ABFSE Accreditation Standards

Effective date: May 1, 2016

CHAPTER IX

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

PREAMBLE

Funeral service is a profession practiced by men and women who are required to meet certain educational, societal, and governmental standards. Some of them are administrative and logistical; others concern health and sanitation. The primary focus of funeral service lies in competent, ethical service to the public. Accreditation of Funeral Service Education programs is intended to help insure that those ingredients necessary to the successful practice of funeral service are offered each student in a consistent and universal manner. Standards have been developed to foster this goal.

The Standards of Accreditation, as established at associate (or comparable) degree and bachelor degree levels, are for the most part qualitative and apply to both individual programs and the institution as a whole. In making its decisions on candidacy or accreditation, the Committee on Accreditation bases its judgment on the objectives of the program, the manner in which it is currently meeting its objectives, and the probability that it will continue to meet its objectives in the future as well as the Accreditation Standards.

It is recognized that technology is influencing approaches to providing instructional, academic, and student services to learners, on and off campus. These standards apply to all instruction and services wherever and whenever and however offered. See also Appendix E of this Manual which contains ABFSE Guidelines for Distance Learning.

Standards are expressed in terms of "must" and "shall." Guidelines, intended to help interpret the Standards, are expressed in terms of "should" and "may."

The provisions contained in the Standards are separable. If any section, sub-section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or requirement contained herein shall be held to be illegal or unenforceable, such illegality or unenforceability of such part shall not affect or in any way impair the validity, application, or enforceability of the remaining portion of that section.

Each program/institution which offers one or more courses via Distance Learning formats must specifically address that course or courses independent of its discussion of other courses. That discussion must proceed on two levels. First, as each Standard is discussed, specific reference must be made to how the Standard is met by the Distance Learning offering(s). Second, the Self study must demonstrate how each element in the Guidelines is satisfied for each course offered via Distance Learning. See also Appendix E of this Manual which contains ABFSE Guidelines for Distance Learning.

The Self study discussion and the Visiting Committee Report relative to Distance Learning offerings will assess to what extent the courses and the educational services offered in support of Distance Learning are structured in a manner that recognizes the distinction between traditional on-campus students and those taking courses via Distance Learning methodologies with regard to

admissions, registration, academic advising, tuition and fee payments, bookstore services, library services, testing security, etc. See also Appendix E of this Manual which contains ABFSE Guidelines for Distance Learning.

The Self study discussion and the Visiting Committee Report relative to Distance Learning must also assess academic support for faculty (e.g., faculty training of online course development, access to computer equipment, online support systems, etc.). See also Appendix E of this Manual which contains ABFSE Guidelines for Distance Learning.

STANDARD 1: SPONSORSHIP

1.1 Accreditation is granted to programs within either single-purpose or multi-purpose sponsoring institutions.

1.2 The program/institution must provide evidence that it assumes responsibility for
- 1.2.1 curriculum content,
- 1.2.2 classroom teaching and clinical education,
- 1.2.3 appointment and evaluation of faculty,
- 1.2.4 policies and procedures for admission, and
- 1.2.5 awarding a diploma, certificate, or degree documenting completion of the program.

1.3 The program must provide evidence that clinical experiences assigned each student are educational in nature.

1.4 The sponsoring institution must provide, or arrange for the provision of, all portions of the required curriculum including all
- 1.4.1 classroom, laboratory, clinical field experiences, and
- 1.4.2 services necessary to support the curriculum in funeral service education as specified in the Standards.

1.5 The sponsoring institution must demonstrate evidence of sound financial support of the educational program on a current and continuing basis.

1.6 The sponsoring institution must provide written evidence that it is approved by the appropriate governing authority in which it is located, or within which it offers instruction, to award the diploma, certificate, or degree for which it seeks accreditation. In situations in which there are conflicts between an Accreditation Standard and a governmental or institutional requirement, the more stringent rule will be applied.

1.7 In a program in which more than one institution or organization provides academic and clinical education, the sponsoring institution must provide evidence or properly executed written agreements describing the responsibilities of the respective institution or organizations.

1.8 If a funeral service program is associated with, or financially sponsored by, an organization whose main purpose is other than education, the sponsoring institution must provide written evidence of sufficient separation between the host institution and the funeral service program to guarantee an effective, independent, and objective learning environment.

1.9 See also Standard **2.8**

STANDARD 2: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

2.1 The governing board must be the legally constituted group which holds the assets of the institution in trust. It must be responsible for sustaining the institution, approving its objectives, and implementing and controlling the program.

2.2 The authority and responsibility of each organizational component of the sponsoring institution (governing board, campus and program administration, faculty, students) together with the processes by which they function or interrelate, must be clearly described by means of a current constitution, by-laws, or some similar means.

2.3 The administration of the institution and/or program must

- 2.3.1 provide educational leadership competent to establish conditions providing for good learning opportunities for students, good working conditions for faculty, and good communication processes both inside and outside of the institution/program;
- 2.3.2 provide management of resources in support of educational objectives;
- 2.3.3 define expectations and quality control requirements of all agencies providing off-campus instruction in the name of the institution; and
- 2.3.4 establish an expeditious process allowing for communication flow both downward and upward within the organization in order for the administration to assess the achievements of its goals and the needs of its constituents;

2.4

- 2.4.1 A single purpose institution offering only a program of funeral service education must be administered by a chief administrative officer, directly accountable only to the governing board for the management of the institution. All other employees must report directly, or indirectly, to this chief administrative officer.
- 2.4.2 This officer may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced commensurate with administrative duties.

2.5

- 2.5.1 A funeral service program within a multi-purpose institution must be administered by a director who has been delegated responsibility for the program. All other employees assigned to the program must report directly or indirectly, to this person.
- 2.5.2 This officer may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced commensurate with administrative duties.

2.6

- 2.6.1 The program administrator for a program in a multi-purpose institution or the institutional chief administrative officer for a single purpose institution must possess an academic background consistent with the position of leadership held. For those hired after May 1979, this will always involve at least the master's degree, within five years of the date of the initial full-time appointment in funeral service education, from a regionally accredited college or university.
- 2.6.2 For program administrators earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United States, the institution awarding the degree must have fulfilled governmental standards which in the judgment of AACRO are acceptable or similar to those of the ABFSE.

2.7 Within program policies, provisions must be made for consideration of student views and judgments in those matters in which students have direct and reasonable interest.

2.8 In order to provide additional guidance to **non-regionally accredited institutions for which the ABFSE acts as "gate-keeper"** and to clarify the documents that representatives of the Committee on Accreditation (COA) conducting accreditation-related visits (both regularly scheduled and unannounced) are expected to review, the COA hereby advises all involved of the following expectations:

- 2.8.1 The institution is expected to provide or have available on campus for review a complete list of members of the Board of Trustees as well as a list of members of the Advisory Committee.

2.8.2 The institution is expected to provide or have available on campus for review copies of agendas and minutes of Board of Trustees meetings for the two-year period immediately preceding the visit and have available on campus agendas and minutes for prior years.

2.8.3 The institution is expected to provide or have available on campus for review copies of the by-laws of the Board of Trustees.

2.8.4 The institution is expected to provide or have available on campus for review copies of all contracts, including management contracts.

2.8.5 To the extent feasible, it is suggested the materials be part of the Self study or of the Appendices attached to the Self study. If an institution determines doing so is not feasible, it may have the materials available on campus only. If the institution determines some of the cited materials are of a confidential nature, it may restrict review of them to the chair of the visiting committee or the individual conducting an unannounced visit.

STANDARD 3: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Each program in funeral service education must have as its central aim recognition of the importance of funeral service personnel as

- 3.1.1 members of a human services profession;
- 3.1.2 members of the community in which they serve;
- 3.1.3 participants in the relationship between bereaved families and those engaged in the funeral service profession;
- 3.1.4 professionals knowledgeable of and compliant with federal, state, provincial/territorial, and local regulatory guidelines in the geographic area where they practice as well as
- 3.1.5 professionals sensitive to the responsibility for public health, safety, and welfare in caring for human remains.

3.2 Each program must have at least the following objectives:

- 3.2.1 to enlarge the background and knowledge of students about the funeral service profession;
- 3.2.2 to educate students in every phase of funeral service and to help enable them to develop proficiency and skills necessary for the profession, as defined in the Preamble at the beginning of this chapter;
- 3.2.3 to educate students concerning the responsibilities of the funeral service profession to the community at large;
- 3.2.4 to emphasize high standards of ethical conduct;
- 3.2.5 to provide a curriculum at the post- secondary level of instruction; and
- 3.2.6 to encourage student and faculty research in the field of funeral service;

3.3 The aims and objectives of the program must be in the published documents – other than brief informational/marketing materials –relating to the funeral service program.

3.4 The program must assess the achievement of its Aims and Objectives (see also Standard 11).

STANDARD 4: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

4.1 Each institution/program must conduct its business and academic activities in an ethical manner. In this regard, each institution program must

- 4.1.1 publish and adhere to a personnel policy assuring equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons; maintain admissions, financial aid, and education services policies for students assuring equal consideration without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or veterans status; and
- 4.1.2 insure that publications and advertising accurately portray the realities of the program/institution. The catalog of each institution must give as much information as possible to include entire curriculum and program of study containing at least the following:
  - 4.1.2.a course names and identification numbers;
  - 4.1.2.b summary descriptions and credit hours;
  - 4.1.2.c requirements for admission;
  - 4.1.2.d requirements and processes for withdrawal and graduation;
  - 4.1.2.e academic calendars;
  - 4.1.2.f grading policies; and
  - 4.1.2.g ~~the requirement that all students must take the National Board Examination (administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards) prior to graduation; and~~ (Removed effective October 13, 2014.)
  - 4.1.2.g financial policies for tuition, fees, and refunds.

4.2 All practices and procedures must apply equally to all students.

4.3 Any reference by a program to accreditation in catalogs, bulletins, or other official publications and communication or other media must read as follows

The (name of the accredited program) at (name of sponsoring institution) is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) ***992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097*** (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org

NOTE: The reference to accreditation must name the specific program accredited by the ABFSE. (For example, at most institutions it should read, "the Funeral Service/Mortuary Science degree program at…" The ABFSE office provided a personalized statement to every program in July 2015. This requirement is particularly important in those institutions offering other areas of instruction which are not accredited, or eligible for accreditation, by the ABFSE.)

4.4 ABFSE accredited institutions or programs which choose to offer, in addition to one or more accredited programs, unaccreditable programs must comply with the following procedures:

4.4.1 publications describing the unaccreditable program must contain the following information: "This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program are not eligible to take the National Board Examination or any state board examination for which graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required."

4.4.2 In addition, the academic transcript for graduates of unaccreditable programs must carry the statement: "This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program are not eligible to take the National Board Examination or any state board examination for which graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required."

4.5 Written policies must exist which ensure due process for students, faculty, and staff, including grievance procedures, clearly defined disciplinary policies, and sexual harassment policies.

4.6 Honesty and integrity are required of all accredited programs and each program will conduct itself in an ethical manner. Violations of ethics include, but are not limited to:

4.6.1. Providing false, misleading, or distorted information directly or by omission to the ABFSE or COA;

4.6.2. Engaging in illegal conduct;

4.6.3 Presenting false information to students, faculty, or the public;

4.6.4. Engaging in intentional conduct that is coercive to students or prejudicial to student learning or outcomes

4.6.5. Any other conduct that is generally regarded as unethical in higher education, accreditation of educational programs and institutions, or funeral service.

4.7 See also Standard 5.1 and Standards 2.8 and 12.2 (if applicable) for additional topics subject to Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards.

STANDARD 5: FINANCE

5.1 The institution/program must have financial resources which are adequate to provide instruction and facilities in compliance with this manual and to ensure graduation of each class accepted.

5.2 The learning resources budget shall be adequate for proper support of the curriculum.

5.3 Acceptable accounting practices must be employed and the most current audited financial statements must be provided. For departmental programs in comprehensive institutions which are regionally accredited, institutional compliance will be assumed. In such cases departmental budgets must reflect adequate financial support of the funeral service department. Budget development for the department must be in evidence.

5.4 The financial accounting system for institutions must not be combined with financial affairs of any other organizations.

STANDARD 6: CURRICULUM

6.1 The ABFSE recognizes the Associate Degree, or its equivalent, as the minimum educational standard for preparation for the funeral service profession.

- 6.1.1 The program in Funeral Service Education must consist of not less than 60 semester (90 quarter or the equivalent where credits are measured by a different means) credits.
- 6.1.2 The program must be spread over at least three semesters or four quarters or the equivalent where academic periods are measured by a different means.

6.2 The program must have and follow a well-organized curriculum plan.

- 6.2.1 The plan must follow a logical sequence and result in a diploma or degree appropriate to the length and depth of the curriculum.
- 6.2.2 Semester or quarter credit hours must be assigned to all courses and apportioned appropriately.
- 6.2.3 A syllabus must be available for each course offered in the program. Each syllabus must include written course objectives and must be distributed to students at the beginning of that course. The course objectives must be reviewed on a continuing basis.
- 6.2.4 All required prerequisite courses must be clearly indicated in institutional publications.
- 6.2.5 The curriculum undertaken by funeral service education students must consist of at least two components: general education coursework and courses in Funeral Service Education (the "major").
- 6.2.6 At least 25% of the total credits must be in general education, non-technical courses.

6.3 The manner of inclusion of ABFSE stipulated content is left to the individual program to decide, provided the minimum content as stipulated in the following is included. Some of the current ABFSE content areas may be counted toward the general education component, as long as they are not counted toward any other portion of the ABFSE requirements. For the purpose of this Standard, general education courses are those in which the instructional content is not narrowly focused on the specific knowledge, skills, and techniques unique to the Funeral Service profession. The minimum requirements for the Funeral Service Education degree program must include:

6.4 **Public Health and Technical** 14 minimum semester (21 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:

- 6.4.1 Chemistry, for Funeral Service (PHT3)
- 6.4.2 Microbiology (PHT1)
- 6.4.3 Human Anatomy (PHT2)
- 6.4.4 Pathology (PHT4)
- 6.4.5 Restorative Art (PHT5)
- 6.4.6 Embalming (PHT6)

6.5 **Business Management *and Professional*** 16 minimum semester (24 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:

- 6.5.1 Accounting
- 6.5.2 Funeral Service Management
- 6.5.3 Funeral Merchandising
- 6.5.4 Cremation
- 6.5.5 Funeral Directing
- 6.5.6 Small Business Management
- 6.5.7 Professional or Business Communications
- 6.5.8 Federal Trade Commission

6.6 **Social Sciences/Humanities** 6 minimum semester (9 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:

- 6.6.1 Sociology
- 6.6.2 History of Funeral Service and Embalming
- 6.6.3 Funeral Service Psychology and Counseling

6.7 **Legal, Ethical, Regulatory** 3 minimum semester (4 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:

- 6.7.1 Funeral Service Law
- 6.7.2 Business Law
- 6.7.3 Ethics

6.8 **General Education** Each associate degree student must earn a minimum of 60 (90 quarter) credits; each bachelor degree student must earn a minimum of 120 (180 quarter) credits of which at least 25% of the total credits required by the program for earning a degree must be in general education, non-technical, courses. In addition, each student must complete sufficient general education credits to meet graduation requirements for the Associate Degree (or its equivalent) or Baccalaureate Degree as described by each state or province/territory and institution if the student is enrolled in a degree program.

In addition to the statement in Standard 6.3 that some of the current ABFSE content area may be counted toward the general education component, as long as they are not counted toward any other portion of the ABFSE requirements, General Education courses may be drawn from the following areas:

- 6.8.1 Accounting
- 6.8.2 Business
- 6.8.3 Computer Applications
- 6.8.4 Speech
- 6.8.5 English
- 6.8.6 History
- 6.8.7 Mathematics
- 6.8.8 Psychology
- 6.8.9 Religion
- 6.8.10 Sociology

6.9 The **Embalming** is a requirement of the curriculum:

6.9.1 Each student must actively participate in at least ten (10) embalmings in order to fulfill the clinical embalming component of the curriculum.

These Embalming cases may either be completed in an on-campus setting or at an off-campus instructional site.

There shall be no more than five (5) students per case receiving credit for a specific embalming. There may be additional students observing; however, they may not interrupt or interfere with the embalming process or distract the preceptor while the embalming is in process.

6.9.2 Active participation means hands-on learning and must include, at a minimum, the following tasks:

6.9.2.a raising vessels
6.9.2.b mixing fluids
6.9.2.c injecting fluids
6.9.2.d aspiration
6.9.2.e suturing incisions
6.9.2.f posing features

6.9.3 Credit for individual cases will be allowed for only those students actively participating: No embalming case credit shall be given for those students observing the case. The number of observing students must be limited to ten (10) unless a video system or amphitheater is large enough to accommodate additional students without interfering with those students actively participating.

6.9.4 Embalming case reports validating the tasks performed by the student are required. Each case report must include:
6.9.4.a details of embalming treatments
6.9.4.b case analysis, as well as types and quantities of embalming fluids used
6.9.4.c a detailed list of the student's participation in the case
6.9.4.d a form that is uniform in nature as adopted by each program which is signed by both the student and preceptor

6.9.5 The program must provide substantive evidence of the technical competence of each graduating student. Such certification must be performed by a qualified faculty member as defined in Standards 7.2.1, 7.2.2, and 7.2.4a.

6.9.6 Embalming cases may be completed in an on-campus setting or at an off-campus instructional site.

6.9.7 If preceptors are used, there must be an identified certification process in place and proper documentation that each preceptor has been properly oriented about the school's requirements concerning knowledge base, competency, and evaluation of student procedures and criteria. The training must include an on- or off-campus workshop and/or a manual pertaining to the training and methods of evaluation. In addition, preceptors must meet the requirements of Standard 7.2.4a and be certified as indicated in Standard 7.3.

6.9.8 Off-campus instructional sites where students receive college credit are to be physically visited by a representative of the program and approved prior to the start of instruction. Instruction includes management, funeral directing and clinical. These visits must occur at least biennially or prior to each use if the use occurs intermittently over a period of several years. Visits must also occur whenever physical changes to the facility are reported. Inspections of off-campus instruction sites must ensure the location has a valid, current license. In addition, inspections must ensure that off-campus sites are clean and adequate for instructional purposes. The inspection must ensure that appropriate equipment and protocols (drench shower, eye wash station, SDS [formerly MSDS] and blood borne pathogen program, ventilation system, proper protective equipment, etc.) are in place and functioning.

6.9.9 Signed affiliation agreements must be maintained by each program. The agreements must include a stated process for interrupting the clinical experience and recourse dismissal of a student from clinical experience and a clear definition of what is to be expected of the preceptor and what is provided by the program.

6.9.10 In addition, each student must participate in an on-campus course in which the application of Restorative Art principles is practiced in a laboratory setting.

6.9.11 Embalming case reports must be retained for at least seven years.

6.10 *Participation in **Funeral Directing** is a requirement of the curriculum. Each student must actively participate in the funeral tasks included in this standard.*

6.10.1 Active participation means hands-on learning and must include, at a minimum, the tasks enumerated in 6.10.2 – 6.10.7.

6.10.2. Students must utilize the following forms:
6.10.2.a. First call sheet
6.10.2.b. Arrangement worksheet
6.10.2.c. FTC-compliant General Price List
6.10.2.d. FTC-compliant Casket Price List
6.10.2.e. FTC-compliant Outer Burial Container Price List

6.10.2.f. Embalming Authorization form
6.10.2.g Cremation Authorization form

6.10.3 First call - Students must demonstrate the process of receiving five (5) first calls. This can be done in a simulation setting.

6.10.4 Transfer of remains - Students must demonstrate the process of performing a body removal. This can be done in a simulation setting.

6.10.5 Arrangement Conference - Students must participate (observe or assist) in five Arrangement Conferences. If done in a simulation setting, no more than 5 students may receive credit at one time (during 1 simulation).

6.10.6 As part of the Arrangement Conference requirement in 6.10.5, students must prepare the following at least one time:
6.10.6.a. Death Certificate
6.10.6.b. Burial Transit permit
6.10.6.c. Social Security form (Statement of Death by Funeral Director)
6.10.6.d. Death notice
6.10.6.e. Obituary
6.10.6.f. FTC-compliant Statement of Funeral Good and Services Selected
6.10.6.g. Veterans flag application, Burial benefits forms, and headstone/marker forms

6.10.7 Funeral Observation - Students must observe five funeral related services. Three of the five must be from the following list: Liturgical, Non-liturgical, Secular, Chapel, Graveside, Military, Fraternal, Memorial (without the deceased), Direct Cremation, or Other (describe).

To receive credit, the student will be required to provide documentation of the service (via service folder, obituary, prayer card, or other artifacts), his/her level of participation in the activity and designate the participants involved. (clergy, celebrant, FD, family, or others). This may not be done in a simulation setting.

6.10.8 Documentation of student participation must be maintained by the program for at least seven years.

6.11 Each program must append Form B-6, (found in Appendix B) "Curriculum Distribution by ABFSE Content Area," to its Self study.

6.12 Instruction must be at a level generally held commensurate with postsecondary education and directed toward the individual growth of each student in areas such as independent thought, resourcefulness, and scientific inquiry.

6.13 Students must be evaluated at reasonable intervals and kept informed of their progress in a timely fashion.

STANDARD 7: FACULTY

7.1 The faculty must be adequate in
- 7.1.1 number,
- 7.1.2 education,
- 7.1.3 competence, and
- 7.1.4 experience to implement effectively the program of instruction.

7.2 Members of the teaching faculty must be qualified in accordance with certain degree and professional requirements, as follows:

7.2.1 All full- or part-time faculty initially appointed after September 1, 1969, as funeral service educators must have a bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

7.2.2 As of May 1, 1979, all newly- and re-appointed full-time faculty must earn a master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university within five years of their initial appointment date. Faculty who fail to meet the five-year requirement may not be allowed to teach until the degree is awarded. For faculty earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United States, the

institution awarding the degree must have met degree standards which in the judgment of AACRO are acceptable or similar to those of ABFSE.

7.2.3 The only exception to the above is in the category of laboratory assistant, guest lecturer, clinical instructor, preceptor, or comparable positions. Individuals in such categories must serve under the direct supervision of a qualified member of the faculty, as above.

7.2.4 **<u>In addition</u>** to above degree requirements, faculty in specific areas must be meet the following criteria:

7.2.4.a a qualified faculty member in embalming is one who holds a valid license that entitles him/her to practice embalming in the state in which he/she is teaching, who has had sufficient specialized training and at least one year of experience as an embalmer, and who has graduated from an institution of funeral service education accredited by the American Board or its predecessor or, for programs outside the U.S., has graduated from a post-secondary funeral service program equivalent to ABFSE-accredited programs;

7.2.4.b a qualified faculty member in mortuary management is one who has graduated from an institution of funeral service education accredited by the American Board or its predecessor or, for programs outside the U.S., from a post-secondary funeral service program equivalent to ABFSE accredited programs, holds a funeral director's license, or its legal equivalent, and has had sufficient specialized training and experience in funeral service practice to enable him/her to give proper instruction;

7.2.4.c a qualified faculty member in restorative art is one who has graduated from an institution of funeral service education accredited by the American Board or its predecessor, or for programs outside the U.S., from a post-secondary funeral service program equivalent to ABFSE accredited programs;

7.2.4.d a qualified faculty member in other required or elective courses is one who has sufficient specialized education or experience in these subjects to enable proper instruction to be provided;

7.2.4.e all personnel serving as off-campus preceptors must be licensed as Funeral Directors, Embalmers, or both, and, after January 1, 1989, embalming preceptors must be graduates of ABFSE accredited programs or, for programs outside the U.S., graduates of a post-secondary funeral service program equivalent to ABFSE accredited programs.

7.3 Preceptor credentials must be certified in one of the following ways by the program:

7.3.1 Have on file an official transcript from the accredited funeral service institution from which the preceptor graduated plus a copy of his or her state license;

7.3.2 Have on file a copy of the preceptor's license from the State Board of Funeral Service and Embalming (if the state requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program)

7.3.3 Have on file a copy of (or be able to provide access to) verification from the State web site that the preceptor is licensed in the state (if the state required graduation from an ABFSE accredited program) with the name of the preceptor and date of the issuance of the license maintained by the program.

7.4 The program must give evidence of active development of high quality faculty, and the involvement of the faculty in the conduct of the academic program including maintaining the standards and conditions pertaining to instruction and research.

7.5 Instructional support for faculty, in the form of library facilities, office facilities, development leave (with or without pay) involvement in program planning, etc., must be in evidence.

7.6 Student-teacher ratios must be available for review and must not exceed 30:1 overall (full-time equivalent per federal/state guidelines/definitions) in the funeral service program, no more than 25:1 headcount for laboratory sessions, and 5:1 headcount for each clinical embalming case. No instructor may supervise more than 3 embalming cases at any one time.

STANDARD 8: FACILITIES

8.1 Classrooms, laboratories, and other areas used for instruction must be properly equipped, adequate in number and size, and supplied for quality instruction to support the aims and objectives of the program and to meet the needs of students. For funeral service education the following is required:

- 8.1.1 classrooms and laboratories must be properly lighted, heated, ventilated, cleaned, and furnished with, or have available, the equipment and supplies necessary for lectures to enable the educational program to be carried out;
- 8.1.2 laboratories must be furnished with sufficient equipment and supplies to permit students to work in small groups or individually. Sufficient equipment and supplies must be available to carry on all research and instruction mentioned in program/institution publications. Equipment and supplies must be replaced as required and upgraded to maintain currency with funeral service practice.
- 8.1.3 All facilities must satisfy federal, state, provincial/territorial, and local regulations.
- 8.1.4 Each program must maintain an on-campus embalming/preparation space either fully functional or for demonstration purposes. The embalming space must be of sufficient size to accommodate at least one preparation table. It must have an electric embalming machine, instruments, and real or simulated chemicals. In the case of a demonstration lab, it must adequately reflect an actual functional embalming laboratory.

8.2 Off-Campus Instructional Sites: Instruction at off-campus locations is generally in the form of practicum, internship, or embalming instruction. Whenever students receive program credit for work carried out off the main campus, the following facilities requirements must be in effect:

- 8.2.1 funeral homes in which off-campus instruction takes must be licensed by the appropriate authorities;
- 8.2.2 off-campus instruction must take place in locations which offer adequate learning space for students involved. In the case of instruction in embalming, preparation room facilities must be of sufficient size to allow for satisfactory participation by each student involved;
- 8.2.3 the program must have written affiliation agreements with each off-campus instructional site. Each agreement must specify the responsibilities of the program/institution and the instructional site relative to supervision and instruction of students and liability. Where appropriate, and in accordance with institutional policies, personnel at the instructional site may be given adjunct faculty appointments by the institution; and
- 8.2.4 all facilities must satisfy federal, state, and local regulations.

STANDARD 9: LIBRARY / LEARNING RESOURCES

9.1 Learning resources, including computer resources, collections of books, periodicals, and reference materials must be both sufficient in scope and readily accessible to students to provide adequate support to the Funeral Service Education curriculum.

9.2 Computer resources include computer assisted instruction materials as well as access to internet resources. The learning resources program should provide access to external computer databases.

9.3 Since quality and availability affect program outcomes, learning resources must be accessible to students outside of regular classroom hours. The program must require student utilization of these resources.

- 9.3.1 An acquisition policy relevant to Funeral Service Education must be in place and funeral service personnel must be involved with the annual acquisitions related to this program.
- 9.3.2 Sufficient space must be devoted to learning resources to provide for the needs of students in Funeral Service Education and must be accessible during reasonable hours and administered by qualified staff.
- 9.3.3 Learning resources must be catalogued according to a recognized standard method.

STANDARD 10: STUDENTS

10.1 Admissions: The admissions requirement for the program must be publicly stated in institutional publications including the catalog and must be administered as published.

The program/institution must recognize and follow ethical practices in student admissions and other student-related matters and so advise the public by publishing in its program information either its own statement of ethical practices which must include key elements of widely recognized and available documents describing such practices or specifically referring in program materials to its adherence to recognized documents on ethical practice (e.g. documents available from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers [AACRAO] and from several of the regional accrediting agencies. At Appendix I is a representative document from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education).

In addition to the above, the following Standards must be met.

10.1.1 The minimum educational requirement for admission to a funeral service education program must be graduation from an accredited four-year high school or its equivalent, such as a recognized G.E.D. or other evidence of academic achievement such as a post-secondary transcript with at least nine credits, exclusive of developmental courses, and a satisfactory grade point average from a regionally accredited post-secondary institution.

10.1.2 No program shall enroll any student until evidence is supplied by the applicant that the above minimum standard has been met. Such evidence must be

10.1.2.a Transcript of high school or college work, received by mail directly from the institution from which the credits were received. If an institution/program accepts internet transcripts it must have a system in place to verify that such transmissions are secure and an accurate
representation of student credits and grades, or

10.1.2.b Evidence that the applicant has a certificate (such as a G.E.D.) equivalent to the high school diploma. Such certificate must be certified by the principal of a recognized high school, the state department of education or its equivalent, or any other authorized and recognized authority in the state or province/territory, or

10.1.2.c In the case of applicants from outside the United States, a statement from a recognized education authority certifying that the applicant has completed formal educational requirements at least equivalent to high school graduation in this country.

10.2 Attendance, Promotion, Graduation

10.2.1 Program/institution policies regarding grading and academic progression must be clearly stated and provided to students in advance. Graduation requirements must be stated in official program/ institution catalogs.

10.2.2 Attendance regulations must be uniformly applicable to all students. This must include clear statements as to attendance expectations, if any, as well as any basis for separation from the institution of students who violate such.

10.2.3 Graduation must ensure a certification that all program and college requirements have been met. ~~which includes taking the NBE~~ (Removed; effective October 13, 2014.)

10.2.4 Only degrees or diplomas for which the institution has received state or equivalent authorization may be awarded, unless on an honorary basis.

10.3 Student Health and Safety

10.3.1 Each accredited funeral service education program must have written policies and procedures ensuring safety of its students.

10.3.2 Each accredited funeral service education program must have health services information available.

10.4 Guidance and Student Involvement

10.4.1 Students must have access to services for personal and/or academic problems. These must include services covering academic difficulty, veterans affairs, housing (housing itself does not need to be provided by the institution or program) academic advising, conduct, part-and full-time employment, licensure requirements, personal problems, and post graduation placement.

10.4.2 Extracurricular activities intended to supplement the funeral service instructional program shall be offered and must be in the form of lectures, student group activities related to funeral service, field trips, and other such activities which cannot take place in the formal classroom setting.

10.4.3 Each funeral service education program must provide opportunities for student involvement in program and institutional governance.

10.5 Records and Reports

10.5.1 Each institution/program must have in operation adequate filing systems for student academic records. This must include policies insuring maintenance of student academic records in perpetuity and ensuring that such will be secured from fire, theft, alteration, and damage.

10.5.2 Student academic transcripts must include indications of the quality of the student's work in each subject studied and the extent of each course, expressed in either semester or quarter credits. Grading must be
explained on the transcript.

10.5.3 In the event a program ceases to function, assurance must be made to guarantee maintenance of the student academic records in perpetuity. The American Board of Funeral Service Education is available to serve as repository for academic records for programs which cannot otherwise guarantee such. All costs associated with sending original records to the American Board are the responsibility of the program that is closing as are costs associated with the American Board making back-up electronic copies of those files.

10.6 All institutions/programs must have specific published policies which are made available to all students and which provide a process that allows any student who believes he or she has been discriminated against, has been a victim or sexual harassment, or has been treated unfairly in an academic or other student-related matter to seek corrective action. If the matter cannot be resolved through discussion with appropriate individuals, the procedure must include provisions whereby the student is given an impartial hearing, to include a written report of the hearing. The policy must include a statement of how students are made aware of the policy and what assistance is provided to students who have a grievance but are unsure about how to proceed.

10.7 Each program or institution the COA accredits must have a transfer of credit policy that is published and available to students and the public. The policy must include the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education. In addition, the statement must include, at a minimum, the established criteria the institution or program uses regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution and a list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement.

STANDARD 11: PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

11.1 ABFSE believes that acceptable National Board Exam pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates are important outcome and quality measures. Accredited institutions/programs are expected to make substantial efforts to assist students in successfully completing their educational programs and in gaining employment in the funeral service profession following graduation. To enhance these efforts, each institution/program must have a continuous system of planning and assessment in place in order to measure its effectiveness and to implement necessary improvements.

11.1.1 The concept of program planning and evaluation has at its core a documented plan which incorporates guidelines, procedures, and methodologies that assess the program's achievement of stated aims and objectives and measures the attainment of expected instructional outcomes.

11.1.1.a The plan must be directly related to the program's aims and objectives.

11.1.1.b The plan must be written and must be approved by appropriate administrative authority.

11.1.1.c The plan must contain provisions for periodic review and revision.

11.1.2 Each program must establish a comprehensive, ongoing system of planning and assessment that ensures instructional quality and documents student success. The system must include-the following:

11.1.2.a Provisions for collecting, maintaining, and analyzing at least seven years of data.

11.1.2.b Opportunities for continuous feedback by students, faculty, and other constituents.
11.1.2.c Regularly scheduled student evaluations of courses and faculty;
11.1.2.d Regularly scheduled supervisory evaluation of faculty and program administrators;
11.1.2.e Results of annual surveys of graduates and employers to include satisfaction with instructional quality, preparation for employment, and expectations of employment;
11.1.2.f Methods used to measure the attainment of expected instructional outcomes; and
11.1.2.g Documentation of how the assessment efforts are used to improve instructional and program quality.

11.2 If the program has been evaluated previously by ABFSE, the program must document what has been done since the last review to correct any deficiencies that may have been cited in reference to the Standards.

11.3 For at least seven years, the program must maintain, calculate, and explain how it has utilized the following data for planning and assessment purposes:

11.3.1 Pass Rates on the National Board Examination (NBE): Accredited programs must ~~require~~ report ~~that each student~~ statistics for ~~take~~ both the "Arts" and "Sciences" sections of the National Board Examination ~~as a requirement for graduation~~. Statistical results are provided annually by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards. (Changes effective October 13, 2014.)

11.3.2 Graduation rates: In each Annual Report beginning in 2014 (January 2015 Annual Report), students must be reported by name as a cohort when they have completed one half of the coursework leading to the degree. For the purpose of calculating graduation rates, students moving through the second half of an associate program will be considered to have graduated on time if they complete their degrees within 18 months, and students halfway through a baccalaureate degree would have 36 months for on-time completion. The same calculation (the second half of the program plus 50%) would apply to other modes of program completion (i.e. diplomas). Each year, each cohort must be identified and tracked in the Annual Report.

11.3.3 Employment rates: Data for students employed in funeral service/mortuary science must be provided on the Annual Report each year beginning with the 2014 rates (January 2015 Annual Report). Job placement is to be calculated within six months of each student's graduation. Programs must specify funeral service related employment, active military duty, or enrollment in further higher education as the three instances that are considered "employment" for purposes of this calculation.

11.4 *The National Board Exam (NBE) is the licensing standard for funeral service/mortuary science in the US. Programs must maintain at least a 60% three (3) year average pass rate for first-time takers of the Arts and the Sciences sections of the NBE. The three (3) year average pass rate will be determined using only the first attempt scores of students who have taken either the Arts or Sciences sections. Please see the policy on and procedure for calculating and tracking cohorts and requesting exemptions in Appendix J.*

11.4.1 A program with less than a 60% three (3) year average pass rate on the same section of the NBE must comply as follows:

- *first year less than 60% - Program Placed on Probation and Report Required (see 11.4.2 for report details)*
- *second consecutive year less than 60% - Accreditation Withdrawn Unless Good Cause Is Shown (see 11.4.*2)

11.4.2 *A program with a single year NBE pass rate below 60% on either or both of the Arts and the Sciences sections in any calendar year is subject to additional monitoring and must submit a report to the Committee on Accreditation by March 1 of the following year. The report must analyze the reason(s) for the low pass rate and explain plans for improvement. This warning language will include a reminder of the Probation and Show Cause consequences described in Standard 11.4.1. Failure to submit a satisfactory report may lead to negative action by the Committee on Accreditation.*

An institution with sporadic pass rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable actions identified above.

11.4.3 National Board Examination pass rates for programs offering courses via Distance Learning must differentiate, on the Annual Report, between those students who take less than 50% of their courses via traditional methods and those who take 50% or more of their courses via Distance Learning. The passage rates of both groups of students (i.e., traditional on-campus and Distance Learning) will be considered both combined and separately in all accreditation actions by the COA.

11.5. The annual passage rate of first-time takers on the National Board Examination (NBE), and program employment rates and graduation rates for the most recent three (3) year period will be posted annually by the Executive Director on the ABFSE website, with a link to each program's website or with contact information for the program.

11.5.1 So that the public and prospective students can easily access these statistics, programs must include the following statements on their website and in the institution's catalog: "National Board Examination pass rates, graduation rates, **(beginning in 2015)** and employment rates **(beginning in 2015)** for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at www.abfse.org. To request a printed copy of this program's pass rates and rates, go to _____(specific location; i.e., the Mortuary Science Office, Room 222, Feather Hall or a specific program web page where the request can be submitted) or by e-mail at _____, or by telephone _____."

11.5.2 Institutions failing to comply with this requirement will be placed on probation immediately. Continued non-compliance may lead to the removal of accreditation.

11. 6 Programs must maintain at least a 60% annual graduation rate for each calendar year. Please see the policy on and procedure for calculating and tracking cohorts in 11.3.2.

11.6.1 As of 2017 (2-year programs) or 2019 (four-year programs), a program with a graduation rate below 60% in any calendar year must submit a report to the Committee on Accreditation by March 1 of the following year. The report must analyze the reason(s) for the low average rate and explain plans for remedying the deficiency. Failure to submit a satisfactory report and to provide evidence of a plan to improve graduation rates may lead to negative action by the Committee on Accreditation.

11.7. Programs must maintain at least a 60% annual employment rate for each calendar year. Please see the policy on and procedure for calculating and tracking cohorts in 11.3. 3.

11.7.1 As of 2015, a program with an employment rate below 60% in any calendar year must submit a report to the Committee on Accreditation by March 1 of the following year. The report must analyze the reason(s) for the low average rate and explain plans for remedying the deficiency. Failure to submit a satisfactory report and to provide evidence of a plan to improve employment rates may lead to negative action by the Committee on Accreditation.

STANDARD 12: DEFAULT RATES IN THE STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS UNDER TITLE IV and COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions which participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs must respond)

12.1 The institution must demonstrate compliance with its obligations under Title IV, including results of compliance audits, program reviews, and the like.

12.2 Subpart B, Chapter VI, Title 34, Volume 3 (revised as of July 1, 2005) of the Code of Federal Regulations identifies and then divides the "Standards for Participation in Title IV," HEA Programs into six broad areas (this document is at Appendix F): (a) Program records, (b) Fiscal records, (c) Required records, (d) General records issues, (e) Record retention, and (f) Examination of records. (A copy of Appendix F is attached.)

Single purpose institutions for which the ABFSE serves as "gatekeeper" must also demonstrate compliance with those accreditation standards which speak directly to their situations, particularly Standards 1 (Sponsorship), 2 (Organization and Administration), 4 (Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards), and 5 (Finance). These matters will be addressed in the Self study and provisions made by the institution to have available appropriate records and information as indicated below.

Recognizing the primary role of financial aid auditors with regard to ensuring compliance with Title IV, ABFSE visiting committees will limit their review under this standard to the following:

12.2.1 A specific examination of the most recent financial aid audit. That review will be referenced in the visiting committee report, including any audit exceptions.

12.2.2 Through sampling methods, the visiting committee will confirm that the records identified in the regulation indicated above as Part a (Program records), Part b (Fiscal records), and Part c (Required records) are on file at the institution.

12.2.3 The visiting committee will ensure the institution has a process in place that assures compliance with Part d (general requirements on records availability), Part e (appropriate retention of records, and Part f (a policy on availability of records for inspection by those identified in the regulation).

12.2.4 The visiting committee will, using sampling methods, ensure that records noted above are maintained in acceptable form and available for inspection by appropriate parties.

12.3 The institution must present Default Rates for the Title IV Student Loan Program for the years since the last accreditation review, as reported to the college by the US Department of Education.

12.4 For institutions in which rates are above the federal guidelines, plans to bring rates into compliance must be presented.

STANDARD 13: RECORD OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

13.1 All student complaints about the program, submitted in writing since the last accreditation review, must be available for review.

13.2 With each written complaint, the program must file a written response, or demonstrate resolution, of the complaint.

13.3 See also Standard 10

STANDARD 14: PROGRAM LENGTH, TUITION, AND FEES MUST RELATE TO SUBJECT MATTER

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions, which participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must respond)

14.1 The Institution must demonstrate that the subject matter taught relates reasonably to tuition and fees charged and to length of the program.

STANDARD 15: PROGRAM LENGTH IN CREDIT HOURS

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions, which participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must respond)

15.1 *The Institution must demonstrate that its program is defined in standard credit hour terms, either semester hour or quarter hour, following the current Department of Education definition of credit hours.*

15.1.1 The Federal Definition of Credit Hour is found in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l).
Credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.