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| **Trinity 2014-2016 Middle States Self-Study: Understanding MSCHE Standards and Fundamental Elements** |
| *Below are the 14 Standards for Accreditation in Middle States and the “Fundamental Elements” we must satisfy.* |
| *In the column to the right please make your notations about Trinity’s fulfillment of the standard.* *Use these questions as a guide for your comments:**Does Trinity fulfill the standard? How well?* *What evidence supports fulfillment of the standard? Evidence Aligned with Fundamental Elements?**Where is there exposure for lack of evidence or sub-par performance? Where is there evidence of excellence?* *What recommendations can we make for improvement?* |
|  | **YOUR COMMENTS** |
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| **Standard 1**Mission and Goals**The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context****of higher education and indicates whom the institution serves and what****it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals, consistent with****the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify****how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are****developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of****its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and****shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Mission and Goals**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:clearly defined mission and goals that:guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in makingdecisions related to planning, resource allocation, program andcurriculum development, and definition of program outcomes;include support of scholarly and creative activity, at levels and of thekinds appropriate to the institution’s purposes and character;are developed through collaborative participation by those whofacilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional improvementand developments;are periodically evaluated and formally approved;are publicized and widely known by the institution’s members;mission and goals that relate to external as well as internal contexts andconstituencies;institutional goals that are consistent with mission; andgoals that focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutionalimprovement. |  |

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| **Standard 2**Planning, Resource Allocation, andInstitutional Renewal**An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based****on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and****utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal.****Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the****strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and****change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Planning, etc.**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:goals and objectives or strategies, both institution-wide and forindividual units that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn fromassessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and areused for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unitlevels;planning and improvement processes that are clearly communicated,provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use ofassessment results;well defined decision-making processes and authority that facilitatesplanning and renewal;the assignment of responsibility for improvements and assurance ofaccountability;a record of institutional and unit improvement efforts and their results;andperiodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation,and institutional renewal processes. |  |

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| **Standard 3**Institutional Resources**The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary****to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and****accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and****efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of****ongoing outcomes assessment.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Institutional Resources**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:strategies to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of,institutional resources required to support the institution’s mission andgoals;rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determineallocation of assets;an allocation approach that ensures adequate faculty, staff, andadministration to support the institution’s mission and outcomesexpectations;a financial planning and budgeting process aligned with the institution’smission, goals, and plan that provides for an annual budget andmulti-year budget projections, both institution-wide and amongdepartments; utilizes planning and assessment documents; andaddresses resource acquisition and allocation for the institution and anysubsidiary, affiliated, or contracted educational organizations as well asfor institutional systems as appropriate;a comprehensive infrastructure or facilities master plan andfacilities/infrastructure life-cycle management plan, as appropriate tomission, and evidence of implementation;recognition in the comprehensive plan that facilities, such as learningresources fundamental to all educational and research programs and thelibrary, are adequately supported and staffed to accomplish theinstitution’s objectives for student learning, both on campuses and at adistance;an educational and other equipment acquisition and replacement processand plan, including provision for current and future technology, asappropriate to the educational programs and support services, andevidence of implementation;adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative andauxiliary operations, and rational and consistent policies and proceduresin place to determine allocation of assets;an annual independent audit confirming financial responsibility, withevidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit’s accompanyingmanagement letter; andperiodic assessment of the effective and efficient use of institutionalresources. |  |

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| **Standard 4**Leadership and Governance**The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of****institutional constituencies in policy development and****decision-making. The governance structure includes an active****governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional****integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource****development, consistent with the mission of the institution.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Leadership and Governance**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:a well-defined system of collegial governance including written policiesoutlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty andreadily available to the campus community;written governing documents, such as a constitution, by-laws, enablinglegislation, charter or other similar documents, that:delineate the governance structure and provide for collegialgovernance, and the structure’s composition, duties andresponsibilities. In proprietary, corporate and similar types ofinstitutions, a separate document may establish the duties andresponsibilities of the governing body as well as the selection process;assign authority and accountability for policy development anddecision making, including a process for the involvement ofappropriate institutional constituencies in policy development anddecision making;provide for the selection process for governing body members;appropriate opportunity for student input regarding decisions that affectthem;a governing body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest andof an appropriate size to fulfill all its responsibilities, and which includesmembers with sufficient expertise to assure that the body’s fiduciaryresponsibilities can be fulfilled;a governing body not chaired by the chief executive officer;a governing body that certifies to the Commission that the institution isin compliance with the Requirements of Affiliation, accreditationstandards and policies of the Commission; describes itself in identicalterms to all its accrediting and regulatory agencies; communicates anychanges in its accredited status; and agrees to disclose informationrequired by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities,including levels of governing body compensation, if any;a conflict of interest policy for the governing body (and fiduciary bodymembers, if such a body exists), which addresses matters such asremuneration, contractual relationships, employment, family, financial orother interests that could pose conflicts of interest, and that assures thatthose interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with theimpartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty tosecure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution;a governing body that assists in generating resources needed to sustainand improve the institution;a process for orienting new members and providing continuing updatesfor current members of the governing body on the institution’s mission,organization, and academic programs and objectives;a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment of thegoverning body in meeting stated governing body objectives;a chief executive officer, appointed by the governing board, with primaryresponsibility to the institution; andperiodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership andgovernance. |  |

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| **Standard 5**Administration**The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate****learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and****support the institution’s organization and governance.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Administration**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institutiontoward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility foradministration of the institution;a chief executive with the combination of academic background,professional training, and/or other qualities appropriate to an institutionof higher education and the institution’s mission;administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and trainingto carry out their responsibilities and functions;qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity ofthe institution;adequate information and decision-making systems to support the workof administrative leaders;clear documentation of the lines of organization and authority; andperiodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures andservices. |  |

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| **Standard 6**Integrity**In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and****the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to****ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for****academic and intellectual freedom.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Integrity**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:fair and impartial processes, published and widely available, to addressstudent grievances, such as alleged violations of institutional policies.The institution assures that student grievances are addressed promptly,appropriately, and equitably;fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation and dismissal ofemployees;sound ethical practices and respect for individuals through its teaching,scholarship/research, service, and administrative practice, including theavoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in allits activities and among all its constituents;equitable and appropriately consistent treatment of constituencies, asevident in such areas as the application of academic requirements andpolicies, student discipline, student evaluation, grievance procedures,faculty promotion, tenure, retention and compensation, administrativereview, curricular improvement, and institutional governance andmanagement;a climate of academic inquiry and engagement supported by widelydisseminated policies regarding academic and intellectual freedom;an institutional commitment to principles of protecting intellectualproperty rights;a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, andadministration for the range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, andperspectives;honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements,advertisements, and recruiting and admissions materials and practices;required and elective courses that are sufficiently available to allowstudents to graduate within the published program length;reasonable, continuing student access to paper or electronic catalogs;when catalogs are available only electronically, the institution’s web pageprovides a guide or index to catalog information for each catalogavailable electronically;when catalogs are available only electronically, the institution archivescopies of the catalogs as sections or policies are updated;changes and issues affecting institutional mission, goals, sites, programs,operations, and other material changes are disclosed accurately and in atimely manner to the institution’s community, to the Middle StatesCommission on Higher Education, and to any other appropriateregulatory bodies;availability of factual information about the institution, such as theMiddle States Commission on Higher Education annual data reporting,the self-study or periodic review report, the team report, and theCommission’s action, accurately reported and made publicly available tothe institution’s community;information on institution-wide assessments available to prospectivestudents, including graduation, retention, certification and licensing passrates, and other outcomes as appropriate to the programs offered;institutional information provided in a manner that ensures student andpublic access, such as print, electronic, or video presentation;fulfillment of all applicable standards and reporting and otherrequirements of the Commission; andperiodic assessment of the integrity evidenced in institutional policies,processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented. |  |

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| **Standard 7**Institutional Assessment**The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process****that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and****goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Institutional Assessment**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluateand improve the total range of programs and services; achievement ofinstitutional mission, goals, and plans; and compliance with accreditationstandards that meets the following criteria:a foundation in the institution’s mission and clearly articulatedinstitutional, unit-level, and program-level goals that encompassall programs, services, and initiatives and are appropriatelyintegrated with one another (see Standards 1: Mission and Goalsand 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal);systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitativeand/or quantitative measures that:maximize the use of existing data and information;clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing;are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidenceto inform decisions;support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessingstudent learning and responding to assessment results;clear realistic guidelines and a timetable, supported by appropriateinvestment of institutional resources;sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to besustainable;periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of theinstitution’s assessment process;evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed withappropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resourceallocation, and renewal (see Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation,and Institutional Renewal) to improve and gain efficiencies in programs,services and processes, including activities specific to the institution’smission (e.g., service, outreach, research); andwritten institutional (strategic) plan(s) that reflect(s) consideration ofassessment results. |  |

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| **Standard 8**Student Admissions and Retention**The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and****abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them****through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Student Admissions**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:admissions policies, developed and implemented, that support andreflect the mission of the institution;admissions policies and criteria available to assist the prospective studentin making informed decisions;programs and services to ensure that admitted students who marginallymeet or do not meet the institution’s qualifications achieve expectedlearning goals and higher education outcomes at appropriate points;accurate and comprehensive information regarding academic programs,including any required placement or diagnostic testing;statements of expected student learning outcomes and information oninstitution-wide assessment results, as appropriate to the programoffered, available to prospective students;accurate and comprehensive information, and advice where appropriate,regarding financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, and refunds;published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfercredit and credit for extra-institutional college level learning that state thecriteria established by the institution regarding transfer of credit; andongoing assessment of student success, including but not necessarilylimited to retention, that evaluates the match between the attributes ofadmitted students and the institution’s mission and programs, andreflects its findings in its admissions, remediation, and other relatedpolicies. |  |

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| **Standard 9**Student Support Services**The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary****to enable each student to achieve the institution’s goals for students.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Student Support Services**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:a program of student support services appropriate to student strengthsand needs, reflective of institutional mission, consistent with studentlearning expectations, and available regardless of place or method ofdelivery;qualified professionals to supervise and provide the student supportservices and programs;procedures to address the varied spectrum of student academic and otherneeds, in a manner that is equitable, supportive, and sensitive, throughdirect service or referral;appropriate student advisement procedures and processes;if offered, athletic programs that are regulated by the same academic,fiscal, and administrative principles, norms, and procedures that governother institutional programs;reasonable procedures, widely disseminated, for equitably addressingstudent complaints or grievances;records of student complaints or grievances;policies and procedures, developed and implemented, for safe and securemaintenance of student records ;published and implemented policies for the release of studentinformation; andongoing assessment of student support services and the utilization ofassessment results for improvement. |  |

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| **Standard 10**Faculty**The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs****are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified****professionals.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Faculty**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:faculty and other professionals appropriately prepared and qualified forthe positions they hold, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined,and sufficiently numerous to fulfill those roles appropriately;educational curricula designed, maintained, and updated by faculty andother professionals who are academically prepared and qualified;faculty and other professionals, including teaching assistants, whodemonstrate excellence in teaching and other activities, and whodemonstrate continued professional growth;appropriate institutional support for the advancement and developmentof faculty, including teaching, research, scholarship, and service;recognition of appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, studentlearning, research, and service;published and implemented standards and procedures for all faculty andother professionals, for actions such as appointment, promotion, tenure,grievance, discipline and dismissal, based on principles of fairness withdue regard for the rights of all persons;carefully articulated, equitable, and implemented procedures and criteriafor reviewing all individuals who have responsibility for the educationalprogram of the institution;criteria for the appointment, supervision, and review of teachingeffectiveness for part-time, adjunct, and other faculty consistent withthose for full-time faculty;adherence to principles of academic freedom, within the context ofinstitutional mission; andassessment of policies and procedures to ensure the use of qualifiedprofessionals to support the institution’s programs. |  |

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| **Standard 11**Educational Offerings**The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor,****and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission.****The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives,****including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Educational Offerings**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities. These elements also apply to all other educationalactivities addressed within Standard 13.educational offerings congruent with its mission, which includeappropriate areas of academic study of sufficient content, breadth andlength, and conducted at levels of rigor appropriate to the programs ordegrees offered;formal undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs—leadingto a degree or other recognized higher education credential—designed tofoster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis oflearning;program goals that are stated in terms of student learning outcomes;periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of any curricular, co-curricular,and extra-curricular experiences that the institution provides its studentsand utilization of evaluation results as a basis for improving its studentdevelopment program and for enabling students to understand their owneducational progress (see Standards 9: Student Support Services and14: Assessment of Student Learning);learning resources, facilities, instructional equipment, library services,and professional library staff adequate to support the institution’seducational programs;collaboration among professional library staff, faculty, andadministrators in fostering information literacy and technologicalcompetency skills across the curriculum;programs that promote student use of a variety of information andlearning resources;provision of comparable quality of teaching/instruction, academic rigor,and educational effectiveness of the institution’s courses and programsregardless of the location or delivery mode;published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfercredit that describe the criteria established by the institution regardingthe transfer of credits earned at another institution. The consideration oftransfer credit or recognition of degrees will not be determinedexclusively on the basis of the accreditation of the sending institution orthe mode of delivery but, rather, will consider course equivalencies,including expected learning outcomes, with those of the receivinginstitution’s curricula and standards. Such criteria will be fair,consistently applied, and publicly communicated;policies and procedures to assure that the educational expectations, rigor,and student learning within any accelerated degree program arecomparable to those that characterize more traditional program formats;consistent with the institution’s educational programs and studentcohorts, practices and policies that reflect the needs of adult learners;course syllabi that incorporate expected learning outcomes; andassessment of student learning and program outcomes relative to thegoals and objectives of the undergraduate programs and the use of theresults to improve student learning and program effectiveness (seeStandard 14: Assessment of Student Learning). |  |
| **Additional Elements for Graduate and****Professional Education**graduate curricula providing for the development of research andindependent thinking that studies at the advanced level presuppose;faculty with credentials appropriate to the graduate curricula; andassessment of student learning and program outcomes relative to thegoals and objectives of the graduate programs (including professionaland clinical skills, professional examinations and professional placementwhere applicable) and the use of the results to improve student learningand program effectiveness (see Standard 14: Assessment of StudentLearning). |  |

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| **Standard 12**General Education**The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and****demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential****skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific****and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and****technological competency.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of General Education**An accredited institution offering undergraduate degrees and some graduateinstitutions are expected to possess or demonstrate the following attributes oractivities:a program of general education of sufficient scope to enhance students’intellectual growth, and equivalent to at least 15 semester hours forassociate degree programs and 30 semester hours for baccalaureateprograms; (An institution also may demonstrate how an alternativeapproach fulfills the intent of this fundamental element.)a program of general education where the skills and abilities developedin general education are applied in the major or concentration;consistent with institutional mission, a program of general education thatincorporates study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives;institutional requirements assuring that, upon degree completion,students are proficient in oral and written communication, scientific andquantitative reasoning, and technological competency appropriate to thediscipline;general education requirements clearly and accurately described inofficial publications of the institution; andassessment of general education outcomes within the institution’s overallplan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessmentresults are utilized for curricular improvement. |  |

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| **Standard 13**Related Educational Activities**The institution’s programs or activities that are characterized by****particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship****meet appropriate standards.** |  |
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| **Basic Skills**Under prepared students may benefit from basic skills or developmental coursesprovided by an institution as part of its educational offerings. When offered,such pre-college level courses, taken prior to or concurrent with enrollment indegree credit courses, can prepare the student for success in achieving his or hereducational goals.**Fundamental Elements of Basic Skills**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:systematic procedures for identifying students who are not fullyprepared for college level study;provision of or referral to relevant courses and support services foradmitted under-prepared students; andremedial or pre-collegiate level courses that do not carry academic degreecredit. |  |
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| **Certificate Programs**Certificate programs are postsecondary non-degree credentials includingpre-baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, post-masters, or post-doctoral level,granted upon completion of a coherent, sequential program of study, usually forcredit. Such certificate programs and the courses included within them shouldfollow the institution’s usual development, approval, review, and assessmentprocesses; should include articulated expected student knowledge, skills, andcompetency levels; and should comply with industry, national, or otherdefinitions of such credentials, where appropriate.**Fundamental Elements of Certificate Programs**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:certificate programs, consistent with institutional mission, that haveclearly articulated program goals, objectives and expectations of studentlearning and that are designed, approved, administered, and periodicallyevaluated under established institutional procedures;published program objectives, requirements, and curricular sequence;program learning goals consistent with national criteria, as appropriate;available and effective student support services; andif courses completed within a certificate program are applicable to adegree program offered by the institution, academic oversight assures thecomparability and appropriate transferability of such courses. |  |

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| **Experiential Learning**Experiential learning generally refers to knowledge or skills obtained outside ofa higher education institution. Recognition of college-level experiential learning,which is derived from work, structured internships, or other life experience, mayfacilitate a student’s progress without compromising an institution’s integrity orthe quality of its degrees. An institution’s policies and procedures shouldprovide appropriate consideration, consistent with good educational practice, forthe individual student who has gained college level learning from other sources.However, procedures to assess learning for the award of academic credit(especially where such credit is part of an accelerated degree program) shoulddefine college-level learning and state clearly that credit is awarded fordemonstrated learning, and not merely for experience.**Fundamental Elements of Experiential Learning**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:credit awarded for experiential learning that is supported by evidence inthe form of an evaluation of the level, quality and quantity of thatlearning;published and implemented policies and procedures defining themethods by which prior learning can be evaluated and the level andamount of credit available by evaluation;published and implemented policies and procedures regarding theaward of credit for prior learning that define the acceptance of such creditbased on the institution’s curricula and standards;published and implemented procedures regarding the recording ofevaluated prior learning by the awarding institution;credit awarded appropriate to the subject and the degree context intowhich it is accepted; andevaluators of experiential learning who are knowledgeable about thesubject matter and about the institution’s criteria for the granting ofcollege credit. |  |
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| **Non-credit Offerings**Non-credit offerings may be offered on-site and through distance educationmodalities. To the extent that non-credit offerings are an important part of aninstitution’s activities, they should be consistent with its mission and goals.Whether these offerings are internally or externally developed, appropriatelyqualified professionals with responsibility to the institution should haveoversight for the design, delivery, and evaluation of such offerings. If non-creditcourses are potentially applicable to for-credit programs at the institution,academic oversight should assure the comparability and appropriatetransferability of such courses.**Fundamental Elements of Non-credit Offerings**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:non-credit offerings consistent with institutional mission and goals;clearly articulated program or course goals, objectives, and expectationsof student learning that are designed, approved, administered, andperiodically evaluated under established institutional procedures;academic oversight assures the comparability and appropriatetransferability of such courses, if courses completed within a non-creditor certificate program are applicable to a degree program offered by theinstitution; andperiodic assessment of the impact of non-credit programs on theinstitution’s resources (human, fiscal, physical, etc.) and its ability tofulfill its institutional mission and goals. |  |
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| **Branch Campuses, Additional Locations,****And Other Instructional Sites**(Including Business/Corporate Locations and Study Abroad)Educational offerings at branch campuses, additional locations, or otherinstructional sites—including study abroad locations and business/corporatelocations—may extend learning opportunities to a variety of populations, someof which are not otherwise served by the institution. Programs so deliveredshould meet standards comparable to those of other institutional offerings.**Fundamental Elements of Branches,****Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:offerings at branch campuses, additional locations, and otherinstructional sites (including study abroad locations and programsoffered at business/corporate sites) that meet standards for quality ofinstruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness comparable tothose of other institutional offerings;activities and offerings at other locations meet all appropriate standards,including those related to learning outcomes;adequate and appropriate support services; andperiodic assessment of the impact of branch campuses, additionallocations, and other instructional sites on the institution’s resources(human, fiscal, physical, etc.) and its ability to fulfill its institutionalmission and goals. |  |

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| **Distance Education, Distributed Learning, and****Correspondence Education**Distance education or distributed learning is a formal educational process thatuses technology to deliver instruction to students who are separated from theinstructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between thestudents and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Thetechnologies may include the Internet, one-way and two-way transmissionsthrough open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiberoptics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audioconferencing; or videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs if used in a course in conjunction with any of thetechnologies listed.Correspondence education differs from distance education. As defined inFederal regulation, correspondence education is provided through one or morecourses by an institution under which the institution provides instructionalmaterials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on thematerials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction betweenthe instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and isprimarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typicallyself-paced.Programs delivered through either distance education or correspondenceeducation modalities— whether by the Internet, television, video-conferencing,or other means—should meet academic and learning support standards,appropriate to the type of delivery, comparable to those offered in moretraditional formats within higher education. Student learning objectives andoutcomes should be consistent across comparable offerings, regardless of whereor how they are provided.Institutions offering programs through distance education modalities alsoshould take appropriate steps to ensure that the student who registers in adistance education or correspondence education course or program is the samestudent who participates in and completes the course or program and receivesacademic credit. Institutions may utilize various technologies or other means,such as a secure login and passcode, proctored exams, or other technologies orpractices that are effective in order to verify student identity.**Fundamental Elements of****Distance Education, Distributed Learning, and****Correspondence Education**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:distance education or correspondence education offerings (includingthose offered via accelerated or self-paced time formats) that meetinstitution-wide standards for quality of instruction, articulatedexpectations of student learning, academic rigor, and educationaleffectiveness. If the institution provides parallel on-site offerings, thesame institution-wide standards should apply to both;consistency of the offerings via distance education or correspondenceeducation with the institution’s mission and goals, and the rationale forthe distance education delivery;planning that includes consideration of applicable legal and regulatoryrequirements;demonstrated program coherence, including stated program learningoutcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificateawarded;demonstrated commitment to continuation of offerings for a periodsufficient to enable admitted students to complete the degree orcertificate in a publicized time frame;assurance that arrangements with consortial partners or contractors donot compromise the integrity of the institution or of the educationalofferings;validation by faculty of any course materials or technology-basedresources developed outside the institution;a system of student identity verification that ensures that the studentwho participates in class or coursework is the same student who registersand receives academic credit; that students are notified at the time ofregistration or enrollment of any additional student charges associatedwith the verification of student identity; and that the identity verificationprocess protects student privacy;available, accessible, and adequate learning resources (such as a library orother information resources) appropriate to the offerings at a distance;an ongoing program of appropriate orientation, training, and support forfaculty participating in electronically delivered offerings;adequate technical and physical plant facilities, including appropriatestaffing and technical assistance, to support electronic offerings; andperiodic assessment of the impact of distance education on theinstitution’s resources (human, fiscal, physical, etc.) and its ability tofulfill its institutional mission and goals. |  |
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| **Contractual Relationships****And Affiliated Providers**As institutions seek to improve the ways in which they provide education totheir students, they may find it more practical or efficient to enter into consortialarrangements or contractual relationships with other institutions ororganizations to provide certain aspects of the education experience, includingfaculty, recruitment of students, and course/program development. Because anaccredited institution is responsible for all activities carried out in theinstitution’s name, the Commission’s accreditation standards, policies, andprocedures—including those on outcomes assessment, advertising, andrecruitment—are fully applicable to any contractual arrangements with anotherregionally accredited institution or with a non-regionally accreditedorganization. Contractual relations with for-profit firms or other institutionsrequire diligent care to protect an institution’s integrity and to avoid abuse of itsaccredited status.An affiliated provider may be a subsidiary, parent, “sister” or other entity(for-profit or non-profit) legally related to the institution or unrelated (exceptthrough contractual arrangement) to the accredited institution. Depending onthe specific relationship, such providers may or may not be included within thescope of the institution’s accreditation. Relevant factors might include matterssuch as use of the same or similar names, ownership, incorporation,management, control of curricula, finances, acceptance of credits,degree-granting authority, and extent of activities. However, whether or not theaffiliate is included within the scope of the institution’s accreditation, the natureof the affiliation should be made clear both to the Commission and to the public,with particular attention to such issues as whether the provider offers its ownprograms or grants its own degrees; whether students are distinct from orconsidered to be students of the parent institution; what student learning andsupport services are available; and whether courses offered by the affiliatedprovider are applicable to a degree program offered by the accredited institution.Attention should be given to the impact of the affiliated entity on theinstitution’s resources and the institution’s ability to fulfill its mission and goals.**Fundamental Elements of Contractual****Relationships and Affiliated Providers**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities:contractual relationships with affiliated providers, other institutions, ororganizations that protect the accredited institution’s integrity and assurethat the institution has appropriate oversight of and responsibility for allactivities carried out in the institution’s name or on its behalf;consistency of any course or program offered via contractualarrangement with the institution’s mission and goals; andadequate and appropriate accredited institutional review and approval ofwork performed by a contracted party in such functional areas asadmissions criteria, appointment of faculty, content of courses/programs,instructional support resources (including library/informationresources), evaluation of student work, and outcomes assessment. |  |

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| **Standard 14**Assessment of Student Learning**Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or****other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge,****skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate****higher education goals.** |  |
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| **Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning**An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the followingattributes or activities.clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes (seeStandard 11: Educational Offerings), at all levels (institution,degree/program, course) and for all programs that aim to foster studentlearning and development, that are:appropriately integrated with one another;consonant with the institution’s mission; andconsonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevantdisciplines;a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluateand improve student learning that meets the following criteria:systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitativeand/or quantitative measures that:maximize the use of existing data and information;clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing;are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidenceto inform decisions; andinclude direct evidence of student learning;support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessingstudent learning and responding to assessment results;clear, realistic guidelines and timetable, supported by appropriateinvestment of institutional resources;sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to besustainable; andperiodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of theinstitution’s student learning assessment processes;assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence thatstudents are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes;evidence that student learning assessment information is shared anddiscussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teachingand learning; anddocumented use of student learning assessment information as part ofinstitutional assessment. |  |
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