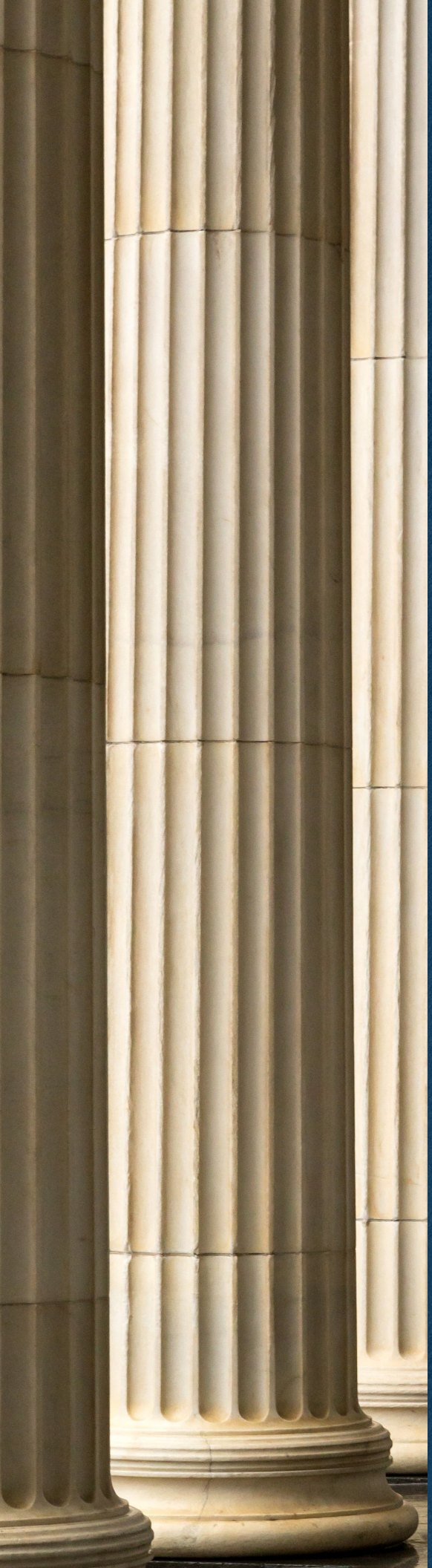

RESOURCE MANUAL

for The Principles of Accreditation:

Foundations for Quality Enhancement

SACSCOC™

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges

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SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

10.1 **The institution publishes, implements, and disseminates academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.** *(Academic policies)*

Rationale and Notes

Effective academic policies related to an institution's educational programs are developed in concert with the appropriate input and participation of the constituencies affected by the policies, conform to commonly accepted practices and policies in higher education, accurately portray the institution's programs and services, and are disseminated to those benefiting from such practices. These academic policies lead to a teaching and learning environment that enhances the achievement of student outcomes and success.

To advance learning, all coursework taken for academic credit has rigor, substance, and standards connected to established learning outcomes. To protect the integrity of degrees offered, the institution is responsible for the quality of all coursework transcripted as if it were credit earned from the institution.

Each institution develops academic policies—such as grading policies, withdrawals, degree completion requirements, academic misconduct policies, syllabus requirements—that are appropriate to its programs and students and that accurately portray its programs and services. Good educational practice presumes that these academic policies lead to a teaching and learning environment that enhances student learning. Faculty members assume responsibility for determining good educational practice and, therefore, should have a substantive role in the development and review of academic policies.

Questions to Consider

- How does the mission of the institution affect its academic practices?
- How are academic policies developed, approved, and revised?
- How and where are academic policies published for those constituencies affected by them?
- What is the role of faculty in determining academic policies?
- Are there examples of the implementation of various academic policies?

Sample Documentation

- Institutional publications that contain academic policies.
- A description of the published process by which academic policies are developed.
- Examples showing implementation and enforcement of academic policies.
- Minutes of meetings in which academic policies are modified or approved.

- Examples of policies that pertain to distance education, to course delivery at off-campus sites, branch campuses, dual enrollment, and for competency-based educational programs, or evidence that policies do not differ in any of these circumstances.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards
Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs
Distance and Correspondence Education
Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure
Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 10.2 *(Public information)*
Standard 12.3 *(Student rights)*
Standard 14.2 *(Substantive change)*

10.2 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies. *(Public information)*

Rationale and Notes

Good educational practice suggests that the institution's constituents be informed about matters such as academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. Such policies and calendars are published and widely distributed.

NOTE
Even if some of these policies were discussed in Standard 10.1 (Academic policies), *information related to how they are made available to students and to the public should be repeated here.*

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution make current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies available to students and other constituents?
- Are these policies made available across all delivery locations and modes of instruction?
- Are there separate policies for graduate and undergraduate students?

Sample Documentation

- Publications that include information about academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies.
- Details on how this information is provided to students taking distance education classes, at off-campus locations, or via other modes of delivery such as competency-based education.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs

Distance and Correspondence Education

Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure

Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 10.1 *(Academic policies)*

10.3 The institution ensures the availability of archived official catalogs, digital or print, with relevant information for course and degree requirements sufficient to serve former and returning students. *(Archived information)*

Rationale and Notes

An institution is obligated to provide to its students, constituents, and the public information about itself that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear and sufficient. Regardless of the name assigned to the publication, the college catalog is one of the most critical publications at any higher

education institution. The catalog describes the institution consistent with its mission statement and sets forth the obligations and responsibilities of both students and the institution.

Because of its importance, the catalog is critical not just in its current edition. Former students often need information pertinent to the course of study and courses taken when they were students. Admissions officials at other institutions and employers are other constituents who often need information from past catalogs. Institutions utilizing print catalogs generally already have long-standing policies for maintaining archival copies. This current standard also emphasizes the importance of this material for archival versions of digital catalogs, including web-based catalogs.

Questions to Consider

- Who is responsible for ensuring archival versions of catalogs are maintained?
- Where are print copies of past catalogs maintained?
- How do former students access the catalog of record for when they were at the institution?
- Is information as to how to obtain access to a former catalog easily accessed by former students and by the general public?
- What are the institution's policies and procedures for updating catalog information?
- How are constituents notified of changes to course offerings or the requirements needed to earn a specific credential?

Sample Documentation

- Details on where archival versions of catalogs are maintained.
- Information on how the catalogs can be accessed by the public.
- Evidence that information is available to the public.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 9.7 *(Program requirements)*

10.4 **The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.** *(Academic governance)*

Rationale and Notes

Because faculty are generally responsible for ensuring the achievement of appropriate student learning and academic program outcomes, it is imperative that an institution establish policies that explicitly delineate the responsibilities and authority of its faculty in academic and governance matters. These published policies clarify the role of the faculty in relation to other constituencies regarding these fundamental aspects of the institution. It is recognized that the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters varies widely across different types of institutions due to differences in organizational structure, mission, and tradition. Nonetheless, all institutions should have clear policies and should act in accordance with these policies.

The tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs (degrees, certificates, and diplomas). Approval by the faculty ensures that programs, including programs offered through collaborative arrangements, contain appropriate courses reflecting current knowledge within a discipline and include courses 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.

Institutional policies concerning the role of faculty in academic matters should make clear that the faculty has primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Documentation should include evidence that faculty actively assume these responsibilities. While department chairs may take a major role in these processes, the evidence should show broad faculty involvement in what are considered fundamental faculty roles.

Questions to Consider

- What are the institution's policies regarding the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters?
- Where are these policies published? Are they accessible to all who are affected by them?
- Are the policies consistently followed?
- How are these policies approved and updated?
- What is the process for developing and approving educational programs?
- Who is responsible for the process?

- What are the policies and procedures for expanding or limiting the curriculum and what are the faculty's responsibilities?
- What is the process for program evaluation and improvement or updating the curriculum?
- How are the faculty involved in these processes? Is it fair to say the faculty responsibility is "primary"?

Sample Documentation

- Policies regarding the role of the faculty in academic and governance matters.
- Details on where these policies are published and how they can be accessed.
- Committee structure and assignments that clarify which members are faculty.
- Minutes and other documents that clearly show the faculty role in academic and governance affairs.
- Procedures for approving educational programs.
- Minutes, forms, and sign-off sheets from relevant committees, both faculty and administrative, that show the program approval process being followed (forms should not be blank).
- Similar documentation for curricular change actions.
- Bylaws and minutes that document 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.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards
Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs
Distance and Correspondence Education
Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications.
See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 4.2.b *(Board/administrative distinction)*
Standard 8.2.a *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*
Standard 8.2.b *(Student outcomes: general education)*

CR 9.1 *(Program content)*
Standard 10.1 *(Academic policies)*
Standard 10.7 *(Policies for awarding credit)*
Standard 10.8 *(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)*
Standard 10.9 *(Cooperative academic arrangements)*

10.5 **The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.** *(Admissions policies and practices)*

Rationale and Notes

Sound admission policies are defined in relation to the institution's mission and are designed to ensure that students who are admitted to the institution or to a specific program can benefit from the institution's programs. Implicit in the policy is that the institution consistently applies the policy to all applicants and transfers; exceptions are limited in number and are based on specific criteria for making exceptions to admission requirements.

Sound admission policies for the institution or a specific program conform to widely accepted higher education standards for admissions and define all admissions categories used by the institution, such as transfer, transient, non-degree, dual enrollment, audit, honors, and probation or conditional. Admission policies are published in official documents and communicated accurately and effectively to prospective students and other constituents.

All accredited higher education institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in student advertising and recruitment. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

NOTE

The SACSCOC policy on Advertising and Student Recruitment contains the following statement regarding recruitment materials:

All statements and representations are clear, factually accurate, and current. Supporting information is kept on file and readily available for review. In the case of programs that are awaiting SACSCOC's approval and inclusion in the institution's accreditation, the institution's communication with both external and internal constituencies clearly and consistently represent the program(s) as "pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges."

That policy contains several other statements that expand on what is meant by accurate representations, and should be referenced by each institution.

Questions to Consider

- What are the basic admissions requirements that apply to all students?
- What are the admission policies for specific programs and how are these policies based on widely accepted standards for undergraduate and graduate applicants?
- Are admissions policies consistent with the mission of the institution?
- Are policies clear and consistently implemented?
- How are exceptions to admissions policies controlled and documented?
- How does the institution disseminate admissions policies and are they uniform in all publications?
- If admission policies differ for various delivery methods or across various campus sites, what are the programs and why are they different (e.g., dual enrollment, branch campuses, online programs)?
- Do recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices, policies, and academic programs?
- What is the approval process for recruitment materials and presentations, and is it followed?
- How are recruitment personnel (staff, volunteers, contractors) trained?
- What are the guidelines for using independent contractors or agents in recruiting students?
  - Do these guidelines assure that independent contractors and agents are governed by the same principles and policies regarding admissions activities as are institutional employees?
  - Are these guidelines enforced?
- How does the institution oversee recruiting activities at branch campuses and at international sites?

Sample Documentation

- Admission policies of the institution and of specific programs.
- Undergraduate and graduate catalogs that include admission policies, standards, and procedures.
- Institutional and specific program brochures and other recruitment materials or electronic resources stating admission policies and procedures.
- Documents describing how the institution evaluates applications and makes admission decisions to the institution and to programs.
- Minutes or other documents showing evidence that the institution follows its admissions policies and that these policies and practices are appropriate.
- Documentation that exceptions are handled appropriately.
- System policy or legislation regarding admission policies and procedures, if applicable.

- Boilerplate expectations for admissions presentations.
- Details on the training of those involved in recruitment.
- Contracts, MOUs, or other documents relating to practices of independent contractors or agents used in recruitment activities.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Advertising and Student Recruitment

Distance and Correspondence Education

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 14.5 *(Policy compliance)*

10.6 An institution that offers distance or correspondence education

(a) ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.

(b) has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

(c) ensures that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

(Distance and correspondence education)

Rationale and Notes

To protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses or programs, an institution takes measures to ensure that a student awarded credit in distance or correspondence education courses is the same student who successfully completes the course and is tested for the achievement of intended student learning outcomes. To this end, an institution is required to verify the identity of a student enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses or programs, ensure that the method used to verify

the identity protects the privacy of students enrolled, and notify the student in advance of enrollment regarding any projected additional charges associated with the verification process.

NOTES

In responding to this standard, all three subparts must be addressed.

Part (b) is not *referring solely to privacy protections that apply to all students (including distance education students) under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The institution is expected to have specific polices to protect the privacy of students taking distance or correspondence courses. If these students utilize the same means of verification of identity as do all students, such as a username and password to access the learning management system, then the institution should explain how the institution protects the privacy of usernames and passwords in general.*

Part (c) may be complicated by circumstances where students must have an examination proctored, but the institution requires the student to find the site. In those cases, the institution has an obligation to make it clear to students in advance of registration or enrollment that there may be charges for this and that the student will need to find an appropriate site.

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution demonstrate that the student who registers in the distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives credit?
- If the distance or correspondence education student never comes to campus, how is the student's identity initially confirmed?
- If the institution utilizes just a username and password, how does the institution ensure this information is not shared by the student when taking online examinations?
- Because the institution is obligated to select a verification method for identifying students enrolled in such courses or programs, how does the institution protect the privacy of students enrolled in distance or correspondence education?
- Do the institution's written procedures for notifying students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification conform to this standard?
- What office(s) is responsible for ensuring that the provisions of this standard are enforced?

Sample Documentation

- Identification of the method(s) used by the institution to verify the identity of the student enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses or programs.
- Institutional technology policies and procedures that apply to usernames, passwords, and protection of data.
- Description of the process for the initial verification of identity.

- Written procedure regarding the protection of privacy of the student enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses or programs.
  - Details on where and how that information is published.
- Written procedure addressing the notification of projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.
  - Details on where and how that information is published.
- Process for ensuring ongoing verification, including persons responsible for implementation.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Advertising and Student Recruitment

Distance and Correspondence Education

Part (b) of this standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

None noted.

10.7 The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.

(Policies for awarding credit)

Rationale and Notes

Good educational practices in higher education assume that institutions adopt sound and generally acceptable policies and procedures for determining what a credit unit means for graduate and undergraduate coursework, taking into account the amount and level of credit for courses. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another. For several decades, the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid. Because of the significance of awarding credit for coursework or

experiences, an institution is obligated to ensure that credit hours awarded for courses and programs conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

The most common means of making these determinations is through academic committees, usually a curriculum committee with approval by the academic administration. While the standard is not prescriptive as to organizational structure, there is a clear expectation that these decisions are made by appropriately qualified persons.

Policies related to determining amount and level of credit should go beyond the expectation that courses are taught in traditional "seat time" fashion. Institutions offer credits for laboratory classes, studios, internships, professional practicums, independent studies, activities courses, and web-based instruction, to mention just a few of the alternatives. Nontraditional course work may vary in format but is equivalent in expected learning outcomes. If the institution uses some measure of credit other than the semester credit hour, either institution-wide or within specific programs (e.g., direct assessment competency-based programs), the institution provides an explanation of equivalency. When undergraduate and graduate courses are offered through nontraditional delivery, the institution awards credit compatible with sound academic practice in the field. A sound academic practice typically involves faculty participation in the evaluation of credit. The institution gives attention to principles developed by nationally recognized organizations, such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, when developing the type of credit and the amount of credit awarded.

NOTE

This standard presumes the institution's credit hour policies include an acceptable definition of credit hours consistent with the SACSCOC policy on Credit Hours.

Questions to Consider

- What is the institution's definition of a credit hour, or its equivalent? Is this definition consistent with commonly accepted practices in higher education?
- What are the institution's policies related to assigning amount and level of credit for undergraduate and graduate courses?
- Are these policies and procedures published in an accessible manner?
- What is the institution's course numbering and naming system?
- If the institution awards credit for courses delivered in format other than semester credit hours, how does the institution ensure that the process for determining the amount of credit is equivalent to the credit earned in the same or similar courses delivered in other formats?
- What are the policies that determine the level and amount of credit awarded for undergraduate and graduate coursework delivered through distance learning technology?
- What is the oversight structure for course approval?
- What is the role of faculty in reviewing academic credit awarded?
- Do those persons responsible for course approval have appropriate academic qualifications?

- In developing policies related to the amount and level of credit awarded, how does the institution use the standards of professional organizations or the practices of peer institutions?
- Are practices under this standard consistent with the institution's own credit hour policies and with the SACSCOC policy on Credit Hours?

Sample Documentation

- The institution's policy for determining credit hours awarded, including the definition of a credit hour used by the institution.
- Policies and procedures for decisions related to the amount and level of credit for courses.
- Details as to where these policies and procedures are published.
- Evidence that the institution consistently applies its policies and procedures in awarding credit for courses and programs.
- Minutes, check sheets, and other documents showing the approval process for the level and amount of credit for courses (not blank forms).
- Descriptions of processes and criteria used to award credit for courses and programs that are not "traditional."
- List of responsibilities and of membership of the institution's curriculum committee or its equivalent, with evidence concerning academic qualifications of membership.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Credit Hours

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs

Distance and Correspondence Education

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 14.5 *(Policy compliance)*

10.8 **The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution's mission.** *(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)*

Rationale and Notes

The key to this standard lies in the institution's obligation to "ensure" academic quality, and to "ensure" comparability, since by awarding credit for learning outside its own educational programs, an institution affirms that students have achieved the knowledge, skills, and experiences comparable to those attained by students who have completed the institution's own courses. This standard applies to approval of transfer credit (including articulation agreements for transfer of credit), advanced placement, credit by examination, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, or similar situations where credit is awarded for learning not originating from the institution itself. This standard *does not apply* to credit transcripted as the institution's own credit that originated from a cooperative academic arrangement (as opposed to being transcripted as transfer of credit); for this circumstance, see Standard 10.9 *(Cooperative academic arrangements)*.

Policies and procedures related to this standard should be approved through appropriate channels, and should be published so that the policies and procedures are available to those affected by the standard (e.g., faculty, current students, admissions staff, and prospective students).

Good practices supporting academic quality in these areas include: (1) linking transfer credit, including credits earned at a foreign/international institution, to clearly delineated outcomes of the institution's own courses and programs; (2) delineating the basis for advanced placement credit awarded for achievements outside commonly accepted programs; (3) awarding credit for experiential learning, professional certifications, and conversion of noncredit activities to credit based on well-documented activities and experiences at the appropriate educational level and evaluated based on clearly developed outcomes for the institution's own courses for which credit is awarded. A sound academic practice typically involves qualified faculty participation in the evaluation of credit.

Questions to Consider

- What are the institution's policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting transfer credit (including entering into articulation agreements for transfer of credit), advanced placement, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, credit by examination, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, and the like?
- Are these policies published in ways that make them accessible to those affected by the policies?
- Are the policies and procedures consistent with the mission of the institution?

- Are the policies clearly written and consistent with commonly accepted practices?
- How are the policies developed and evaluated to ensure comparability to the institution's own courses and degree programs?
- What is the role of faculty in reviewing academic credit awarded?
- How does the institution ensure that accepted coursework and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level?
- How does the institution demonstrate responsibility for the academic quality of the following work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript?
  - Credit awarded under articulation or other agreements with institutions from which students frequently transfer credits.
  - Transfer of credit not under articulation agreement.
  - Advanced placement and other examination-based awards of credit.
  - Experiential learning and prior learning assessment.
  - Professional certificates or other noncredit educational experiences outside a collegiate course.
- How does the institution ensure that students receiving credit for such programs have achieved the same knowledge, skills, and experiences as those who have completed its own coursework?

Sample Documentation

- Policies and procedures for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution.
- Evidence that policies are published and accessible.
- A description of how these policies are developed and updated.
- Examples of how the policies are implemented in practice.
- Forms, sign-off approval letters, and emails (not blank forms).
- Redacted transcripts showing how credits are posted.
- Narrative description of how decisions are made to accept or award credit from other institutions or organizations, including how the institution ensures that coursework and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and are comparable to the institution's own degree programs.
- Copies of articulation or transfer agreements with other institutions or organizations, including agreements between two-year and senior institutions that involve transferring credits for coursework leading to a degree.
- Documents or descriptions of contracts, study abroad and student exchange agreements, or other arrangements with institutions or organizations inside or outside the United States that involve transferring credits for coursework leading to a degree.

- Description of the process of awarding experiential credit and prior learning assessment credit, including how the institution ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and are comparable to the institution's own courses and degree programs.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Credit Hours

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs

Distance and Correspondence Education

Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees

SACSCOC Position Statement:

Transfer of Academic Credit

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

Developing Policy and Procedures Documents

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 10.9 *(Cooperative academic arrangements)*

10.9 **The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcripts courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements.** *(Cooperative academic arrangements)*

Rationale and Notes

It is common for institutions of higher education to enter into consortial agreements with other institutions of higher education or enter into contractual agreements with others to broaden the options for courses or programs offered at the institution. When institutions choose to treat such work in its transcripts as coursework offered by the institution itself, the institution has an obligation to its students and to SACSCOC to ensure the quality and integrity of that coursework that is similar to its obligations for its own courses.

While the institution is responsible for any credit placed on the transcript, including transfer of credit, the institution's obligation when transcripting credit as its own, even when it has not had

full control over all aspects of the delivery of the coursework, is clearly higher. A signed written agreement 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 these agreements. Regular evaluation to validate comparability and approve program and course curricula, faculty qualifications, and the level of student learning against institutional expectations and mission is essential in maintaining educational quality. It is the institution's responsibility to provide documentation that it exercises appropriate oversight to ensure the quality and integrity of all credit transcripted.

NOTES

If an agreement entails courses that are transcripted as transfer of credit, then see Standard 10.8 (Evaluating and awarding academic credit). However, if the agreement entails courses offered or traditional faculty functions offered by another institution of higher education, vendor, or other third party, then this standard (Standard 10.9) applies. Examples of agreements covered by this standard typically include:

- *Geographic or denominational consortia*
- *Agreements involving joint and dual academic awards*
- *Statewide distance education agreements*
- *Types of study abroad agreements (based on the nature of transcripting of credit; e.g., "School of Record" agreements)*
- *Contractual instruction*
- *Contracts where "coaching," curricula, testing, or other traditional functions are provided by a third party*
- *High school dual-credit programs where the institution does not have control over faculty assignments*

These types of cooperative academic arrangements are considered substantive changes, and require submission of the signed contract or agreement prior to initiation. If more than one SACSCOC institution is involved in the agreement, then each should submit the information (or one submission with a coversheet signed by an appropriate representative of each affected SACSCOC institution). A major revision of the contract or agreement should also be submitted. See SACSCOC policy Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions.

Questions to Consider

- What types of cooperative academic arrangements does the institution have where it transcripts courses as its own work?
- Does the institution have a signed contract or memorandum of agreement for each such situation?
- Does the contract or consortial agreement provide for the following?
  - Clear indication of the responsibilities of all parties to the agreement?
  - Provision for ensuring the quality of the programs and courses offered through the agreement?

  - Provision for evaluating the agreement in relation to the mission of the institution?
- What is the institution's process for ensuring the quality of programs and courses offered through cooperative academic arrangements?
- How does the process involve all parties to the arrangement?
- How does credit earned through these agreements appear on the institution's transcript?

Sample Documentation

- Copies of signed contracts and consortial agreements.
- Evidence that the institution regularly evaluates the cooperative academic arrangement against the purpose of the institution.
- Documents that clearly stipulate the responsibility of each party to ensure course quality.
- Documents that clearly stipulate the responsibility of the SACSCOC institution to ensure ongoing compliance with the standards/requirements as applicable to the cooperative academic arrangement.
- Redacted transcripts that demonstrate how the credits earned under these agreements appear on the institution's transcript.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards
Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs
Distance and Correspondence Education
Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 6.2.a *(Faculty qualifications)*
Standard 6.2.b *(Program faculty)*
Standard 9.4 *(Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree)*
Standard 9.5 *(Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)*
Standard 10.8 *(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)*