



COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals

Preamble

These Principles, initially developed through the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation and endorsed by all regional accrediting commissions in 1990, have informed the reviews of scores of international educational ventures. The Principles speak to matters that deserve the scrutiny of all institutions engaged in or planning to engage in developing campuses or moving educational programs abroad.

The regional accrediting commissions reviewed the Principles in 1997, amended them to reflect lessons that have been learned over the past seven years, and continued to endorse them. They reflect a national consensus among regional accrediting associations on good practices in specific types of international education. Subsequently, the policy has been revised by the Commission in 2003.

The Principles are based on the following basic assumptions:

1. The accredited institution is responsible for whatever is done in its name.
2. U.S. accredited institutions operating abroad are guests in another country; they become knowledgeable about and respect the laws and customs of the other country and, consistent with their mission, enhance the community in which they operate.
3. The accredited institution bears the responsibility to assure that the international entity does not claim for itself or infer any accredited status other than that held by the accredited institution.
4. The accrediting commission retains the right to review overseas international programs for non-U.S. nationals on evaluation cycles different from those established for the home institution.
5. The accredited institution is expected to bear the costs of reviews and visits required by the accrediting commission.
6. Unless exceptions are stated explicitly, the Principles supplement but do not supplant the accrediting commission's stated criteria and requirements for accreditation.

The Principles

1. Institutional Mission

1.a. The international program is rooted in the U.S. institution's stated mission and purposes and reflects any special social, religious, and ethical elements of that mission.

1.b. The faculty, administration, and the governing board of the U.S. institution understand the relationship of the international program to the institution's stated mission and purposes.

1.c. Consistent with its own mission, the U.S. institution enhances the international community in which it operates.

2. Authorization

2.a. The international program has received all appropriate internal institutional approvals, including that of the governing board, and review by the faculty on the same basis as on-campus programs.

2.b. The international program has received all appropriate external approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations.

2.c. The U.S. institution documents the accepted legal basis for its operations in the host country and meets the legal requirements of the host country.

3. Instructional Program

3.a. The U.S. institution specifies the educational needs to be met by its international program.

3.b. The content of the international educational program is subject to review by the U.S. institution's faculty.

3.c. The international education program reflects the educational emphasis of the U.S. institution, including a commitment to general education when appropriate.

3.d. The U.S. institution's faculty has a substantive role in assuring the content and rigor of the program is appropriate to the credits and degrees awarded.

3.e. The educational program is taught by faculty with appropriate academic preparation and language proficiencies. Hiring decisions are made by the U.S. institution, and faculty are judged by the institution to be equivalent to those who teach in the U.S. program.

3.f. Faculty and academic administrators collectively have significant experience in American higher education and are prepared to implement the policies and practices of the institution they represent.

3.g. The standard of student achievement in the international program is equivalent to the standard of student achievement on the U.S. campus and methods of assessment of student achievement used on the U.S. campus are extended to the international program.

3.h. The international educational program where possible and appropriate is adapted to the culture of the host country, while reflecting American educational values and practice.

4. Resources

4.a. The institution currently uses and assures the continuing use of adequate physical facilities and learning resources for its international educational program, including classrooms, offices, libraries, and laboratories, and provides access to technology that will allow students to attain the same learning outcomes as students on the U.S. campus.

4.b. The U.S. institution has demonstrated its financial capacity to underwrite the international program without diminishing its financial support of the U.S. campus. Financing of the international program is incorporated into the regular budgeting and auditing process.

4.c. The U. S. institution has contingency plans showing its capacity, if necessary, to fulfill its obligations to all students admitted to its international programs.

4.d. The U. S. institution provides financial information that describes its total financial income and direct expenditures and overhead costs for the international site.

5. Admissions and Records

5.a. International students admitted abroad meet admissions requirements equivalent to those used for international students admitted to the U.S. campus, including appropriate language proficiencies.

5.b. The U.S. institution controls the recruitment and admission of students in the international program.

5.c. All international students admitted to the U.S. program are recognized as students of the U.S. institution.

5.d. All college-level academic credits earned in the international program are applicable to degree programs at the U.S. institution.

5.e. The U.S. institution maintains official records of academic credit earned in its international program.

5.f. The official transcript of record issued by the U.S. institution follows the institution's practices in identifying by site or through course numbering the credits earned in its off-campus programs.

5g. International students abroad are subject to the same academic policies regarding grades, academic sanction, academic integrity, satisfactory progress, and related matters as students studying at the U.S. campus.

6. Students

6.a. The U.S. institution assures that its institutional program provides a supportive environment for student development, consistent with the culture and mores of the international setting (as well as the requirements of its accrediting body).

6.b. Students in the international program are fully informed as to services that will or will not be provided.

6.c. Students are provided with services equivalent to the U.S. campus in academic advising, career planning and placement, and other services directly related to the desired learning outcomes.

6.d. The U.S. institution gives appropriate regard to ensuring the health and safety of students while they are on the international campus. In addition, international students are fully informed about the extent of the U.S. institution's responsibility for student safety.

7. Control and Administration

7.a. The international program is controlled by the U.S. institution.

7.b. The teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program are accountable to a full-time resident administrator from the U.S. institution who is qualified by education and experience to represent the U.S. institution internationally.

7.c. The U.S. institution formally and regularly reviews the performance of all faculty and staff associated with its international program.

7.d. The U.S. institution assesses its international program on a regular basis in light of institutional goals and incorporates these outcomes into its regular planning process.

8. Ethics and Public Disclosure

8.a. The U.S. institution provides a full accounting of the financing of its international program, including an accounting of funds designated for third parties within any contractual relationship.

8.b. The U.S. institution assures that all media presentations about the international program are factual, fair and accurate.

8.c. The U.S. institution's primary catalog, website, and other appropriate publications describes its international program.

8.d. The U.S. institution does not sell or franchise the rights to its name or its accreditation.

8.e. The U.S. institution assures that all references to transfer of academic credit reflect the reality of U.S. practice.

8.f. The U.S. institution assures that if U.S. accreditation is mentioned in materials related to the international program, the role and purpose of U.S. accreditation is fairly and accurately explained within these materials.

9. Contractual Arrangements

9.a. The official contract is in English and the primary language of the contracting institution.

9.b. The contract specifically provides that the U.S. institution controls the international program in conformity with these Principles and the requirements of the U.S. institution's accreditations.

9.c. The U.S. institution confirms that the foreign party to the contract is legally qualified to enter into the contract.

9.d. The contract clearly states the legal jurisdiction under which its provisions will be interpreted will be that of the U.S. institution.

9.e. Conditions for program termination specified in the contract include appropriate protection for enrolled students.

9.f. All contractual arrangements are consistent with the accrediting commission's "Good Practices in Contractual Arrangements."

10. Distance Education

10.a. When the U.S. institution uses distance education in its international program, it adheres to the accrediting association's Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.

10.b. The technologies as well as content of the distance education program are appropriate to the educational culture of the students.

10.c. The U.S. institution ensures that students admitted to an academic program have at least an adequate level of proficiency in English and provides the students with appropriate support in second language learning.

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