Standard Nine
Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements. In presenting the institution to students, prospective students, and other members of the public, the institutional website provides information that is complete, accurate, timely, readily accessible, clear, and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.

Integrity

9.1 The institution expects that members of its community, including the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students, will act responsibly, ethically, and with integrity; and it systematically supports the pursuit thereof. Institutional leadership fosters an atmosphere where issues of integrity can be openly considered, and members of the institutional community understand and assume their responsibilities in the pursuit of integrity.

9.2 Truthfulness, clarity, and fairness characterize the institution’s relations with all internal and external constituencies. Adequate provision is made to ensure academic honesty. Appropriate policies and procedures are in effect and periodically reviewed for matters including intellectual property rights, the avoidance of conflict of interest, privacy rights, and fairness in dealing with students, faculty, and staff. The institution’s educational policies and procedures are equitably applied to all its students.

9.3 The institution is committed to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It assures faculty and students the freedom to teach and study, to examine all pertinent data, to question assumptions, and to be guided by the evidence of scholarly research.

9.4 The institution observes the spirit as well as the letter of applicable legal requirements. It has a charter and/or other formal authority from the appropriate governmental agency authorizing it to grant all degrees it awards; it has the necessary operating authority for each jurisdiction in which it conducts activities; and it operates within this authority.

9.5 The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. It fosters an inclusive atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds.

9.6 The institution manages its academic, research and service programs, administrative operations, responsibilities to students, and interactions with prospective students with honesty and integrity.

9.7 The institution is responsible for all activities that are sponsored by the institution or carry its name. These activities are compatible with the institution’s mission and are administered within its organizational structure. The institution assumes responsibility for the appropriateness and integrity of such activities.

9.8 The institution has established and publicizes clear policies ensuring institutional integrity. Included among them are appropriate policies and procedures for the fair resolution of grievances brought by faculty, staff, or students.
The pursuit of institutional integrity is strengthened through the application of findings from periodic and episodic assessments of the policies and conditions that support the achievement of these aims among members of the institutional community.

In its relationships with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, the institution demonstrates honesty and integrity, and it complies with the Commission's Standards, policies, Requirements of Affiliation, and requests. It notifies the Commission regarding adverse events.

In addition to the considerations stated in this Standard, the institution adheres to those requirements related to institutional integrity embodied in all other Commission Standards.

Transparency

The information published by the institution on its website is readily accessible and sufficient to allow students and prospective students to make informed decisions about their education. The institution's public website includes the information specified elsewhere in this Standard (9.18-9.27).

The institution provides sufficient information to the public about its processes for admissions, employment, grading, assessment, student discipline, and the consideration of complaints and appeals.

The institution is responsive to reasonable requests for information about itself and informs the public about how inquiries can be addressed. The institution provides notice as to the availability of its most recent audited financial statement or a fair summary thereof.

All forms of print and digital communications officially representing the institution are consistent with catalogue content and accurately portray the conditions and opportunities available at the institution. Institutions ensure the availability of archival editions of catalogues, regardless of their format.

The institution has readily available valid documentation for any statements and promises regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty.

Through a systematic process of periodic review, the institution ensures that its print and digital publications are complete, accurate, available, readily accessible, and current. The results of the review are used for improvement.

Public Disclosure

The institution's catalogue describes the institution consistent with its mission statement and sets forth the obligations and responsibilities of both students and the institution.

The institution publishes its mission, objectives, and expected educational outcomes; its status as a public or independent institution; if independent, its status as a not-for-profit or for-profit institution; any religious affiliation; requirements and procedures and policies related to admissions and the transfer of credit; a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements; student fees, charges and refund policies; rules and regulations for student conduct; procedures for student appeals and complaints; other items related to attending or withdrawing from the institution; academic programs, courses currently offered, and other available
educational opportunities; academic policies and procedures; and the requirements for degrees or other forms of academic recognition. (See also 4.38)

9.20 The institution publishes a list of its continuing faculty, indicating departmental or program affiliation, showing degrees held and the institutions granting them. The names and positions of administrative officers, and the names and principal affiliations of members of the governing board are also included.

9.21 The institution publishes the locations and programs available at branch campuses and other instructional locations, including those overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of the programs and services available at each location.

9.22 The institution clearly indicates those programs, courses, services, and personnel not available during a given academic year. It does not list as current any courses not taught for two consecutive years that will not be taught during the third consecutive year.

9.23 The institution publishes a description of the size and characteristics of the student body, the campus setting, the availability of academic and other support services, the range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students, and those institutional learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit.

9.24 The institution publishes statements of its goals for students’ education and the success of students in achieving those goals. Information on student success includes rates of retention and graduation and other measures of student success appropriate to institutional mission. If applicable, recent information on passage rates for licensure examinations is also published. (See also 8.6, 8.7, 8.10)

9.25 The institution publishes information about the total cost of education and net price, including the availability of financial aid and the typical length of study. The expected amount of student debt upon graduation and the institution’s cohort default and loan repayment rates are published to help students and prospective students make informed decisions. (See also 5.14)

9.26 The institution ensures that when students, prospective students, or members of the public are interacting with an individual acting on behalf of the institution through a contractual or other written agreement, the relationship of that individual to the institution is clear.

9.27 The institution’s statements about its current accredited status are accurately and explicitly worded. An institution placed on probation by the Commission discloses this status in all print and digital publications in which the institution’s accreditation is mentioned.