

General Institutional Standards

1 PURPOSE, PLANNING, AND EVALUATION

Theological schools are communities of faith and learning guided by a theological vision. Schools related to the Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools conducts post-baccalaureate programs for ministerial leadership and in theological disciplines. Their educational programs should continue the heritage of theological scholarship, attend to the religious constituencies served, and respond to the global context of religious service and theological education.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Each member school shall have a formally adopted statement of institutional purpose. The statement of institutional purpose should articulate the mission to which the school believes it is called and define its particular identity and values. When confessional commitments are central to the identity of a school, they shall be clearly articulated in the statement of purpose. The initiation, development, authorization, and regular review of this statement is the responsibility of the appropriate governing body, and the development should involve all appropriate constituencies (e.g., trustees, faculty, administration, staff, students, and ecclesiastical bodies).

1.1.2 Theological schools that are related to colleges or universities should support the purpose of the overall institution and develop their purpose statements in relationship to the institutions of which they are a part.

1.1.3 Purpose statements should be enabling and defining documents, and should be realistic and accurate. The adequacy of the purpose statement and the institution's ability to fulfill its mission are critical elements to the institution's integrity.

1.2 Planning and Evaluation

1.2.1 The purpose statement shall guide the institution in its comprehensive institutional planning and evaluation procedures, and in making decisions regarding programs, allocation of resources, constituencies served, relationships with ecclesiastical bodies, global concerns, and other comparable matters.

1.2.2 Evaluation is a critical element in support of integrity in educational efforts, institutional renewal, and individual professional development. Evaluation is a process that includes: (1) the identification of desired goals or outcomes for an educational program, or institutional service, or personnel performance; (2) a system of gathering quantitative or qualitative information related to the desired goals; (3) the assessment of the performance of the program, service, or person based on this information; and (4) the establishment of revised goals or activities based on the assessment.

Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for employees, students, educational programs, and institutional activities.

1.2.3 A comprehensive evaluation process is the primary resource an institution uses to determine the extent to which it is accomplishing its purpose. The various institutional and educational evaluation procedures shall be analyzed, coordinated, and employed in comprehensive institutional planning.