



MEMORANDUM

TO: SACSCOC Membership

FROM: Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President

DATE: February 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Alternative Graduate Programs

It has come to our attention that some institutions are offering alternative tracks in their programs at the masters and doctoral level which require fewer than 30 semester hours. Often, these tracks have been developed following SACSCOC approval of the original degree program which required 30 semester hours or more. Institutions which offer such alternative graduate degree pathways are reminded that Core Requirement 9.2 (*Program length*) of the [Principles of Accreditation](#) requires that “post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional” degrees be “at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent.” The standard also requires that “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.” Such a justification would need to be provided any time the institution is asked to demonstrate compliance with CR 9.2. Institutions will also want to be prepared to demonstrate that such degrees comply with Standard 9.6 (*Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum*), Standard 9.7 (*Program requirements*), and the SACSCOC policy [Quality and Integrity of Educational Credentials](#).

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or if we may be of assistance to you in any way.