

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS)

INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (IERS) FOR APPLICANT INSTITUTIONS

Understanding the IERs

The IERs are initial prerequisites for applicant institutions aspiring to candidate (pre-accredited) status with TRACS. They may be viewed as a developmental checklist of basic requirements, which indicate an institution's readiness to proceed toward the self-study that is required for candidacy. In the initial staff visit, the IERs provide a simple checklist review of the institution in key foundational areas, and they provide a basis for the written staff report. They may also be used by institutional leaders to provide a convenient self-check of the institution's readiness for candidate (pre-accredited) status.

Unlike the Standards that appear in the TRACS Accreditation Manual, the IERs are not criterion referenced and, therefore, are not intended to provide the means of evaluating an institution's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission. In addition, they are not intended to serve as a basis for an 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 an institution with a broad basis for evaluating its effectiveness in the accomplishment of its mission as do the TRACS Standards and Evaluative Criteria. However, they do provide a prescribed set of basic elements necessary for the successful operation of an institution of higher learning. **This checklist, along with the Institutional Profile form, must be filed with the TRACS Executive Director as part of the TRACS application process. It will be used to help assess an 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 degrees (and, if applicable, certificates and/or diplomas) within the state it is located.**

A state may authorize an institution to offer religious degrees under religious exemption. Normally, the TRACS Staff Review Committee will only approve institutions that meet, or are in the process of meeting, the non-exempt requirements of the state for offering an academic or religious degree. **The institution's charter and written state authority are required.**

Comments:

- _____ _____ **2. A governing board that has the authority to carry out the mission of the institution, 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 comprehensive, clearly-written, published Biblical foundations statement that is in harmony with the TRACS Biblical Foundations statement.

The institution's Biblical Foundations Statement (Statement of Faith or Doctrinal Statement) must demonstrate affirmation of the tenets of TRACS Biblical Foundation Statement. It should be published in appropriate official documents such as the catalogue and on the institution's website.

Comments

_____ _____

5. A clearly defined, published statement of mission (formally adopted by the governing board) along with published general institutional objectives that demonstrate that the fundamental purposes of the institution are educational, appropriate to a degree-granting institution, and relevant to the needs of the constituencies it seeks to serve.

The mission must 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:

Yes

No

- 6. The institution must offer a minimum of one postsecondary educational degree program (Associate, Bachelor’s, Master’s or Doctorate) consistent with its mission. Clearly defined and published objectives for each of its educational programs/majors must exist that are appropriate for higher education (in level, quality, and the means for achieving them), including a designated course of studies acceptable for meeting degree, diploma, or certificate requirements, plus adequate guidance to degree candidates in meeting requirements along with 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:

- 7. A program of general education required for all associate and bachelor’s 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. Faculty sufficient in number to support the educational programs/majors offered:**

- 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.**

On a separate sheet, list all majors and programs offered at the institution, and identify the full-time, contracted faculty members who are assigned to head each major/program.

Duties must be spelled out in a job description, and a contract must be on file showing teaching assignments and other employment expectations. Full-time faculty may not hold a full-time contract with another educational organization; part-time by faculty employment other than teaching at the college must be documented.

Comments:

Yes No

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

COMPLETE THE ATTACHED INSTITUTIONAL STAFF LISTING (ISL) WHEN RESPONDING TO THIS IER.

Comments:

9. A library, a librarian and other learning resources 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.

Comments:

10. A comprehensive master/strategic plan and an ongoing assessment mechanism that documents that the institution is accomplishing its mission (including student learning) effectively.

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

Comments:

11. An adequate financial base of documented funding commitments that demonstrate the institution's ability to carry out 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

_____ **12. Students enrolled in and pursuing 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:

_____ **13. An approved set of admissions policies compatible with the institution's 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. A comprehensive, published policies and procedures manual that includes a specific policy 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 from enrollment.

Comments:

Yes

No

15. A catalog and/or other comparable official publications available to students and the public that honestly and accurately sets forth pertinent information that must include at least 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. Refund policy**
- i. 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: