

Part 201 Chapter 4: Standards and Regulations (SR)

Introduction. If a standard does not apply to the institution, the institution shall provide a detailed written justification and rational as to why the standard does not apply.

For purposes of this section, commission-approved accrediting agency means any of the six regional accrediting agencies, the Association of Theological Schools accrediting commission and the Association of Biblical Higher Education Accrediting Commission.

Rule 4.1 No academic degree-granting institution shall operate in the State without first receiving approval from the Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA or commission). Registration with the Secretary of State shall not constitute State authority, accreditation, or approval to grant degrees or offer courses and programs leading to academic degrees. To meet the requirements for institutional authorization or the renewal of existing institutional authorization, the institution shall be in compliance or progressing toward compliance with State standards, regulations, provisions, procedures and policies including but not limited to the standards set out below and/or the provisions in Part 201 Chapter 3.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 4.2 Institutions shall meet the standards of quality for institutional authorization as it relates to institutional mission, governance, administration, distinction of roles, resources and stability, financial records, evaluation and assessment, admissions, faculty qualification and size, curriculum, general education, credit for work completed outside a collegiate setting, library, facilities, academic records, accurate and fair disclosures, academic advising and counseling, and student rights and responsibilities.

Rule 4.2.1 Mission. The institution has a clearly defined and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.

Rule 4.2.2 Governance. The institution shall have a governing board consisting of at least five members. The institution's governing board shall be an active policy-making body, focused on promoting the mission of the institution, and shall exercise its authority to ensure that the mission of the institution is carried out. Members of the board shall represent the interests of the institution's constituencies of faculty, students, and supporters. The governing board shall ensure that the institution complies with Commission requirements.

Rule 4.2.3 Administration. The character, education, and experience in higher education of governing board members, administrators, supervisors, counselors, agents, and other institutional officers shall be such as may reasonably ensure that the institution can maintain the standards of the Commission and progress to authorization and accreditation within the

time limits set by the Commission and Commission-recognized accrediting agency. The chief academic officer shall hold an appropriate graduate academic degree, and shall demonstrate sound aptitude for and experience with curriculum development and assessment; accreditation standards and processes as well as all relevant state regulations; leadership and development of faculty, including the promotion of scholarship, research, and service; and the promotion of student success. The institutional officers shall demonstrate a record of effective leadership in administering the institution.

Rule 4.2.4 Distinction of Roles. There shall be sufficient distinction among the roles and personnel of the governing board of the institution, the administration, and faculty to ensure their appropriate separation and independence.

Rule 4.2.5 Resources and Stability. The institution must have a sound financial base, demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. The institution must, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provide and support student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections as well as to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered; those collections and resources must be sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs, as applicable.

Rule 4.2.6 Financial Records. Financial records and reports of the institution shall be kept and made separate and distinct from those of any affiliated or sponsoring person or entity. Financial records and reports shall be kept in accordance with the guidelines of the National Association of College and University Business Officers as set forth in *College and University Business Administration*, current addition. An annual independent audit of all fiscal accounts of the educational institution shall be authorized by the governing board, shall be performed by a properly authorized certified public accountant or an appropriate governmental auditing agency*, and shall be made available to the Commission upon request.

*Refer to *College and University Business Administration*, current edition, available from the National Association of College and University Business Officers, One Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, DE 30036; and *Audits of Colleges and Universities and Audits of Not-for-Profit Organizations*, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Rule 4.2.7 Evaluation and Assessment. Continual and effective assessment, planning, and evaluation of all aspects of the institution shall be conducted to advance and improve the institution. These aspects include, but are not limited to, the academic program of teaching, research, and public services, if applicable; administration; financial planning and control; student services; facilities and equipment, and auxiliary enterprises.

Rule 4.2.8 Quality Enhancement. The institution shall provide to the Commission upon request and in all applications for approval evidence of its implementation of a plan for the systematic assessment of its effectiveness in promoting the quality of student achievement and development.

Rule 4.2.9 Admissions.

Rule 4.2.9.1 Upon the admission of a student to any undergraduate program, the institution shall document the student's level of preparation to undertake college level work by obtaining proof of the student's college record, high school graduation, or qualifying scores on a state approved equivalency examination, and otherwise complying with state standards, policies, procedures and requirements. The institution shall provide an effective program of remediation for students diagnosed with deficiencies in their preparation for collegiate study.

Rule 4.2.9.2 Upon the admission of a student to any graduate program, the institution shall document that the student is prepared to undertake graduate-level work by obtaining proof that the student holds a baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by the Commission or a Commission-approved accrediting agency(1) to offer baccalaureate degrees, or a degree from a foreign institution equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. The procedures used by the institution for establishing the equivalency of a foreign degree shall be consistent with the standards of evaluation approved by the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials or its successor; or reviews from evaluation services provided through the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers.

Rule 4.2.10 Faculty Qualifications. The character, education, and experience in higher education of the faculty shall be such as may reasonably ensure that the students will receive an education consistent with the objectives of the course or program of study.

Rule 4.2.10.1 The institution employs competent members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers

competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualification of its faculty.

Rule 4.2.10.2 Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

Rule 4.2.10.3 Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

Rule 4.2.10.4 Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.

Rule 4.2.10.5 Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

Rule 4.2.10.6 Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

Rule 4.2.11 Faculty Size. There shall be a sufficient number of faculty holding full-time teaching appointments who are resident and accessible to the students to ensure continuity and stability of the education program, adequate educational association between students and faculty and among the faculty members, and adequate opportunity for proper preparation for

instruction and professional growth by faculty members. At the associate and baccalaureate levels, there shall be at least one full-time faculty member in each program. At the graduate level, there shall be at least four full-time members in each program.

Rule 4.2.12 Programs/Curricula.

Rule 4.2.12.1 The quality, content, and sequence of each course, curriculum, or program of instruction, training, or study shall be appropriate to the purpose of the institution and shall be such that the institution may reasonably and adequately achieve the stated objectives of the course or program. Each program shall adequately cover the breadth of knowledge of the discipline taught and course work must build on the knowledge of previous courses to increase the rigor of instruction and the learning of students in the discipline. Substantially all of the courses in the areas of specialization required for each degree program shall be offered in organized classes by the institution. An institution may offer no more than a very limited amount of for-credit coursework that does not directly relate to approved programs.

Rule 4.2.12.2 An academic associate degree must consist of at least 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours and not more than 66 semester credit hours or 99 quarter credit hours. A baccalaureate degree must consist of at least 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours. A master's degree must consist of at least 30- semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of graduate level work past the baccalaureate degree.

Rule 4.2.12.3 Courses designed to correct deficiencies, remedial courses for associate and baccalaureate programs, and leveling courses for graduate programs, shall not count toward requirements for completion of the degree.

Rule 4.2.12.4 The degree level, degree designation, and the designation of the major course of study shall be appropriate to the curriculum offered and shall be accurately listed on the student's diploma and transcript.

Rule 4.2.13 General Education.

Rule 4.2.13.1 Each academic associate degree program shall contain a general education component consisting of at least 15

semester credit hours or the equivalent. Each baccalaureate degree program shall contain a general education component consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent.

Rule 4.2.13.2 This component shall be drawn from each of the following areas: Humanities and Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. It shall include courses to develop skills in written and oral communication and basic computer instruction.

Rule 4.2.13.3 The applicant institution may arrange to have all or part of the general education component taught by another institution, provided that:

Rule 4.2.13.3.1 the applicant institution's faculty shall design the general education requirement;

Rule 4.2.13.3.2 there shall be a written agreement between the institutions specifying the applicant institutions' general education requirements and the manner in which they will be met by the providing institution;

Rule 4.2.13.3.3 at least one-half of the courses shall be offered in organized classes; and

Rule 4.2.13.3.4. the providing institution shall be accredited by a Commission-recognized accrediting agency.

Rule 4.2.14 Noncredit to Credit.

Rule 4.2.14.1 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience.

Rule 4.2.14.2 In no instance may credit be awarded for life experience per se or merely for years of service in a position or job.

Rule 4.2.15 Library.

Rule 4.2.15.1 The institution shall have in its possession or direct control, properly catalogued, and readily available to its students and faculty a sufficient quality and variety of library holdings to support adequately its own curriculum. In addition, the institution shall supply access to educational

resources appropriate to support its programs that are available by electronic delivery, including access to the Internet, and shall make these educational resources available in an active and effective manner.

Rule 4.2.15.2 The institution shall have adequate library facilities for the library holdings, space for study, and workspace for the librarian and library staff.

Rule 4.2.15.3 The librarian shall hold a graduate degree in library science from an institution accredited by a Commission-recognized accrediting agency. The librarian shall have authority to select and acquire resources with funds in the library budget, have interaction with faculty sufficient to ensure a library collection that supports the courses and programs offered, and have adequate interaction with students to support the library and research needs of the students.

Rule 4.2.15.4 Arrangements made with other libraries for the use of library materials shall be formalized in writing, the collection shall be validated by the institution to be appropriate for the program being offered, records of usage by the students shall be kept, and the library shall be reasonably accessible to the students and faculty.

Rule 4.2.16 Facilities. The institution shall have adequate space, equipment, and instructional materials to provide education of good quality. Student housing owned, maintained, or approved by the institution, if any, shall be appropriate, safe, and adequate.

Rule 4.2.17 Academic Records. The institution shall securely and permanently maintain adequate records of each student's academic performance.

Rule 4.2.17.1 The records for each student shall contain:

Rule 4.2.17.1.1 student contact and identification information, including address and telephone number;

Rule 4.2.17.1.2 records of admission documents, such as high school diploma or GED (if undergraduate) or undergraduate degree (if graduate);

Rule 4.2.17.1.3 records of all courses attempted, including grade; completion status of the student, including the diploma, degree or award conferred to the student; and

Rule 4.2.17.1.4 any other information typically contained in academic records.

Rule 4.2.17.2 Two copies of said records shall be maintained in secure places.

Rule 4.2.17.3 If the institution discontinues operation, the chief executive officer or other responsible official shall have the duty to convey all student records, including financial aid disposition, to a safe place for storage (preferably electronic storage) and shall notify the Commission within sixty (60) days of the storage address and applicable fees; and subsequently, of any changes in storage location. The records of students shall be available for reproduction as requested by students.

Rule 4.2.18 Accurate and Fair Representation in Publications, Advertising, and Promotion.

Rule 4.2.18.1 Neither the institution nor its agents or other representatives shall engage in advertising recruiting, sales, collection, financial credit, or other practices of any type that are false, deceptive, misleading, or unfair. Likewise, all publications, by any medium, shall represent accurately and fairly the institution, its programs, available resources, tuition and fees, requirements, and authorization and accreditation status.

Rule 4.2.18.2 The institution shall provide students, prospective students prior to enrollment, and other interested persons with a catalog containing, at minimum, the following information:

- Rule 4.2.18.2.1* the institution's mission;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.2* a statement of admissions policies;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.3* information describing the purpose, length, and objectives of the program or programs offered by the institution;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.4* the schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.5* cancellation and refund policies;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.6* a definition of the unit of credit as it applies at the institution;

- Rule 4.2.18.2.7* an explanation of satisfactory progress as it applies at the institution, including an explanation of the grading or marking system;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.8* the institution's calendar, including the beginning and ending dates for each instructional term, holidays, and registration dates;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.9* a complete listing of each regularly employed faculty member showing name, area of assignment, rank, and each earned degree held, including degree level, degree designation, and institution that awarded the degree;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.10* a complete listing of each administrator showing name, title, area of assignment, and each earned degree held, including degree level, degree designation, and institution that awarded the degree;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.11* a statement of legal control with the names of the trustees, directors, and officers of the corporation;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.12* a complete listing of all scholarships offered, if any;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.13* a statement describing the nature and extent of available student services;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.14* complete and clearly stated information about the transferability of credit to other postsecondary institutions including two-year and four-year colleges and universities;
- Rule 4.2.18.2.15* any such other material facts concerning the institution and the program or course of instruction as are reasonably likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll therein; and
- Rule 4.2.18.2.16* any disclosures specified by the Commission or defined in Commission standards, policies and procedures.

Rule 4.2.18.3 The cancellation and refund policy of the institution shall be fair and shall be applied equitably.

Rule 4.2.18.4 The institution shall provide to each prospective student, newly-enrolled student, and returning student, complete and clearly presented information indicating the institution's current graduation rate by program and, if required by the Commission, job placement rate by program.

Rule 4.2.18.5 Any special requirements, or limitations, of program offerings must be made explicit in writing. Either a separate section in the catalog or a brochure separate from the catalog may accomplish this. However, if a brochure is produced, the student must also be given the regular catalog.

Rule 4.2.18.6 Upon satisfactory completion of the program of study, the student shall be given appropriate educational credentials indicating the degree level, degree designation, and the designation of the major course of study, and a transcript accurately listing the information typically found on such a document, subject to institutions' obligation, if any, to cooperate with the rules and regulations governing state and federally guaranteed student loans.

Rule 4.2.19 Academic Advising and Counseling. The institution shall provide an effective program of academic advising for all students enrolled. The program shall include orientation to the academic program, academic and personal counseling, career information and planning, placement assistance, and testing services.

Rule 4.2.20 Student Rights and Responsibilities. The institution shall establish and adhere to a clear and fair policy regarding due process in disciplinary matters, and publish this policy in a handbook, which shall include other rights and responsibilities of the students. This handbook shall be supplied to each student upon enrollment in the institution.

Rule 4.2.21 Records Storage (Institution Closures). Within sixty (60) days of its closure, the institution shall inform the Commission of its closure and must provide information to the Commission as set out in 5.5. The records of students shall be available for reproduction as requested by students. The Commission must be kept informed where students may obtain student financial and academic records.

Rule 4.2.22 Registration with Secretary of State. If not already incorporated or qualified to do business in the State of Mississippi, an institution shall apply to the Secretary of State for Articles of Incorporation or, in the case of a non-domesticated corporation, a Certificate of Authority; and submit

to the Commission a copy of such Articles or Certificate, along with the application for authorization.

Registration with the Secretary of State shall not constitute state authority, accreditation, or approval to grant degrees or offer courses and programs leading to academic degrees.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended)*.