

# **ACCREDITATION 101: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Eligibility Requirements represent the minimum qualifications for institutions seeking an accredited status with the ACCJC. Member institutions are expected to maintain compliance with the Eligibility Requirements at all times.

## INTRODUCTION

During an institution's comprehensive peer review process, peer review teams will monitor an institution's ongoing compliance with Eligibility Requirements through its evaluation of the institutional self-evaluation report, evidence, and other required documentation per Commission policies.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **I. Authority**

The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and to award degrees by an appropriate governmental organization or agency as required by each of the jurisdictions or regions in which it operates.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **2. Operational Status**

The institution is operational with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **3. Degrees**

A substantial portion of the institution's educational offerings are programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them. At least one degree program must be of two academic years in length.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **4. Chief Executive Officer**

The institution has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **5. Financial Accountability**

The institution annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or an audit by an appropriate public agency. Institutions that are already Title IV eligible must demonstrate compliance with federal requirements.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **6. Mission**

The institution's educational mission is clearly defined, adopted, and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the constituency it seeks to serve.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **7. Governing Board**

The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the academic quality, institutional integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is achieved.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **8. Administrative Capacity**

The institution has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **9. Educational Programs**

The institution's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education field(s) of study, are of sufficient content and length, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student outcomes.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **10. Academic Credit**

The institution awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices for degree-granting institutions of higher education and in accordance with statutory or system regulatory requirements. The institution provides appropriate information about the awarding of academic credit.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **11. Student Learning and Student Achievement**

The institution defines standards for student achievement and assesses its performance against those standards. For each program, the institution publishes the program's expected student learning outcomes and any program-specific achievement outcomes.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **12. General Education**

The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general education component includes an introduction to some of the major areas of knowledge.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **13. Academic Freedom**

The institution's faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **14. Faculty**

The institution has a sufficient number of qualified faculty, which includes full time faculty and may include part time and adjunct faculty, to achieve the institutional mission and purposes. The number is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution's educational programs.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **15. Student Support Services**

The institution provides for all of its students, appropriate student support services that foster student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **16. Admissions**

The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **17. Information and Learning Support Services**

Through ownership or contractual agreement, the institution provides specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning support services adequate for its mission and instructional programs in any format whenever and wherever they are offered.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **I 8. Financial Resources**

The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **I 9. Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The institution systematically evaluates and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. The institution provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **20. Integrity in Communication with the Public**

The institution provides a print or electronic catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following: General Information, Requirements, Major Policies Affecting Students, and Locations or Publications where Other Policies may be Found.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **21. Integrity in Relations with the Commission**

The institution provides assurance that it adheres to the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to achieve its accrediting responsibilities.

## ADOPTION AND REVISIONS

These Eligibility Requirements were ...

- Adopted June 2014
- Edited June 2021
- Revised January 2022
- Edited January 2024

## DISCUSSION / QUESTIONS

