

Targeted Issues Checklist for Schools and Evaluation Committees

School Name: **School inserts name here**

**Visit Dates:** School inserts date here

Chapter Five of the *Self-Study* *Handbook* describes various types of text found in the standards, including the following statement (p. 4):

[Another type] consists of mandatory requirements that reflect regulatory or ethical expectations . . . [They reflect] regulatory requirements of authorities outside the member schools, such as governmental agencies, or normative ethical guidelines that are true for any organization related to the Christian or Jewish traditions, like being honest and treating persons fairly . . . [These] requirements usually require a single, discrete institutional behavior or policy . . . This type of text leads to a simple evaluative task: determining whether the school does or does not [meet] the requirement. The Standards [and Procedures] have relatively few of these mandatory requirements. In self-studies, schools should audit their institutional policies and behaviors to affirm their compliance. In accreditation evaluations, committees should confirm the school’s compliance.

This checklist assists evaluation committees in confirming that a school meets these various requirements (“targeted issues”). This checklist is not a substitute for addressing these issues in the self-study report or in the committee’s narrative report of the evaluation visit, but serves as assurance that the school and the committee have addressed specific issues that are required by the Board of Commissioners or entities that certify accreditation by the Commission on Accrediting.

These targeted issues are listed below in two parts: Part 1 describes issues (from both Standards and [Procedures](http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/COAProcedures.pdf)) for which all schools are held accountable, and Part 2 describes issues for which only schools participating in Title IV programs (for USDE federal financial aid) are held accountable. Please note that one other key issue, Standard 1, section 1.2.2.2, on “ongoing evaluation procedures for educational effectiveness,” is covered by a separate document titled “Checklist for Effective Assessment.”

**This Targeted Issues Checklist has two sections for each item: one for schools to complete and one for evaluation committees to complete. Schools must address items on this checklist in four ways: (1) by inserting the requested information for each item, (2) by placing copies of the requested materials in the document room in** **a “Targeted Issues File” organized by each numbered item below, (3) by appending a completed copy of this checklist to the self-study report, and (4) by providing the evaluation committee a separate electronic file of the completed checklist at the beginning of the evaluation visit. The committee will then complete its part of the school’s completed checklist and attach it to the committee report.**

**Part 1. Requirements for All ATS Accredited Schools**

|  |
| --- |
| **Commission on Accrediting** [**Standards**](http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/GeneralInstitutionalStandards.pdf) |
| **2.2** With regard to state, provincial, and federal authorities, schools shall conduct their operations in **compliance with all applicable laws and regulations**. *The school must provide a copy of all necessary legal documents verifying that the school has appropriate authority to operate its main campus and any extension sites. If the school enrolls any out-of-state online students, it must document how it determines whether those students trigger any state regulations and, if so, how those regulations are met. Please list here where these legal and other documents may be found (e.g., a copy of the school charter is in TIC File 2.2 in Document Room or found online at …).* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **2.3** The school shall ensure that **all published materials**, electronic and print, including catalogs, academic calendars, and promotional literature, **accurately represent the institution** to its various constituencies and publics, including students and prospective students. All charges and fees, including refund policies, should be fully disclosed. Schools should exercise care in advertising to portray the institution fairly and honestly to the public. Wherever appropriate, published institutional documents shall employ gender-inclusive language. *The school must provide a copy of or reference to the document(s) that list the school’s charges and its refund policy, as well as provide representative samples of published materials listed above. Please list here where these published materials may be found (e.g., TIC File 2.3 or online at …).* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **2.9** Member schools shall **make public a statement of their policy on transfer credits** earned at other institutions of higher education, including the criteria used for their decisions. *The school must provide a copy of or reference to its transfer policy, listing where the policy is found (be specific). Evaluation committees must also interview recruitment/registrar staff and sample transcripts.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.3.1** Policies regarding **students’ rights and responsibilities**, as well as the institution’s code of discipline, shall be clearly identified and published. *The school must provide a copy of or reference to all published policies regarding students’ rights and responsibilities, including its student handbook. Please list here where those may be found.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.3.4** Schools shall **maintain adequate student records** regarding admission materials, course work attempted and completed, and in other areas as determined by the school’s policy. Appropriate backup files should be maintained and updated on a regular basis. The institution shall ensure the security of files from physical destruction or loss and from unauthorized access. *The school must describe how it maintains and protects student records. The evaluation committee must investigate that student records are adequately maintained and appropriately protected.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.3.5** Institutions shall demonstrate that **program requirements, tuition, and fees are appropriate** for the degree programs they offer.  *The school must list below and provide a copy of or reference to degree program requirements and published tuition and fees. The committee must confirm this through interviews and document reviews.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.3.6** Institutions shall publish all requirements for degree programs, including courses, noncredit requirements, and grading and other academic policies.  *The school must document where it provides its degree program requirements and other policies listed here.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.3.8** The institution shall have a **process for responding to complaints raised by students** in areas related to the accrediting standards of the Commission and schools shall **maintain a record** of such formal student complaints for review by the Board.  *The school must document its complaint process, provide copies of any written complaints, and share its response(s).* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.5.2** Theological schools should monitor the placement of graduates in appropriate positions… [Note also section \_\_1.4.2 of the Degree Program Standards, which requires schools to include in their assessment efforts “measures such as the **percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions**.”]  *The school must list here its graduation rates and placement rates for each of its degree programs for the last few years (the ATS Annual Report form has required placement rates since 2012 and graduation rates since 2015; if you want to find/review those rates, consult the person in your school responsible for submitting that information each fall to ATS). The school should provide an explanation for any graduation rates below 25% and any placement rates below 50% (or if 50% of more of any placements are listed as “unknown”), per Board* [**Policy Manual**](http://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/board-of-commissioners-policy-manual.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks)*, Appendix 1, item #6 (p. 32).* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **ES 6.4.4** The institution shall, on a regular basis, **make available to the public a summary evaluation of the educational effectiveness of its approved degree programs**. The school shall determine the frequency and manner of this information.  *The school must provide a link to and copy of its published educational effectiveness statement, which should include evidence of effectiveness for each degree program, such as completion and placement rates and/or other appropriate measures (see section 1.4.2 of each Degree Program Standard).* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **ATS Commission Policies and** [**Procedures**](http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/COAProcedures.pdf)(applicable to ***all*** schools) |
| **VII.A.4** In preparation for an evaluation visit, a **school shall advertise to its constituencies at least 60 days prior to the visit that it is receiving an evaluation committee and invite comments** in writing to the school and/or to the Commission concerning the institution’s qualifications for accreditation. These comments will be available to the evaluation committee. The evaluation committee may also include an open hearing scheduled during the course of the visit. *The school must document how it advertised this evaluation visit, along with any formal comments received.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **X.A.2** Accredited members shall **disclose . . . in their printed and/or electronic bulletin, calendar, or catalog the status of their accreditation** (using language from COA [Procedures](http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/COAProcedures.pdf) X.A.2). *The school must provide a copy of and reference to how it discloses its accredited status.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **VI.D.4 Schools conducting distance education must have a process** by which the institution establishes by use of secure login and pass code . . . or other means that are effective in **verifying student identity and protecting student privacy** . . . In addition, the school **must notify students of any projected additional student charges** associated with [this at] registration.  *The school must document its policies and practices regarding student identification, privacy, and fees.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  does not conduct distance education.  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

**Part 2. Requirements Only for Schools Participating in Title IV Programs**

|  |
| --- |
| **2.7 Institutions participating in US federal student financial assistance programs shall comply with prevailing governmental guidelines** regulating these programs. **Default rates on student loans** above the federal threshold, or failure to comply with federal guidelines, is cause for review of an institution’s overall conformity to the Standards of Accreditation of the Commission. Schools shall demonstrate that they have **resolved effectively all areas of deficiency identified** in audits, program reviews, and any other information provided by the [USDE] to the Commission.  *The school must document its response to each of the following questions as instructed below.* |
| 1. Does the school list the ATS Commission as its recognized accreditor for Title IV funds? (If your school is dually accredited, put “Y” only if the ATS Commission is the *primary* accreditor.) Choose Y/N. 2. What is the school’s most recent cohort default rate for student federal loans? Enter %.% Please place in the Documents Room a copy of the school’s most recent official cohort default rate letter from the USDE. 3. Does the school have a clean audit (Circular A-133) for federal financial aid? Choose Y/N.   If NO, school must provide explanation here, including what steps it has taken. School inserts explanation here if answered NO.   1. Has the USDE required the school to submit a Financial Responsibility letter since the last comprehensive evaluation? Choose Y/N.   If YES, the school must provide an explanation here, including its current status. School inserts explanation here if answered YES.   1. Does the school have an appropriate Satisfactory Academic Progress policy? Choose Y/N.   School inserts here the reference to where its SAP policy may be found.   1. How does the school verify student participation in instruction (i.e., what prevents students from receiving financial aid for classes they enrolled in but never attended)? School references here its policy to prevent financial aid abuse for student participation. 2. Does the school have an appropriate policy and practice for awarding credit that aligns with commonly accepted practices and with the federal definition of a credit hour? (See page 5 of [USDE Guidance Regarding a Credit Hour](http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf).) The evaluation committee will review random samples of various course syllabi (in different programs and in different delivery methods) to ensure that the school’s practices conform to its policies. School describes here its policy for awarding credits appropriately. 3. Please indicate below where the evaluation committee can find the most recent copy of the school’s Campus Security (Clery) Report. School inserts requested information here. 4. Does the school offer at least 25 percent of any educational program through contractual or consortial arrangement(s) with one or more entities not certified to participate in the Title IV programs? If yes, please list the entity(ies) involved, and explain the nature and extent of the contractual or consortial arrangement(s).   School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response to all items in 2.7**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |

|  |
| --- |
| **6.4.1** Senior administrators and financial aid officers shall review **student educational debt** and develop institutional strategies regarding students’ borrowing for theological education. (NOTE: Section 6.4.2 of Standard 6 addresses schools’ provision of financial counseling to students; that may also be reviewed during the evaluation, though it is only a “should” statement.)  *The school must document its process for reviewing student debt and cite here where that may be found. The committee must review this evidence, as well as interview appropriate staff and students, to determine if the school has appropriate strategies to keep student educational debt loads reasonable.* |
| **School Response**  School inserts requested information here. |
| **Committee Response**  The committee has reviewed the evidence and determined that the school  meets this requirement with no further comment or action needed.  meets this requirement and a comment appears in the committee report.  does ***not*** meet this requirement, so a recommendation appears in the committee report. |