

Policy on International Education Programs

Proposed changes clarify requirements for both educational sites and/or online programs offerings outside an institution's home country.

Educational institutions in the U.S. and Canada ~~are establishing branch campuses~~ may establish educational sites abroad or offer distance education (online) programs to students that reside outside their home country ~~and moving entire degree programs overseas~~ in alignment with ABHE policies. ~~Therefore, guidelines are needed to ensure the quality of programs wherever they are offered.~~ The following principles will assist institutions in planning international ~~ventures~~ initiatives and evaluation teams in assessing ~~these programs~~ educational sites/programs offered internationally.

~~These principles are derived from a longer list endorsed by the Executive Directors of the regional institutional accrediting bodies of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation on February 14, 1990, and neither supplant the ABHE Standards for Accreditation, nor replace the processes for approving programmatic change.~~

The Principles

1. The international ~~program~~ site and/or program offerings ~~is~~ are rooted in the institution's stated mission and purposes.
2. The institution cooperates with the appropriate educational community leadership in the host country.
3. The international ~~program~~ site and/or program offerings ~~has~~ have received all appropriate internal ~~programmatic~~ approvals, including that of the governing board, and all appropriate external approvals, ~~where required~~, including government bodies and accrediting associations where required. ~~The program~~ International sites and/or program offerings ~~is~~ are controlled by the institution and its board.
4. The institution documents the accepted legal basis for its operations in the host country where required.
5. ~~The program~~ The institution specifies the educational needs to be met by the international ~~program~~ site and/or program offerings.
6. ~~The content of the program is~~ Program offerings offered internationally are subject to review by ~~the program's~~ program faculty and ~~is~~ are taught by faculty with appropriate academic preparation and language proficiencies.
7. While ~~the program, where appropriate,~~ international program offerings ~~is~~ may be adapted to the culture of the host country, the standard of student achievement ~~in~~ for the international

~~program site/program offerings~~ is equivalent to the standard of student achievement on the institution's home campus and in its distance education offerings.

8. The institution currently uses and assures ~~the continuing~~ use of adequate physical facilities for its international ~~education program~~sites/program offerings, ~~including classrooms, offices, and libraries, and provides access to computer facilities where appropriate if applicable.~~
9. The institution ~~has demonstrated~~ demonstrates ~~its~~ financial capacity to underwrite the international ~~program site/program offerings~~ without diminishing ~~its~~ financial support of the home campus. Financing of ~~the international program~~ sites/program offerings is incorporated into the regular budgeting and auditing process.
10. International students admitted abroad meet admissions requirements ~~similar to equivalent~~ to those used for international students admitted to the home campus, including appropriate language proficiencies.
11. The institution exercises control over recruitment and admission of students ~~in for the international program~~ international site/program offerings and all such students are recognized as students of the ~~program~~ institution.
12. All academic credits earned ~~in at the international program site and/or through international~~ program offerings are applicable to comparative degree programs at the ~~program home~~ institution.
13. The institution maintains official records of academic credit earned ~~in its international program~~ at its international sites/program offerings and the official transcript of record follows the institution's practices.
14. The institution assures that its international ~~program site/program offerings~~ provides a supportive environment for student development consistent with the culture and mores of the international setting, and students in the international program are fully informed as to services that will or will not be provided.
15. The institution's primary catalog describes its international ~~program~~ site/program offerings.
16. In instances where contractual relationships are established, the official contract is available in all languages of the contracting parties.
17. Procedures for site/program termination are available to provide appropriate protection for enrolled students.

Applicable Standards: Standard 7

Applicable Policies: Policy on State/Government Authorization

Adopted February 1998; Proposed February 2026