

Exploring the Proposed ABHE Standards 7-9

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ABHE Principles of Accreditation

- An ABHE COA-accredited institution documents that it is in accord with the Association for Biblical Higher Education's Tenets of Faith and has a mission statement appropriate to biblical higher education as defined below:

Higher education in which the Bible is central, and the development of Christian life and ministry is essential. A biblical higher education requires of all students a substantial core of biblical studies, general studies, and ministry formation experiences and integrates a biblical worldview with life and learning. An institution of biblical higher education offers curricula that fulfill its overriding purpose to equip all students for ministry in and for the Church and the world.

- An ABHE COA-accredited institution demonstrates patterns of evidence that indicate substantial compliance with the Conditions of Eligibility and Standards of Accreditation. An ABHE COA-accredited institution can be reasonably expected to continue to (1) achieve its stated mission, (2) substantially comply with the Standards of Accreditation, and (3) pursue ongoing institutional improvement.

ABHE Principles of Accreditation

- An ABHE-COA accredited institution demonstrates compliance with the Standards of Accreditation for all educational sites, instructional modalities, languages of instruction, and pedagogical models, including competency-based and direct assessment programs.
- An ABHE COA-accredited institution documents its compliance with the Standards of Accreditation with appropriate evidence. When a Standard requires a policy statement, the policy is (1) expressed in writing, (2) approved by appropriate bodies, (3) distributed to appropriate personnel, and (4) subject to periodic evaluation. Failure to meet these four conditions will constitute partial or non-compliance. For more information, see the *Policy on Academic Quality as Related to Institutional Mission*.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

The institution's academic programs are designed with appropriate curricula, policies, and practices to impart the knowledge, skills, and practical experiences necessary for lifelong learning, vocational competence, and development of a biblical worldview regardless of location, instructional modality, or language of instruction.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by . . .

1. Academic programs designed with content and rigor characteristic of higher education, and the knowledge and skills needed for lifelong learning commensurate with the level of education offered.
2. Curriculum designed to support development of a biblical worldview through Bible engagement and theological reflection.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

3. Curriculum designed to prepare graduates for effective engagement in diverse and multicultural contexts.
4. Curriculum that progresses from foundational to advanced studies appropriate to the degree and level of education offered.
5. Practical experiences and application of knowledge through practicums, internships, course-embedded experiential learning, or other appropriate means for ministry and professional programs.
6. A cycle of regular academic program review that supports program planning and improvement.
7. An academic advising system that guides the student from the point of program selection to graduation.
8. An academic calendar that meets state, provincial, and federal regulations and considers regional higher educational patterns. Clear, published policies govern any alternative patterns utilized.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

9. Published policies for awarding academic credit commensurate with normative academic and/or governmental definitions, including credit awarded based on direct assessment of intended learning outcomes, if applicable.
10. A system of grading, and associated policies and procedures, that reflects integrity, ensures fairness and consistency, conforms to higher education norms, and facilitates transferability of students' academic credits.
11. Appropriate measures to ensure that the student receiving credit is the person completing the work, and notification in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any additional charges associated with verification of student identity.
12. Advanced standing policies for master-level programs ensuring that a minimum of 50% of semester hours applied to degree requirements are awarded from curricula designed for and delivered at the graduate level.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

13. Policies ensuring that a minimum of 25% of semester hours required for an undergraduate degree and 33% of semester hours required for a graduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
14. A clear and publicized statement of faculty-adopted graduation requirements consistently applied to the certification of graduates.
15. A system of accurate and secure student record keeping consistent with state, provincial and/or federal regulations.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

Relative to this standard, the undergraduate programs of an accredited institution are characterized by...

16. The equivalent of a minimum of 120 semester hours for a baccalaureate degree and 60 semester hours for an associate degree.
17. A core of Bible/theology studies equivalent to a minimum of 30 semester hours for a four- or five-year baccalaureate degree, 24 semester hours for a Canadian three-year baccalaureate degree, 18 semester hours for a non-traditional degree completion program or transfer students needing fewer than 60 semester hours to complete a baccalaureate degree, and 12 semester hours for an associate degree or one- or two-year certificate or diploma program.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

18. A core of general studies equivalent to a minimum of 30 semester hours for a baccalaureate degree or 15 semester hours for an associate degree, with one or more courses drawn from each of the following four disciplines: communication, humanities/fine arts, natural science/mathematics, and social/behavioral sciences.
19. The equivalent of a minimum of 18 semester hours of professional and/or ministry studies for a baccalaureate degree.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

Relative to this standard, graduate programs of an accredited institution are characterized by...

20. The equivalent of a minimum of 30 semester hours for a master's degree, 72 semester hours for the Master of Divinity degree, and 30 semester hours beyond the master's degree for a doctoral degree.
21. Appropriate prerequisite and/or curricular requirements to ensure that students are prepared to pursue graduate studies.
22. Cohesive curriculum designed to advance students' academic knowledge, research skills, and professional expertise substantially beyond that required of undergraduate programs.
23. Curricular requirements that ensure students demonstrate significant ability to engage in biblical integration and theological reflection in relation to their academic or professional disciplines through prerequisites, curricular requirements, or program-level learning outcomes.

Standard 7: Academic Programs and Policies

24. Doctoral-level programs that build upon and advance students beyond the levels of knowledge and competence required of master-level programs, if applicable.
25. Doctoral-level programs that ensure doctoral students demonstrate comprehensive understanding and mastery of the knowledge and skills appropriate to the field of study, if applicable.

Standard 8: Learning Resources and Services

The institution secures, maintains, and ensures access to a collection of learning resources and services necessary to support the research and information needs of the learning community regardless of location, instructional modality, or language of instruction.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by . . .

1. Published policies and procedures relating to the management, access, and security of learning resources and services.
2. Physical and digital resources that effectively support access to and security of learning resources and services.

Standard 8: Learning Resources and Services

3. A collection of learning resources appropriate to the institution's curriculum, co-curriculum, and course offerings with regard to content, format, usage, and currency.
4. Availability of reference, technical, circulation services, and other means of support to meet the research and information needs of the learning community.
5. Appropriate documentation of participation in, and regular review of, resource sharing networks or other cooperative agreements that involve the use of learning resources and services, if applicable.
6. Adequate library staffing, including effective leadership by a director with a graduate degree in library sciences or a related field, and faculty status.
7. Meaningful collaboration of library personnel and faculty in curriculum planning and learning resource development.
8. Curricular requirements, instruction, and reference services supporting development of information literacy skills.

Standard 9: Student Development and Success

The institution provides services that contribute to the holistic development, care, and success of students and are appropriate to the level of education and instructional modality.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by . . .

1. Services that demonstrate a commitment to the holistic development of students and are consistent with institutional mission and an educational community of belonging.
2. Services that address diverse student needs, abilities, and cultures regardless of location or instructional modality.
3. Services that address the needs of at-risk students and improve student achievement and retention.

Standard 9: Student Development and Success

4. Clear, timely, and ongoing communication with students regarding available support services.
5. A commitment to spiritual formation that fosters student personal faith and spiritual development.
6. Academic and/or co-curricular ministry preparation of all students to be effective witnesses, servants, and workers in the church and the world.
7. Systems that encourage student input for the purpose of institutional decision-making.

