



SACSCOC™

Conversations About Educational Quality

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Sample standards for discussion related to educational quality:

- Core Requirement 9.2 (Program length)
- Core Requirement 9.3 (General education requirements)
- Standard 10.7 (Policies for awarding credit)
- Standard 10.8 (Evaluating and awarding academic credit)



Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

1. Identify factors to consider when evaluating educational quality.
2. Identify characteristics of a convincing case for compliance for standards related to educational quality.
3. Practice articulating a rationale for compliance using multiple scenarios.



Core Requirement 9.2: Program Length

The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.



Core Requirement 9.3 General Education Requirements

The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:

- (a) is based on a coherent rationale.
- (b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
- (c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.



Standard 10.7: Policies for Awarding Credit

The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.



Standard 10.8
Evaluating and Awarding Academic Credit

The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution’s mission.



Factors to Consider

- What is the level of engagement by full-time, academically-qualified faculty?
- Are the faculty members providing instruction appropriately qualified?
- What is the framework for providing oversight and review of program quality, the depth and breadth of course content, and for ensuring academic rigor?
- What procedures are in place to ensure that students are prepared for the educational experiences being provided?



Factors to Consider

- Describe the process for regular assessment and review to evaluate effectiveness.
- How do student learning outcomes compare with other coursework offered by the institution?
- What mechanisms are in place evaluate student success in meeting established learning outcomes?
- What structures are in place to protect the integrity of credit and degrees awarded by the institution?
- Are there relevant peer practices, professional organizational standards, or other higher education practices to guide action?



An Effective Case for Compliance

Narrative

- Provides a clear rationale, referencing supporting evidence
- Describes the evidence (“walking the reader through the documentation”) relevant to each compliance component
- Explains why the evidence supports a determination of compliance

Evidence

- Documents that describe how the institution operates: bylaws, strategic plan, catalog, handbooks, manuals, policies, or procedures; and
- Documents that show how the institution operates in practice: meeting minutes, completed inventories, completed evaluations, completed audits, completed course approval forms, completed degree audits, copies of student complaints, assessment rubric results, or redacted transcripts



Questions?

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