The Association *for*
Biblical Higher Education
ABHE *Commission on Accreditation*

What's New

Update for Evaluation Teams

February 2019

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Policy/Standard Changes

- **Changes in Policies** – effective immediately

- **Changes in Standards** – institution has 2 years to implement

- **Team Reports** – reference the current Standard/ Essential Element numbers.
  Option: ". . . in Standard 2: EE 1 (old Standard 2a: EE 3)"

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Standard 4

The institution is legally constituted as a nonprofit organization or is a nonprofit subsidiary of a parent organization, authorized by its state or province to operate as an educational institution and grant all degrees and/or offer credentials. The institution has its own governing board with legal and fiduciary responsibility to exercise appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, resource development, and ongoing operations.

– adopted February 2018

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Standard 4

EE 1: Enabling documents that establish the institution as a legal entity in its state or province; protect its mission/ purpose, tenets of faith, and control; and provide a basis for governance and administration. Where an Institution is a subsidiary of a parent organization, it must have its own enabling documents (EE 1)

Essential Element 3—A governing board that has the necessary authority and exercises legal power for the operation of the institution. Where an institution is a subsidiary of a parent organization, the institution must have its own governing board, including representatives from a broader pool than the sponsoring organization alone, and autonomy over institutional decisions.

Essential Element 10—A process for effective recruitment, orientation, and development of board members to ensure stability and new membership.

– adopted February 2018

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Standard 5

The Institution has a team of administrators that brings together its various resources and allocates them to accomplish institutional goals.

– adopted February 2018

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Standard 5

* **EE 1: CEO who has the capacity, is sufficiently engaged with the institution, and has the professional qualifications to lead the institution toward the accomplishment of its mission**
  * Removed are specifics on academic and professional preparation appropriate to the institution's mission
* **EE 2: A chief executive officer appointed by, reporting to, and evaluated on a regular basis by the board**
* **EE 5: Ongoing assessment and enhancement of the performance of administrators**
* **EE 6: Established written policies and procedures to promote effective operations**
* **EE 8: Effective communication and collaboration with appropriate stakeholders**

– adopted February 2018

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Conditions of Eligibility

* **COE #1: (Tenets of Faith)—The institution's board of control affirms agreement with and commitment to the ABHE Tenets of Faith, as evidenced by a copy of the Tenets of Faith signed annually by the chief executive officer of the institution.**
* **COE #2: (Nonprofit Status)—Evidence that the institution is a nonprofit organization or the nonprofit subsidiary of a parent organization.**

– adopted February 2019

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Conditions of Eligibility

* **COE# 6: (Chief Executive Officer)—An institution must have a chief executive officer who has the capacity and authority to lead the institution toward the accomplishment of its mission.**

* **COE #15: (Student Body)—An institution must have sustained and viable student enrollment in its education programs over the past two years (typically an FTE of 10 or headcount of 30 students or more)**

– adopted February 2019

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PROPOSED Institutional Standard 1
Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The institution has a written mission statement that is clear and appropriate to biblical higher education supported by clearly defined institutional goals and student learning objectives.

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PROPOSED Institutional Standard 1
Mission, Goals, and Objectives

1. A clearly written mission state appropriate to biblical higher education.
2. Evidence that the mission statement is developed and periodically reviewed by broad representation from all sectors of the institution and ratified by the governing board.
3. Evidence that the mission statement guides faculty, staff, administration, and the governing board in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, and program development.
4. Clearly articulated institutional goals that directly relate to the mission statement.
5. Clearly articulated student learning objectives for each educational programs that support fulfillment of the mission statement.
6. The mission statement, institutional goals, and student learning objectives are easily located on the institution's website and in its catalog(s).

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PROPOSED Institutional Standard 2
Assessment and Planning

The institution demonstrates that it is accomplishing and can continue to accomplish its mission, fulfill goals and objectives, and improve institutional effectiveness through an ongoing system of assessment and planning.

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PROPOSED Institutional Standard 2
Assessment and Planning

1. **A written, comprehensive assessment plan that describes what data (qualitative and/or quantitative) the institution gathers to demonstrate fulfillment of institutional goals and student learning objectives and how and when data are gathered in an ongoing and structured way.**

2. **Clearly defined and measurable student learning outcomes that support mission fulfillment accompanied by metrics or other means that effectively assess whether or not the institution is achieving its stated objectives.**

3. **Student learning outcomes** appropriate to the higher education credential to be awarded (**certificate, associate, baccalaureate, master's, and/or doctoral study**).

4. Use of multiple means to validate student learning outcomes.

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PROPOSED Institutional Standard 2 (continued)
Assessment and Planning

5. **Ongoing assessment of operations and services to evaluate the extent to which these functions are effective in supporting mission fulfillment and improving institutional effectiveness.**
6. **Meaningful analysis of assessment data and use of results by appropriate constituencies in a clearly documented, ongoing planning process for the purpose of improvement in teaching, learning and institutional effectiveness.**
7. **A written, comprehensive institutional improvement plan based on assessment results and aligned with realistic resource projections.**
8. **The ongoing provision of reliable information to the public regarding institutional performance and student achievement, including graduation rates and employment rates for graduates of professional programs. Such outcomes data must be available via the institution's website through an easily identified link on the homepage.**

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Glossary Terms

* **Goal:** A desire or ambition seeking to be accomplished. A goal is general in nature and typically not measurable. It may apply to an institution, program, et cetera.
* **Objective:** An anticipated or intended result of an activity/set of activities that is specific and measurable. An objective communicates a sought-after or desired result.
* **Outcome:** A consequence or end-result of an activity/set of activities that has been measured and can be demonstrated to be the product of those activities. An outcome communicates demonstrated result.

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Glossary Terms

* **Student Learning Objective:** An anticipated or intended measurable result of a learning activity/set of activities describing what a student will know, be able to do, or believe/affirm.
* **Student Learning Outcome:** A measured or demonstrated end-result of a learning activity/set of activities evidencing what a student knows, can do, or believes/feels.
* **Program Objectives:** An anticipated or intended result of completing of an academic program. Program objectives should be measurable and stated in terms of what a student competing the program will know, be able to do, or believe/feel.

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Team Report Issues

* **Summary statements concerning the Institution's satisfying the Conditions of Eligibility**
    * If **no concerns**, please provide one sentence at the end of the COE's to acknowledge achievement of the COEs
    * If there are **limited concerns** (one-to-three COEs), then feel free to address those issues in one paragraph
    * Many COEs are more fully addressed in the Standards/Essential Elements.

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Team Report Issues

* **Cite Essential Elements** after sentences/paragraphs
  * Evaluators may address more than one Essential Element in a paragraph if there is an obvious achievement of correlating/corresponding issues within a Standard and/or its subpoints—do not write one-sentence paragraphs for each Essential Element.
  * Each Standard should take no more than 2 pages
  * For Standards with sub-sections (Standards 2, 6, 7, 9, 11), no more than 3-4 pages
  * Do not restate the Essential Element before writing the evaluation of the Essential Element issue(s)

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Team Report Issues

* **Enforce connection to the Standards with the Recommendations, and be explicit in the Report**
  * The Team recommends... (Standard XX: EE XX)
  * **Number of Recommendations per Standard**
    * If an Institution is not "substantially complying" with an issue of the Standard, then it should be raised as a Recommendation (<u>not</u> a Suggestion)
    * How many Recommendations are appropriate?
      * Evaluation Team Handbook (p. 27): "Normally, no more than Eleven (11) recommendations should be included in the Report." Discontinued in 2019 (removed from the 2020 Evaluation Team Handbook).
    * If a Recommendation is warranted, then it should be made. Effort should be made to combine recommendations that have connections with one another, even if crossing Standards (EX: Standard 3: EE 7; Standard 7c: EE 2)

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Team Report Issues

* **Be Judicious with Commendations and/or Suggestions**
    * **The Evaluation Team Report is an "audit" of the Institution's compliance with the Standards/Essential Elements. It is <u>not</u> a consultation report and may become public in the near future. Be sure the focus is on an evaluation of the Institution's satisfaction of ABHE Standards/Essential Elements.**
        * **Have conversations of consultation outside of the Report.**
        * **Goal should be to have no more than three-to-five Suggestions per Report.**
        * **Commendations should likewise be limited and apply only when an institution is**
            1. **doing an exceptional job in a particular area <u>compared to all accredited institutions</u>**
            2. **has made exceptional progress in an area of weaknesses**
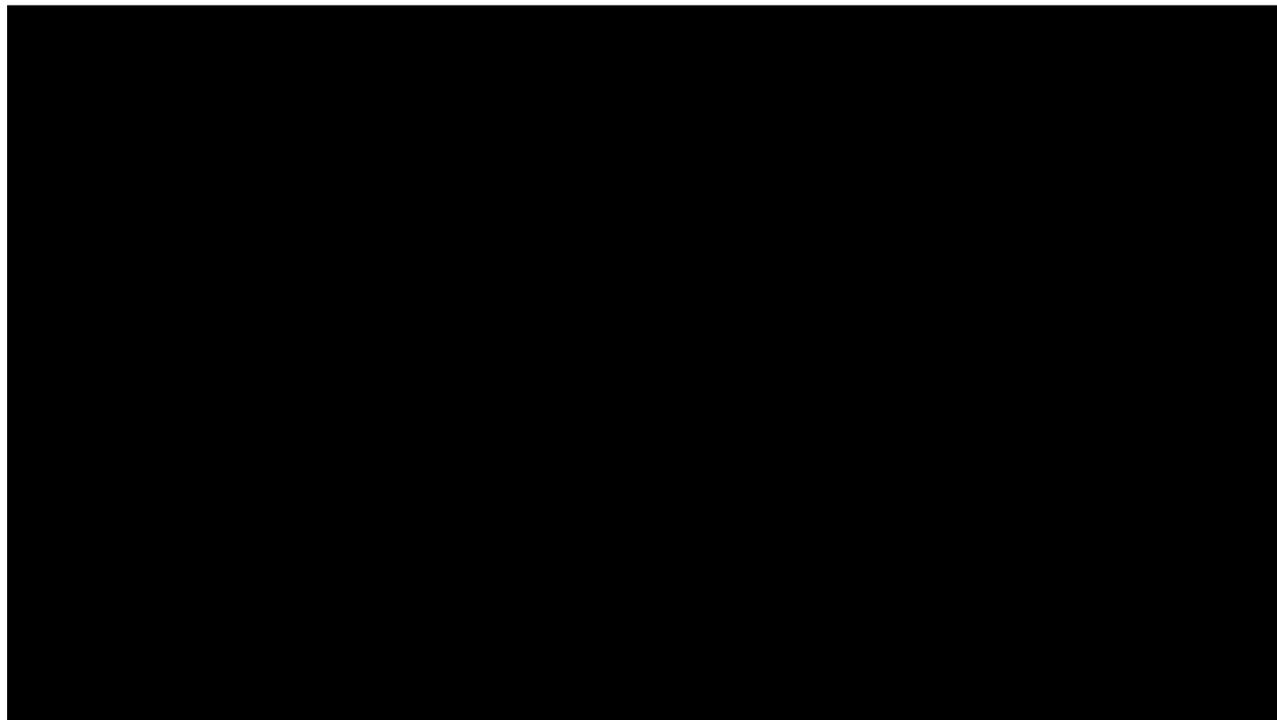   **Do not commend an institution for doing what is expected.**
        * **"Strongly suggests"****—do not use to cover for a mini-Recommendation. A Suggestion is professional advice unrelated to the Standards, not a near Recommendation.**

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Team Report Issues

* **Evaluate, don't just document.**
    * **Why do you believe the institution "substantially complies" with the Standard/Essential Element?**
    * **Where are there substantial weaknesses in meeting the Standard/Essential Element and what are these weaknesses?**
    * **What indicates that these weaknesses or deficiencies exist?**
    * **Synthesize, don't just quote.**
* **More focus is needed on student learning and institutional effectiveness outcomes.**
    * **What is the evidence that the institution fulfills its mission and <u>published</u> objectives?**
    * **Is that evidence strong?**
    * **Is that evidence made available to the public (website/catalog)?**

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