
Guidelines for Institutions Serving as a School of Record

A School of Record is an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (i.e., accredited institution) that documents and awards credits for study abroad courses or programs, taken overseas or domestically, with an institution/organization not accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (i.e., non-accredited institution). This includes study abroad programs offered by independent program providers that collaborate with an accredited institution to transcript coursework taken by students at locations other than their home campus. While such programs are typically a semester in length, they can also be for shorter periods to include a summer term or semester break. The accredited institution which transcribes such coursework acts as a School of Record.

It is incumbent upon the School of Record to verify the academic integrity of these courses or programs to validate their quality before awarding credit. This policy is intended to ensure Schools of Record do so in conformity with academic integrity and transparency, have appropriately trained personnel for evaluating such courses or programs, and have established processes for evaluation that are applied in a consistent manner.

If an accredited institution is acting as a School of Record, evaluation of the institution's School of Record activities will occur at least at the time of an institution's comprehensive evaluation. Institutions with plans to become a School of Record for the first time must submit a proposal for approval as a substantive change prior to implementation as in most cases such arrangements involve "... engaging another organization (as by contract) to provide direct instructional services." (See the Commission's *Policy on Substantive Change* and its *Policy on Contractual Arrangements Involving Courses and Programs*.)

In evaluating institutions acting as a School of Record, the Commission considers the following:

1. **Standard 1: Mission, Organization, Governance, and Planning** (1.13)

1.13 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty qualifications, and other aspects of academic policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and control.

Examples of evidence include:

The School of Record has a designated faculty or staff member responsible for monitoring and evaluating the relationships with the non-accredited institutions/organizations offering the programs for which it awards credit.

Regular visits are made by the School of Record to the program site(s) to assess the content, quality, effectiveness, and integrity of academic programming offered and resources available.

2. Standard 2: *The Academic Program, Faculty, and Students* (2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.18, 2.19, 2.24)

2.1 The institution offers collegiate-level programs consisting of a curriculum of studies that leads to a degree. Degree programs and other awards have a coherent design and are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, continuity, sequential progression, and synthesis of learning.

2.2 Academic programs and initiatives align with the institution's mission and are supported by sufficient resources.

2.5 A bachelor's degree consists of a minimum of 120 credits, an associate's degree a minimum of 60 credits, a master's degree a minimum of 30 credits. An institution must have approval to offer specific modified degrees with fewer credits (see Policy on Innovation, and Guidance for Institutions Preparing Proposals to offer Bachelor's Degrees of Fewer than 120 Credits). At the bachelor's level, curricula include substantial requirements at the advanced undergraduate level, with appropriate prerequisites.

2.13 The institution demonstrates its clear and ongoing authority and administrative oversight for the academic elements of all courses for which it awards institutional credit. It retains, even with contractual, dual enrollment, or other arrangements, responsibility for the design, content, quality and delivery of courses.

2.15 Credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning is awarded only with appropriate faculty and academic oversight and is limited to 75% for credentials of 30 credits or fewer. Student learning and achievement should be demonstrated to be at least comparable to breadth, depth, and quality of the institutionally provided learning experiences. Such credit does not substantially diminish the proportion of intermediate and advanced coursework in a student's academic program.

2.18 There are sufficient faculty and academic staff appropriate to the institution's mission, size, and scope.

2.19 The preparation, qualifications, and evaluation of all faculty and academic staff are appropriate to the nature of their assignments.

2.24 The institution regularly identifies the needs of its student populations and systematically makes provisions for responding to them and regularly assesses the effectiveness of such provisions. (See also 4.2)

Examples of evidence include:

The coursework transcribed by the School of Record is in an academic discipline offered at that institution.

The School of Record ensures that the coursework it transcribes meets its own academic standards.

The School of Record has policies ensuring academic integrity if it records courses or programs that include internships, independent study, directed research, service learning, credit based on prior learning, etc.

The School of Record has clear protocols for the transcribing of such coursework. The transcripts include notations as to the source of recorded coursework and specific designations of titles, grades, credits, etc. of the courses.

The School of Record ensures that the faculty and staff who evaluate courses taken overseas or domestically with a non-accredited institution/organization are qualified to evaluate such courses and are, if relevant, appropriately trained in international curricula and faculty credentials to conduct the evaluations.

In the evaluation to award appropriate credit, faculty and staff pay attention to such matters as course or program objectives, course outlines and syllabi, contact or credit hours, assignments and outcomes, among others.

3. Standard 3: *Institutional Resources* (3.9, 3.10, 3.11)

3.9 The institution provides access to information and learning resources—physical and/or digital—that are sufficient for the needs of its academic programs, research activities, and public service mission.

3.10 The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical, information, and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes and to support student learning. Sufficient resources are allocated to maintain and enhance them.

3.11 The institution's facilities are constructed and maintained in accordance with legal requirements to ensure access, safety, and security.

Examples of evidence include:

The School of Record assesses the quality of academic resources at the program site (such as the instructional facility, availability of information resources, technological capacity, etc.).

4. Standard 5: *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure* (5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

5.1 The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs, including its research activities if relevant, and in its dealings with all constituents, the general public, and the Commission.

5.2 In presenting the institution to its constituents, the public, and the Commission, the institution provides information through its website and other means that is accurate, timely, readily accessible, clear, and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution, including details on the total cost of education, net price, student debt, loan repayment and default, and student success, and includes information on how the student's degree will benefit them post-graduation.

5.3 The institution publishes its accreditation status, complaint and public comment procedures, transfer and credit policies, articulation agreements, list of programs offered and student services, cost, financial aid, and anti-discrimination policies.

Examples of evidence include:

The School of Record performs its responsibility in a transparent fashion. Transparency carries with it, but is not limited to, the obligation to ensure that credit transcription policies and processes are clearly and publicly articulated to students before they enroll in the courses or programs. These policies include any fees, timeframe for such transcription work, any limitations whereby all or part of the coursework would not be accepted, and any other matters that might be of concern to students and institutions receiving these transcripts.

The School of Record identifies its current partner(s) (i.e., the non-U.S.-accredited institutions/organizations or independent program providers with whom it collaborates in the relationship) on its public webpage(s) dedicated to the School of Record information.

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