



Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad

The New England Commission of Higher Education will consider for eligibility interested independent institutions of higher education that declare themselves to be American-style institutions.

To be declared eligible to apply for candidacy with the New England Commission of Higher Education, an institution operating entirely outside the United States and its territories must meet the following requirements. Candidate and accredited institutions must continue to fulfill these requirements as specified in the *Standards for Accreditation*.

Independence

1. The institution has formally adopted a statement of mission, which demonstrates that the fundamental purposes of the institution are educational, and which is also appropriate to a degree-granting institution and appropriate to those needs of society it seeks to serve;
2. Has a charter and/or other formal authority from the appropriate government agency authorizing it to grant all degrees it awards; has the necessary operating authority for each jurisdiction in which it conducts its activities and is operating within its authority. If the institution is not legally eligible for local government approval, it otherwise documents its standing and significant support from the local community and other relevant communities of interest;
3. Has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's standards;
4. Has a governing board that includes representation reflecting the public interest that oversees the institution, working to assure the fulfillment of its mission and advance the institution's level of quality; assures that two-thirds of the board members, including the chair, have no personal or immediate familial financial interest in the institution, including as employee, stockholder or shareholder, corporate director, or contractor;
5. Has a chief executive officer, appointed by and responsible to the governing board, whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution and who possesses the requisite authority;
6. Devotes all, or substantially all, of its gross income to the support of its educational purposes and programs.

American-Style

7. The institution publicly declares itself to be an American-style institution, for example, through its name, mission statement, catalog, and other declarations and actions that reflect its commitment to offering an American-style education abroad;
8. Has a governing board, administration, faculty, and professional staff including a significant proportion of Americans and others with experience in American higher education who are collectively prepared to ensure the institution offers an American-style education and meets the Standards for Accreditation;
9. Uses English as a principal language of instruction and operation, sufficient to permit an evaluation by the Commission;
10. Offers academic programs that are comparable in terms of length, curriculum, objectives, learning outcomes, and degrees awarded to those offered by regionally accredited institutions in the United States;
11. In addition to study of the areas of specialization proper to its principal educational programs, requires a coherent and substantive program of general education at the postsecondary level, comparable to those offered by institutions in the United States, as either a prerequisite to or a clearly defined element in those programs; documents a commitment and resource base sufficient to facilitate students' achievement of the goals of general education;
12. Has financial records that relate clearly to the institution's educational activities and has these records externally audited annually; financial statements are prepared using accounting principles recognized in the United States (i.e., U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles – GAAP – or International Financial Reporting Standards reconciled to U.S. GAAP).

Educational Mission and Programs

13. The institution offers one or more collegiate-level education programs, consistent with its mission, that lead to a degree in a recognized field of study and requires at least one year to complete;
14. Awards the bachelor's, master's, or doctor's degree or, if it grants only the associate's degree, includes programs leading to degrees in liberal arts or general studies or another area of study widely available at the baccalaureate level of regionally accredited colleges and universities;
15. Has, for each of its educational programs, clearly defined and published objectives appropriate to higher education in level, standards, and quality, as well as the means for achieving them, including a designated course of studies acceptable for meeting degree requirements, adequate guidance to degree candidates in the satisfaction of requirements, and adequate grading or evaluation procedures;
16. Awards only degrees appropriate to each graduate's level of attainment;

17. Has adopted a statement specifying the potential students it wishes to serve, and admits qualified students to its programs under admission policies consistent with this statement and appropriate to those programs;
18. Has students enrolled in and pursuing its principal educational programs at the time of the Commission's evaluation;
19. Has graduated at least one class in its principal educational programs before the Commission's evaluation for accredited status.

Resources

20. The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to carry out its stated purposes;
21. Has faculty sufficient in number, qualifications, and experience to support the academic program offered, including an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential to the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes;
22. Has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience, to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purposes.

Transparency

23. The institution has available to students and the public a current and accurate website and catalog or comparable official publication setting forth purposes and objectives, entrance requirements and procedures, rules and regulations for student conduct, programs and courses, degree completion requirements, full-time and part-time faculty and degrees held, costs, refunds, and other items related to attending or withdrawing from the institution.
24. The institution agrees to submit any dispute involving the final denial, withdrawal, or termination of candidacy or accreditation to initial arbitration prior to any other legal action.

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