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NMC Commission on Accreditation

Summary of Standards

AACSB, ABET, and NASAD

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

<http://www.aacsb.edu>

Timeline

- Established, 1916.
- First standards released, 1919.
- Additional standards (accountancy programs) released, 1980.

Specific Approach

AACSB is a specialized agency granting accreditation for undergraduate and graduate business administration and accounting programs. Standards assess the relationship between the school's mission and its resources, curricular offerings, educational efforts, staff, faculty, administration, and programs. Evidence collected in support of standards focuses on documentation of student and faculty activities, programmatic details, and documents describing the school's mission and learning goals. Standards for accounting programs build on the business management standards and add an emphasis on depth and breadth of study, and preparation for employment for students, and on professional activities and achievement in the field for both faculty and students.

Definition of Accreditation

"Accreditation is a process of voluntary, non-governmental review of educational institutions and programs. Institutional accreditation reviews entire colleges and universities. Specialized agencies award accreditation for professional programs and academic units in particular fields of study. As a specialized agency, AACSB International grants accreditation for undergraduate and graduate business administration and accounting programs."

— AACSB Website

Standards Areas

- Business Programs
- Accounting Programs

Summary of AACSB Standards (Business Accreditation)

These standards first establish guidelines for eligibility of programs desiring accreditation. Eligibility is contingent upon membership in AACSB International, the presence of degree-granting programs, and support of programs by continuing resources.

The twenty-one standards for business accreditation are divided into three sections: strategic management standards, participants standards, and assurance of learning standards. Within the sections, each standard is stated, interpreted, and supported by a basis for judgment. Guidelines for satisfying and appropriately documenting each standard are also presented. The document also includes sample charts, lists, and other means of recording evidence for a standard, where applicable.

Strategic Management Standards

This set of standards addresses how well the school's mission is supported by the resources and efforts employed there. The standards are paraphrased below:

1. The school publishes a mission statement.
2. The mission includes a focus on producing intellectual contributions of value to the field.
3. The mission statement specifies the student population the school intends to serve.
4. The school specifies objectives for continuous improvement.
5. The school has financial strategies in place to support its mission and objectives.

Participants Standards

This set of standards addresses the human element of the school, including students, faculty, staff, and other human resources. They are designed to help reviewers make judgments about the quality of intellectual resources at the school, the appropriateness of processes that support participants, and whether the school's programs are of consistently high quality. These standards are paraphrased below:

6. Admission policies are clear and consistent with the school's mission.
7. Academic standards and retention practices produce high-quality graduates and are consistent with the school's mission.
8. Employed staff are sufficient to support the school's activities and to provide ongoing quality improvement for student support activities. Such activities are consistent with the school's mission and programs and meet the needs of the student population.
9. Sufficient faculty are employed such that the school is stable and ongoing quality improvement of instructional offerings can take place. Faculty resources are deployed consistent with the mission and programs. All students have the opportunity to receive instruction from qualified faculty. (Additional principles describing student-faculty interaction are also provided.)
10. Faculty are qualified to support the school's mission and are evaluated regularly using clearly defined procedures. The school specifies appropriate initial qualifications and requirements for maintaining faculty competence. (The document provides extensive detail on appropriate qualifications for different positions.)
11. Procedures for faculty management and support are in place and well-documented.
12. Faculty, administrators, and staff share responsibility to ensure adequate time is allotted for faculty and student learning activities, faculty-student contact is adequate, academic achievement is supported, and instructional programs are evaluated and improved.
13. Teaching faculty members are professional in their actions, keep current in their fields, involve students in the learning process, encourage collaboration, and give frequent and prompt student feedback.
14. Students are professional in their actions, engage with learning materials, remain engaged when challenged, contribute to the learning of others, and perform to faculty standards.

Assurance of Learning Standards

These standards address how well the school meets its own educational goals at the center of its mission. They are also intended to help schools improve programs and courses. Accreditation requires that the school establish a list of the learning goals, to which these standards will be applied, for each degree-granting program offered. The standards are paraphrased below:

15. The school uses appropriate processes for developing and managing curricula. (The document provides extensive detail to describe *appropriate processes*.)
16. Undergraduate learning goals are clearly specified, and achievement is demonstrated, for key knowledge and skills that students achieve in the program.

17. Undergraduate programs provide sufficient time, content coverage, student effort, and student-faculty interaction such that learning goals can be met.
18. Master's level learning goals in general management build on undergraduate learning goals, and learning at the master's level is more integrative and interdisciplinary than at the undergraduate level. (Specific master's level capacities are detailed.)
19. Master's level learning goals in specialized degree programs are appropriate to the specialty field.
20. Master's level programs provide sufficient time, content coverage, student effort, and student-faculty interaction such that learning goals can be met.
21. Doctoral programs include learning goals appropriate to this level of study. Students in such programs demonstrate the ability to construct knowledge through original research in their area of specialization. (Normal components of doctoral programs are detailed.)

Summary of AACSB Standards (Accounting)

The standards for accounting programs build on the standards for business management. Programs must satisfy each of the standards listed above, as well as specific standards for accounting. Additional standards are summarized below.

Strategic Management Standards

The two additional accounting standards under this category address the relationship between the mission statement and the accounting profession, as well as requiring evidence that the academic unit is committed to being responsive to and adequately serving its stakeholders.

Accounting Participants Standards

Four additional standards for accounting programs address the professional achievements of students and faculty. These standards examine student placement after graduation, career success of graduates at a later time, professional credentials held by faculty, faculty contributions to the field, and ongoing professional interaction and practical experience by faculty.

Assurance of Learning for Accounting Programs

The eight additional standards for accounting programs address the depth and breadth of learning desired in students of accounting at undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. These standards specify that learning goals be consistent with the mission statement and support skills and outcomes relevant to the field of accounting; that graduates meet entry requirements for the profession; that undergraduate programs include broader learning objectives to support a more varied education; and that master's and doctoral program requirements match expectations for study at those levels and employment after graduation.

ABET, Inc.

<http://www.abet.org>

Timeline

- Established as Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD), 1932.
- First accreditation, 1936.
- Became Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), 1980.
- Established Applied Science Accreditation Commission (ASAC), 1983.
- Helped establish Computing Sciences Accreditation Board (now CSAB), 1985.

Specific Approach

ABET is a specialized agency granting accreditation to postsecondary degree-granting programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology education. Standards center on the design, quality, and outcomes of degree-granting programs, the quality and professional abilities of the faculty, the availability and appropriateness of facilities and resources for support, and specific technical skills. Each of the four fields accredited by ABET (applied sciences, computing, engineering, and technology) includes general criteria for the field as well as more detailed program-specific requirements.

Definition of Accreditation

"In the United States, accreditation is a non-governmental, peer-review process that assures the quality of the postsecondary education students receive. Educational institutions or programs volunteer to undergo this review periodically to determine if certain criteria are being met.

"(NOTE: Outside the United States, accreditation is not necessarily voluntary nor non-governmental. Please visit the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org) for more information on the world's postsecondary education systems and their quality assurance mechanisms.)

"It is important to understand, however, that accreditation is not a ranking system. It is simply assurance that a program or institution meets established quality standards.

"There are two types of accreditation: institutional and specialized.

- "Institutional accreditation evaluates overall institutional quality. One form of institutional accreditation is regional accreditation of colleges and universities.
- "Specialized accreditation examines specific programs of study, rather than an institution as a whole. This type of accreditation is granted to specific programs at specific levels. Architecture, nursing, law, medicine, and engineering programs are often evaluated through specialized accreditation.

"ABET, Inc., is responsible for the specialized accreditation of educational programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology."

— *ABET Website*

Standards Areas

- Applied Science Programs
- Computing Programs

- Engineering Programs
- Technology Programs

Summary of ABET Standards

Each of the four standards documents (applied science, computing, engineering, and technology) includes a base set of nine criteria supplemented by specific considerations for different programs under each field. For instance, the applied science criteria include specific standards for environmental health and safety, industrial hygiene, and surveying and geomatics.

The nine criteria shared by each program are paraphrased below:

1. *Students:* Programs must evaluate, advise, and monitor students.
2. *Program Educational Objectives:* Programs must have mission-appropriate objectives, and these must be documented and periodically assessed.
3. *Program Outcomes:* Programs must show that students meet certain outcomes, specified in the standards document (these outcomes are different for each of the four fields).
4. *Continuous Improvement:* Each program should use data from processes that support other criteria to demonstrate actions undertaken to improve the program.
5. *Curriculum:* Basic curricular requirements are specified, focusing on mathematics, sciences, discipline-specific topics, and general education (these requirements are different for each of the four fields).
6. *Faculty:* Program faculty must be sufficient in number and qualifications to provide appropriate guidance to the program and cover the curricular content.
7. *Facilities:* Learning spaces and equipment must be sufficient to meet program objectives and create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Spaces should facilitate interaction between students and faculty and support professional development activities. Computing and information infrastructure are specifically named.
8. *Support:* Support in the form of institutional backing, financial resources, and leadership must be available such that the program's continuity and quality is assured. Resources must support and attract faculty and acquire, maintain, and run necessary facilities and equipment.
9. *Program Criteria:* If applicable, programs must fulfill specific program criteria as detailed separately.

Each of the four standards documents then includes program-specific criteria as described in criterion nine. These criteria expand on one or more of the first eight; for example, the *Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs* includes additional criteria in the areas of curriculum (criterion five) and faculty qualifications (criterion six).

Applied Science Programs

The program-specific criteria for applied science programs specify additional standards for curriculum (baccalaureate and master's-level), faculty (baccalaureate and master's-level), and master's-level admissions. These relate to field-specific requirements. For example, the additional criteria for Industrial Hygiene specify that a certain percentage of faculty must be Certified Industrial Hygienists.

Computing Programs

The program-specific criteria for computing programs specify additional standards for program outcomes, curriculum, and faculty. These relate to field-specific requirements. For instance, the additional criteria for Information Systems require some full-time faculty to hold a terminal degree in information systems, and also specify that students achieve "an understanding of processes that

support the delivery and management of information systems within a specific application environment.”

Engineering Programs

The program-specific criteria for engineering programs are limited to requirements pertaining to curriculum and faculty. These are likewise field-specific requirements.

Technology Programs

The additional criteria for technology programs are framed as objectives and outcomes. The objectives describe the preparation expected of graduates in each program (such as Aeronautical Engineering Technology, whose graduates are expected to understand the design, installation, manufacture, testing, and other aspects of aeronautical and aerospace systems). The outcomes list specific skills and expertise that graduates must be able to demonstrate at the associate and baccalaureate degree levels.

National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)

<http://nasad.arts-accredit.org>

Timeline

- Established, 1944.

Specific Approach

NASAD is a specialized agency granting accreditation to educational programs in art and design. Its *Handbook* includes both standards, which must be satisfied for accreditation, and guidelines, which are recommendations. The bulk of NASAD standards and guidelines focus on the curricular offerings of various programs for art and design, establishing what must be available to the student and what the student must demonstrate mastery of at the completion of the course of study. Many standards address curricular structure and some indicate baseline requirements for admission or graduation.

Definition of Accreditation

“Accreditation is a process by which an institution or disciplinary unit within an institution periodically evaluates its work and seeks an independent judgment by peers that it achieves substantially its own educational objectives and meets the established standards of the body from which it seeks accreditation. Typically, the accreditation process includes 1) a self-evaluative description (self-study) of the institution or unit, 2) an on-site review by a team of evaluators, and 3) judgment by an accreditation decision-making body, normally called a Commission. Accreditation reviews focus on educational quality, institutional integrity, and educational improvements.”

— NASAD Website

Standards Areas

- Visual Arts and Design
- Studio and Art History
- Art Education
- Advanced Professional Study (Art Therapy, Medical Illustration, Art Conservation)

Summary of NASAD Standards and Guidelines

1. The **basic criteria for membership** section establishes baseline requirements for institutions and units, including qualified faculty, course offerings, and essential attributes of the program.
2. The **purposes and operations** section establishes that:
 - a. the institution or unit exists for educational purposes and conducts operations in a manner consistent with those purposes;
 - b. the size and scope of the organization is consistent with its stated purpose;
 - c. its financial resources and policies are appropriate to its size and purpose;
 - d. governance and administrative practices are appropriate and transparent;
 - e. qualified faculty and staff are hired, retained, advanced, and positioned to serve the student population;
 - f. adequate and safe facilities are provided and maintained;
 - g. sufficient library materials, services, and personnel are available and maintained;
 - h. student-focused activities such as recruitment, admission, retention, record-keeping, and advisement are carried out effectively and appropriately;
 - i. published materials about the institution are comprehensive and correct;
 - j. activities involving the community or other institutions are clearly described, if they exist; and that

- k. evaluation, planning, and projections are timely and consistent with the purpose, size, and scope of the institution or unit.
3. The **art and design programs** section establishes basic credit and time requirements for different degrees and specifies criteria for the awarding and transfer of course credits. It also specifies requirements for the shape of program offerings, covering the areas of time on task, curricular proportions, competencies, forms of instruction, course requirements, program continuity, residence, new programs, independent study, distance learning, multidisciplinary programs, majors based in electronic media, non-degree-granting community programs, content and methods, flexibility and innovation, quality assurance, and the visual arts in general education.
4. The **undergraduate programs in the visual arts and design** section covers the basic purposes of such programs, resources and components of the programs, and degree structures.
5. The **admission to undergraduate study** section establishes requirements for admissions, including specific aptitudes and achievements expected of applicants.
6. The **two-year degree-granting programs** section indicates programmatic requirements for such programs, including purposes and protocols and standards for vocational programs.
7. The **liberal arts degree with a major in art/design** section covers criteria for programs that grant the titles of Bachelor of Arts in Art/Design and Bachelor of Science in Art/Design. The section describes the contexts within which such degrees may be offered and the types of content and curricular structures that are applicable, including specific majors (studio art or design, art history, and museum studies).
8. The section on **all professional baccalaureate degrees in art and design** establishes criteria for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree-granting programs. This section outlines basic programmatic requirements, including specialization, common body of knowledge and skills, institutional responsibilities in terms of providing instruction and other resources, competencies for general studies, operational guidelines, and expected student outcomes.
9. The section on **specific professional baccalaureate degrees in art and design** covers a wide variety of art specializations (ceramics, digital media, drawing, etc.) and outlines the expected curricular structure, competencies, experiences, and opportunities for the study of each.
10. The **professional combination degrees in studio and art history** section describes the justification, standard, and guidelines for offering a combination art history/studio degree.
11. The **baccalaureate degrees in art education** section outlines the expectations for degree programs that prepare students to teach at the primary and secondary levels. This section covers curricular characteristics of such programs as well as desirable personal qualities of teaching candidates, basic competencies (in the arts and in teaching) required of graduates, and professional procedures for preparing students to teach and for providing professional development for practicing teachers.
12. The **baccalaureate degrees in preparation for advanced professional study** section outlines requirements for curricular offerings; student competencies, experiences, and opportunities; field experiences; and faculty qualifications for programs that prepare students for careers in art therapy, medical illustration, or art conservation.
13. The **section on graduate programs in the visual arts and design** emphasizes the differences between undergraduate and graduate programs and outlines requirements for curricular structure and content (in general terms); fields of specialization; creative work, inquiry, research, and scholarship; types of degree programs that may be accredited; breadth of competence; and professional preparation. The standards also indicate general requirements for program resources, community, and student experiences, and general degree requirements and procedures.

14. The section on **admission to graduate study** covers baseline standards for admissions policies, student achievement levels prior to admission, examinations, and language requirements.
15. The section on **specific initial graduate degree programs** specifies standards for hours of study, percentage of work in the field, published materials describing the programs, and skills students must develop during the program. These standards are applicable to studio art and design, art history and criticism, design research and scholarship, museum studies, art education, art therapy, and multiple occupations. Additional standards for art therapy address requirements for practical training, faculty positions, and facilities and equipment to support that program.
16. The section on **specific terminal degree programs** describes standards applicable to programs that award the title of Master of Fine Arts, doctoral degrees, and degrees combining research and practice orientations. These standards address credit requirements, skills graduates are expected to display, program components, curriculum structure and degree titles, published objectives of the program, admission and retention policies, faculty requirements, student assessments, and presentation of work. In addition, standards for doctoral degrees describe requirements for qualifying prerequisites for the degree and requirements for final projects. Additional standards are described for specific content areas.
17. The **non-degree-granting programs in art and design** section indicates baseline standards for certificate and diploma programs and independent study, including resources that must be available for students.
18. The section on **admission to non-degree-granting programs in art and design** outlines standards for establishing and publishing admission criteria, requiring a high school diploma or its equivalent, requiring portfolio reviews and evaluations prior to admission, and circumstances permitting admission to advanced standing.
19. The **specific professional non-degree-granting programs** section indicates general standards addressing published purposes of such programs and the information these must include, evaluation mechanisms for enrolled students, and the adequacy of guidance, advising, and mentoring services.
20. The section on **specific operational standards for all institutions of higher education for which NASAD is the designated institutional accrediting agency** contains additional standards applicable to institutions that are not regionally accredited. These standards address the structure, finances, governance, and administration of the institution; the availability of general studies programs at undergraduate institutions; and the requirements for facilities and equipment, student services, information on the occupation of graduates, and teach-out agreements. Standards for procedural requirements relating to accreditation are also outlined.
21. The section on **specific operational standards for proprietary institutions of higher education** includes additional standards specifically applicable to private, for-profit institutions, relating mainly to governance, structure, finances, and roles.