreign institution—

(i) An institution that is owned and operated only by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations; and

(ii) (A) 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

(B) If no 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.

(iii) 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)).

Proprietary Institution – 34 CFR 668.8(a)(2)(d) defines a proprietary institution of higher education and postsecondary vocational institution as follows:

An eligible program provided by a proprietary institution of higher education or postsecondary vocational institution—

(1) (i) Must 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;

(ii) Must be at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours;

(iii) Must provide undergraduate training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; and

(iv) May admit as regular students persons who have not completed the equivalent of an associate degree;

(2) Must—

(i) 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;

(ii) Be at least 300 clock hours, 8 semester or trimester hours, or 12 quarter hours;

(iii) Provide training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation as provided under § 668.6; and

(iv) (A) Be a graduate or professional program; or

(B) Admit as regular students only persons who have completed the equivalent of an associate degree;

(3) For purposes of the FFEL and Direct Loan programs only, must—

(i) 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;

(ii) Be at least 300 clock hours but less than 600 clock hours;

(iii) Provide undergraduate training that prepares a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation as provided under § 668.6;

(iv) Admit as regular students some persons who have not completed the equivalent of an associate degree; and

(v) Satisfy the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section; or

(4) For purposes of a proprietary institution of higher education only, is a program leading to a baccalaureate degree in liberal arts, as defined in 34 CFR 600.5(e), that—

(i) Is provided by an institution that is accredited by a recognized regional accrediting agency or association, and has continuously held such accreditation since October 1, 2007, or earlier; and

(ii) The institution has provided continuously since January 1, 2009.

(e) Qualitative factors. (1) An educational program that satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (d)(3)(i) through (iv) of this section qualifies as an eligible program only if—

(i) The program has a substantiated completion rate of at least 70 percent, as calculated under paragraph (f) of this section;

(ii) The program has a substantiated placement rate of at least 70 percent, as calculated under paragraph (g) of this section;

(iii) 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

(iv) 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.

(2) 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 § 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).

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

Preaccredited – 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 "preaccredited.")

Program – A postsecondary educational program offered by an institution of higher education that leads to an academic or professional degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.

Proprietary Institution – Proprietary institution is a career and technology institution that is 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.

Recognition – An unappealed determination by the senior Department official under § 602.36, or a determination by the Secretary on appeal under § 602.37, that an accrediting agency complies with the criteria for recognition listed in subpart B of this part and that the agency is effective in its application of those criteria. A grant of recognition to an agency as a reliable authority regarding the quality of education or training offered by institutions or programs it accredits remains in effect for the term granted except upon a determination made in accordance with subpart C of this part that the agency no longer complies with the subpart B criteria or that it has become ineffective in its application of those criteria.

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

1) A General Education Development Certificate (GED);
2) 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;
3) 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
4) 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.

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 Support 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.

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 athttp://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.

Representative of the Public – A person who is not—
1) An employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited or preaccredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation or preaccreditation;
2) A member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the agency; or
3) A spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition.

Scope of Recognition – The range of accrediting activities for which the Secretary recognizes an agency. The Secretary may place a limitation on the scope of an agency's recognition for Title IV, HEA purposes. The Secretary's designation of scope defines the recognition granted according to—
1) Geographic area of accrediting activities;
2) Types of degrees and certificates covered;
3) Types of institutions and programs covered;
4) Types of preaccreditation status covered, if any; and
5) Coverage of accrediting activities related to distance education or correspondence education.

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 Agreement – 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.

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.

Title IV, HEA Program – Any of the student financial assistance programs listed in 34 CFR 668.1(c).