

Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) for Applicant Institutions

Understanding the IERs

The IERs are initial prerequisites for applicant institutions aspiring to candidacy status. They are used primarily for the staff visit. They may be viewed as a developmental checklist of basic requirements, which indicate institutional readiness to proceed toward the self-study for candidacy. In the initial staff visit, the IERs provide a simple checklist review of the institution in key elemental areas and provide a basis for the staff report. In a self evaluation by a college leader, they may also provide a self check. The IERs are not criteria referenced, but rather self evident as a simple “Yes-No” checklist.

The IERs do not provide the means of evaluating institutional effectiveness in mission accomplishment as do the Standards and Criteria. Neither are they meant to serve as a basis for the institution’s self study.

Institutional Eligibility Requirements for Applicant Institutions

Checklist

The Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs) are prerequisites for applicant institutions aspiring to candidacy status. In this sense, they may be looked upon as a developmental checklist. The IERs are not intended to provide the institution a broad basis for evaluating its effectiveness in the accomplishment of its mission as do the Standards and Criteria. However, they do provide a prescribed set of basic elements necessary for the successful operation of an institution of higher learning. **This checklist must be filed with the TRACS Executive Director along with your written Report and recommendations to the institution visited. It will be used in determining the institution's level of readiness to process toward Candidacy.**

Yes No

_____ _____

- 1. A charter and/or authority from the appropriate governmental agency to operate legally and to award a certificate, diploma, or degree within the state it is located.**

A state may give an institution approval to offer religious degrees under a religious exemption, and TRACS may approve that institution for the accreditation process. However, TRACS prefers that an institution meet, or be moving to meet as non-exempt, the requirements of the state for offering an academic degree or religious degree. A charter and written state authority to operate are required.

Comments:

_____ _____

- 2. A governing board that has the authority to carry out the mission of the institution and that includes representation reflecting the public interest, and whose members do not have contractual, employment, or personal financial interests with the institution.**

A legal governing board is required. The governing board may have one member from the administration on the board, usually the president, who may be a voting member. In those cases where the board may require some adjustments to meet the above requirements, TRACS will take into consideration that there is a plan to meet the requirements prior to candidacy. Board members who have loaned money or assets to the institution may stay on the board but must not vote on the issues that involve the loan.

Comments:

Yes No

3. A chief executive officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution and who possesses the authority needed to manage the affairs of the institution.

The institution must employ a qualified full-time administrator to head a leadership team. This person may be the president or vice-president who has the administrative authority to execute the board's policies. In some cases the president may be the pastor of the church that founded the institution who has extended authority to an executive vice-president for operations. In evaluation for candidacy, the institution must comply with the organizational and administrative criteria. The leadership team consists minimally of a president and chief academic officer. The term "full-time" is interpreted here as one who possesses a written full-time contract from the board based on a written job description outlining duties and responsibilities, and who is not contracted full time by another organization.

Comments:

4. A clearly defined and published statement of mission, formally adopted by the governing board, which demonstrates that the fundamental purposes of the institution are educational, appropriate to a degree-granting institution, and appropriate to the needs of the constituencies it seeks to serve.

The mission must simply be clearly stated and be in agreement with the institutional practices and long-range plans. All variations in the mission or practice must be corrected through a well developed plan to bring the two into agreement.

Comments:

5. A comprehensive, clearly-written, published Biblical Foundations statement that is in harmony with the TRACS Biblical Foundations statement.

The Biblical Foundations statement for the institution does not have to be written word for word like the TRACS Biblical Foundational Statement, but it must reflect the concepts covered by the TRACS statement. There may be a number of statements approved by the institution. This is acceptable as long as they do not contradict the statement approved by the Accreditation Commission.

Comments:

Yes No

6. One or more postsecondary educational programs of at least one academic year and consistent with its mission, with clearly defined and published educational objectives appropriate to higher education in level, quality, and standards - as well as a clear statement of its means for achieving in either a diploma/certificate or a degree (associate, bachelor, master, doctorate).

The institution must have a program that leads to a diploma/certificate or a degree. The initial quality will be based on the course objectives and requirements for graduation as compared to national norms. Apparent weaknesses will be noted and must be corrected prior to candidacy consideration.

Comments:

7. A program of general education required for all associate and bachelor degrees.

The institution must specify the requirements for general education and they should be consistent with national norms. A full-time, annually contracted, qualified faculty member not employed full-time by another organization must head up this program.

Comments:

- 8. **Clearly defined and published objectives for each of its educational programs which are appropriate for higher education in level, quality, and the means for achieving them, including a designated course of studies acceptable for meeting diploma, certificate, or degree requirements, plus adequate guidance to degree candidates in the satisfaction of requirements and adequate grading or evaluation procedures.**

The institution must have a set of published objectives for each educational program that meets normally accepted national norms. Syllabi must be on file for all courses offered.

Comments:

Yes

No

- 9. **Learning resources, including a library, that adequately support the educational programs offered, plus appropriate learning equipment and materials.**

The institution must provide library and adequate support services for all programs offered and consistent with the needs of the students and faculty. A full-time qualified librarian must be contracted. Library information may be requested in a separate document.

Comments:

- 10. **Faculty sufficient in number to support the educational programs offered including:**

- a. **A minimum of one contracted full-time faculty, with appropriate earned credentials from a USDE-recognized accredited institution, to head each educational program offered, including general education. Full-time faculty is interpreted to mean a faculty member who is contracted annually to teach a minimum of 24-30 semester hours or the equivalent at the undergraduate level and a minimum of 18-24 semester hours or the equivalent at the graduate level.**

The FT faculty member/s may not hold a full-time contract with another educational organization. Duties must be spelled out in a job description. A contract must be on file showing teaching assignments, advising, and office hours. Document and support any full-time employment other than teaching at the college.

Comments:

b. Sufficient additional full and part-time faculty, with appropriate earned credentials to teach the courses offered for the number of students served.

Statements "a" and "b" are required for an applicant institution. Evaluation for candidacy will require that the institution demonstrate basic compliance with all Standards and Criteria.

Comments:

Yes

No

11. Students enrolled in and pursuing its program(s).

The institution must have an adequate number of students enrolled in each program offered to justify the program. Prior to seeking candidacy, an institution must have graduated at least one class.

Comments:

12. A master plan that addresses its financial, physical, and educational development, as well as procedures for program review and institutional improvement.

The institution must have a strategic planning document (usually a five-year plan), that provides direction for institutional development in all critical areas.

Comments:

_____ _____ **13. An approved set of admissions policies compatible with its stated mission and objectives.**

The institution must include in its published catalog a set of admission policies that guide the admission department in admitting students.

Comments:

_____ _____ **14. An adequate financial base of documented funding commitments that demonstrate the institution's ability to carry on its stated purposes. (Submit a copy of current budget and prior year's audited financial statement prepared by an independent public accountant who has no other relationship to the institution.)**

The institution must demonstrate that it operates within the revenues received. The institution must be able to demonstrate adequate funding for academic programs offered. Funding/finances must be such so as to demonstrate the institution's continuity over time. A full-time chief financial officer must oversee all financial and business operations, supervise an adequate system of accounting, and provide current and regular reports to the president.

Comments:

Yes No

_____ _____ **15. A published policy and procedure, in keeping with generally accepted practices, for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment.**

The institution must have a published refund policy for all student charges including the following: 1) refunding fees, 2) charges for students who withdraw.

Comments:

_____ _____ **16. A catalog and/or other comparable official publication available to students and the public that honestly and accurately sets forth pertinent information such as the following items:**

- a. Mission and objectives**
- b. Entrance requirements and procedures**
- c. Rules and regulations for conduct**
- d. Programs, courses, and objectives**
- e. Degree completion requirements**
- f. Full and part-time faculty, degrees held, with institution granting the degree**
- g. Costs**
- h. Other items relative to attending the institution or withdrawing from it.**

The items listed above must be available in a published catalog for an institution to be considered as an applicant seeking possible candidacy status.

Comments:

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