



Handbook of Institutional Accreditation

New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Albany, NY 12234

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

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Introduction

This handbook provides information on institutional accreditation by the New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education (“agency”), acting in their capacity as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency.

The agency’s scope of accreditation, granted by the U.S. Secretary of Education, is as follows:

Scope of recognition: the accreditation of those degree-granting institutions of higher education in New York, including distance education offered by those institutions, that designate the agency as their sole or primary nationally recognized accrediting agency for purposes of establishing eligibility to participate in HEA programs.

The principal purpose of institutional accreditation by the Regents and the Commissioner of Education is to establish an accredited institution’s eligibility for Title IV student aid programs established by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The institutional accreditation process is entirely voluntary on the part of the institution. The process is separate from the State authorization processes of the Regents and the Commissioner.

The institutional accreditation process is administered by the State Education Department’s Office of Higher Education. Please direct inquiries to:

Office of College and University Evaluation
State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue—960 EBA
Albany, NY 12234
Phone: (518) 474-1551
E-mail: ACCREDITOR@NYSED.GOV

This handbook is available on the Department’s [web site](#).

Institutions Accredited by the Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education

Link: [Directory of institutions](#) accredited by the Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education.

Initiating the Application Process for Institutional Accreditation

An authorized degree-granting institution located in New York State may apply to the Regents and the Commissioner (“agency”) for institutional accreditation, based on the agency’s standing as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency. Institutional accreditation establishes eligibility to participate in Title IV programs available under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

The scope of this agency’s recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education includes distance education. Please note, however, that this agency has not sought or been granted the authority to include correspondence education in its scope of recognition.

Applicant institutions are encouraged to review this handbook closely before deciding to pursue accreditation by the agency. Having done so, an institution sends a letter of interest to:

Office of College and University Evaluation
State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue—960 EBA
Albany, NY 12234

The letter encloses evidence that all required State approvals have been met. (These normally include a Regents charter or permission to confer degrees and program registration letters from the State Education Department.) An application will not be entertained if any significant conditions related to compliance with the Rules of the Board of Regents or the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education are attached to any State approvals.

In considering an application, the agency will determine whether the institution complies with State authorization requirements. It will also consider whether the institution is under any adverse action by the Federal government or by any other nationally recognized accrediting agency. The Department may consider other performance indicators as well, such as (but not limited to) the institution’s financial stability; graduation, retention, default, and job rates; and graduates’ performance on licensure and certification examinations. An institution will not be considered for institutional accreditation until it can document success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission.

If there are no concerns, an accreditation staff member will be assigned as the institution’s primary contact and review coordinator. Once an institution has applied for accreditation, the applicant institution should maintain ongoing contact with its review coordinator.

Process Overview: Accreditation and Renewal of Accreditation

Note: The following overview highlights elements of the process for reviewing institutions seeking accreditation or renewal of accreditation by the Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education. The basis for this is [Subpart 4-1 of Regents Rules](#). The Department may alter the process due to extenuating circumstances and in concurrence with Regents Rules.

Regents Rules and [Related Policies](#) define the requirements of the accreditation process and related responsibilities. Regents accredited institutions should familiarize themselves with those standards and policies.

Overview

The New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education are an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education (“Secretary”). An institution may apply to the Regents and the Commissioner for accreditation to establish eligibility to participate in Title IV student aid programs established by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. An application for accreditation can occur only after the Regents and the Commissioner, acting in their capacities as a State approval agency, have conferred degree authority and registered the institution’s program(s). (**Note:** institutions that hold provisional charters do not have the ability to confer degrees.)

Institutional accreditation focuses on institutional policies and on the qualitative effectiveness of the institution as a whole, particularly with respect to promoting student achievement and development. It takes into account an institution’s compliance with its responsibilities as a recipient of Title IV funds, if it participates in such programs.

An institution may be accredited for a period of up to ten years or for a shorter time, at the discretion of the Regents and the Commissioner. During its accreditation period, an institution provides annual reports for review to assure sustained compliance with all accreditation standards. Information from annual reports or from other agencies related to compliance with accreditation standards may occasion a review of the standing of an institution. Such review may take the form of reports on specified topics, a special on-site review, or acceleration of the scheduled periodic accreditation review.

The Department publishes a list of institutions scheduled for accreditation or renewal of accreditation review in the New York *State Register*, requesting third-party comment on the institution's qualifications for accreditation.

Application for Initial Accreditation

An institution seeking initial institutional accreditation from the Regents and the Commissioner submits a letter of interest describing the scope of requested accreditation. It shows that it has all required State approvals and that it is not under adverse action by the Federal government (with respect to use of Title IV funds) or by another nationally recognized accrediting agency. An institution will not be reviewed for possible accreditation until it can document student outcomes consistent with the institution's statement of mission, purpose and objectives. Generally, this means the institution has graduated a sufficient body of students on which to provide a reliable assessment of outcomes, as determined by the Commissioner

Application for Renewal of Accreditation

Institutions seeking renewal of accreditation shall submit a letter of intent requesting renewal at least 18 months prior to the end date of the institution's current accreditation period. Following a review and direction by the Department, the institution may begin the self-study process.

Preparation of a Self-Study

Upon acceptance of an application for accreditation, the professional accreditation staff member of the Office of Higher Education who has been designated as the review coordinator contacts the institution to discuss the institution's self-study. A [Self-Study Guide](#), including the accreditation standards, examples of compliance, suggested documentation, and other pertinent materials, is provided to the institution. Following receipt of the institution's self-study, the review coordinator examines the self-study to determine the institution's readiness for a site visit by a peer review team. The Department may require the institution to submit additional information.

Public Notice

The Department invites the public to comment on an institution's qualifications for accreditation by publishing in the New York State *Register*, or its successor publication, a notice that the institution is being considered for accreditation action.

Review Team Selection

The review coordinator establishes the peer review team before the site visit. The team consists of outside peer reviewers as well as professional accreditation staff from the Department. Team size varies, depending on the scope of the institution; it is typically in the range of four to six persons. Team members may include faculty and administrators from comparable institutions in New York and other states. Care is taken to identify persons who are expert in their fields, objective in their judgments, and who have no conflicts of interest. Team members have undergone training on institutional accreditation conducted by the State Education Department, including coverage of conflicts of interest and recusals. The Department will select one peer member to serve as chair of the review team. The Department provides the names and affiliations of proposed team members to the institution, which may request substitutions when there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest. Conflict of interest guidelines are also provided in advance to the institution.

Team Preparation for the Visit

The institution provides each team member with the completed self-study at least 30 days prior to the visit, if possible. At the same time, the Department's review coordinator provides the team members with guidelines for conducting review activities; guidelines on conflict of interest; the format for the reporting of findings, recommendations and suggestions; a tentative schedule of review activities during the visit; and supplementary guidelines for use in assessment activities and determinations. Team members with a conflict of interest under the written guidelines are expected to recuse themselves from the review.

Team members are asked to review the self-study and the Department's review standards and procedures prior to the visit and to seek any needed clarifications from the Department's review coordinator. Once on site, the team typically meets before beginning its review activities to review assignments and identify any information needs.

The Visit

The purpose of the site visit to the institution is to assess compliance with the standards for institutional accreditation. Site visits typically last 1-3 days. During the visit, team members interview faculty, administrators, and students; review course syllabi and student work; examine student and faculty folders; examine administrative records and policy statements; assess physical facilities, library resources, and instructional equipment; visit branch campuses; and conduct other review activities as pertinent. Team members meet regularly during the site visit to share observations, work on recommendations under the guidance of the chair, and clarify any uncertainties related to the application of standards. Particular attention is given to the institution's qualitative effectiveness in promoting successful student development and outcomes in relation to applicable standards and the institution's mission and scope.

At the end of the site visit, the chair, other members of the team and the Department's review coordinator may meet with the chief executive officer and any designated staff. The team chair and the review coordinator outline subsequent steps in the review process. No accreditation recommendation is announced at this time.

Report of the Visit

After the site visit, each team member submits to the team chair and the review coordinator a written report of observations and findings concerning the institution's compliance with the accreditation standards and any recommendations and suggestions for institutional improvement in relation to the standards. Team member reports are advisory and confidential. The team chair prepares a draft team report based on the members' written reports. The report includes the team's recommendations for institutional improvement or compliance with specific standards. Department accreditation staff review the team report, at which point the review coordinator may return to the team for final clarifications. The Department then transmits the report to the chief executive officer of the institution and asks the institution to note any factual errors, respond to requests for clarification or additional information, and provide any comments. The institution has 30 days to respond in writing to the report, starting from the date the Department sends the report.

The Department sends the final compliance report to the institution after the Department receives the institution's response. The final compliance report consists of the peer review team report; the institution's response; and the Department's recommendation with respect to accreditation action, including a summary of the institution's compliance with the standards.

Determination Process

The Department transmits the final compliance report and a preliminary recommendation for institutional accreditation action to the Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation (Council). In addition, the Council receives the self-study and other pertinent supporting documentation at least 20 days prior to the scheduled Council meeting. The Council reviews these materials at its next available meeting, drawing on the observations and recommendations of assigned readers appointed by the Council Chair. Accreditation staff introduces the institution and presents an outline of the process and the recommended action. Typically, a member of the peer review team presents a summary of the team's findings and recommendations. The Council invites representatives of the institution under review and, at the Council's discretion, other interested parties, to make oral presentations. After concluding its review, the Council votes on a recommendation to the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, based on the entire record,

including the institution's self-study and the compliance review report. (The possible actions are noted in the next section.) The Department transmits a copy of this recommendation to the institution.

The institution and/or the Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education has the right to appeal the Council's findings and recommendations. If neither the institution nor the Deputy Commissioner appeals, the Commissioner adopts the Council's findings and recommendations as the Commissioner's findings and recommendations to the Regents. At a regularly scheduled public meeting, the Board of Regents considers the complete record of the accreditation process (including the institution's self-study, compliance report, and the record of the Council) and makes the final determination on accreditation action. Representatives of the applicant institution may be present at this meeting, but normally they are not invited to participate in the discussion.

The Regents may act or may defer action pending further consideration by the Council or the receipt of additional information. If the Regents take adverse action as defined in Regents Rules §4-1.2(d) on an application for institutional accreditation or renewal of accreditation, a statement of the reason(s) for this action will be provided to the applicant institution.

Possible Accreditation Actions

Accreditation without conditions. The institution is in full compliance with the standards for institutional accreditation. Any follow-up matters are not, in the judgment of the Regents, of a nature or scope that affects the institution's capacity to maintain adherence to the institutional accreditation standards for the period of accreditation. Recommendations or any follow-up reports relate either to minor compliance matters or to the strengthening of practices that meet the standards of compliance. Accreditation without conditions may be for a period of up to ten years. Accreditation without conditions may apply to institutions seeking initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation.

Accreditation with conditions. The institution is in substantial compliance with the standards for institutional accreditation. Any areas of non-compliance are not of such nature or scope as to call into question the institution's substantive adherence to the institutional accreditation standards during the term of accreditation. The institution has demonstrated the intent and capacity to rectify identified deficiencies and to strengthen practice in marginally acceptable matters within no more than two years. The institution will be required to take steps to remedy issues raised in the review for accreditation and to provide reports and/or submit to site visits concerning such issues. Accreditation with conditions may be for a period of up to ten years, contingent on a finding of compliance within no more than two years on any areas for deficiency cited in the Regents accreditation action. Accreditation with conditions may apply to institutions seeking initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation.

Probationary accreditation. Probationary accreditation means accreditation for a set period of time, not to exceed two years, during which the institution shall come into compliance with standards for accreditation through corrective action. During this period, the institution provides documentation of compliance with standards, particularly all standards that were not met at the time of the Regents action. A follow-up visit by Department staff and/or peer reviewers may be required following provision of a required report. Probationary accreditation is only available to institutions seeking renewal of accreditation.

Denial of accreditation. The institution does not meet standards for institutional accreditation and cannot reasonably be expected to meet those standards within two years. Denial of accreditation may apply to institutions seeking initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation.

Note:

At this writing, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) may require this agency to report a determination of “accreditation with conditions” as being equivalent to “probationary accreditation.” In addition, USDE may seek enhanced reporting from an institution if it is found to be out of compliance with certain “student success” measures that address student achievement; fiscal and administrative capacity; recruiting, admissions, and advertising practices; and other elements.

Summary of Selected Policies

- Institutional accreditation for Title IV purposes is the outcome of an application that is separate from application for State authorizations by the Regents and the Commissioner of Education. All determinations about accreditation and renewal of accreditation are based solely on the defined standards and requirements for institutional accreditation set forth in Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents. Approvals by the Regents and the Commissioner, acting singly or together as a State agency, do not impute accreditation by the Regents and the Commissioner acting as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency.

Institutions accredited by the Board of Regents and Commissioner must adhere to the separate and distinct State authorization and institutional accreditation standards and processes. An institution’s action to address an accreditation requirement does not serve to address or initiate actions that may be needed for State authorization purposes. Likewise, actions taken to address State authorizations do not initiate actions that may be needed for purposes of Regents institutional accreditation.

For example, State authorization and Regents institutional accreditation standards that address the addition of new institutional locations may differ from one another. Institutions are responsible for initiating required actions to maintain compliance with both State authorization and Regents institutional accreditation requirements.

- Denial, non-renewal, or other adverse accreditation action, or voluntary withdrawal by an institution, does not impute loss of State approval.
- In the event of institutional closure, State authorization policies and processes relative to that action do not impute compliance with teach-out requirements of the standards for accreditation.
- Accreditation and renewal of accreditation are not granted to any institution that is under adverse action by another nationally recognized accrediting agency, by the Federal government with respect to Title IV participation, or by the State approval agency.

Institutional Accreditation Self-Study Guide

Degree-granting institutions in New York State may designate the New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education as their nationally recognized accrediting agency to establish eligibility for student aid funds available under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. Institutions receiving such designation must meet the quality standards established by the Regents and the Commissioner of Education for voluntary institutional accreditation. Institutional adherence to these standards is periodically confirmed through a process of institutional self-study and subsequent peer review.

The Office of Higher Education, acting under the authority of the Regents and the Commissioner, has prepared this Self-Study Guide to assist institutions in undergoing a review for purposes of institutional accreditation. The self-study requires an examination of the entire institution and the contributions of its departments to the institution as a whole. The process is intended to help identify areas that need strengthening and suggest future actions as well to assure compliance with accreditation standards.

This guide includes:

- a description of the format for the self-study
- a summary data form
- statements of the applicable standards, “examples of compliance,” and “suggested documentation”
- a list of materials commonly used in documentation of the self-study and in the subsequent on-site review (Appendix A)
- specific forms to be used in the self-study (Appendix B)

Because of the distinctiveness of each institution, it is important that the institutional representative coordinating the self-study maintain ongoing communication with the Department's designated review coordinator during all phases of the self-study process.

An institution must assess itself in terms of all applicable sections of the standards for institutional accreditation. Under each standard, or grouping of standards, three responses are requested:

- (1) Data: In this section, the institution describes its present status with regard to the standard cited. The statements of "examples of compliance" and "suggested documentation" are intended to assist the institution in its self-assessment of compliance and to identify any areas needing changes, as well as to assist peer reviewers and others assess institutional compliance. Documentation may vary in type and scope, depending on an institution's mission and scope of instruction. The institution may consult with the review coordinator if it has questions about documentation appropriate to its circumstances. Documentation commonly required is cited in Appendices A and B of this guide.
- (2) Analysis: In this section, the institution provides a careful and thorough evaluation of its compliance with the standard cited and of the effectiveness of its policies and practices in the area addressed by the standard. It should recognize **both accomplishments and areas for improvement**.
- (3) Plans: In this section, the institution presents its plans to build on its strengths and to correct identified weaknesses or matters of non-compliance.

Suggestions on Organizing the Self-Study

The main narrative of the Self-Study should be concise. Consider providing lengthy evidence and documentation as clearly labeled appendices to the main narrative. This will help reviewers access the information as needed while reading the narrative. Please be prepared to provide the Self-Study in both paper and electronic forms.

Evidence and documentation should be clearly relevant to statements made in the Self-Study narrative. While you may find it necessary in some cases to append a large document (such as a Student Handbook), it would be helpful if the narrative notes the location of the relevant material (e.g., *Appendix C, Student Handbook, page 6*).

Peer reviewers will be writing primarily to the institution's compliance with accreditation standards found in section 4-1.4 of Regents Rules. These are the standards reflected in the Self-Study document. They also have as a reference (but are not limited to) the Self-Study document's "examples of compliance" and "suggested documentation" elements. A clear and accurate self-assessment will help reviewers assess the statements made by the institution. If the team cannot confirm compliance with a standard, it will not assume the standard is met.

Summary Data

| <u>INSTITUTION INFORMATION</u> | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Name of institution: | | |
| Address of main campus: | | |
| President of institution: | | |
| <u>CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THIS APPLICATION</u> | | |
| Name: | | |
| Address | | |
| E-mail: | | |
| Telephone: | | |
| <u>SUMMARY DATA</u> | | |
| Enter number of branch campuses and additional locations: | | |
| Attach listing of addresses and enrollments for each branch campus and additional location. | | |
| (See definition in Section 4-1.2 (g) of the Rules of the Board of Regents.) | | |
| Enter number of degrees awarded by level (for the preceding academic year—and identify year): | | |
| Associate: | Baccalaureate: | First-Professional: |
| Master's: | Master of Philosophy: | Doctoral: |
| Enter number of faculty (for the most recent fall term): | | |
| Full-time: | Part-time: | |
| Enter total enrollment (for the most recent fall term—and identify year): | | |
| Undergraduate: | Full-time: | Part-time: |
| First-Professional: | Full-time: | Part-time: |
| Graduate: | Full-time: | Part-time: |
| Enter first-year freshman enrollment (for the most recent fall term—and identify term): | | |
| Full-time: | Part-time: | |
| Enter admissions information (for the most recent fall term, undergraduate—and identify year): | | |
| Completed applications: | First-year: | Transfer: |
| Acceptances: | First-year: | Transfer: |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Enter number of requests for financial aid transcripts (for the preceding academic year—identify year):</p> <p>(A) By other institutions:</p> <p>(B) By this institution from other institutions:</p> | | | |
| <p>Enter percents of institutional revenues from the following (for the preceding academic year, or other 12-month reporting period):</p> <p>(A) TAP grant program (%):</p> <p>(B) Pell grant program (%):</p> | | | |
| <p>Calculate first-year undergraduate persistence rate (for the first term to second term, full-time only):</p> <p># entering cohort: # continued to second term: Persistence rate (%):</p> | | | |
| <p>Calculate undergraduate graduation rate (in period 50 percent greater than normal program length):</p> <p>(A) Associate degree (3 years):</p> <p>Entering cohort year: # entering cohort: # of graduates: Rate (%):</p> <p>(B) Baccalaureate degree (6 years):</p> <p>Entering cohort year: # entering cohort: # of graduates: Rate (%):</p> | | | |
| <p>Enter job placement rate:</p> | | | |
| <p>Enter distance education course information (for the most recent fall term—identify year):</p> <p>Total courses offered through distance education:</p> <p>Total enrollment in distance education courses:</p> <p>Total programs registered in the distance education format:</p> <p>(See definition in Section 4-1.2 (p) of the Rules of the Board of Regents.)</p> | | | |

Self-Study: Standards, Examples of Compliance, and Suggested Documentation

Standard: Institutional mission

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(a)

The institution shall have a clear statement of purpose, mission, and goals that shall be reflected in the policies, practices, and outcomes of the institution. The statement of mission may include but need not be limited to: the academic purposes of the institution and the institution's commitment to the social and economic context in which the institution operates; the relative roles of teaching, creation and preservation of knowledge, and service; the nature of constituents to be served; and the basis for setting priorities.

Examples of Compliance:

- Institutional mission and goals are clearly stated in the catalog and other publications.
- The mission statement does not conflict with the institution's charter or authorizations granted by the Regents.
- Institutional goals, objectives, policies, practices, and programs reflect and implement the mission.
- Components of the institution's educational program are consistent in defined objectives and content with stated institutional purpose, mission and goals.
- Members of the institutional community (trustees, administration, faculty, students) are knowledgeable about the institution's mission.
- Institutional and student outcomes are consistent with the institutional mission and goals.
- The institution has a plan and program to assess the effectiveness with which its units and services contribute to the consistent implementation of its mission and goals.
- If the institution offers distance education courses or programs, the institution's distance learning activity is consistent with the institutional mission.

Suggested Documentation:

- Citations of pertinent statements in catalogs, other publications, and internal documents.
- Syllabi, examinations and other course materials.
- Surveys of members of the institution's community.
- Data on outcomes for students and the institution as a whole.
- Institutional effectiveness assessment plan and program.
- Reports of internal and external reviews of the institution.
- Minutes of trustees, administrative committees, and faculty committees.
- Institutional long-range master plan.
- Statement of mission.
- Statement of institution vision.
- Evidence of reappraisal of mission.
- Evidence that institutional budgets reflect the mission and goals.

Standard: Assessment of student achievement

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(b)

(1) The institution shall prepare and implement a plan for the systematic assessment of its effectiveness in promoting the quality of student achievement and development. The assessment plan shall include but need not be limited to: graduation rates, retention rates and, as pertinent to institutional mission and programs, State licensing examination results and job placement rates. The plan may include other information important to the institution's achievement of its mission, such as transfer rates and the subsequent educational success of its graduates. The institution shall provide to the department on request and in all applications for accreditation and renewal of accreditation, evidence of its implementation of the plan and its effects on the quality of student achievement in relation to its mission and goals.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution has a comprehensive plan and program to assess its effectiveness in promoting the quality of student achievement and development on a scheduled, periodic basis and has implemented the plan. The institution's plan to assess its effectiveness includes assessment of the outcomes of its educational programs and services and specifically includes student persistence and graduation rates, licensing examination results and job placement rates as applicable to the fields and programs of study, and the institutional policies and practices contributing (or not contributing) to these outcomes.

Suggested Documentation:

- Institutional effectiveness assessment plan and documentation of its implementation.
- Outcomes data on student persistence rate, graduation rate, job placement, and other outcomes including, if applicable, state professional licensing examination results.

(2) The institution shall annually submit to the department:

- (i) timely and accurate statistical information as prescribed by the commissioner;
- (ii) additional specified reports, including data related to graduation rates, State licensing examination results, job placement rates, and other evidence of the quality of student achievement;
- (iii) record of compliance with its program responsibilities under HEA title IV (including student default rate data, and the results of audits and program reviews);
- (iv) record of student complaints and their outcomes; and
- (v) other information pertaining to an institution's compliance with the standards prescribed in this Subpart, as determined by the department.

Examples of Compliance:

- Annual reports are accurate, complete, and timely.

Suggested Documentation:

- Annual reports provided to the department.

(3) (i) Graduation rates.

- (a) Associate degrees. If, in the judgement of the commissioner, there is a sufficient cohort of students, based on the most recent data submitted to the department, an institution awarding associate degrees that reports an associate degree completion rate more than five percentage points below the mean associate degree completion rate reported by all institutions in the State, according to the most recent information available to the department, shall prepare and submit a plan to improve student achievement as measured by graduation rates. Such plan shall include but need not be limited to: strategies and timelines to achieve a completion rate not lower than five percentage points below the mean. Such plan shall be submitted to, and subject to approval by, the commissioner.
- (b) Baccalaureate degrees. If, in the judgement of the commissioner, there is a sufficient cohort of students, based on the most recent data submitted to the department, an institution awarding baccalaureate degrees that reports a baccalaureate degree completion rate more than five percentage points below the mean baccalaureate degree completion rate reported by all institutions in the State, according to the most recent information available to the department, shall prepare and submit a plan to improve student achievement as measured by graduation rates. Such plan shall include but need not be limited to: strategies and timelines to achieve a completion rate not lower than five percentage points below the mean. Such plan shall be submitted to, and subject to approval by, the commissioner.

(ii) Job placement rates.

- (a) Two-year colleges. If, in the judgement of the commissioner, there is a sufficient cohort of students, based on the most recent data submitted to the department, an institution whose mission includes the preparation of students for employment and that offers no programs beyond the associate degree that reports job placement rates, including placement in civilian and military occupations, more than five percentage points below the mean reported by all institutions in the State offering programs no higher than the associate degree level, according to the most recent information available to the department, shall prepare and submit a plan to improve student achievement as measured by job placement rates. Such plan shall include but need not be limited to: strategies and timelines to achieve a job placement rate not lower than five percentage points below the mean. Such plan shall be submitted to, and subject to approval by, the commissioner.
- (b) Four-year colleges. If, in the judgement of the commissioner, there is a sufficient cohort of students, based on the most recent data submitted to the department, an institution whose mission includes the preparation of students for employment and that offers programs at and above the baccalaureate degree that reports job placement rates, including civilian and military occupations, below 80 percent, shall prepare and submit a plan to improve student achievement as measured by job placement rates. Such plan shall include but need not be limited to: strategies and timelines to achieve at least an 80 percent job placement rate. Such plan shall be submitted to, and subject to approval by, the commissioner.

- (c) Graduate-only institutions. If, in the judgement of the commissioner, there is a sufficient cohort of students, based on the most recent data submitted to the department, an institution whose mission includes the preparation of students for employment and that offers no programs below the master's degree that reports job placement rates, including civilian and military occupations, below 80 percent, shall prepare and submit a plan to improve student achievement as measured by job placement rates. Such plan shall include but need not be limited to: strategies and timelines to achieve at least an 80 percent job placement rate. Such plan shall be submitted to, and subject to approval by, the commissioner.

Examples of Compliance:

- Provision of a satisfactory plan to address any shortfalls in the designated performance measures.

Suggested Documentation:

- Written plan, with timelines, to come into compliance with the performance standards.
- Comparison of institutional graduation and job placement data with the New York State [Total Trend report](#).

Standard: Programs of study

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(c)

(1) Integrity of credit.

- (i) Each course offered for credit by an institution shall be part of a general education requirement, a major requirement, or an elective in a program of study leading to a degree or certificate.
- (ii) Credit toward an undergraduate degree shall be earned only for college-level work. Credit toward a graduate degree shall be earned only through work designed expressly for graduate students. Enrollment of secondary school students in undergraduate courses, of undergraduates in graduate courses, and of graduate students in undergraduate courses shall be strictly controlled by the institution.
- (iii) The institution, in offering coursework through distance education or correspondence education, must have processes in place to verify that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course and receives the academic credit for the course, using methods that may include but are not limited to a secure login and pass code; proctored examinations; and other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity. Institutions must also use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.
- (iv) Learning objectives for each course shall be of a level and rigor that warrant acceptance in transfer by other institutions of higher education.
- (v) The institution shall assure that credit is granted only to students who have achieved the stated objectives of each credit-bearing learning activity.

Examples of Compliance:

- Remedial course work is not credit bearing.
- Coursework for undergraduate credit is college level.
- Course enrollment is strictly controlled by the institution according to level; appropriate prerequisite knowledge is required.
- Credit is granted only for courses that count toward some degree offered by the institution, at least as an elective.
- Credit is granted only for achievement of objectives of all credit-bearing activities; grades and credit are commensurate with demonstrated student attainment of course objectives.
- The length of instructional time and hours of supplementary assignments meet the requirements set forth in §4-1.2(v).
- Registrar audits of program progress and completion are consistent with published requirements for curricula and degrees completion.
- Distance learning courses and programs are expected to produce the same learning outcomes as comparable classroom-based programs.
- The policies and procedures for the verification of student identity in distance education courses are adequate and effective.
- The processes used to protect student privacy are judged to be effective and adequate.

- Charges associated with the verification of student identity are clearly identified in publications and presented to students at the time of registration or enrollment.

Suggested Documentation:

- Instructional policy statement and internal guidelines on expectations of effort and level.
- Catalog descriptions of curricula and courses and their prerequisites.
- Comprehensive list of all courses scheduled for a term.
- Written institutional policies regarding enrollment in courses (by level or place in the curriculum).
- Course materials, including general syllabi, instructor course outlines, exam questions, graded student papers.
- Recent self-assessments or external assessments of programs, departments, and general education, as available.
- If the institution offers distance education courses or programs, samples of course websites and grading rubrics; student verification policies and procedures.
- Transcripts, registrar's audits on program progress; degree and program templates for advisors.
- Feedback from students, alumni, employers on attainment of course objectives and needed general skills and knowledge.
- Completed Course Assessment Forms, as indicated by review coordinator.
- Listings of charges and fees in catalog and other publications.

(2) Programs of study goals and objectives.

- (i) The goals and the objectives of each program of study and the competencies expected of students completing the program shall be clearly defined in writing.
- (ii) Each program of study shall show evidence of careful planning. The content and duration of programs of study shall be designed to implement their purposes.
- (iii) Course syllabi shall clearly state the subject matter, the learning objectives, and requirements of each course and shall be provided to the students in the course.

Examples of Compliance:

- The curriculum design is coherent, implements the philosophy and purposes of the program, and is aligned with the educational objectives of the program.
- Learning experiences and methods of instruction are consistent with the purposes and objectives of the program.
- Curriculum content proceeds from introductory level to advanced in logical sequence with appropriate breadth, depth, and currency.
- Course outlines/syllabi are clear and comprehensive and include: course objectives; prerequisites; credits allocated; course content and assignments; testing methods; method of assessing student achievement; basis of grade; and bibliographic and other resources related to course; and other course policies.
- There is a record of ongoing and formal periodic review of curricular design, content, and effectiveness in implementing stated purposes, consistent with institutional mission and objectives.
- The same academic standards and requirements are applied to programs offered on campus and through distance learning.

Suggested Documentation:

- Descriptions of curricular objectives and requirements in the catalog and other printed materials, and on-line.
 - Feedback from faculty and students regarding the effectiveness of curricula in implementing their purposes and meeting defined objectives.
 - Course materials, including syllabi, examinations, and graded student papers.
 - Course evaluations by students and peer reviewers.
 - Recent formal program evaluations, including assessment by internal committees and by external peer reviewers and/or constituencies.
- (3) Assessment of success in achieving the goals and objectives. There shall be a written plan to assess, no less than every five years, the effectiveness of faculty and students in achieving goals and objectives and to promote improvement. Such assessment shall include systematic collection, review and use of quantitative and qualitative information about programs of study, including information that directly addresses learning outcomes, and shall document actions taken to improve student learning and development.

Examples of Compliance:

- Existence of the required plan.

Suggested Documentation:

- Provision of the assessment plan.
- (4) Program length, credit, and other requirements for degrees. For each program of study, the institution shall assure that courses will be offered with sufficient frequency to enable students to complete the program within the minimum time for degree completion for each degree level identified in this paragraph.
- (i) Associate degree programs shall normally be capable of completion in two academic years of full-time study, or their equivalent in part-time study, with an accumulation of not less than 60 semester hours.
 - (ii) Baccalaureate degree programs shall normally be capable of completion in four academic years of full-time study, or, in the case of five-year programs, five academic years of full-time study, or their equivalent in part-time study, with an accumulation of not less than 120 semester hours.
 - (iii) Master's degree programs shall normally require a minimum of one academic year of full-time graduate level study, or its equivalent in part-time study, with an accumulation of not less than 30 semester hours. Research or a comparable occupational or professional experience shall be a component of each master's degree program. The requirements for a master's degree shall normally include at least one of the following: passing a comprehensive test, writing a thesis based on independent research or completing an appropriate special project.
 - (iv) The master of philosophy degree shall require completion of all requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy except the dissertation, and shall require that the student have been

admitted to candidacy in a doctor of philosophy curriculum offered by the institution conferring the master of philosophy degree.

- (v) Doctoral programs shall require a minimum of three academic years of full-time graduate level study after the baccalaureate degree, or their equivalent in part-time study. Doctoral studies shall include the production of a substantial report on original research, the independent investigation of a topic of significance to the field of study, the production of an appropriate creative work, or the verified development of advanced professional skills.

Examples of Compliance:

- Courses are offered with sufficient frequency to allow full-time students to complete the program within the minimum time frames set forth in these standards.
- The length of time for part-time students is reasonable, with suggested limits for program completion.
- Associate degree curricula include a minimum of 60 semester hours.
- Associate degree curricula normally require a minimum of two years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study.
- Baccalaureate degree curricula include a minimum of 120 semester hours.
- Baccalaureate degree curricula normally require a minimum of four years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study.
- Master's degree curricula include a minimum of 30 semester hours.
- Master's degree curricula normally require a thesis, based on independent research, a culminating project, a comprehensive examination, or some combination of same.
- Master of Philosophy curricula include all the requirements for a doctor of philosophy except the dissertation.
- The M. Phil. requires that the student has been admitted to candidacy in a Ph.D. program.
- Doctoral programs include a minimum of three years of full-time graduate study or the equivalent in part-time study.
- Doctoral studies include a dissertation based on original research a comparable significant creative work, or the verified development of advanced professional skills.

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalog descriptions of all courses citing frequency of offering; catalog includes model schedules.
- Institution's analysis for the previous two years confirming the offering of courses with sufficient frequency for timely degree completion.
- Institution's analysis of its use of course substitutions and independent study as an alternative to offering of courses.
- Records of registrar's degree audits of students; student transcripts.
- For a master's degree program that does not require a thesis, a culminating project, a comprehensive examination, or some combination of the same, evidence that the program was registered with such a characteristic.
- Masters and doctoral theses or equivalent papers; comprehensive examinations for graduate degrees.
- Record of institution's reviews of graduate theses or the equivalent, and comprehensive examinations for sufficiency of depth, breadth, and quality of analysis.

Standard: Faculty

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(d)

(1) Competence and credentials.

- (i) In support of the mission of the institution, all members of the faculty shall have demonstrated by training, earned degrees, scholarship, experience, and by classroom performance or other evidence of teaching potential, their competence to offer the courses and discharge the other academic responsibilities which are assigned to them.
- (ii) Faculty members who teach in a program leading to a certificate or undergraduate degree shall hold at least a master's degree in the field in which they teach or a related field, or shall be actively pursuing graduate study in such field or a related field, or shall have demonstrated, in other widely recognized ways, such as completion of relevant education, training and/or experience, their competence in the field in which they teach. Upon request, institutions shall provide documentation to the commissioner confirming that faculty members who do not hold such master's degree or are not pursuing such graduate study have demonstrated competence in the field in which they teach.
- (iii) At least one faculty member teaching in each program of study culminating in a baccalaureate degree shall hold an earned doctorate in an appropriate field, unless the commissioner deems that the program is in a field of study in which other standards are appropriate.
- (iv) All faculty members who teach within a program of study leading to a graduate degree shall possess earned doctorates or other terminal degrees in the field in which they are teaching or shall have demonstrated, in other widely recognized ways, their special competence in the field in which they direct graduate students. Upon request, institutions shall provide documentation to the commissioner confirming that the faculty members who do not hold such doctorate or terminal degrees have demonstrated special competence in the field in which they direct students.

Examples of Compliance:

- Faculty have the documented expertise, including the advanced study and licensure appropriate to the field, to teach each course to which they are assigned and conduct other faculty responsibilities set forth in this Section.
- Faculty members teaching at the certificate, associate degree, and baccalaureate degree levels hold at least a master's degree in an appropriate field or are actively pursuing graduate study and have the necessary background for in-depth teaching, curriculum development, and program evaluation responsibilities. A minimum of one faculty member teaching in each curriculum at the baccalaureate level holds an earned doctorate.
- Faculty members teaching at the graduate level hold earned doctorates or other terminal degrees in their specialty areas. Any faculty members teaching at the graduate level who do not hold an earned doctorate or other terminal degree have significant, widely recognized special competence in the field in which they teach graduate students as demonstrated by such means as publication record.
- The faculty have college teaching and administrative experience appropriate to their assignments.
- If the institution offers distance education courses or programs, the institution recognizes that teaching in the distance learning environment requires different pedagogical and communication strategies to function effectively.

Suggested Documentation:

- Faculty transcripts/resumes; record of professional activity; record of service at the institution, as included in faculty folders and other documents.
- Completed faculty information forms and forms on expected advanced training for particular courses.
- Completed Faculty Profile Forms.
- Faculty handbook, employment agreements and contracts, and other documents with criteria for employment, retention, promotion and tenure; evaluation process and standards, and professional development expectations and support.
- Advertisements for faculty positions.
- Minutes of trustee meetings and administrative and faculty committee meetings related to staffing, curriculum and academic standards.
- Course materials, including syllabi and graded student work.
- Course evaluations by students and peers.
- Institutional self-assessments of the educational program and its components, and their outcomes on staffing.
- Descriptions of and materials from faculty training programs on distance education pedagogy and facilitation.

(2) Adequacy to support programs and services.

- (i) The faculty shall be sufficient in number to assure breadth and depth of instruction and the proper discharge of all other faculty responsibilities.
- (ii) To foster and maintain continuity and stability in academic programs and policies, there shall be in the institution a sufficient number of faculty members who serve full-time at the institution.
- (iii) For each program of study the institution shall designate a body of faculty who, with the academic officers of the institution, shall be responsible for setting curricular objectives, for determining the means by which achievement of objectives is measured, for evaluating the achievement of curricular objectives, and for providing academic advice to students.
- (iv) The ratio of faculty to students in each course shall be sufficient to assure effective instruction.

Examples of Compliance:

- The faculty clearly are responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of curricular design, for ongoing quality assurance, and advising.
- The number of full-and part-time faculty members is sufficient to assure the consistent attainment of institutional and program objectives with respect to breadth and depth of instruction, timely offering of all courses needed to complete each program, and effective conduct of other academic responsibilities.
- There is a sufficient and appropriate number of ongoing full-time faculty members to assure continuity of leadership and stability in all academic programs, including the development, implementation and evaluation of curricular design, ongoing quality assurance, and advising in all program areas. Any exception to the maintenance of a well-qualified core of ongoing full-time faculty in each program area is thoroughly documented in terms of high qualitative learning outcomes for students as well as the unique nature of the field.
- Class size and the methods of instruction are consistently conducive to effective learning. The size of each class is such as to assure prompt, continual, and substantive feedback on student

performance during the course and to assure ongoing faculty accessibility to students in the course. Class size is such that the instructor, or a well-qualified member of the instructional team for the course, has a good working knowledge of each student's strengths and weaknesses in the course and interacts with the student to strengthen performance. Remedial classes have enrollments consistent with intensive, individualized teaching; they are consistently less than 20.

- Course evaluations by students and peers assess whether class size and methods of instruction are conducive to effective learning.

Suggested Documentation:

- Printouts of courses offered, with class sizes; summary data on class sizes.
- Completed Faculty Profile Form. (See Appendix B.)
- Course grade sheets, as indicated by review coordinator.
- Faculty Information Forms.
- Expected Faculty Expertise Forms.
- Syllabi, examinations, graded student papers, and other course materials
- Continuity of Faculty Form. (See Appendix B.)
- Observations in institutional self-studies of programs and of institutional functioning, and their outcomes.
- Feedback from students, faculty, graduates and others on instructional effectiveness and outcomes.
- Student and peer evaluations of instructors and courses.
- Composition of committees, including academic standards, curriculum, and tenure and promotion.
- Minutes of faculty committees.
- Faculty handbook and other documents addressing (a) academic governance and (b) expectations in teaching.
- Institutional self-studies of optimum class size for effective teaching and the core of full-time faculty needed to assure continuity and stability in programs and policies.
- Data on student/faculty ratios and class size.
- Data on proportion of instruction by full-time faculty.
- Institutional definition of full-time employment for faculty members.

(3) Evaluation and professional responsibilities.

- (i) The teaching and research of each faculty member, in accordance with the faculty member's responsibilities, shall be evaluated periodically by the institution. Members of the instructional staff new to the institution shall receive special supervision during the initial period of appointment.
- (ii) The institution shall ensure that each member of the faculty is allowed adequate time, in accordance with the faculty member's responsibilities, to broaden professional knowledge, prepare course materials, advise students, direct independent study and research, supervise teaching, participate in institutional governance and carry out other academic responsibilities appropriate to his or her position, in addition to performing assigned teaching and administrative duties.

Examples of Compliance:

- Institutional policy provides for evaluation of faculty members according to an established schedule and procedure; faculty folders reflect adherence to stated policy.

- Orientation and supervision of inexperienced faculty members are carried on during the initial period of appointment; other faculty are evaluated periodically with respect to their teaching and other responsibilities.
- The institution has written policies regarding release time and other support for faculty members pursuing activities which contribute to their professional knowledge and implements them consistently and evenhandedly.
- Faculty workloads are consistent with the skill levels of students and their needs for instructional support, feedback and individual mentoring.
- Faculty workloads permit sufficient time for participation in academic governance, advising, professional development and other designated responsibilities.
- Faculty workloads provide sufficient time for course preparations and for frequent and careful assessments of students' progress, including the development of writing and analytical skills.
- Assignment of maximum faculty teaching loads is consistent with the assessed quality of teaching and with high qualitative learning outcomes for students. Total teaching loads, including overload assignments, take into account the effect of class size and total student load on quality of instruction. Normally, full-time faculty have a teaching load of no more than three separate course preparations.
- The institution has developed and implemented a process for sustaining faculty professional development in distance learning.

Suggested Documentation:

- Written institution policies in faculty handbook, individual or collective contracts or agreements, and other documents, including descriptions of formal systems of faculty evaluation, orientation and supervision of inexperienced faculty, and faculty workloads.
- Materials in faculty folders on evaluation of teaching and other responsibilities.
- Description of advising responsibilities and workloads of faculty and staff, description of basis for assigning advisees.
- Record of faculty development and other professional activities.
- Internal assessments of faculty workload in relation to the quality of student achievement and development.
- Completed Faculty Information Forms and Statements of Expected Expertise. (See Appendix B.)
- Any institutional self-studies on teaching effectiveness.
- Syllabus, examinations, graded student papers and other course materials.

Standard: Resources

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(e)

(1) Facilities, equipment, and supplies.

- (i) The institution shall provide classrooms, administrative and faculty offices, auditoria, laboratories, libraries, audio-visual and computer facilities, clinical facilities, studios, practice rooms, and other instructional resources sufficient in number, design, condition, and accessibility to support its mission, goals, instruction, programs, and all other educational activities.
- (ii) The institution shall provide equipment sufficient in quantity and quality to support administration, instruction, research, and student performance.

Examples of Compliance:

- Facilities include an adequate number of well-equipped class, conference, and multimedia/computer rooms, and laboratories, as appropriate to the curricula offered.
- Adequate maintenance and repair of equipment and supplies.
- Adequate faculty office space for meetings with students and course preparations.
- Adequate space and equipment for academic support services and administrative services.
- Compliance with the New York State Uniform Fire Code, or with a local fire code that supersedes it, with applicable local health and sanitation codes, and other licensing requirements.
- Provision of computers and other teaching aids sufficient in number, kind and condition to meet institutional and course objectives.
- There is adequate provision for accessibility by all students.
- The institution has committed sufficient resources to its distance learning programs and services to ensure their effectiveness.
- The institution has in place a comprehensive, viable technology plan for distance learning.

Suggested Documentation:

- Summary data on classrooms, laboratories, academic support services, faculty, administrative services and other spaces, and equipment related to the educational program.
- Summary of provisions for accessibility for students; reports on compliance.
- Summary data on computing and other equipment for the educational program and plans for upgrades.
- Maintenance agreements or budget allocations for maintenance and repair of classroom and laboratory equipment.
- Written agreements for provision of facilities or services by other organizations and to other organizations.
- Certificates of occupancy, code, fire, safety, and health compliance, as applicable.
- Technology plans.

(2) Library and information resources.

- (i) The institution shall provide libraries that possess, maintain, and provide access to print and non-print collections and technology sufficient in depth and breadth to support the mission of the institution and each program of study.

- (ii) Libraries shall be administered by professionally trained staff supported by sufficient personnel. Library services and resources shall be available for student and faculty use with sufficient regularity and at appropriate hours and shall support the mission of the institution and its programs of study.
- (iii) The institution shall ensure that all students receive instruction in information literacy.

Examples of Compliance:

- The library collection contains print materials, including monographs and serials, and non-print media adequate in breadth and depth to support the institution's mission and curricula, in addition to full-text data bases.
- Professional library staff have master's degrees from accredited library schools.
- Faculty and library staff have mechanisms to collaborate to ensure the adequacy of library resources for academic programs.
- Faculty and students have ready access to the circulation, reference, and reserve collections.
- Professional and support staff are sufficient in number to provide instruction and other services to students and to engage in collection development.
- Library services such as orientation, computer search, and duplicating equipment are available to faculty and students.
- Library seating capacity and hours are adequate to meet the needs of students and faculty.
- Students consistently attain information literacy skills through their use of library resources.
- The institution provides adequate library and information resources, services and support for academic programs, including training on information literacy. These resources and services are accessible at a distance on a timely basis.

Suggested Documentation:

- Statement of library hours for student use.
- Statement of collection development plan and underlying budgeting.
- User studies, statistics, or other qualitative or quantitative measures that assess effectiveness of resources and instruction.
- Summary of library holdings and resources by major program area; list of acquisitions in the last year by program area.
- Minutes of meetings demonstrating collaboration of faculty and library staff.
- Summary of materials placed on reserve for courses in the fall term of the academic year of the site visit.
- Resumes of full- and part-time professional staff; summary of staffing during hours of operation.
- Summary of seating capacity and computers for student use.
- Summary of access to databases and other information available through library computers.
- Any written agreements or contracts for sharing information resources with other library organizations or networks.
- Summary of instruction in information accessing and library use skills in the term preceding the accreditation site visit; provision of instructional materials.
- Course materials documenting training in information literacy.
- Analysis of library holdings of materials cited under bibliographic resources in course syllabi.
- Evidence of support for the institution's mission in the library's holdings and services.
- Instructions for students on accessing library materials and resources.
- Evidence of the integration of library instruction with coursework.

(3) Fiscal capacity. The institution shall possess the financial resources necessary for the consistent and successful accomplishment of its mission and objectives at the institutional, program and course levels.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution demonstrates an acceptable score on the Federal Test of Financial Responsibility and meets all other federal criteria for determining if the institution may participate in the Title IV student aid programs.
- The institution's certified audits and other data indicate ongoing capacity to carry out its educational mission effectively and in compliance with these accreditation standards.

Suggested Documentation:

- Institutional budget for the current year; monthly cash flow for the 12 months preceding provision of the self-study.
- Certified financial audits for the three most recent fiscal years.
- Documentation of expenditures supporting the institution's mission, goals, and objectives.

Standard: Administration

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(f)

(1) Responsibilities.

- (i) Responsibility for the administration of institutional policies and programs shall be clearly established.
- (ii) Within the authority of its governing entity, the institution shall provide that overall educational policy and its implementation are the responsibility of the institution's faculty and academic officers. Other appropriate segments of the institutional community may share in this responsibility in accordance with the norms developed by each institution.
- (iii) Academic policies applicable to each course, including learning objectives and methods of assessing student achievement, shall be made explicit by the instructor at the beginning of each term.
- (iv) The institution shall provide academic advice to students through faculty or appropriately qualified persons. The institution shall assure that students are informed at stated intervals of their progress and remaining obligations in the completion of the program.
- (v) The institution shall maintain for each student a permanent, complete, accurate, and up-to-date transcript of student achievement at the institution. This document will be the official cumulative record of the student's cumulative achievement. Copies shall be made available at the student's request, in accordance with the institution's stated policies, or to agencies or individuals authorized by law to review such records.
- (vi) The institution shall not be in violation of State and/or Federal statute, where such violation demonstrates incompetence and/or fraud in the management of the institution in the judgement of the commissioner.

Examples of Compliance:

- Responsibilities for all institutional functions and services are clearly established and known to all affected constituencies through publication and timely notice.
- Communication channels are clearly established and follow established organizational structure in educational governance and administrative services; communication is open.
- Institutional organization and services, and the institution's program for assessing institutional functioning, are effectively focused on maximizing the quality of student achievement and development.
- Faculty and academic officers are actively engaged in and responsible for the setting of curricular and academic standards.
- Students, advisory committee members, and other representatives of the college community have an opportunity to share in the responsibility of educational governance.
- Academic policies are made explicit by instructors at the beginning of each course.
- A course outline has been developed for each course that includes learning objectives; prerequisites; credits allocated; methods of instruction; course content and assignments; means of assessing student achievement; basis of grades; bibliographic and other resources related to course; and other course policies.
- Students are formally informed of their progress, including all grades and cumulative grade point average, throughout each term.

- Faculty and other staff with advisement responsibilities are regularly and conveniently available to students for academic and career planning advisement.
- Copies of cumulative transcripts and assessments of remaining academic requirements and other obligations are available to students on request.
- Transcripts are kept current and accurately reflect student achievement; they include a key to the meaning of symbols, abbreviations, calculations; there are satisfactory provisions for security.
- The institution has and adheres to procedures and criteria for entries on and changes to academic transcripts.
- Courses taken at other colleges and accepted for credit are included on the transcript.
- Transcripts clearly differentiate between credit and non-credit courses.
- Transcripts include term and cumulative grade point averages.
- Policies on recording of grades, including those for repeated courses, changes in grades, and other aspects of recording and calculating student attainment adhere to sound, widely accepted professional practices.
- The institution has clearly identified a single office or officer with responsibility for assuring the quality of all distance education across the institution.
- The institution ensures the administration of its distance learning programs by knowledgeable personnel with adequate time and resources to accomplish this task.

Suggested Documentation:

- For Regents-chartered institutions, and as available for proprietary institutions, by-laws of the board of trustees and minutes of their meetings.
- Organizational charts of the institution's structure; description of responsibilities of senior staff; description of responsibilities of committees responsible for assuring institutional effectiveness.
- Written policies concerning curriculum development, evaluation, and revision.
- Minutes of faculty and administrative committees responsible for academic governance.
- Sample transcripts, advisement worksheets, and degree audit worksheets.
- Compendium or handbook of policies relating to student records, including recording of student progress and records retention.
- Institutional effectiveness assessment plan or its equivalent.
- Self-assessments of academic programs or administrative services in the last three years, and their outcomes.
- Description of the institution's resource allocation process and criteria.
- Course syllabi.

(2) Published policies. The institution shall establish, publish and enforce explicit policies with respect to:

- (i) academic freedom;
- (ii) the rights and privileges of full-time and part-time faculty and other staff members, working conditions, opportunity for professional development, workload, appointment and reappointment, affirmative action, evaluation of teaching and research, termination of appointment, redress of grievances and faculty responsibility to the institution; and
- (iii) requirements for admission of students to the institution and to specific programs of study, requirements for residence, graduation, awarding of credit, degrees or other credentials, grading, standards of progress, payment of fees of any nature, refunds, withdrawals, standards of conduct, disciplinary measures and redress of grievances.

Examples of Compliance:

- Clear and reasonable policies are published and in effect for each of the above items; policies are consistent with applicable governmental requirements; policies meet widely accepted professional expectations of “even-handedness” and “fairness.”

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalogs and brochures, student handbook, faculty handbook, contracts and other pertinent publications; reference to pertinent publications and pages for each item.
- Record of complaints and their resolutions.

Standard: Support services

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(g)

- (1) The institution shall assure that whenever and wherever the institution offers courses as part of a program of study it shall provide adequate support services, taking into account its mission and the needs of its students.
- (2) Institutions that admit students with academic deficiencies shall provide sufficient supplemental academic services to enable them to make satisfactory progress toward program completion.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution adequately assesses the skill levels of all entering degree students and addresses any needs for the development of college-level skills, including the areas of writing, literacy, computing, time management, and analytical thinking, that are consistent with the institution's educational mission.
- The institution provides the academic and other support services, including but not limited to tutoring and personal and career counseling, that students may need to succeed in the programs to which they have been admitted.
- The institution provides adequate advising and program planning services to support its academic programs.
- The institution has procedures to assess the effectiveness of its support services in meeting students' needs.
- If the institution admits English language learners, it provides adequate instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) to enable such students to undertake college level study in English.
- The institution provides physical resources commensurate with the scope and fields of instruction and learning needs of the students.
- The institution provides distance learners with adequate academic support, including academic advisement, technical support, and other student support services normally available on campus.

Suggested Documentation:

- Samples of any tests or other diagnostic tools used for student assessment, together with the meaning of scores, and the resulting placements and/or other outcomes in accordance with test results.
- Citation of written policies and procedures regarding academic advising, placement, and other student support services; a summary of staffing for these services; a summary record of services provided in the academic year preceding the review visit.
- If childcare is operated by the institution, record of its licensure.
- Assessment of services provided to a sample of 15-30 "at risk" students.
- Descriptions of special strategies and programs to strengthen student persistence, and their outcomes.
- Instructions for students on accessing student services and resources, including access for students at a distance.

Standard: Admissions

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(h)

- (1) The admission of students shall be determined through an orderly process using published criteria consistent with the institution's mission that shall be uniformly applied.
- (2) Admissions shall take into account both the capacity of the student to undertake a course of study and the capacity of the institution to provide the instructional and other support the student needs to complete the program.
- (3) Among other considerations and consistent with its mission, the institution shall take measures to increase enrollment in academic programs at all degree levels by persons from groups historically underrepresented in such programs.
- (4) An institution shall not refuse a student's request for transfer of credit based solely upon the source of accreditation of the sending institution, where the sending institution is institutionally accredited for title IV purposes by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education for such purposes.

Examples of Compliance:

- Admissions criteria are fully and accurately described in the catalog and other admissions literature.
- The institution adheres to published admission criteria and policies for admitting only those students capable of completing the course of study to which they apply, given the instructional and other support it provides.
- The institution effectively places all admitted students in courses and services consistent with their assessed skill and knowledge.
- The institution identifies groups historically underrepresented in college programs and encourages the enrollment of students from those groups.
- The institution identifies any special educational needs of students, including students with disabilities, and makes appropriate provisions for meeting those needs.
- Availability of documentation that remediation, other college skills, and developmental programs are effective.
- Social, psychological, health, financial, and academic counseling services are available to students and are effective.
- The admissions and registration processes are readily accessible to distance students, and materials clearly describe how access is obtained.

Suggested Documentation:

- Data on number of applications, acceptances, and students enrolled for the most recent academic years together with demographic and academic profile of admitted students for the most recent fall term including such demographic elements as age, gender, racial/ethnic distribution, and geographic origin of students and such academic elements as grade point averages and admission test scores, as pertinent.
- Admissions criteria as published in catalog; supplemental written materials describing assessment standards and policies.
- Written advanced placement policies and challenge opportunities.
- Written guidelines on providing academic assistance to students in need of remediation; documentation of practice.

- Sample of admission files.
- Data, including institutional self-studies, on the success/failure of students who have completed remedial coursework.
- Catalog and other published materials indicating availability of social, psychological, health, financial, and academic counseling services.
- Statement of materials that normally are included in a student folder.
- Provision of a sample of student academic records, as indicated by review coordinator.
- Procedures for identifying and addressing special educational needs of admitted students.
- Data on the number of persons from historically underrepresented groups recruited by, applying to, and accepting and enrolling at the institution; discussion of policy and strategies employed.

Standard: Consumer information

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(i)

(1) The following information shall be included in all catalogs of the institution:

- (i) Information shall be provided on financial assistance available to students, costs of attending the institution, the refund policy of the institution, and the instructional programs and other related aspects of the institution. Information shall include programs of financial assistance from State, Federal, institutional and other sources. Information on the institution's standards of progress shall be disclosed, if different from those utilized for State student financial aid programs.
- (ii) Cost of attending the institution for each of the cost categories listed below shall be provided. Estimates, so indicated, may be used where exact figures are unavailable or inappropriate. Where summary information is provided, an institutional office where detailed information can be obtained shall be identified.
 - (a) Tuition and fees. Information shall be provided on all assessments against students for direct educational and general purposes. A brief description of the purpose of any mandatory fee shall be included if the purpose of such fee is not apparent from its name. Course fees and lab fees shall be clearly identified. Conditions under which nonmandatory fees need not be paid shall be clearly stated.
 - (b) Books and supplies. Estimated costs of textbooks, books, manuals, consumable supplies and equipment, which a student should possess as a necessary corollary to instruction, shall be provided. Separate estimates shall be provided for major program categories for which such costs vary more than 25 percent from the average for the entire institution.
 - (c) Room and board. Costs of housing and food services operated by the institution shall be provided where such services are available. Estimated costs of similar accommodations available in the community shall also be provided. These figures shall be consistent with estimated student budgets prepared by the institution's financial aid office.
 - (d) Other living expenses. Estimated cost of personal expenses applicable to students devoting primary efforts to pursuit of educational objectives shall be provided. This estimate shall be consistent with similar figures defined by the institution's financial aid office.

Examples of Compliance:

- Tuition and mandatory course and laboratory fees are clearly identified. Conditions under which non-mandatory fees need not be paid are clearly stated.
- Estimated costs of textbooks, manuals, consumable supplies and equipment that a student should possess are provided.
- Costs of housing and food services operated by the institution are provided. Estimated costs of similar accommodations available in the community are also provided.
- Estimated cost of personal expenses applicable to students devoting primary efforts to pursuit of educational objectives is provided.

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalogs; citation of pages in self-study.

- Other public documents, e.g., viewbooks, website.

(iii) The institution shall state its policy and requirements on student withdrawal from the institution and its policy and requirements concerning refunds due to failure of students to complete an academic term for any reason. The policy shall include the percentage or amount of tuition, fees, institution-operated room and board, and other assessments to be refunded after specified elapsed periods of time.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution has a clearly stated and published refund policy that includes the percentage or amount of tuition, fees, institution-operated room and board charges, and other assessments to be refunded after specified elapsed periods of time.

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalogs; citation of pages in self-study
- Other public documents, e.g., viewbooks, website.

(iv) The instructional programs of the institution shall be described accurately.

- (a) Degree, certificate and diploma programs. A list of degree, certificate and diploma programs shall be provided. The list shall be consistent with the inventory of registered degree and certificate programs maintained by the department. The list shall contain at least the official approved program title, degree, HEGIS code number, and shall be preceded by a statement that enrollment in other than registered or otherwise approved programs may jeopardize a student's eligibility for certain student aid awards.
- (b) Program descriptions. Each degree, certificate or diploma program shall be described in terms of program objectives, prerequisites and requirements for completion.
- (c) The academic year in which each instructional offering (course) is expected to be taught shall be indicated.
- (d) Program-related facilities. A general description of instructional, laboratory and other facilities directly related to the academic program shall be provided, in addition to general information describing the total physical plant. Narrative and/or statistical information shall be provided about library collections and facilities, student unions, and institution-operated eating-places. Hours of operation, including holiday and vacation schedules, shall be provided.
- (e) Faculty and other instructional personnel. Regular resident faculty shall be listed by rank, with the highest degree held by the faculty member and the institution by which such degree was granted, full-time or part-time status, and department or major program area to which such member is assigned. An estimated number of adjunct faculty and teaching assistants in each department or major program area shall be provided.
- (f) Recruiting and admission practices. The process and criteria for the recruitment and admission of students to the institution and to specific programs of study, as required by

subparagraph (f)(2)(iii) of this section and by subdivision (h) of this section, shall be published.

- (g) Transfer of credit. The process and criteria for accepting transfer of credit from other institutions shall be publicly disclosed and include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education and a list of the institutions with which the institution has established articulation agreements.
 - (h) Academic calendar. The academic calendar of the institution, and of specific programs of study, if different, shall be published.
 - (i) Grading. The grading policy of the institution, and of specific programs of study, if different, shall be published.
 - (j) Student retention and graduation. Information on student retention and graduation rates shall be provided based on a summary of the most recent cohort survival statistics (e.g., percentages of those students enrolled at the end of the spring term, percentages of freshman classes that graduate in four, five and six years) available to the institution for at least full-time undergraduates.
 - (k) Outcomes for former students. Summaries of employment outcomes, advanced study, and student professional and occupational licensing examination results compiled by or provided to the institution shall be provided. The student cohort year or years, or date of examinations shall be included. Data displays on employment outcomes shall be by major or discrete curricular area.
 - (v) Information shall be provided on the institution's code of conduct for students and any disciplinary measures that may be applied to a student for a violation of such conduct, with a description of the institution's student disciplinary process.
- (2) Institutions that produce a multi-year catalog may use an annual printed addendum to update the information in the catalog or, if the catalog is also online, a website update. All print and online catalogs shall be archived annually, and archived copies shall be retained permanently.
- (3) The institution shall demonstrate that it continuously assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to provide students and prospective students with timely, accurate, and complete consumer information.

Examples of Compliance:

- Programs are accurately listed according to title, degree, and HEGIS code.
- Programs are described in terms of both prerequisites and requirements for completion.
- The academic year in which each course is expected to be taught is included.
- Instructional, laboratory, and other facilities directly related to the academic program are described.
- Information about hours of operation of the institution's services, including the library and food services, is provided.
- Faculty are listed by rank, indicating the highest degree held by each faculty member, the institution which granted the highest degree, and the program area to which the faculty member is assigned.

- An estimated number of adjunct faculty and teaching assistants in each department or major program is provided.
- Admissions criteria and procedures are fully described in the institution's catalogs.
- The academic calendar is published in the catalog.
- The institution's academic policies including its grading policies are published.
- Information on graduation rates and retention is provided.
- Summaries of job placement statistics and information on other activities of former students compiled by the institution are available.
- Distance education courses and programs are clearly and accurately represented in written and other materials, and include the nature of the learning experience, program and faculty responsibilities, the nature of interaction opportunities, techniques and requirements.
- Materials describing distance education courses and programs define any specific student background, knowledge, and/or technical skills needed to undertake and successfully complete distance education courses and/or programs, and list required and recommended technical equipment and software.
- The institution's transfer of credit policy lists the criteria for awarding credit earned at another institution.
- The institution maintains a publicly accessible list of other institutions with which articulation agreements have been established.

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalogs; citation of pages in self-study.
- Other public documents, e.g., viewbooks, website.

(4) Advertising.

- (i) Advertising conducted by or on behalf of an institution shall not be false, misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent and shall be consistent with the provisions of article 22-A of the General Business Law. Advertising and promotional material shall not leave false, misleading, or exaggerated impressions of the institution, its personnel, its facilities, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities of its graduates.
- (ii) The primary emphasis of all advertisements and promotional literature shall be the educational services offered by the institution. Such advertising and promotional literature shall clearly indicate that education, not employment, is being offered by the institution.
- (iii) Statements and representations in all forms of advertising and promotion shall be clear, current, and accurate. To the extent that statements of facts are made, such statements shall be restricted to facts that can be substantiated. Materials to support statements and representations in advertising and promotion shall be kept on file and shall be available for review by the department.
- (iv) Any endorsement or recommendation shall include the author's identity and qualifications and shall be used only with the author's consent. No remuneration of any kind for any such endorsement or recommendation shall be paid for such endorsement or recommendation.
- (v) References to the New York State Board of Regents in any advertisement or promotional literature shall comply with the requirements of section 13.11 of this Title and subdivision (m) of this section.

Examples of Compliance:

- Students are recruited based on factual and accurate information about the institution.
- Financial aid is not the sole enrollment incentive used to recruit students, and aid available only at the institution is distinguished from aid available at most institutions.
- When recruiting students, representatives of the institution state clearly their credentials, purpose, and position or affiliation with the institution; such recruiters are either volunteers or paid employees of the institution and are not paid based on numbers of students recruited.
- All advertisements, promotional literature and recruitment activities focus primarily on the educational services offered by the institution.
- The institution accurately characterizes its recognition by the New York State Board of Regents.

Suggested Documentation:

- Advertising and other promotional materials.

Standard: Student complaints

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(j)

- (1) The institution shall establish, publish, and consistently administer internal procedures to receive, investigate, and resolve student complaints related to the standards prescribed in this Subpart.
- (2) The institution may have informal means by which students can seek redress of their complaints.
- (3) The institution shall have a formal complaint procedure that shall include, but need not be limited to: steps a student may take to file a formal complaint; reasonable and appropriate time frames for investigating and resolving a formal complaint; provision for the final determination of each formal complaint to be made by a person or persons not directly involved in the alleged problem; and assurances that no action will be taken against the student for filing the complaint.
- (4) The institution shall maintain adequate documentation about each formal complaint and its disposition for a period of at least six years after final disposition of the complaint. Assessment of the disposition and outcomes of complaints shall be a required component of any self-study required by this Subpart and shall be a consideration in any review for accreditation or renewal of accreditation.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution has formal procedures for students to file complaints and seek redress of grievances consistent with the requirements of this section. The procedures protect the rights of the student and provide for a fair hearing with adequate assurance that no action will be taken against the student for filing the complaint.
- The institution maintains adequate documentation of its handling of all formal complaints for at least six years after the final disposition of the complaint.

Suggested Documentation:

- Catalogs, student handbooks, or other publications widely available to students stating complaint policy and procedures; citation of pages in the self-study.
- Record of any complaints in previous two years.

Standard: HEA Title IV program responsibilities

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(k)

- (1) An institution shall have a procedure in place to ensure that it is in compliance with its program responsibilities under title IV of the HEA and shall maintain a record describing such procedure.
- (2) An institution shall maintain a record of its compliance with its program responsibilities under title IV of the HEA over the previous 10 years, unless the department determines that there is good cause for a shorter records retention period. This record shall include: student default rate data provided annually to the secretary by the institution; financial or compliance audits conducted annually by the secretary; and program reviews conducted periodically by the secretary. The institution shall submit information from this record of compliance to the department on a periodic basis as determined by the department.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution has a procedure in place to ensure its compliance with its responsibilities to participate in Title IV student aid programs.
- The institution maintains a record describing its compliance, including student default rate data; and financial or compliance audits or program reviews conducted by the Secretary.

Suggested Documentation:

- Written procedures indicating methods of complying with Title IV responsibilities.
- Record of compliance, including Federal audits.
- Student default rates in most recent three years.

Standard: Teach-out plans and agreements

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(l)

- (1) Institutions are required to submit for approval to the accrediting agency a teach-out plan upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
 - (i) the Board of Regents receives notification by the Secretary of Education that the secretary has initiated an emergency action against an institution, or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any title IV program of the Higher Education Act, and that a teach-out plan is required;
 - (ii) the Board of Regents acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation of the institution;
 - (iii) the institution notifies the Board of Regents that it intends to cease operations or close a location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program; or
 - (iv) another state's licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Board of Regents that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.
- (2) An institution's teach-out plan must ensure that it provides for the equitable treatment of students pursuant to criteria established by the commissioner and the Board of Regents and that the plan specifies additional charges, if any, and provides for notification to the students of any additional charges.
- (3) As part of its teach-out plan, the institution must submit any teach-out agreement that an institution has entered into with another institution or institutions for approval. To be approved, such agreement shall:
 - (i) be between or among institutions that are accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency;
 - (ii) ensure that the teach-out institution(s) has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonable similar in content, structure and scheduling to that provided by the closed institution;
 - (iii) ensure that the institution will remain stable, carry out its mission, and meet all obligations to existing students; and
 - (iv) ensure that the teach-out institution(s) can provide student access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances.

Examples of Compliance:

- Any teach-out agreement has been approved by the department.
- Any teach-out agreement shall be with an accredited institution or institutions, is consistent with applicable standards and regulations, and meets obligations to existing students.
- The teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide a comparable educational program.

- The teach-out plan does not require students to move or travel substantial distances to have access to the program(s) and services.
- The teach-out plan assures the equitable treatment of students and addresses the requirements set forth in the standard.
- The institution informs the students about any additional charges as a result of the teach-out plan.

Suggested Documentation:

- Teach-out plan, if applicable.

Standard: Public disclosure of accreditation status

Regents Rules, §4-1.4(m)

An institution that elects to disclose its accreditation status shall disclose such status accurately and identify in its disclosure the specific academic and instructional programs covered by that status and information identifying the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Commissioner of Education as its institutional accrediting agency. Such information shall include the address and telephone number of the department. The disclosure shall be consistent with the requirements of section 13.11 of this Title.

Examples of Compliance:

- The institution's statement of its accreditation status is accurate and up-to-date.
- Suggested statement: *(Name of Institution) is accredited by the New York State Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education. Contact information: New York State Education Department, Office of College and University Evaluation, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234. Telephone number: (518) 474-1551*

Suggested Documentation:

- Published materials that cite the institution's accreditation by the commissioner and the Regents; citation of the pages in the self-study.

Self-Study Appendix A: Suggested Documentation

The institution's Self-Study should be supported by documentation that confirms the statements made in the Study. Please consider this guidance along with the "Suggested Documentation" items in the Self-Study template. Documents that are referenced/ summarized in the Self-Study narrative (such as handbooks, minutes, contracts) may be appended to that narrative. Reminder: if the team cannot confirm compliance with a standard, it will not assume the standard is met.

The following lists show a typical distribution of items to be sent in advance and those that can be provided on site. The institution may provide additional or alternative items as relevant to its operations. It may consult with the Department's Review Coordinator if it has questions. The institution should plan to send its Self-Study to each team member at least 30 days prior to the site visit. Copies of all materials sent to team members are also to be available on site.

Note: the review coordinator and/or members of the peer review team may identify additional materials to be sent in advance of the visit. Additional requests may be made on site at the time of the visit. Representatives of the institution should be available to respond to such inquiries.

In general, the following items should be sent in advance as part of the Self-Study narrative or its appendices:

1. Copy of organizational chart; list of senior administrators and descriptions of their responsibilities.
2. Copy of by-laws and/or other documents describing institutional governance, including trustee responsibilities, and institutional purposes and goals. Self-study reports in last three years dealing with general issues of institutional mission, goals and effectiveness.
3. Undergraduate admissions profiles (a) academic (e.g., high school rank in class distributions, GPA, SAT, ACT, or ability to benefit scores, ESL and other placement score distributions, etc.) and (b) demographic (e.g., age, gender, ethnic/racial, income distributions). Graduate admissions profiles by undergraduate grade point average distribution and graduate or professional assessment tests (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, etc.). Data for most recent fall term.
4. Retention, graduation, placement statistics, licensing examination results (pass rates), advanced study, transfers, and other outcomes data. Results of employment and graduate "satisfaction surveys."
5. Note: The New York State [Total Trend report](#) displays totals of major indicators such as tuition, enrollment, persistence and graduation by Sector and Level.
6. Copy of student handbook or other materials that describe student obligations, standards of conduct, disciplinary measures, redress of grievances, and due process (including handling of complaints).
7. Copy of faculty handbook or other materials that describe standards for appointment, reappointment, promotion and tenure; professional responsibilities; professional development; termination; redress of grievances; faculty responsibility to the institution.
8. Copy of faculty collective bargaining contract (if applicable); blank copy of individual faculty contracts or employment agreements for full-and part-time faculty.
9. Blank copy of course and faculty evaluation forms used by students, peers, and administrators.

10. Schedule of courses offered at the time of the visit and for the term prior to the visit (all times, formats, locations). Schedule should indicate which courses are offered through distance learning, if applicable.
11. Sample course outlines/syllabi. (All syllabi should be available on site.)
12. Completed Faculty Profile, Faculty Continuity, Course Review, and Individual Faculty Information Forms (See Appendix B).
13. The two most recent certified audits; institutional budget for current year; other compliance audits related to HEA Title IV compliance (last three years); monthly cash flow report for 12 months preceding submission of the self-study. **Send two copies of each to review coordinator only.**
14. List of materials normally in a student's file; blank copy of forms, generic letters, etc.
15. List of materials normally in a faculty member's file; copy of blanks of forms.
16. Current catalog(s), annotated to show (a) recent changes in senior staff and full-time faculty personnel, and (b) pages stating required consumer information, noting the requirement being addressed.
17. Description of recent or planned changes in curriculum, academic services and policies related to academic performance or progress of students.
18. Description of measures/services to improve student performance and persistence, including scope and assessed outcomes of particular services.
19. Study of a specific sample of undergraduate students (15 to 30) admitted in the "at risk" category (if any): achievement levels and issues on entry, performance and outcomes following entry; a description of institutional interventions/services; and analysis of what, if anything, might have been done differently.
20. List of diagnostic and placement tests for first-time undergraduate students with scores for admissions or placement options and numbers in each group. Copy of blank forms.
21. Admissions and marketing literature used in all media in the last year.
22. Summary of library/resource center print holdings, access to databases, and other resources.
23. Copy of any current institutional effectiveness plan, or the equivalent.
24. Updated annual data report form, data for current term or preceding term if visit is less than one month after start of current term.

The following items should be available on site:

1. Minutes of trustee meetings; minutes of faculty governance committees (including academic standards, curriculum, tenure and promotion). Minutes of meetings of academic units within the institution, (departments, divisions, schools) as indicated by review coordinator. Provide for last three years.

2. Any special reports to trustees, institution-wide committees, or senior administrators on academic issues (e.g., general education, grading practices) related to institutional effectiveness. Provide for last three years.
3. Packets of materials for a sample of courses, including syllabus/course outline; final grade roster; final examination questions; graded student papers (15 alphabetically based on final grade roster); copy of title page and table of contents of principal texts; completed Faculty Information Form (see Appendix B); and completed Statement of Expertise Form (see Appendix B).
4. Copies of recent self-studies for other nationally recognized accrediting agencies and the subsequent reports of the accrediting agencies (last 3 years); compliance and audit reports by public agencies (last 3 years).
5. Advertisements for faculty and professional staff positions in the last year.
6. For baccalaureate programs, senior essays as available. For graduate programs, master's theses, essays, projects; doctoral thesis proposals and completed theses; comprehensive examination questions.
7. Most recent institutional profile reports to voluntary organizations, such as the College Board, Peterson's Guides, or U.S. News and World Report, the Common Data Form, or comparable forms.
8. Sample transcripts of the prior year's graduates (15, alphabetically; personally identifying information should be removed).
9. List of students in their last term of study for their degree; transcripts and degree audits of students in this group (first 15, alphabetically; personally identifying information should be removed).
10. List of evaluative/compliance reports prepared for external organizations in the 18 months prior to the date of the institutional accreditation visit. Include reports that are pertinent to one or more of the standards for institutional accreditation.
11. List of evaluation/compliance reports received from external organizations or reviewers in the 18 months prior to the date of the institutional accreditation visit. Include reports that are pertinent to one or more of the standards for institutional accreditation.

Self-Study Appendix B: Faculty Forms

- Faculty Profile Form (institution-wide)
- Faculty Continuity Form (institution-wide)
- Faculty Information Form (individual)
- Statement of Expertise Form (individual)

These reports or similar institution-prepared reports should be available to the site visit team. A representative sample should be attached as an appendix to the Self-Study document.

Faculty Profile Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete for each term or semester in the preceding academic year.

NOTES:

- Degree counts listed in the table should identify only “highest earned degrees.” Note that the “Prof. License in Field” degree count may duplicate degrees.
- Examples of first professional degrees: J.D., M.D., D.D.S., D.C., Pharm.D.
- At end of table, provide an unduplicated total count of faculty in each column.

| Curricula (If many programs, cluster by major discipline areas.) Separate programs by deg. level (associate, bachelor, etc.) | Degree Awarded | Full-time (FT) faculty credentials | | | | | | Part-time (PT) faculty credentials | | | | | | Name of Director or Coordinator of Curriculum |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|------|-------|-------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|-------|-------------|------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Total # of FT Fac. | Doc. | Mast. | First Prof. | Other Deg. | Prof. License in Field (e.g., CPA) | Total # of PT Fac. | Doc. | Mast. | First Prof. | Other Deg. | Prof. License in Field (e.g., CPA) | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Faculty Continuity Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete for each of the most recent four quarters, identifying the number of Faculty for each.

NOTES:

- Identify any atypical instances of faculty service.
- Define full-time and part-time service in the table or reference pertinent pages in the Faculty or Employee Handbook.
- Two terms equals one year of service.

| Time Teaching at Institution | Full-time (continuous service) | Part-time (total terms of service) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Less than 1 term | | |
| One full term to one year | | |
| 1 year but less than 3 years | | |
| 3 years but less than 5 years | | |
| 5 years but less than 7 years | | |
| 7 years but less than 9 years | | |
| 9 or more years | | |

Faculty Information Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete for all faculty designated by the department's review coordinator.

NOTE: Some items may be completed by reference to an attached resume.

| GENERAL INFORMATION | | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Date: | | | | |
| Institution: | | | | |
| FACULTY INFORMATION | | | | |
| Name: | | | | |
| Department: | | | | |
| Years at institution: | FT (new): | PT (new): | Tenured? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, Institution has no tenure system |
| CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THIS INSTITUTION | | | | |
| <u>(A) Teaching:</u> | | | | |
| Teaching this term: (list each section) | Credits | Approximate enrollment | Location (if not main campus) | Day(s) and time offered |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <u>(B) Advising:</u> | | | | |
| Number of advisees: | Undergraduate: | Graduate: | | |
| <u>(C) Other assignments/responsibilities</u> (committees, etc., in last three years): | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |
| CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES AT OTHER COLLEGES/SCHOOLS, COMPANIES, AGENCIES, ETC. | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |

| EDUCATION (beginning with the most recent) | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Degree | Institution | Date received | Major/Specialization | Title of research |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| OTHER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING/EXPERIENCE RELATED TO COURSES LISTED | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |
| PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCES (starting with those most pertinent to current teaching assignments at this institution) | | | | |
| Institution | Subjects | | Dates | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| ACTIVITY IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |
| PUBLICATIONS | | | | |
| (A) Most significant: | | | | |
| (B) Recent (last 3-5 years): | | | | |
| OTHER SIGNIFICANT PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |
| EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES BY COLLEGE | | | | |
| (A) What are this institution's policies on evaluation of faculty? | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |
| (B) Describe this institution's support of your professional development in the past five years. | | | | |
| Explain: | | | | |

Statement of Expertise Form

Institution's Statement of Faculty Expertise that Should Underlie Specific Courses

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete only for courses designated by the Department's review coordinator.

NOTE: For each course, attach a course description from the catalog and statement of expected prerequisite courses or knowledge.

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| COURSE: | | COURSE NUMBER: |
| EXPECTED FACULTY EXPERTISE | | |
| (A) <u>Minimum degree(s)</u> | <u>Acceptable field(s) of degree</u> | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| <p>(B) Coursework/formal training needed as a specific knowledge foundation in field to teach course content with sufficient breadth, depth and currency. For example, if the course is Calculus I, indicate coursework or advanced knowledge beyond Calculus I needed to demonstrate sufficient expertise, in the institution's view.</p> <p>Explain:</p> | | |
| <p>(C) Any comparable alternative basis of content knowledge and how documented.</p> <p>Explain:</p> | | |
| <p>(D) Other expertise and skills needed to teach course content.</p> <p>Explain:</p> | | |

Other Applications and Reports: Annual Reporting and Substantive Changes

Required Annual Reporting

Institutions accredited by the Board of Regents are required under Section 4-1.3(f) of the Rules of the Board of Regents (“Rules”) to file an annual data report. Failure to provide this report, or other reports required by the State Education Department, will result in a finding of noncompliance with the standards of quality for institutional accreditation, as defined under section 4-1.4(b)(2) of the Rules.

The latest version of the [annual report form](#) will be available on the Department’s web site.

Applying for a Change in Scope of Accreditation Due to “Substantive Change”

Overview

Section 4-1.5(d) of Regents Rules defines actions that require a change in the scope of an institution’s accreditation. It also describes the process for considering such substantive changes.

Important:

These Rules address Regents institutional accreditation requirements; they are designed to comply with Federal requirements for accrediting agencies. Accreditation definitions and standards are distinct from, **and may differ from**, State requirements for institutional authorization and program registration.

For example, Regents Rules on institutional accreditation define the term “additional location.” (Section 4-1.2) This is **not** the same as the off-campus locations defined for institutional authorization and program registration purposes (Section 50.1 of Commissioner’s Regulations).

What Constitutes a Substantive Change?

Substantive change means:

- (i) any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution;
- (ii) any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution;
- (iii) the addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from the existing offerings of educational programs, or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the department last evaluated the institution for accreditation;
- (iv) the addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation;
- (v) a change from clock hours to credit hours;
- (vi) a substantial increase in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;

- (vii) the establishment of an additional location or branch campus, as such terms are defined in section 4-1.2 of this Subpart;
- (viii) if the accreditation granted to the institution enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in title IV, HEA programs, the entering into a contractual agreement with an entity not certified to participate in title IV, HEA programs, that offers more than 25 percent of one or more of the institution's program of study;
- (ix) the establishment of an additional location at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program;
- (x) the acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution; or
- (xi) the addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.

Requirement to Apply for Change in Scope of Accreditation

A Regents-accredited institution that initiates a substantive change is required to apply to the agency for a change in the scope of its accreditation.

State Authorizations Must Occur First

Under Regents Rules 4-1.3(a)(1), “The institution shall be in compliance with State standards prescribed in this Title, including but not limited to section 3.47, and Parts 50, 52, 53 and 54 of this Title....”

These “State authorization” references encompass the State institutional authorization and program registration requirements under which New York institutions of higher education operate, regardless of institutional accreditation status. ***This stipulation requires that any relevant State authorizations/registrations occur BEFORE Regents institutional accreditation actions.***

Important:

State authorization and program registration actions do not constitute notification or application for a change in scope of institutional accreditation. State authorization and Regents institutional accreditation processes are separate and distinct, in keeping with Federal requirements.

No Retroactive Approvals

The effective date of any substantive change shall be the date of the commissioner and Board of Regents determination of an approved accreditation substantive change. By Regents Rule and Federal requirement, such changes may not be retroactive.

Site Visits and Comprehensive Reviews

The agency may conduct a site visit in connection with the review of any proposed substantive change. Site visits are ***required*** to establish branch campuses; additional locations; and changes in ownership that effect a change in control of the institution.

In addition, the agency may conduct a comprehensive review or a compliance review (as defined under section 4-1.5 of Regents Rules) at its discretion for good cause based on (but not limited to) information provided in an application for a change in scope of accreditation; significant growth at the institution; complaints relating to the institution's compliance with state or accreditation standards; adverse or probationary actions taken by other recognized accrediting agencies; federal or state financial aid audits, reviews, or actions; loss of financial viability; loss of state approval; inadequate student performance; and/or other developments that suggest the basis for the institution's previous recognition may no longer provide evidence of the institution's capacity to comply with accreditation standards.

Application Content

Consistent with requirements in Regent Rules, an application for a change in scope of accreditation should focus on demonstrating that the proposed change does not adversely affect the institution's capacity to meet accreditation standards. Frame your responses to the application items in those terms. You may find it useful to consider the examples of compliance associated with each standard in the self-study guide (found in the Accreditation Handbook).

Draft Substantive Change Review Report

The agency shall prepare a draft report on the substantive change assessing compliance and provide a copy to the institution. The institution shall be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the draft report within 30 days of the date it was transmitted by the department.

Substantive Change Review Report

The agency shall send to the institution the determination by the deputy commissioner concerning the change in the scope of accreditation, together with the substantive change review report. Such determination and report shall address whether the institution has met the standards set forth in this Subpart, and any comments by the institution concerning the draft review report.

Approval of Change in Scope of Accreditation

The Commissioner and Board of Regents make the determination concerning approval or disapproval of the institution's application for a change in the scope of accreditation, and shall provide the institution with written notification indicating the approval and inclusion of the substantive change in the institution's grant of accreditation. As noted previously, the effective date of any substantive change shall be the date of the Commissioner and Board of Regents' determination of an approved substantive change. Under Regents Rules, that date may not be retroactive.

Denial of Change in Scope of Accreditation

Decisions to deny a change in the scope of accreditation may be appealed in keeping with Section 4-1.5(d)(8) of Regents Rules.

Application for a Change in Scope of Accreditation

You may download an [application for a change in scope](#) of institutional accreditation.

Appendix 1: Links to Regents Rules on Institutional Accreditation

Standards and Procedures

The primary standards and procedures for the agency's institutional accreditation process are defined in [Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents](#).

Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation and the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board

[Sections 3.12\(d\) and \(e\) of Regents Rules](#) define the Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation and the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board, respectively.

Appendix 2: Related Institutional Accreditation Policies

These policies supplement provisions of Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents.

Note: in this section “agency” refers to the Commissioner of Education and Board of Regents, acting in their role as an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education (“Secretary”). References to the Secretary’s regulatory requirements are noted in [brackets].

Maintenance of Records of Accreditation Reviews and Decisions

When the Regents and the commissioner act as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency, complete and accurate records of the last two full accreditation reviews of each institution shall be retained. These records include the institution's most recent self-study report, on-site evaluation reports, institutional responses to on-site reports, and other reports, annual reports, other periodic reports, any reports of special reviews conducted by the agency between regular reviews, all accreditation decisions, including adverse actions, and all correspondence with the institution that is significantly related to decisions about its accreditation.

Permanent records also include substantive change requests, including but not limited to applications for changes in scope of accreditation and all related documentation, including review materials and decisions. [Ref:34 CFR 602.15(b)]

Review of Accreditation Standards

A review of all institutional accreditation standards in Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents shall be conducted on a repeating four-year cycle. The purpose of the comprehensive review in each cycle will be an examination of the adequacy, in practice, of the standards for the evaluation of educational quality. A review plan and schedule within this cycle shall be developed and implemented by accreditation staff of the Department in consultation with the Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation. Complaints about accreditation standards or procedures will be considered in the cyclical program of comprehensive review of its standards. In addition, accreditation standards and their applications shall be examined continuously, based on accreditation experience and feedback from pertinent constituencies, to assure currency with evolving standards in distance education and other evolving areas.

The Regents shall initiate action on changes to the standards within 12 months of identifying a need for such changes. Such changes shall take effect within a stated time following formal adoption by the Regents. Revisions of standards or adoption of new standards by the Board of Regents shall take into account any recommendations of the Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation and shall include an opportunity for comment by accredited institutions, other relevant constituencies, and the public for a period of not less than 45 days [Ref: 34 CFR 602.21(a)].

Public Comment Process

The agency is a public entity in New York, which means that it is required to seek public comment on its proposed regulatory activities (including those related to its institutional accreditation function). As a public entity, the agency is mandated under the New York State Administrative Procedures Act to conduct its regulatory activities in an environment of public access and observation. Regulatory amendments proposed by the agency, for example, require a 45-day public comment period. The agency considers all comments received on a given regulatory proposal. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.21 (c)]

Student Achievement Benchmarks

As noted in the accreditation Self-Study document, and in consideration of standards described under section 4-1.4(b) of Regents Rules, information needed to assess compliance with student achievement benchmarks (such as graduation rates) may be accessed through such resources as State [data published by the State Education Department](#). [Ref:34 CFR 602.16(a)(1)(i)]

Policy on Significant Enrollment Growth

The agency will request additional reporting from institutions that exceed a 20 percent growth in headcount enrollment in a single institutional academic year (July 1 through June 30), as reported through required annual reports or other mechanisms. In addition, the agency may request additional reporting when, in the judgment of the agency, the rate of enrollment growth may affect the institution's capacity to comply with accreditation standards. The additional reporting may include, but is not limited to, self-analyses of the growth and its effects on the institution; agency reviews of the institution's financial viability; agency assessment of concomitant growth in faculty, administrative, and other resources; and a compliance review (see section 4-1.5(b) of Regents Rules).

Special provisions for distance education: If an institution whose scope of accreditation includes distance education experiences an increase in headcount enrollment of 50 percent or more within one institutional fiscal year, the agency will report that information to the Secretary within 30 days of acquiring such data. [Ref:34 CFR 602.19(d) and (e)]

Evaluation of Teach-Out Plans/Closed Institutions

Under Regents accreditation standards, a teach-out plan means a written plan that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution or an institutional location that provides 100 percent of at least one program ceases to operate prior to all students completing their program of study.

Institutions selected to complete a teach-out of the closing institution must have the following attributes and capabilities:

- Accreditation or pre-accreditation from a nationally recognized accrediting agency.
- One or more programs registered by the State authorization agency that are comparable in structure, content, and scheduling to those in which students were enrolled at the closing institution.
- Student access to instruction and related services without incurring substantial, additional travel.
- No charges or tuition rates beyond those charged by the closing institution. Any exception for cause will be determined by the Commissioner. In such cases, if additional charges are permitted, the institution will be required to notify students about those charges prior to enrollment.

Teach-out plans will be assessed by accreditation staff. If the agency approves a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another recognized accrediting agency, it will notify that agency of its approval. [Ref:34 CFR 602.24(c)(3)]

If an institution the agency accredits closes without a teach-out plan or agreement, the agency will coordinate with the U.S. Department of Education and the state authorization agency to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charges.

Review of Complaints

Complaints About Regents-Accredited Institutions

Complaints concerning an institution's compliance with Regents accreditation standards should be directed to agency staff by using the [complaint form](#) available on the State Education Department Web site.

If the agency finds that the complaint addresses compliance with an accreditation standard, it will forward the complaint to the institution. The agency will provide the institution at least 30 days from the date of the agency's inquiry to respond. Agency staff will then assess the original complaint and institution's response to determine the need for additional action. The complainant and the institution will be notified of the agency's findings.

Complaints About This Accrediting Agency

In responding to complaints against itself as an accrediting agency, it is the agency's policy to ask the office that is the subject of the complaint to review the matter and resolve it if possible or, alternatively, to explain why it cannot be resolved in the manner desired by the complainant. It is the agency's policy to respond to any such complaints within 30 days of receipt. The following steps are taken to support an unbiased review:

- If the complaint involves a person or persons, the agency will ask an administrator outside the accreditation staff to provide an unbiased assessment of the complaint and recommend appropriate action.
- If the complaint is about accreditation standards or procedures, the agency will assign the review to the State Education Department's Office of Counsel to provide an unbiased assessment of the complaint and recommend appropriate action.

In addition, a complainant is informed that he or she may directly contact the U.S. Secretary of Education with a complaint regarding the accreditation standards or procedures of the agency. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.23 (c)].

Provision for Public Correction of Incorrect or Misleading Information on Accreditation

An institution that designates the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education as its nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency for Title IV purposes shall make public correction, as specified by the Regents and the Commissioner, of incorrect or misleading information related to the accreditation status of the institution, the contents of reports of on-site reviews, or the accreditation actions of the Regents and the Commissioner, with respect to the institution.

Subsequent to an investigation, correction may include all or some of the following: (1) posting of the correction on the institution's web site; (2) correction notices in the media in which the misrepresentation has been disseminated; and (3) letters of correction to any agency or organization to which the institution provided the misleading or inaccurate information, all nationally recognized agencies that accredit one or more programs at the institution or the institution as a whole, the U.S. Secretary of Education; or any interested parties that make inquiry about the misrepresentation.

Persistent or serious misrepresentation may provide a basis for adverse accreditation action by the Regents and the Commissioner pursuant to Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.23 (e)]

Notifications of Accreditation Decisions

The following entities shall be notified of the following actions no later than 30 days after the agency's decision [Ref: 34 CFR 602.26 (a,b)]:

- (1) **Entities:** Secretary of Education (by letter), appropriate accrediting agencies (by letter), and the public (by public notice in the New York *State Register*, published by the New York State Department of State, and/or on the accreditation web site of the Office of Higher Education).
- (2) **Actions:** A decision to award initial accreditation to an institution or to renew its accreditation; a final decision to place an institution or program on probation or an equivalent status; a final decision to deny, withdraw or terminate the accreditation of an institution; a final decision to take any other adverse accreditation action or a decision by an accredited institution to withdraw from or let lapse its accreditation.

In addition, the agency shall provide to the Secretary and appropriate accrediting agencies written notice of any action cited under §602.26(b)(2) within 30 days of the date the action is taken. Within 60 days after a decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate an institution's accreditation, the Board of Regents will provide a brief statement to the Secretary and the public summarizing the reasons for the agency's decision and the official comments, if any, that the affected institution made with regard to that decision (or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment).

Notifications to Institutions

- Consistent with Regents Rule section 4-1.5(a)(10), the agency notifies institutions in writing of action on an institution's application for accreditation, renewal of accreditation, or change in scope of accreditation. Notifications of adverse action include the basis for that action. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.25 (a-e)]
- Consistent with Regents Rule section 4-1.5(a)(11), the agency notifies institutions in writing of the results of an appeal and the basis for that result. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.25 (g)]

Voluntary Withdrawal and Lapses

It is the agency's policy to notify the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and, upon request, the public if an accredited institution:

- Decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation, within 30 days of receiving notification from the institution that is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation; or
- Lets its accreditation lapse, within 30 days of the date on which accreditation lapses. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.26e].

Information to be Provided to the U.S. Secretary of Education

- In conducting an accreditation review, the agency reviews and evaluates the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours. If the agency finds systemic noncompliance with its credit hour requirements, or significant credit-hour noncompliance in one or more programs at the institution, the agency will promptly notify the Secretary. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.24(f)(4)]

- The Secretary of Education will be provided a copy of any annual report prepared by the Regents and the Commissioner acting in their capacity as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency.
- The Secretary of Education will be provided a copy, updated annually, of the directory of institutions accredited by the Regents and the Commissioner acting as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency.
- The Secretary of Education will be provided a written data summary of the Regents and the Commissioner's activities as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency during the previous year if requested by the Secretary.
- The Secretary of Education will be provided any proposed change in policies, procedures or accreditation standards that might affect the Regents and the commissioner's scope of recognition or compliance with the criteria for recognition at the same time such proposed change is published in the *State Register*.

The agency will submit to the U.S. Department of Education the name of any institution or program that the agency has reason to believe is failing to meet its HEA Title IV responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse, together with the reasons for the agency's concern. The agency will also submit, on the Secretary's request, information that may bear on an accredited institution's compliance with its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities, including the eligibility of the institution or program to participate in Title IV, HEA programs. The agency considers these contacts with the Secretary to be confidential. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.27].

Regard for the Decisions of States and Other Accrediting Agencies

- As stated in section 4-1.3(a)(1) of the Rules of the Board of Regents, institutions seeking accreditation from the agency must satisfy New York State's authorization requirements for postsecondary institutions. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.28(a)]
- Except as provided, the agency will not grant accreditation to an institution if it knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of
 1. A pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the state;
 2. A decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation;
 3. A pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or
 4. Probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.28(b)]
- The agency may grant accreditation to an institution, as identified in the preceding paragraph, only if it provides to the Secretary, within 30 days of its action, a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.28(c)]
- If the agency learns that an institution it accredits is the subject of an adverse action by another accrediting agency or has been placed on probation or an equivalent status by another recognized agency, the agency must promptly review its accreditation of the institution to determine if it should also take adverse action or place the institution on probation or show cause. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.28(d)].

Appendix 3: Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Recusal Policy

These guidelines apply to peer reviewers, members of the Regents Advisory Council, the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Regents, accreditation staff, and members of the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board. For purposes of this section, all are considered “reviewers” based on their involvement in the institutional accreditation process.

The Commissioner of Education, peer reviewers, accreditation staff, members of the Board of Regents, members of the Regents Advisory Council, and members of the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board shall be subject to New York State [Public Officers Law section 74](#), which contains the code of ethics and conflict of interest policies for officers of a State agency.

This section provides that “No officer or employee of a state agency, member of the legislature or legislative employee should have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his duties in the public interest.” Likewise, individuals engaged by the Department as peer reviewers may only participate in such reviews if they are able to satisfy these requirements.

Individuals involved in the institutional accreditation process must follow the conflict of interest and recusal policies prescribed herein. Strict adherence to these standards will assure the continued independence, credibility, integrity and reputation of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents as an accrediting agency, and its policy making processes, by avoiding actual conflicts, potential conflicts, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In addition to the prohibitions in Public Officers Law section 74, to avoid an actual, potential or the appearance of a conflict, any reviewer involved in an accreditation activity under Subpart 4-1 of the Rules of the Board of Regents should recuse him or herself from an accreditation action and/or review if he/she:

- (1) is a present or former employee, student, member of the governing board, owner or shareholder of, or consultant to the institution that is seeking institutional accreditation from the Commissioner and the Board of Regents;
- (2) is a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual or persons listed in (1) above;
- (3) has expressed an opinion for or against the proposed accreditation;
- (4) is seeking or being sought for employment or other relationship with the institution under review;
- (5) has a personal, professional or other relationship with the institution under review, or with its affiliates, partners or other constituents or interested parties that might compromise objectivity; and/or
- (6) has a competitive relationship with the institution that might compromise objectivity (such as a material interest in a particular accreditation outcome based on a significant business or other fiduciary agreement—excluding routine articulation or similar inter-institutional agreements); and/or

(7) if, in the agency's judgment, there is any other circumstance that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Prior to making assignments, the site team coordinator must take appropriate measures to assure that no site team evaluators will be assigned to review an institution with which the individual has a conflict or appearance of a conflict.

All decision-making bodies shall exercise the duties of care, loyalty and obedience and must refrain from self-dealing and usurping corporate opportunities and receiving improper personal benefits.

Each staff member of the agency involved in accreditation functions, or any member of the Regents Advisory Council, the Board of Regents, or the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board shall promptly notify the Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education if he/she has an actual, perceived or an appearance of a conflict of interest with any of the institutions accredited by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents prior to any review of such institution.

Recusal Policy

- Members of the Regents Advisory Council; the Commissioner; members of the Board of Regents; and members of the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board shall review their employment and other interests and relationships on an ongoing basis for potential conflicts of interest with institutions accredited by the Commissioner or Board of Regents and candidates seeking accreditation. Members may seek guidance from the Department's Ethics Officer on potential conflicts when necessary (email: NYSEDEthics@mail.nysed.gov; or telephone (518) 474-6400)
- Members of the Regents Advisory Council; members of the Board of Regents; and members of the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board who determine they have a conflict of interest for a given application or proposed action must notify the Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education immediately in writing and disclose the material facts as to the relationship or interest.
- Members of the proposed site visit team who determine they have a conflict of interest must notify the site visit coordinator in writing and disclose the material facts as to the relationship or interest.
- Recusal should occur when there exists any financial or personal interest, direct or indirect, that is incompatible with the Commissioner or member's duties, or might reasonably be expected to impair objectivity and independence of judgment in the exercise of his/her official duties.
- The minutes of any Committee or board meeting where any action is taken that involves an actual or potential conflict of interest should address the conflict of interest subject and identify the potential conflict of interest, record the material facts as to the relationship and interest, known or disclosed at the meeting.
- The Commissioner and/or the members of the Regent Advisory Council; the Board of Regents or members of the Institutional Accreditation Appeals Board should absent themselves during any substantive discussion and recuse themselves from any accreditation-related decision involving an institution with which they have a conflict. Any abstention shall also be duly recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Confidential Information

The team's report is confidential until it is final. Reviewers may not disclose the report or any part of the report until the Regents have acted on the institution's application. Confidential information

obtained during the review may not be used for personal gain. Reviewers' memoranda, notes and other work products generated during the review are the property of the State Education Department and may never be disclosed.

Gifts

Gifts or gratuities of more than a nominal value may not be accepted from an institution accredited by the Commissioner and the Board of Regents and/or where accreditation is being considered, where doing so might raise an inference that the gift was intended either to influence the team/reviewer or decision-making body in the performance of the accreditation review.

Appendix 4: Institutional Accreditation Decision-Making Bodies and Related Entities

References to the regulatory requirements of the U.S. Secretary of Education are noted in [brackets].

Links to Information about Members of Agency Decision-Making Bodies and Related Councils

- New York State [Commissioner of Education](#).
- New York State [Board of Regents](#).
- [Regents Advisory Council](#) on Institutional Accreditation.
- Members of the [Accreditation Appeals Board](#). [Ref: 34 CFR 602.23 (a)]

Principal Accreditation Staff of the Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education

- John L. D'Agati, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner, Office of Higher Education
- Leslie E. Templeman, Esq., Director, Office of College and University Evaluation

Composition of Evaluation and Decision-Making Bodies

The evaluation, policy, and decision-making bodies directly involved in accreditation by the Regents and the Commissioner acting as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency shall include academic and administrative personnel. [Ref: 34 CFR 602.15 (a) (3)]

When the Regents and the Commissioner act as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency, the public shall be represented on all decision-making bodies involved in the institutional accreditation function [Ref: 34 CFR 602.15 (a) (5)]

Statement on Public Members of Decision-Making Bodies

All accreditation decision-making bodies shall include at least one representative of the public, in compliance with the following criteria (at minimum) and any definitions in law, rule, or regulation establishing those bodies. "Representative of the public" means a person who is not--

1. An employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation;
2. A member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the agency; or
3. A spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition.