

Standard VII

Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students;
2. a legally constituted governing body that:
 - a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;
 - b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;
 - c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;
 - d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;
 - e. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;
 - f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer;
 - g. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;
 - h. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;
 - i. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution;

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3. Chief Executive Officer who:
 - a. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;
 - b. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;
 - c. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;
 - d. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness;
4. an administration possessing or demonstrating:
 - a. an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships;
 - b. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities;
5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.
 - c. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles;
 - d. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties;
 - e. regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives;
 - f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and