Programmatic Accreditation Standards

STANDARD 1
INTEGRITY AND MISSION

The program operates with integrity, supports fulfillment of the institution's mission, and is appropriate to biblical higher education.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

1. Integrity in all program operations, including financial management.
2. Fulfillment of applicable Commission policies and requirements, as demonstrated by honest, complete, and timely communication with all oversight agencies.
3. Written policies and documented processes that ensure equitable and consistent treatment of students and employees.
4. Program values and practices that foster respect for diverse backgrounds and perspectives consistent with the institution's mission and contribute to an educational community of belonging and service.
5. Intended program outcomes that support fulfillment of the institution's mission and lead to student development in biblical/theological- and/or ministry-related studies.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Academic Quality as Related to Institutional Mission; Policy on Ethical Practices; Policy on Falsification of Data; Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*

STANDARD 2
PROGRAM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

The program's system of ongoing planning and assessment demonstrates that it accomplishes, and can continue to accomplish its intended outcomes, and provides opportunities for systematic program improvement.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

1. A written, comprehensive assessment plan that describes the systematic collection of evidence demonstrating fulfillment of student learning outcomes at the program level. The assessment plan explains how and when data are gathered in an ongoing and structured way.
2. Clearly defined and measurable learning outcomes for academic programs (including general education and Bible/theology components of undergraduate degree programs) that align with institutional mission. Student learning outcomes are appropriate to the credential awarded and accompanied by multiple measures that effectively assess the extent to which students are achieving the program's stated outcomes.

3. Implementation of the assessment plan for academic programs evidenced by documented analysis of assessment data and use of results by appropriate constituencies for the purpose of improvement and planning.
4. Outcomes data, disaggregated in missionally-relevant ways, used to demonstrate a commitment to the success of all students in attaining intended learning outcomes.
5. The ongoing provision of reliable and current information to the public, including program retention and completion rates, employment rates for professional programs, and licensure pass rates for programs where licensure is expected. Required outcomes data are available via the institutions' website through an easily identified link on the homepage.
6. Written program improvement plans, informed by assessment, aligned with realistic resource projections, and accompanied by consistent reporting on plan achievement.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Academic Quality as Related to Institutional Mission; Policy on Outcomes*

STANDARD 3
AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

Standard 3 is not applicable to programmatic accreditation review.

STANDARD 4
ADMINISTRATION, STAFF, AND FACULTY

The program has the necessary human resources to achieve its intended outcomes and has implemented policies and procedures to support program effectiveness.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

1. A sufficient number of qualified personnel to provide program services to all stakeholders.
2. A clearly documented organizational structure appropriate to the size and scope of the program in the context of the institution as a whole.
3. Mission-driven values and practices that encourage job satisfaction and employee engagement.
4. Complete, accurate, and securely maintained administrative records of decision-making.

Faculty

Specific to faculty, an accredited program is characterized by…

5. Committed Christian faculty members who engage in the academic, spiritual, and vocational development of students.
6. Faculty members who possess earned and appropriately documented degrees from institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the Council for Higher Education

Accreditation (CHEA), the U. S. Department of Education, or the appropriate provincial government.
7. Undergraduate faculty members who have earned a minimum of a master's degree and teach in an area of documented expertise. Graduate faculty members who have earned a terminal or doctoral degree and teach in an area of documented expertise. Faculty credentials based on factors other than degrees earned are justified by appropriate documentation.
8. A faculty of sufficient size and expertise to ensure the quality of curriculum, achievement of intended program outcomes, and effective program leadership.
9. Systems for evaluating and improving instructional effectiveness to support student learning.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Ethical Practices*

STANDARD 5
FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The program has the financial and physical resources necessary to achieve its intended outcomes.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

1. A budgeting process, informed by program planning, that serves as an effective instrument of financial oversight.
2. Adequate resources, including financial resources, facilities, equipment, supplies, and technology to support institutional mission, achieve intended program outcomes, and ensure continuity of offerings.
3. Reliable technology platforms, training and support, and related policies and procedures, that support institutional mission and ensure accurate and secure institutional and program data.

STANDARD 6
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The program supports and implements enrollment management plans and strategies to effectively recruit and admit qualified students.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

1. Recruitment strategies that are directed toward students whose spiritual commitments, educational goals, and interests are consistent with the intended outcomes of the program.
2. Program admission requirements that are clearly communicated to prospective students.

3. Evaluation procedures and/or programs that reasonably ensure admitted students have attained the requisite educational level, possess the ability to achieve their educational goals successfully, and are adequately prepared for their desired level of study and instructional modality.
4. Accurate and fair descriptions of the institution's admissions policies, transfer credit and prior learning policies and criteria, articulation agreements, and effectiveness claims in institutional publications (print and electronic), statements, and advertising.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Transfer and the Award of Academic Credit; Policy on Validating Credits Earned at Unaccredited Institutions*

STANDARD 7
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The program is 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 program is characterized by . . .

1. 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.
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.
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.
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.

Relative to this standard, an accredited undergraduate program is 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.
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.

Relative to this standard, an accredited graduate program is 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.
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.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Adult Degree Completion Programs; Policy on Biblical and Theological Studies; Policy on Canadian Institution Degree Programs; Policy on Certificate, Diploma, and Two-Year Degree Programs; Policy on Competency-Based Education and Direct Assessment; Policy on General Studies; Policy on Instructional Modalities; Policy on International Education Programs; Policy on Transfer and the Award of Academic Credit; Policy on Validating Credits Earned at Unaccredited Institutions; Guidelines for Doctoral Programs; Guidelines for Ensuring Integrity in Distance Education and Correspondence Studies; Guidelines for Sharing Online Courses*

STANDARD 8
LEARNING RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The program ensures the availability of and 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 program is characterized by . . .

1. A collection of learning resources appropriate to the institution's curriculum, co-curriculum, and course offerings with regard to content, format, usage, and currency.
2. Availability of reference, technical, circulation services, and other means of support to meet the research and information needs of the learning community.
3. Meaningful collaboration of library personnel and faculty in curriculum planning and learning resource development.
4. Curricular requirements, instruction, and reference services supporting development of information literacy skills.

STANDARD 9
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS

The program 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.
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 programmatic decision-making.