**Accreditation Readiness Report (ARR)**

*Effective Date: January 1, 2021*

**Instructions**

The pre-applicant or applicant institution will review the *Application and Candidacy Review Cycle and Monitoring Policy and Procedures* prior to completing this form. This form aligns with the policy and procedures effective September 1, 2020.

1. The institution must first demonstrate that it meets minimum requirements in the Pre-Applicant Minimum Requirements Report prior to completing the Accreditation Readiness Report (ARR).

2. To begin the Application for Candidate for Accreditation review, the institution will begin to draft and compile the ARR, which must be thorough, analytical, and complete pursuant to the instructions provided by the Commission staff.

3. The institution will develop a brief narrative describing compliance with the Commission’s standards for accreditation, requirements of affiliation, policies and procedures, and applicable federal regulatory requirements.

4. The institution will provide supporting evidence that clearly and concisely documents and support the narrative.

5. The institution will use appropriate excerpts or isolate specific pages rather than provide lengthy documents.

6. The institution will specifically reference all supporting evidence within the narrative so that the relevance of the evidence is explicit.

7. The institution will review the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations booklet and complete the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. The Report should be included as evidence under Standard II, criterion 8. The booklet and template are available on the MSCHE website at: https://www.msche.org/resources/.

8. The institution will submit the ARR and evidence in accordance with the instructions and established deadlines provided by the Commission staff. The report and evidence are due by the close of business at 4:30 p.m. on the due date.

**Name of Institution:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/President:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Application Manager:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Submission Date**: Click or tap to enter a date.

Because the purpose of the ARR is to demonstrate readiness, the institution may be asked to resubmit and update the ARR. If this is an update, please indicate so by choosing the correct option from the drop-down menu below.

**This ARR is a:** Choose an item.

**Dates of prior ARR submission(s):**

First submission: Click or tap to enter a date.

Second submission: Click or tap to enter a date.

Third submission: Click or tap to enter a date.

Fourth submission: Click or tap to enter a date.

***INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT***

Present a brief history and overview of the institution:

***BASELINE SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION***

Provide a narrative description of the institution’s offerings, delivery modalities, and locations and complete the checkbox sections below. The institution’s educational offerings become the *baseline* for the institution’s scope of candidate for accreditation status. The institution’s scope of candidate for accreditation status is established at the time Candidate for Accreditation status is granted.

**Credential Levels:**

[ ]  Postsecondary Award/Certificate/Diploma (<1 year)

[ ]  Postsecondary Award/Certificate/Diploma (>=1 year, <2 years)

[ ]  Associate’s or equivalent

[ ]  Postsecondary Award/Certificate/Diploma (>=2 years, <=4 years)

[ ]  Bachelor’s or equivalent

[ ]  Post-baccalaureate Award/Certificate/Diploma

[ ]  Master’s or equivalent

[ ]  Post-master’s Award/Certificate/Diploma

[ ]  Doctor’s – Professional Practice

[ ]  Doctor’s – Research/Scholarship

[ ]  Doctor’s – Other

**Alternative Delivery Methods:**

[ ]  Distance Education

[ ]  Correspondence Education

**Branch Campus(es): *(List)***

**Additional Location(s): *(List)***

**Other Instructional Site(s): *(List)***

***REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION***

**To be eligible for, to achieve, and to maintain accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an institution must demonstrate that it fully meets the following Requirements of Affiliation. An applicant institution must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements of affiliation in order to be granted Candidate for Accreditation Status. The institution’s compliance will be validated periodically, typically at the time of institutional self-study and during any other accreditation activity.**

*The following table contains a listing of the requirements of affiliation and the standard under which the documentation of compliance with each requirement should be included. Applicant and candidate institutions are required to ensure that sufficient documentation is in place to enable evaluators and the Commission to conclude that the institution is in compliance with each. The institution may have provided documentation for some requirements of affiliation earlier in the Pre-Applicant Minimum Requirements Report. Please provide that documentation again in the ARR under the appropriate standard, making sure to note any updates or changes.*

| **Requirement** **of Affiliation** | **Documentation** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and to award post-secondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both. Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates.[[1]](#footnote-2)
 | See Required Evidence in this section |
| 1. The institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.
 | See Required Evidence in this section |
| 1. For institutions pursuing Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, the institution will graduate at least one class before the evaluation team visit for initial accreditation takes place, unless the institution can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the lack of graduates does not compromise its ability to demonstrate appropriate learning outcomes.
 | Standard IV |
| 1. The institution’s representatives communicate with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing
 | All documents must be provided in English |
| 1. The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) policies, regulations, and requirements
 | Standard II |
| 1. The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website, www.msche.org.
 | Standard II |
| 1. The institution has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body that defines its purpose within the context of higher education.
 | Standards I, VII |
| 1. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
 | Standards I, III, IV, V, VI |
| 1. Student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.
 | Standards III, IV, V |
| 1. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.
 | Standards I, III, IV, V, VI |
| 1. The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis
 | Standards III, VI |
| 1. The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution’s mission is being carried out.
 | Standard VII |
| 1. A majority of the institution’s governing body’s members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflicts of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution’s district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.
 | Standard VII |
| 1. The institution and its governing body/bodies will make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.
 | Standard II, VI |
| 1. The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution’s educational programs.
 | Standards III, VI |

*The following evidence is required for this section. Documentation for the remainder of the Requirements of Affiliation should be provided under the standard identified in the table above.*

**Required Evidence**

* **Documentation of Degree Granting Authority (DGA) and Licensing**. Legal charter, statute, constitutional provision, or other action from an appropriate organization or agency or documentation of any exemption, AND a proper license to operate from each jurisdiction in which the institution operates.
* **Enrollment Profile Data**. Enrollment data or reports demonstrating that the institution is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

***STANDARD I: MISSION AND GOALS***

**The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard I Criteria** | **List of Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Clearly defined mission and goals that:
 |  |
| 1. are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement
 |  |
| 1. address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies
 |  |
| 1. are approved and supported by the governing body
 |  |
| 1. guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes
 |  |
| 1. include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at all levels and of the type appropriate to the institution
 |  |
| 1. are publicized and widely known by the institution’s internal stakeholders, and
 |  |
| 1. are periodically evaluated.
 |  |
| 1. Institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education and consistent with mission.
 |  |
| 1. Institutional goals focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure that they are relevant and achievable.
 |  |

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard I**

**Requirement 7:** The institution has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body, that defines its purpose with the context of higher education.

**Requirement 8:** The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

**Requirement 10:** Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, institutional assessment.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD II: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY***

**Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard II Criteria** | **List Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights
 |  |
| 1. A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives
 |  |
| 1. A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.
 |  |
| 1. The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents.
 |  |
| 1. Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees.
 |  |
| 1. Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.
 |  |
| 1. As appropriate to mission, services or programs in place:
 |  |
| 1. to promote affordability and accessibility and
 |  |
| 1. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.
 |  |
| 1. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:
 |  |
| 1. the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates
 |  |
| 1. the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation
 |  |
| 1. substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion, and
 |  |
| 1. the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies.
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide for Standard II.*

**Required Evidence**

* **Other Accreditation Reports and Correspondence:** If the institution is accredited by another USDE recognized accreditor, provide the accreditor’s most recent accreditation action and any other relevant correspondence. (At a later date, MSCHE may request a copy of the most recent report submitted by the institution to the accreditor, but do not append it at this time.)
* **Institutional Federal Compliance Report**: The institution must review the *Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations* booklet. The institution must complete the *Institutional Federal Compliance Report* and include it as evidence under Standard II, criterion 8. The booklet and template are available on the MSCHE website at: <https://www.msche.org/resources/>.

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard II**

**Requirement 5:** The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) policies, regulations, and requirements.

**Requirement 6:** The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website at <https://www.msche.org/policies-guidelines/>.

**Requirement 14:** The institution and its governing body/bodies will make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD III:***  DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

**An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard III Criteria** | **List Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Certificate, undergraduate, graduate and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning
 |  |
| 1. Student learning experiences that are:
 |  |
| 1. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies
 |  |
| 1. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do
 |  |
| 1. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are sufficient in number
 |  |
| 1. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation, and
 |  |
| 1. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures.
 |  |
| 1. Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion
 |  |
| 1. Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress
 |  |
| 1. At institutions that offer undergraduate education: A general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:
 |  |
| 1. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field
 |  |
| 1. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives, and
 |  |
| 1. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills.
 |  |
| 1. In institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula
 |  |
| 1. Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third party providers
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of the programs providing student learning opportunities
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide for Standard III.*

**Required Evidence**

* URL to the most recent versions of the institution’s catalog(s)
* Graduation requirements for each educational program, if not provided in the catalog
* Additional Academic Programs: Information on existing, new, or planned programs that are not in the current catalog(s)
* Academic Rigor: Evidence that the content of every academic program is appropriate to the collegiate level
* Third Party Providers Agreements and Contracts: Copies of agreements and/or contracts for the institution offering education-related services, where appropriate
* Faculty Profile: Current counts of all instructional staff currently employed by the institution, with breakdowns by full-time, part-time, and adjunct status, and by location (on campus and at each off-campus location). Include the percentage of faculty with the terminal degree.
* Faculty Data: Names, titles, most advanced degree, field of experience, and current teaching load (in credits per semester or quarter, and in hours per week) of each instructional staff person
* Faculty/Staff Handbook(s)
* Library and Other Information Resources:
* Description of the nature and breadth of library/learning resources available on-site, at branch campuses, additional locations, and other instructional sites, and electronically, with documentation that resources take into account all instructional locations and formats
* Description of how the institution provides for access to and utilization of a broad range of library/learning and other information resources to support its academic programs, learners, and faculty
* Description of the nature and scope of bibliographic instruction, information literacy, and other programs for educating students and faculty in the use of information resources
* Copies of formal agreements with other institutions for the use of their information resources and/or reference services

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard III**

**Requirement 9:** Student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

**Requirement 10:** Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

**Requirement 11:** The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.

**Requirement 15:** The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution’s educational programs.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD IV: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE***

**Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard IV Criteria** | **List Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:
 |  |
| 1. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds
 |  |
| 1. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for the study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals
 |  |
| 1. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience, and
 |  |
| 1. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement.
 |  |
| 1. Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches
 |  |
| 1. Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records
 |  |
| 1. If offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs
 |  |
| 1. If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services, designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide for Standard IV.*

**Required Evidence**

* Admissions Philosophy and Practices: Documents and policy statements (in addition to the catalog) on the institution’s admissions philosophy and practices.
* Admissions Profile: Number of inquiries, applications, admits, yield rates, deposit-payers, and newly enrolled degree-seeking students, with appropriate cohort breakdowns, for the most recent year for which this information is available.
* Enrollment Profile: List of all educational programs with enrollments for each program for the last three years (where enrollment is over ten students), indicating whether they are undergraduate or graduate. Provide the current enrollment profile, which may include: Percentage of students by program, FT/PT status, age, gender, geographic origin, racial/ethnic status, and eligibility for financial aid. Where applicable, supply post-graduation placement information and percentage of enrolled students who transferred into the institution in the last three years.
* Enrollment Projections: Five-year enrollment projections, with distribution by program or major, and the assumptions upon which these projections are based.
* Financial Aid Profile: Brochures and other publications on financial aid and, for the last three years, (a) most recent three-year student loan cohort default rates; (b) total tuition and fees; and, where applicable, (c) net price.
* Retention and Graduation Rates: Student retention and graduation rates for the last three years, including clear definitions of each rate and how each is calculated. Provide aggregate institutional rates.
* Student Handbook: The institution’s student handbook and other documents addressing students and student development topics and giving evidence of comprehensive student services, including academic and financial services, and, as appropriate, personal, transfer, admissions, and career counseling services.

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard IV**

**Requirement 3:** For institutions pursuing Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, the institution will graduate at least one class before the evaluation team visit for initial accreditation takes place (Step 7 of the initial accreditation process), unless the institution can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the lack of graduates does not compromise its ability to demonstrate appropriate learning outcomes.

**Requirement 8:** The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

**Requirement 9:** Student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

**Requirement 10:** Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT***

**Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution’s students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution’s mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard V Criteria** | **List of Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Clearly stated student learning outcomes, at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution’ s mission
 |  |
| 1. Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:
 |  |
| 1. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible Standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals
 |  |
| 1. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their missions for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals, and
 |  |
| 1. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders.
 |  |
| 1. Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution’s mission, such uses include some combination of the following:
2. assisting students in improving their learning
3. improving pedagogy and curriculum
4. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services
5. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities
6. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services
7. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs
8. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates, and
9. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.
 |  |
| 1. If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third party providers
 |  |
| 1. Periodic evaluation of the assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide for Standard V.*

**Required Evidence**

* Assessment of Student Learning Documentation: Documentation of an implemented, systematic, and sustained process to assess student learning outcomes, including documentation of programmatic student learning goals and objectives, summarized student learning assessments results for all programs at institutional and unit levels (for programs with more than twenty students enrolled).

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard IV**

**Requirement 8:** The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

**Requirement 9:** Student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

**Requirement 10:** Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT***

**The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard VI Criteria** | **List of Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation.
 |  |
| 1. Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results.
 |  |
| 1. A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution’s mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution’s and unit’s strategic plans/objectives.
 |  |
| 1. Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure are adequate to support the institution's operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
 |  |
| 1. Clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.
 |  |
| 1. Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes.
 |  |
| 1. An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter
 |  |
| 1. Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide for Standard VI.*

**Required Evidence**

* Current Institutional Strategic Plan
* Audited Financial Statements: The institution’s two most recent externally-audited financial statements, including management letters. Provide appropriate supporting documents to help the Commission understand the audited financial statements; if applicable, SEC 10K filings or Form 990.
* Financial Plans and Budget: The financial plans and total institutional budget for revenues and expenditures, in detail, for the current fiscal year and the next five fiscal years.
* Analytical narrative that (1) provides information on the financial plan’s underlying assumptions, (2) provides evidence of the viability of those assumptions, (3) reconciles the financial plan to the institution’s strategic, operating, and other plans, and (4) assesses the institution’s financial capacity and risk factors). If either of the financial statements shows a deficit, include clear, well-founded plans to yield a balance or surplus in a timely fashion.
* Human Resources Data
* Documentation of an implemented, systematic, and sustained institutional assessment process linking planning, assessment and resource allocation decisions.
* Physical Facilities Documentation
	+ A thorough description of physical facilities, including space for instruction, library, student support services, and administrative services
	+ Appropriate documentation regarding ownership (titles, mortgages, liens), and rental and lease agreements (contracts).
* Copies of insurance policies currently in force (fire, casualty, and liability).
* Capital facilities master plan, if any.

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard VI**

**Requirement 8:** The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

**Requirement 10:** Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

**Requirement 11:** The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.

**Requirement 14:** The institution and its governing body/bodies will make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

**Requirement 15:** The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution’s educational programs.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

***STANDARD VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION***

**The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purposed, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.**

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with this standard. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance with this standard or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

*This standard includes the following criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that should be incorporated in your narrative. Complete the following table by including a list of supporting evidence provided for this standard. If a particular criterion is not applicable to this institution, provide a brief explanation of why it is not.*

| **Standard VII Criteria** | **List of Supporting Evidence** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines its roles, responsibilities and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
 |  |
| 1. A legally constituted governing body that:
 |  |
| 1. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution
 |  |
| 1. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities
 |  |
| 1. ensures that neither the governing body nor individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution
 |  |
| 1. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management
 |  |
| 1. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution
 |  |
| 1. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer;
 |  |
| 1. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance
 |  |
| 1. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure that impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest, and
 |  |
| 1. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution.
 |  |
| 1. A Chief Executive Officer who:
 |  |
| 1. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body
 |  |
| 1. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization
 |  |
| 1. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission, and
 |  |
| 1. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.
 |  |
| 1. An administration possessing or demonstrating:
 |  |
| 1. an organizational structure that is clearly defined and that clearly defines reporting relationships
 |  |
| 1. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities
 |  |
| 1. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles
 |  |
| 1. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties
 |  |
| 1. regular engagement with faculty and student in advancing the institution’s goals and objectives, and
 |  |
| 1. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations.
 |  |
| 1. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.
 |  |

*The following evidence is required. Please ensure that this evidence is included in the list you provide.*

**Required Evidence**

* Governing Documents: Provide the bylaws, articles of incorporation, operating provisions or agreements, filings, or any other founding documents and identifying the entit(ies) legally responsible for the institution.
* Governing Board: Provide documentation of the structure, authority, and autonomy of the governing board, including policies and procedures manuals, board and committee procedures, and board and committee minutes. The documentation should describe how the governing board regularly reviews basic policies and include the board’s conflicts of interest policy.
* Governing Board Members: A list of current governing board members, including the name, affiliation, and occupation of each member. Identify those members of the governing board who are remunerated by the institution through salaries, wages or fees; and identify board members who are creditors of the institution, guarantors of institutional debt, or active members of businesses of which the institution is a customer.
* Governance structure: An organizational chart or diagram that clearly conveys all components of the governance structure of the institution, including any owners or related entities.
* Administrative Organization: The organizational chart for the institution, including names and titles of the individuals in each position identified in the chart.
* Continuity of Leadership: Institutional procedures for continuity of leadership in the event that the institution is sold, the owner or president dies, etc.
* Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
* Resume or vita for the chief executive officer including the officer’s name and title
* Evidence that the CEO was appointed by the governing board
* The appointment date of the CEO

**Alignment of Requirements of Affiliation with Standard VII**

**Requirement 7:** The institution has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body that defines its purpose within the context of higher education.

**Requirement 12:** The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution’s mission is being carried out.

**Requirement 13:** A majority of the institution’s governing body’s members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflicts of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution’s district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.

Provide a narrative demonstrating the institution’s compliance with requirements of affiliation. The institution should make an assertion about the extent to which it believes it has achieved compliance. If necessary, provide a clear and concise summary of plans either to come into compliance or to improve the level of compliance, as appropriate.

1. MSCHE will expand the acceptance of domestic applications beyond the current geographic boundaries under the new Application and Candidacy Review Cycle and Monitoring Policy and Procedures and the United States Department of Education (USDE) regulations effective as of July 1, 2020. MSCHE will lift its moratorium on international applications beginning on January 1, 2021, with a phased expansion, first on a limited basis in targeted areas and then more expansively thereafter. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)