

## **International Programs Offered By Accredited Institutions**

An accredited institution may offer education abroad through branch campuses or additional locations or by contractual relationships with other non-accredited providers (including consortia of which it is part). Such offerings may include limited study abroad activities as well as the provision of entire degree programs. The education and degrees may be offered to students matriculating at its U.S. campus and/or to foreign nationals.

Institutions whose home campus is outside of the U.S. are governed by this policy with respect to all programs offered outside the country of their primary location.

All such activities must be addressed within the self-study and periodic review report, and in certain cases locations abroad must be visited by the Commission's representatives as part of decennial, substantive change, or other reviews.

If a Middle States accredited institution contracts with an international institution to provide any aspect of the educational experience, the contract should comply with the requirements set forth in the policy, "Contracts for Education-Related Services," and it should:

- be in English and in the primary language of the host institution;
- state that the legal jurisdiction under which its provisions will be interpreted will be that of the accredited member institution;
- provide protections for enrolled records for storage of records; and
- comply with all of the applicable provisions of this policy.

The institution should confirm that the foreign party to the contract is legally qualified to enter into the contract.

## **Good Practice for Programs Abroad Offered by Accredited Institutions**

All international programs should:

- meet all accreditation standards.
- meet standards for quality of instruction, academic rigor, educational effectiveness, and student achievement comparable to those of other institutional offerings. Resources such as student services should be appropriate to the culture and mores of the international setting.
- be rooted in the institution's mission and have clear educational goals.
- reflect the educational emphasis of the U.S. institution, including commitment to general education, with appropriate adaptation to the culture of the location abroad.
- be included in its regular budgeting and auditing processes, and be offered without diminishing its financial support for its US operations.
- provide the Commission on request accurate financial records for the program, including accounting for funds designated for third parties within any contractual relationship.
- meet all internal and external approval requirements, such as that of the governing body, system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations, both in the U.S. and abroad, including consultation with national quality assurance agencies in countries where programs are offered.

In addition, the accredited member institution should:

- notify the Commission in advance, in accordance with the "Substantive Change" policy, if the institution alters its mission or goals;
- ensure adequate supervision of the program both on-site and by the home campus including recruitment and admission of students and supervision of the teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program. Visits from overseas representatives to the home campus are encouraged.

- share with prospective and enrolled students, the following types of information:
  - the learning goals of the program
  - the relationship, if any, to a foreign institution
  - grading practices and policies for assigning credit, especially if several institutions are involved with a single overseas institution or consortium
  - significant differences between the home campus experience and what can be expected abroad
  - the extent of responsibility assumed by the program for housing participants
  - what services will and will not be provided.
- maintain official records of academic credit earned in its international program if academic credits earned in the program abroad are applicable to degree programs in the accredited member institution, and the official transcript should follow the institution's practices in identifying every site or through course numbering the credits earned in its off campus programs.
- inform students in advance that they will ordinarily not receive credit for foreign study undertaken without prior planning or approval by the students' home campus administrators.
- assure fair reimbursement to participants if the program is not delivered as promised for reasons within the institution's control, or because of international exigencies.