Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Standards for Internal Academic Program Review for  
Schools, Departments, and Programs  
October 2007

Purpose: The purpose of these standards is to promote and maintain educational quality at Clark Atlanta University. The review process is initiated by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs through the Provost based on a scheduled time-table. The review is designed to provide schools, departments, and programs with an understanding of each program's strengths and weaknesses. It will ensure that each academic unit will: 1) be accountable for the quality of their programs; 2) make budget decisions based on priorities; 3) ensure that programs are accountable to students; and 4) improve programmatic areas and bring about desired changes based upon an agreed upon timetable. These Core Requirements (CR) and Comprehensive Standards (CS) were identified from those currently approved as Principles of Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 2007.

There ten primary areas of review for each department. The areas of review are:

- Program mission, goals, and objectives.
- Organization, governance, resources
- Faculty
- Strategic Plan / Annual Review
- Curriculum (includes Student Learning Outcomes)
- Student Services
- Support Staff
- Support Services and Facilities
- Off-campus programs
- Distance Learning

IV. Self-Study Process

A. Preparation:

Notification that a unit is scheduled for review of its academic program should signal the official beginning of preparation for the upcoming self-study process. While each unit is free to initiate those steps it deems appropriate in preparation for conducting the self-study, at a minimum these steps should include (1) discussion of the process at meetings with department faculty, staff, and students; (2) outlining preliminary plans for conducting the self-study; (3) discussions regarding the types and sources of data needed; and (4) the identification of any special issues relevant to effectively conducting the process.
B. Role of the Faculty:

The internal review of a degree program is a faculty-driven process. As such, there should be clear documentation that faculty are fully engaged and involved in the preparation, planning, and conduct of the review process. Additionally, faculty should be actively involved in the preparation of the self-study report and the Program Quality Enhancement Plan.

C. The Office of Planning, Assessment and Research will provide units with data needed for the self-study. Based on the discussions held during the preparation period, advance consultation with this office should be sought on any special data needs. Units may also use data generated internally. Documentation for such data should be addressed in the report.

D. Writing the Self-Study Report:

Instructions on the writing of the degree program’s self-study report are contained in Section V below.

E. Questions:

Questions about the process and Standards for Internal Academic Program Review should be referred to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Questions related to data needed for the self-study should be directed to the Director, Office of Planning, Assessment, and Research (OPAR).

V. The Self-Study Report

Assessment of any degree program must flow from its mission, major goals, objectives, and student learning outcomes as well as benchmarking of best practices at peer and aspirant institutions. Therefore, the process should identify peer and aspirant institutions, expected outcome measures, the collection and analysis of valid, relevant, and timely data, and a set of actions to improve the quality and competitiveness of the degree program based on the assessment results. Such assessment requires feedback to the respective department and school and to the university. A chart depicting how this process should flow is shown below.

Academic Program Assessment

Strategic Planning Focus Areas & Objectives → Mission → Program Goals & Objectives → Benchmarking
↑
Action ← Feedback ← Report Generation ← Data Analysis ← Data Collection ← Student Learning Outcomes
↓
Program reviews are conducted against sets of standards (including regional (SACS) accreditation standards and in some cases, professional accreditation standards as they affect the evaluation of degree program quality) and benchmarks of best practices at peer and aspirant institutions. The primary supporting department chair or degree program coordinator in coordination with the faculty, school dean, and the Director, OPAR should identify at least two peer and two aspirant institutions with a similar degree program as the one scheduled for self-study. The Director, OPAR will assist the faculty, department chair or program coordinator in identifying appropriate data points to be used in benchmarking the degree program with that at peer and aspirant institutions. Standards and benchmarks frame the essential processes used by educational institutions in determining the quality of academic programs and should form the basis for the self-study. The standards and benchmarks should be applied to the following:

1. Planning – Assessment of the articulation of the strategic plan, mission statement, major goals, and objectives for each degree program with strategic plans for the school and university

2. Faculty Qualifications – assessment of faculty qualifications (compared to peer and aspirant institutions, per faculty handbook criteria, and regional (SACS) and professional accreditation standards (For documentation purposes, the SACS Faculty Roster Form provided in the Standards for Internal Academic Program Review 2008 – 2011 should be completed for each degree program. In addition, faculty qualification and sufficiency tables provided in AACSB Standards for Accreditation should be completed for each School of Business degree program; faculty qualification and sufficiency tables provided by NCATE Standards for Accreditation should be completed for each School of Education degree program.)

   a) Quality of Teaching (including but not limited to student evaluations of instruction, adequacy of syllabus, and assessment of student learning outcomes, course integration of information technology, innovative teaching methods, and availability to students re advisement and supplemental instruction)

   b) Quality of Scholarship (including but not limited to quality and quantity of published peer reviewed contributions to new knowledge in each faculty member’s discipline, profession, and teaching assignments)

   c) Quality of Service (including service to the department, school, university, profession, and other stakeholder communities)
d) Quality of Administration (for those faculty serving in full-time administrative positions, including but not limited to knowledge of administrative policies and procedures, quality of faculty performance evaluation, availability to faculty and students

3. Curriculum Quality - (per peer and aspirant institutions, faculty handbook criteria, and regional (SACS) and professional accreditation standards); also assessment of the currency and adequacy of the mission statement, major goals, and objectives of the degree program and processes for (1) curriculum reviews and (2) implementation of changes improving the curriculum

4. Assessment Framework for Student Learning Outcomes - (per faculty handbook criteria and regional (SACS) and professional accreditation standards); assessment of (1) processes for measuring the achievement of student learning outcomes and (2) quality of implementation of the assessment framework for the degree program (including but not limited to recommendations for improvements in the degree program based on assessment of student learning outcomes)

5. Organizational Structure and Faculty Governance - Assessment of the adequacy of the organizational structure and faculty governance as it applies to each degree program

6. Student Demographics, Involvement, and Support (per regional (SACS) and professional (AACSBI and NCATE) accreditation standards and compared to peer and aspirant institutions)
   a) Including but not limited to number of students in the degree program by year, GPA, gender, number of graduates, and graduates pursuing advanced degrees
   b) Extent of student involvement in faculty research and degree program related organizations
   c) Scholarship opportunities for students in the degree program
   d) Quality of Student Services – Assessment of the adequacy of student services provided to students in the degree program by the department, school, and university including after-graduation student placement

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e) Quality of Support Staff - Assessment of the adequacy of the support staff provided to faculty and students in each degree program by the department, school, and university

f) Quality of Facilities - Assessment of the adequacy of the facilities required to support each degree program

7. Assessment of the Quality of Off-Campus Programs (if the degree program includes off-campus offerings)

8. Cost Management – Number of full-time faculty and budgeted expenditures (including faculty salaries and fringe benefits as well as other direct and indirect expenditures) for the degree program should be compared to the number of matriculating and graduated students (school and departmental budgets for the self-study year should be used as the major source of data for assessment of cost management for each degree program)

The Standards for Internal Academic Program Review contains the rationale and notes, relevant questions for consideration, and sample documentation for the applicable SACS accreditation standards. The Self-Study Report should be a thorough and comprehensive analysis of each degree program as it meets SACS and professional accreditation standards (e.g., AACSB and NCATE) and as it compares to that at peer and aspirant institutions.

A. Content:

The self-study report should be a concise, well-written document which clearly addresses how well the degree program satisfies each accreditation standard and compares to peer and aspirant institutions. Appropriate data should be used to support this review and any conclusions reached. The self-study report should be a totally self-contained document. The use of appendices and references to other documents is permissible; however, the report should include all information necessary to determine how well each degree program meets a particular accreditation standard and compares to peer and aspirant institutions. For example, when discussing the unit’s mission rather than indicating that “the mission statement is contained in the university’s catalog, which is attached,” the mission should be fully stated in the report itself.

For each of the areas contained in the Standards for Internal Academic Program Review and professional accreditation standards (e.g., AACSB and NCATE), a narrative statement should
be included in the self-study report. The narrative should include, at a minimum, the following:

1. A brief description of each degree program’s current compliance with the standard.

2. A discussion of how compliance with the standard was evaluated or assessed.

3. An indication of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the unit’s compliance with the standard.

4. A discussion of the data used in the assessment of the standard, including an indication of a baseline upon which the compliance is determined. These should be, to the extent possible, quantifiable indices.

5. A discussion of how the degree program compares with the data points in the baseline data set.

6. An indication of any barriers identified which hinder compliance with the SACS or professional accreditation standard and impede the degree program from being competitive with the degree program at peer and aspirant institutions.

7. Specific recommendations identified to improve compliance with each SACS and professional accreditation standard and competitive position relative to peer and aspirant institutions.

8. A brief summary of the results of the assessment of each degree program’s compliance with the SACS and professional accreditation standards and its competitive position relative to peer and aspirant institutions, to include a discussion of how the assessment was carried out.

As noted above, the degree program self-study report should contain an identifiable section on Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. This section should contain, at a minimum, the following:

1. Statement on established student-learning outcomes and the process by which they are reviewed for modification.

2. Description of measures used for assessing student-learning outcomes.
This section should also describe the involvement of faculty and students in assessment activities.

3. Discussion of assessment results.

4. Discussion of and supporting evidence of use of assessment results for program enhancement with particular attention to curriculum, instructional strategies, and program policies and procedures.

B. Format:

The self-study report should be written in a narrative style and should be formatted identically with the SACS and professional accreditation standards and clearly identify how the degree program competitively compares to those at the peer and aspirant institutions in accordance with available date. The issues to be covered under each SACS accreditation standard are contained in the accompanying Standards for Internal Academic Program Review. The report should be written in standard 12-point type and double spaced. All pages should be sequentially numbered. A table of contents should be included showing the location of each standard in the report. A brief introductory section may be included immediately before the standard by standard narrative.

C. Copies:

An original and three (3) copies of the final report should be made. The copies should be printed front to back and bound securely.

D. Transmittal:

A cover memorandum should accompany transmittal of the self-study report to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

(Curriculum) CS 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

Rationale and Notes:

This standard addresses the process of assessment that supports the institution’s administrative and educational support services and serves as the cornerstone of institutional effectiveness. For academic programs and for administrative and educational support services, institutional effectiveness focuses on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning.
Note: CS 3.3.1 focuses on the full range of programs, services, and activities offered by the institution to include educational programs. CS 3.4.1 specifically requires an institution to establish and evaluate learning outcomes for each educational program for which academic credit is offered. CS 3.3.1 underscores the overarching expectation for a comprehensive approach to planning and evaluation in all aspects of an institution. Even though the concept of institutional effectiveness may not be explicitly referenced in all of the comprehensive standards, the accreditation process assumes that all programs and services wherever offered within the context of the institution's activity are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process. Note: CR 2.5 (related to Institutional effectiveness), CS 3.3.1, and CS 3.4.1 all relate directly to institutional effectiveness but each addresses a different aspect. CR 2.5 requires that an institution have an effective process for producing improvement and accomplishing its mission. CS 3.3.1 requires that an institution identify outcomes (resulting from the process required in CR 2.5), evaluate achievement of those outcomes, and demonstrate improvement based on the results of that evaluation. This applies to all educational programs and all administrative and support services. CS 3.4.1 requires that each educational program offered for academic credit establish and evaluate student learning outcomes.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How are expected outcomes clearly defined in measurable terms for each educational program as well as for administrative and educational support services?
- What is the evidence of assessment activities for each educational, administrative, and educational support unit?
- What is the evidence for broad-based participation in assessment activities?
- How are periodic reviews in which programmatic outcomes such as retention, graduation rates, employer and alumni satisfaction, and the like assessed, reviewed, and used for improvements?
- How does the institution’s use of assessment results improve educational programs and administrative and educational support services?

Sample Documentation:

- Documentation of goals and expected outcomes for educational programs and for administrative and educational support services
- Documentation of the evaluation of those outcomes
- Documentation of the use of the findings from assessment to improve the institution
(Curriculum) CS 3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational  
program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved  
by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and  
evaluates program and learning outcomes.

Rationale and Notes:

The tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs. Approval by the faculty ensures that programs contain appropriate courses reflecting current knowledge within a discipline and that they are appropriate for the students enrolled. Approval by the administration affirms that educational programs are consistent with the mission of the institution and that the institution possesses both the organization and resources to ensure the quality of its educational programs. The expectation is that the institution will engage in ongoing planning and evaluation to ensure that, for each academic program, the institution develops and assesses student learning outcomes.

Program and learning outcomes are grounded in the faculty’s knowledge of the content and coherence of the discipline as well as in the learning process and reflect expectations for performance consistent with the level of the program and the mission of the institution. Program and learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program. Methods for evaluating the extent to which students achieve these outcomes are appropriate to the nature of the discipline and consistent over time to enable the institution to evaluate cohorts of students who complete courses or a program. Shared widely within and across programs, the results of this evaluation can affirm the institution’s success at achieving its mission and can be used to inform decisions about curricular and programmatic revisions. At appropriate intervals, program and learning outcomes and evaluation methods are evaluated and revised as appropriate.

Note: CR 2.5, CS 3.3.1, and CS 3.4.1 all relate directly to institutional effectiveness but each addresses a different aspect. CR 2.5 requires an institution to have in place an effective process for producing institutional improvement and for accomplishing its mission. CS 3.3.1 requires that an institution identify outcomes (resulting from the process required in CR 2.5), evaluate achievement of those outcomes, and demonstrate improvement based on the results of that evaluation. This applies to all educational programs and all administrative and support services. CS 3.4.1 requires that each educational program offered for academic credit establish and evaluate student learning outcomes.
Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What is the process for developing and approving educational programs and who is responsible?
- What are the program and learning outcomes for all educational programs, including majors, minors, general education and other institution-wide programs, including distance-learning programs?
- How has the institution evaluated the extent to which students are achieving expected outcomes?
- How has the institution used the results of evaluating student achievement?
- What evidence exists that the institution has established student learning outcomes in all settings, including distance learning, and that they are assessed within the institutional mission?

Sample Documentation:

- Policies and procedures for approving educational programs
- Minutes from faculty and administrative meetings
- Representative examples of program and learning outcomes for each educational program.
- Descriptions of methods for evaluating student achievement of these outcomes
- Reports of the results of evaluation, examples of how the results have been used for program improvement, and examples of how methods of evaluation have been improved over time

(Is this relevant?) CS 3.4.2 The institution’s continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution’s mission.

Rationale and Notes:

This standard recognizes a clear distinction between credit and noncredit activities and reinforces that, when such outreach activities are in place, they should be consistent with the institution’s mission.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What evidence exists that demonstrates that continuing education, outreach, and public service programs are consistent with the institution’s mission?
- What evidence exists that demonstrates that continuing education, outreach, and public service programs are regularly evaluated in relation to the institution’s mission?

Sample Documentation:
• Policies regarding the role and scope of continuing education, outreach, and public service as they relate to the institution’s mission
• Examples of program offerings in continuing education, outreach, and public service including information about the audiences served
• Documentation that continuing education, outreach, and public service activities are regularly evaluated with respect to the institution’s mission and program goals

(Curriculum) CS 3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs/courses offered through consortial relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution.

Rationale and Notes:

A consortial relationship typically is one in which two or more institutions share in the responsibility to develop courses and programs that meet mutually agreed-upon standards of academic quality. A contractual agreement typically is one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (i.e., clinical training, internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider. The institution is responsible for ensuring the quality of all such coursework included on its students’ transcripts as credit earned from the institution and for ensuring that the quality of such programs meets the standards required of similar programs.

An evaluation process that delineates the responsibility and role of all parties to the agreement is basic to the institution’s ability to ensure the quality of the educational programs and courses covered by the agreements. Regular evaluation and comparison of program and course offerings against the institutional mission are also important in establishing educational quality.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:
• How does the institution define “consortium” and “contract” with respect to programs/courses?
• How does an institution’s contract or consortial agreement provide for the following: (1) a clear indication of the responsibilities of all parties to the agreement; (2) provision for ensuring the quality of the programs and courses offered through the agreement; and (3) provision for evaluating the agreement in relation to the purposes of the institution?
(Curriculum) CS 3.4.10 The institution defines and publishes general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

Rationale and Notes:

The institution is responsible for determining course learning outcomes for each educational program. The general education program defines the underlying learning experience that supports the institution’s mission and traditionally provides the “breadth” component to an undergraduate education. Through general education, students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge that introduce a breadth of knowledge and reinforce cognitive skills and affective learning opportunities for each student. An effective general education program has underlying rationale and design with goals consistent with the mission of the institution.

Major program requirements allow for an integrated understanding of the discipline. Such programs, whether at the graduate or undergraduate level, display a clear rationale and design and include clearly stated and measurable goals consistent with the mission of the institution. Each major course of study identifies courses that are designed as introductions to the major, required courses, electives, capstone courses, and any co-requisite courses. Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary majors, or majors within traditional disciplines that deviate substantially from commonly accepted major requirements, require a greater degree of definition and rationale.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- For each undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree program, what evidence exists that the institution (1) designs each program, (2) publishes goals for each program, and (3) provides an identifiable set of experiences for students in each program?
- What is the process for determining what coursework is included in the general education requirements?
- What is the process for determining what coursework is included in the major program requirements?
- How does the institution provide information about its educational programs, including philosophy, goals, and required courses, that is sufficient for a student to make informed choices?
- What role does the faculty play in the design and assessment of each program?
• How does the institution demonstrate that all appropriate
documents, print and otherwise, provide clear, complete, and
consistent information about each major program?

Sample Documentation:
• For all educational programs, evidence that the institution has
published documents, including the catalog and recruitment
materials, that describe general education and program completion
requirements
• For major program requirements and the general education
program, (1) comparative data for degree programs with peer
institutions, (2) professional accreditation, and (3) external program
reviews
• Minutes of curriculum committee meetings
• What is the institution’s process for ensuring the quality of
programs and courses offered through contract or consortial
agreements?
• How does the process involve all parties to the agreement?

Sample Documentation:
• Contracts and consortial agreements that clearly stipulate the
responsibility of each party to ensure program and course quality
• Evidence that the institution evaluates the consortial relationship
and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution

(Faculty) CS 3.4.12 The institution places primary responsibility for the
content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.

Rationale and Notes:
The curriculum is directly related to the institution’s mission and
the educational degrees, certificates, and diplomas. This standard
assumes that the faculty has primary responsibility for the content,
quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. The route for curriculum
approval is typically through faculty-controlled processes that begin
at the department or program level followed by appropriate approvals
within and external to the institution. Initiation of and responsibility for
curriculum content is faculty driven. Additionally, it is the responsibility
of the faculty to assess periodically the curriculum for quality and
effectiveness and make changes as appropriate. When reviewing
the quality of its curriculum, the institution might consider character-
istics such as the following: (1) currency and relevancy of the
theories and practices in the field or discipline; (2) intellectual rigor
appropriate to the level of the degree program; or (3) the
“connectivity” among the components of the curriculum. When considering the *effectiveness* of its curriculum, the faculty establishes learning outcomes of the curriculum and assesses the extent to which these outcomes are being achieved. Consequently, the characteristics for assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum might include the extent to which the curriculum provides opportunities for (1) increasingly complex understandings of theories, principles, and practices; (2) increasingly complex levels of analysis and development of skills; and (3) application of theories and principles.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**

- What is the process for the development, approval, evaluation, and improvement of the curriculum?
- What are the policies and procedures for expanding or limiting the curriculum and what are the faculty’s responsibilities?
- How does the institution ensure the quality and effectiveness of its curriculum so that it is appropriate to its educational programs? What standards for review of curriculum quality does the institution use?
- How does the institution ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the institution’s mission and program offerings?

**Sample Documentation:**

- Faculty handbook, current curriculum development policy or manuals, minutes of curriculum committees describing the role and responsibility of faculty in determining the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum
- Curriculum evaluations conducted by faculty showing attention to curriculum quality and effectiveness
For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

Rationale and Notes:

This standard assumes that individuals competent in the field oversee all majors or curricular areas or areas of concentration in undergraduate and graduate degree programs in order to ensure that each contains essential curricular components, has appropriate content and pedagogy, and maintains currency in the degree. Degree programs normally are coordinated by academically qualified faculty who hold degree credentials or other qualifications appropriate to the degree offered. If responsibility for coordination for curriculum development and review are assigned to persons other than faculty, then the institution should provide appropriate documentation.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What evidence exists that the coordinator for each major, curricular area or concentration in an undergraduate or graduate degree program has the qualifications and credentials for leadership in the development and review of the curriculum?
- What evidence exists that the coordinator provides oversight for assessing the quality of the curriculum for the respective undergraduate or graduate degree programs and for ensuring that the curriculum, as well as the delivery of the curriculum, is educationally sound?

Sample Documentation:

- List of program coordinators, their areas of responsibility, and their qualifications
- Description of coordinator responsibilities

The institution’s use of technology enhances student learning, is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs and ensures that students have access to and training in the use of technology.
**Rationale and Notes:**

This standard addresses the appropriate use of technology to enhance student learning, meet program objectives, and enrich resources available to students and faculty. It is the institution’s responsibility to provide opportunities for students and faculty to develop competencies in the use of technology. In addition to formal training, other opportunities for developing competencies in technology can be provided through access to technology laboratories for students, residence halls where computers are networked with other learners and units, and access to technology for presentation of material, and other means.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**

- How is the institution using technology to enhance student learning?
- What evidence exists that technology is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs?
- How does the institution ensure faculty and student access to technology and to the training, use, and applications of technology?

**Sample Documentation:**

- Documents that contain policies and procedures for the use of technology to enhance student learning
- Evidence that the use of technology in teaching and learning is appropriate and effective
- Evidence that students and faculty have sufficient opportunity for access and training in the use of technology (e.g., schedules and usage patterns)
- Evidence that the institution assesses competencies of students in the use of technology and uses the results for continuous program improvements

*(Curriculum) CS 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. (Only review for those general education core courses that are taught by your unit.)*

**Rationale and Notes:**

Since the general education core is central to educational programs, this standard assumes that the institution will define
specifically which competencies are appropriate to the goals of its general education program and consistent with principles of good practice. The institution is responsible for identifying measures to ensure that students have attained those competencies.

**Note:** This standard addresses college-level competencies within the general education core; it does not require a specific course to address each competency.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**
- What are the specific college-level competencies within the general education program?
- What evidence is available to show that students have attained these competencies?
- How does the institution demonstrate that it identifies competencies that are college-level?

**Sample Documentation:**
- Identification of competencies
- Documentation of justification for defining and evaluating the college-level general education competencies
- Evidence that graduates of undergraduate degree programs have attained the college-level competencies

(Curriculum) CS 3.6.1 The institution’s post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master’s and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.

**Rationale and Notes:**

The course content of post-baccalaureate degree programs, as determined by faculty, is progressively more complex and rigorous than undergraduate courses and is consistent with the expectation of higher education institutions. These advanced degree programs build upon the foundation established by undergraduate programs. Requirements in courses not specifically designed for graduate credit but that allow both undergraduate and graduate enrollment ensure that there is a clear distinction between the learning outcomes of undergraduate students and graduate students.

**Relevant Questions for Consideration:**
- How has the institution clearly defined the content and rigor of post-baccalaureate degree programs?
- What evidence exists that the institution has learning outcomes for
post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and its master’s and doctoral programs indicating that the programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs?

Sample Documentation:

- College catalogs, policies and procedures, and course syllabi or other documents that show differentiation in undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs
- For programs within the same discipline offered at different degree levels, samples of learning outcomes at each level and intended student achievement for outcomes assessed
- Course syllabi describing the advanced body of learning to be accomplished through completion of post-baccalaureate coursework

(Curriculum) CS 3.6.2 The institution ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study.

Rationale and Notes:

Effective graduate instruction fosters independent learning so that graduates have the ability to work and learn independently and contribute to a profession or field of study. Although the extent to which students are expected to demonstrate independent learning will vary with the level of the graduate degree, faculty within graduate programs define the skills and knowledge required and evaluate the ability of students to engage in independent learning.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How do admissions policies for graduate programs ensure that students are prepared to develop skills for independent learning?
- How do the learning outcomes for graduate programs reflect expectations that students will demonstrate independent learning skills?
- What evidence exists that syllabi and degree requirements for graduate programs include activities that foster independent learning?
- How does the institution evaluate students’ independent learning skills?
- How does the institution ensure that students are well prepared for the independent learning required in graduate programs?
Sample Documentation:

- Degree requirements and syllabi including requirements that foster independent learning
- Program and learning outcomes defining expectations for independent learning
- Examples of independent research projects, portfolios, theses, dissertations, or other examples demonstrating independent learning by graduates
- Evidence that resources are adequate to allow graduate students to work and learn independently

(Faculty) CS 3.7.1. The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

Credential Guidelines:

a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctoral or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctoral or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: bachelor’s degree in the teaching discipline, or associate’s degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.

d. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctoral or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a
concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree - usually the earned doctorate - in the discipline.

e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

f. Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

Rationale and Notes

This standard asserts the fundamental principle that qualified, effective faculty members are essential to carrying out the goals of the mission of the institution and ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs of the institution. The emphasis is on overall qualifications rather than simply academic credentials and that, while academic credentials are primary and in most cases will be the standard qualification for faculty members, other types of qualifications may prove to be appropriate. It is also important to note that the documentation and justification of qualifications for each member of the faculty are the responsibility of the institution.

Note: The Commission suggests that institutions use the Commission’s “Faculty Roster Form for Full-time and Part-Time Faculty” or a similar format providing the same information to report the qualifications of faculty. The following faculty should be reported: all full-time and part-time faculty teaching credit courses that can be part of a degree, certificate, diploma, or other credential; faculty teaching developmental or remedial courses; and teaching assistants who are the instructors of record.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How does the mission of the institution influence the determination of the qualifications of the faculty in order to meet its goals?
- How does the institution determine the competencies of members of the faculty and justify that the qualifications of the members of the faculty meet these competencies?
- How does the institution document and justify the qualifications for each member of the faculty?
Sample Documentation:

- A complete roster of faculty, qualifications, and teaching assignments (Use SACS Form on page 22.)
- Policies governing the qualifications of members of the faculty necessary to carry out the mission of the institution and the process for the selection of members of the faculty that ensure these qualifications
- A file or portfolio on each member of the faculty that includes pertinent, up-to-date information describing the qualifications of the faculty member, such as curriculum vitae, teaching evaluations, and institutional qualification justifications in nonstandard situations.

(Faculty) CS 3.7.2. The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

Rationale and Notes:

Since the members of the faculty direct the learning enterprise of an academic institution and are responsible for assuring the quality of the academic program, it is imperative that an effective system of faculty evaluation be in place. The concept of faculty evaluation encompasses a range of processes designed to assess the quality and effectiveness of the performance of each member of the faculty. The overall evaluation system may include a variety of components, but regardless of the evaluation types utilized, it is critical that the faculty evaluation system be consistent with the mission of the institution.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What are the policies, procedures, and criteria that govern faculty evaluation and how are these publicized among the faculty and others?
- What is the procedure used in the evaluation of faculty?
- How does the institution ensure that faculty evaluation policies are sufficiently broad for all faculty, regardless of status?
- How are faculty evaluations administered and used in ensuring the effectiveness of the faculty, especially in terms of student learning?
Sample Documentation:

- Policies and handbooks that describe the faculty evaluation process
- Sample evaluation forms and procedures
- Evidence that evaluations are taking place and being used

(Faculty) CS 3.7.3. The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

Rationale and Notes:

Faculty members are at the core of institutional teaching, learning, scholarship, and research and therefore need to stay current, improve their own skills, and have the opportunity to conduct research and scholarship. In order to establish and sustain a culture in which faculty professional development is valued and pervasive, it is important that institutions develop a systematic and comprehensive approach to offering and supporting activities and programs that assist and encourage members of the faculty to pursue professional development.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What are the policies, procedures, and programs dealing with the professional development of members of the faculty?
- How does the institution support faculty professional development?
- How are members of the faculty informed of professional development opportunities?
- How are professional development activities assessed?

Sample Documentation:

- Policies and procedures governing faculty professional development
- Descriptions of the professional development opportunities supported by the institution and the resources allocated for professional development
- Evidence that members of the faculty are involved in professional development (e.g., reports, faculty files, rosters, grants, etc.)
(Curriculum) CS 4.1 When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.

Rationale and Notes:

An institution needs to be able to document in all educational programs its success with respect to student achievement. In doing so, it may use a broad range of indicators to include, as appropriate, course completion rates, state licensing examinations, job placement rates, or other means relevant to the institution’s mission.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How does the institution document student success in relation to its mission and its educational programs?
- Are the three indicators mentioned above appropriate to the mission of the institution? If so, how does the institution use the findings?

Sample Documentation:

- Sample documentation of student achievement such as trend data showing course completion by discipline, pass rates on state licensing exams, job placement rates by degree program, and others

(Curriculum) CS 4.2 The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to its purpose and goals and to diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.

Rationale and Notes:

To meet its mission, an institution offers educational programs that are appropriate to the type of diplomas, certificates, and degrees awarded. The institution’s curriculum carries out the goals of the educational programs.
Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- How are existing programs an outgrowth of the mission and goals of the institution?
- What evidence exists that the programs are appropriate to diplomas, certificates, and degrees awarded by the institution?
- What evidence exists that the curriculum is appropriate to the programs?

Sample Documentation:

- Description of the mission of the institution and how the curricula are related to that mission
- Documentation that the curricula are consistent with the diplomas, certificates, and degrees awarded by the institution and consistent with good practices in higher education

(Curriculum) CS 4.4 The institution demonstrates that program length is appropriate for each of the degrees offered.

Rationale and Notes:

Accepted practices in higher education are used to determine program length and completion requirements. The faculty determine scope and length based upon the degree being pursued. Degree programs are of sufficient length to include appropriate course work, of sufficient duration to provide for mastery of all aspects of the subject matter.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- What criteria does the institution use to determine the appropriateness of program length?
- How is the program length sufficient for students to gain mastery of the subject matter?

Sample Documentation:

- Documentation of the criteria used in determining program length
- Documents identifying program length (e.g., catalogs, curriculum approval policies, approved curriculum, minutes of curriculum committees, program brochures, program review reports, academic policy manual, degree planning worksheets)
General Instructions for Completing the Faculty Roster Form

1. These instructions apply to the use of the Faculty Roster Form (access: www.sacscoc.org, click onto Resources, click onto Institutional) for all institutions undergoing the process of reaffirmation of accreditation. Additional instructions will be provided by the Commission or its staff for Substantive Change Committees, Special Committees, Monitoring Reports, Fifth Year Interim Reports, Applicant Institutions, Candidate Institutions, and for reaffirmation as needed.

2. Information requested on the form should be provided for all full-time and part-time faculty teaching credit courses that can be part of a degree, certificate, diploma, or other credential. Faculty teaching developmental/remedial courses should also be included. Teaching assistants should be included only if they are the instructor of record.

3. Faculty should be grouped by departments or disciplines (do not group by broad areas such as social sciences or humanities). Faculty with teaching assignments in more than one department should be listed in each department or discipline in which they teach.

Providing Information that Establishes Qualifications

1. Institutions completing the Faculty Roster Form should review Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1 and its referenced Commission guideline “Faculty Credentials” found in the Principles of Accreditation. The guidelines represent commonly-accepted good practice for the academic qualifications of faculty; however, the Commission recognizes that qualifications other than academic credentials (or combined with credentials) may be appropriate for teaching particular courses.

2. The Commission usually accepts common collegiate practice in recognizing an academic discipline, concentration, and/or field of study. Examples include history, mathematics, chemistry, English, sociology, finance, accounting, marketing, and management. For faculty teaching in these areas, it is expected that the institution will provide information that justifies and documents each faculty member’s qualifications relevant to the specific courses they are assigned to teach. For faculty teaching interdisciplinary courses, it is expected that the institution will provide information that justifies and documents the faculty member’s qualifications relevant to the disciplines that are components of the course.

3. When completing the Faculty Roster Form, it may become obvious that only one of the faculty member’s degrees need be cited in order to justify his/her qualifications to teach a specific course. In that case, cite only that one degree. In other cases, it will be necessary to list two or more degrees and to list the number of semester hours in those degrees relevant to the courses assigned. It may also be necessary to indicate additional qualifications such as diplomas or certificates earned (with discipline indicated); related work or professional experience; licensure and certifications; continuous documented excellence in teaching; honors and awards; publications and presented papers; and other
demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. Indicate the dates for these additional qualifications and clearly describe the relationship between these qualifications and the course content and/or expected outcomes of the courses assigned to the faculty member.

4. Institutions are expected to maintain appropriate justification and documentation in the files of all faculty that establish qualifications, including those listed in columns three and four of the Faculty Roster Form.

Instructions for the Columns of the Faculty Roster Form

**Column One.** Provide the name of the instructor and indicate full or part-time status: (F) or (P). Number each instructor consecutively. A full-time faculty member is usually defined as one whose major employment is with the institution, whose primary assignment is in teaching or research, and whose employment is based upon a contract for full-time employees. If a significantly different definition is used for full-time faculty, please provide that definition.

**Column Two.** List from the catalog the course prefix, course number, and course title of all credit courses taught during the requested time period. For each course indicate whether it is developmental (D), undergraduate (U) or graduate (G). Two-year institutions should indicate whether the courses are offered for transfer (T), non-transfer (N) or developmental (D). Information should be provided - separate from the roster - summarizing the content of the courses listed on the roster. Appropriate information might be provided through a catalog or other description of the content of these courses.

**Column Three.** List the earned academic degrees that help qualify the instructor to teach the listed courses. Indicate the discipline (concentration or major) of each degree, the institution that awarded the degree, and, if necessary for establishing qualifications, the total number of graduate semester hours earned in each discipline in which courses have been, or will be, taught. It might also be helpful in establishing qualifications to list majors or semester hours taken at the undergraduate level in the teaching disciplines.

**Column Four.** If necessary to establish adequate Qualifications of faculty for courses assigned, indicate additional qualifications such as diplomas or certificates earned (with discipline indicated); related work or professional experience, licensure and certifications; continuous documented excellence in teaching; honors and awards; publications and presented papers; and other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. Indicate the dates for these additional qualifications and clearly describe the relationship between these qualifications and the course content and/or expected outcomes of the courses assigned to the faculty member. As necessary, provide this information on additional pages.
## Faculty Roster Form
### Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

**Name of Institution:**

**Name of Academic Area, Discipline, Department/School:**

**Academic Term(s) Included:**

**Date Form Completed:**

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<td>Name</td>
<td>Courses Taught</td>
<td>Relevant Academic Degrees and Course Credits Earned</td>
<td>Other Qualifications</td>
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